ANDALUSĪ CHRISTIANITY:
The survival of indigenous Christian communities

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Volume I of II

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I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.
This thesis comprises an attempt to re-evaluate the experience and the survival of the indigenous Christian population of al-Andalus. It is a response to two problematic aspects of the historiography, whose authority has only recently begun to be questioned: first, the inordinate focus upon the polemical and problematic mid-ninth-century Cordoban hagiography and apologetic of Eulogius and Paul Albar, whose prejudiced vision has not only been accepted as a source of social history, but also projected onto all Andalusī Christianity to support the second – the assertion that conversion happened early and *en masse*, and led to their eradication in the early twelfth century.

Eulogius and Albar’s account of a Córdoba oppressed and Christians persecuted (a trope herein dubbed the *ecclesia destituta*) has dominated thinking about the indigenous Christians of al-Andalus, due to its championing by Catholic historians since the texts’ rediscovery and publication in 1574, and by nineteenth-century Spanish nationalists to whose ideological and patriotic purposes it was amenable. The Cordobans’ account is here re-evaluated as regards its value as a historical artefact and its internal problems are outlined. The discrepancies between the picture created by Eulogius and Albar and that of other contemporary reports, and the problematic hagiography, are then explained to some degree by the literary models Eulogius had at his disposal – of primary interest are the classical pagan poetics of Vergil, Horace and Juvenal and the late antique theology of Augustine.

Albar’s famous despair at the Arabisation of the Christian youth has, in conjunction with Eulogius’ *ecclesia destituta* and the relative scarcity of documentary evidence for the Christians of Andalusī territory, formed the crux of assumptions regarding the speed and extent of Arabisation and conversion. In reassessing Richard Bulliet’s ‘curve of conversion’, which seemed on a faulty reading to prove these assumptions, the second part of the thesis seeks to argue that profound Arabisation did not impact until a century later than is thought and resulted not in assimilative decline but in a late cultural flowering, and show the long, and in many places unbroken, survival of indigenous Christian communities in al-Andalus to the early fifteenth century.
CONTENTS

Introduction 10

Islam’s arrival in the Iberian Peninsula 12
Mid-ninth-century Córdoba: martyrdom amid the blossoming of Arabic-Islamic culture 16

Mozarabism 18
Arabic Christian designations 23

The place of indigenous Christianity in the historiography 24
(i) Ignored by the founding studies of Andalusī history 24
(ii) ‘Mozarabs’ briefly become a valid subject 27
(iii) Andalusī Christians once more sidelined in history of conquerors’ culture 33
(iv) Andalusī Christians seen through Eulogius and his martyrs of Córdoba 35
(v) The debate over Arabisation and Islamisation 37
(vi) Focus returns to mozarabic studies 45

PART I
LATINATE CHRISTIANITY IN AL-ANDALUS

Chapter I. The ecclesia destituta 53
Eulogius (and Albar’s) modern reception as historical source 54
Persecution of the individual 61
Destruction of church buildings 66
Chapter II. Problems and internal contradictions in Eulogius' *ecclesia destituta* 85
- Eulogius and Albar as unrepresentative witnesses 88
- Chronology 91
- Portrait of emir Muḥammad I 94
- The relationship between historical truth and hagiographical persecution 96
- Conflicting claims for 857: mass public martyr veneration during renewed persecution 99
- No place for the miraculous? 102
- Córdoba, seat of Latin learning 107
- Eulogius' hagiography 111
- External contradictions 117
- Manuscript transmission and concluding comments 123

Chapter III. Eulogius’ motivation and influences 129
- Division and conflict in the *Dār al-Islām* 130
- Apocalypticism in al-Andalus? 143
- The rise of Arabic culture and the blurring of cultural boundaries 150
- A war of words against Arabic culture: studying for a Latin renaissance 161

Chapter IV. The pagan classics on the Eastern Other: a framework for Christian apologetic and anti-Islamic polemic 174
- *Oriens barbarus*: the Graeco-Roman image of the East 179
- Christian-Muslim moral antithesis 190
- Cordoban engagement with the classics 198
- Conclusion 209

Chapter V. Eulogius’ Cordoban hagiography: a Christian revival 212
- The limited appeal of monumental Latin polemical tracts 212
- Intercession and redemption 215
- Christian unity around martyrial *exempla* 224
- The martyr’s *locus potentiae* 227
- Hagiography as a means of culture-building 230
Augustinian influence in the Iberian Peninsula 233
Augustine’s martyr: a Christian hero 238

Chapter VI. Inscriptions: a window into Latin literacy 250
Highs and lows of literary Latin to the eleventh century 255
Latin use in a ritual context into the thirteenth century 263

PART II
THE SURVIVAL OF ANDALUSĪ CHRISTIANITY

Chapter VII. Bulliet’s Conversion Curve and its significance for the history of Andalusī Christianity 269
Bulliet’s reception and problems with his methodology 273
An argument for reassessing indigenous Andalusī Christian survival in light of Bulliet’s true import 277
Eastern dhimmī survival belies inevitability of mass conversion 283
Introduction to Part II 288

Chapter VIII. The Flourishing of Arabised Andalusī Christianity Part I: the Caliphate (929-c.1031) 296
Urban rebellion in Córdoba: post-Eulogian martyrdom 301
Christians of standing and influence in tenth-century society 304
Scriptural translation 311
Ḥafṣ al-Qūṭī and internal conflict over the Arabisation of Scripture 314
Ḥafṣ al-Qūṭī’s Psalter 321
The Calendar of Córdoba: a Christian text? 326
Latin documentation after the Arabisation of Scripture 333

Chapter IX. The Flourishing of Arabised Andalusī Christianity Part II: the taifa kingdoms (c.1031-c.1086) 338
Christians serve taifa courts 339
Christian Arabic verse 346
Religio-cultural boundaries: Christian influence still felt 351
Chapter X. An age of upheaval: Almoravids, Almohads and Naṣrid Granada (c.1086-1492)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Christians fade as holy war consumes the historical discourse</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An age of Christian movement</td>
<td>379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Granada post-1126</td>
<td>391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exiles in North Africa</td>
<td>394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North African exiles copy Arabic Scripture</td>
<td>398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North marches: Zaragoza, 1118</td>
<td>401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gharb al-Andalus: Lisbon, 1147</td>
<td>404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valencia, 1238</td>
<td>409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murcia, 1243</td>
<td>411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seville, 1248: hisba literature on Almoravid control of Christian population</td>
<td>412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almohad conquest of Seville</td>
<td>417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gharb al-Andalus: the Church of the Crow</td>
<td>419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The swift end of Almohad control</td>
<td>421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last potential sighting: Granada province, 1431</td>
<td>423</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion 428

Appendices

Appendix I: Albar’s complaint in full 434
Appendix II: Inscriptions 440
Appendix III: The Calendar of Córdoba 499
Appendix IV: Lasting testament to Christian presence in Iberian toponymy 503

Bibliography 506
ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Graphs

Map: Christian inscriptions and manuscript production of al-Andalus