

ANDALUSĪ CHRISTIANITY:
The survival of indigenous Christian
communities

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Volume I of II

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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 <i>ecclesia destituta</i>	53
Eulogius (and Albar's) modern reception as historical source	54
Persecution of the individual	61
Destruction of church buildings	66

The burden of Visigothic sin	68
<i>Ecclesia fracta</i> : contemporary martyrdom rejected	73
Clergy imprisoned	82
Chapter II. Problems and internal contradictions in Eulogius' <i>ecclesia destituta</i>	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 <i>Dār al-Islām</i>	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
<i>Oriens barbarus</i> : 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 <i>exempla</i>	224
The martyr's <i>locus potentiae</i>	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 <i>dhimmī</i> 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 <i>Calendar of Córdoba</i> : a Christian text?	326
Latin documentation after the Arabisation of Scripture	333
Chapter IX. The Flourishing of Arabised Andalusī Christianity Part II: the <i>taifa</i> kingdoms (c.1031-c.1086)	338
Christians serve <i>taifa</i> courts	339
Christian Arabic verse	346
Religio-cultural boundaries: Christian influence still felt	351

Christian Conquests	358
<i>Gharb al-Andalus</i> : Coimbra, 1064	358
<i>Meseta central</i> : Toledo, 1085	360
<i>Sharq al-Andalus</i> : Valencia and Albarracín, 1094	362
Conclusion	368
Chapter X. An age of upheaval: Almoravids, Almohads and Naşrid Granada (c.1086-1492)	371
Indigenous Christians fade as holy war consumes the historical discourse	375
An age of Christian movement	379
Granada post-1126	391
Exiles in North Africa	394
North African exiles copy Arabic Scripture	398
North marches: Zaragoza, 1118	401
<i>Gharb al-Andalus</i> : Lisbon, 1147	404
Valencia, 1238	409
Murcia, 1243	411
Seville, 1248: <i>hisba</i> literature on Almoravid control of Christian population	412
Almohad conquest of Seville	417
<i>Gharb al-Andalus</i> : the Church of the Crow	419
The swift end of Almohad control	421
Last potential sighting: Granada province, 1431	423
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	596
Map: Christian inscriptions and manuscript production of al-Andalus	498