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DOI

[10.1163/15700674-12340014](https://doi.org/10.1163/15700674-12340014)

Publication date

2018

Document Version

Final published version

Published in

Medieval Encounters

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Citation for published version (APA):

García-Arenal, M., & Wieggers, G. (2018). Interreligious Encounters in Polemics between Christians, Jews, and Muslims in Iberia and Beyond. *Medieval Encounters*, 24(1-3), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15700674-12340014>

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Introduction



Interreligious Encounters in Polemics between Christians, Jews, and Muslims in Iberia and Beyond

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The articles gathered here were presented as lectures at the conference “Polemical Encounters: Polemics between Christians, Jews, and Muslims in Iberia and Beyond,” which took place at the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC) in Madrid in October 2014. This conference was organized by the editors of this volume under the auspices of the European Research Council’s Advanced Grant project CORPI.¹ The contributions included here are only a selection of the nearly thirty papers presented at the conference. The majority of the contributions focus on the time period often called the “long fifteenth century” (beginning with the 1391 pogroms and extending to the forced conversion of the Aragonese Muslims in 1526), a period—characterized

1 The conference was funded by the European Research Council under the European Union’s Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007–2013) ERC advanced grant—grant agreement 323316—project CORPI (Conversion, Overlapping Religiosities, Polemics, Interaction. Early Modern Iberia and Beyond), PI Mercedes García-Arenal, ILC-CCHS, CSIC, Spain.

See also the book edited by Mercedes García-Arenal and Gerard Wiegers, *Polemical Encounters. Christians, Jews, and Muslims in Iberia and Beyond* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2018).

by legal restrictions against Judaism and Islam in the Iberian Peninsula and by persecutions, conversions, and social violence, but also by cultural exchange—when the tension between assimilation and segregation reached its climax. It is a period that witnessed not only the disturbances in Toledo and Pedro Sarmiento's statute against converts (studied here by Giordano) but also the defense of the medieval status quo—Christian convivencia with Jews and Muslims—by the likes of the bishop of Ávila, Alonso de Madrigal, El Tostado (studied by Echevarría). It was a long century in which the physical and symbolic borders separating the three religions, while being transformed, remained extraordinarily porous—a time of unstable religious ideas and identities. In spite of religious prohibitions, the members of Iberia's different faiths interacted by means of commonly held notions, that is, they made use of religious ideas and symbols as ways of interrelating. This is the century that saw the founding of the Inquisition, the conquest of Granada, the expulsion of the Jews, and the various stages in the conversion of Muslims, when the border between the church and the synagogue had become tenuous and Islam continued to be officially recognized. At this time the *converso* problem—not only that of how to regard converts but also how to *be* a convert, how to know what to retain from one's old religion after conversion—was of primary importance. It was a century defined by confrontation and redefinition but also one in which the rigid turn taken by Spanish Catholicism had still not come to pass. The intensity of the debates presented in the following chapters shows that, during the long fifteenth century, other paths were still open and various solutions still seemed possible.

Efforts to convert Jews and Muslims, in addition to the defensive efforts of these communities to keep their members, led to the production of a considerable number of polemical texts. The forced conversions that took place in Iberia between the end of the fourteenth century and the first decades of the sixteenth gave rise to crypto-Muslim and crypto-Jewish groups whose former identities, religious beliefs, and culture were attacked through the different kinds of texts and images that were discussed at the conference. These texts were not only Christian polemics directed against Judaism or Islam and their respective reactions: Jews and Muslims also wrote polemics against each other's religion. We were interested in focusing on religious polemics in a framework of shifting identities, languages, and both religious and erudite knowledge. Polemics against Islam and Judaism also provided the opportunity for Christians to clarify their own doctrines against competing Christian groups. This is because polemics do not usually serve primarily to convince an opponent, but rather to protect the religious identity of the group to which the polemicist belongs and his own religious authority among his co-religionists,

who often constituted the most direct readership of his writings. Polemics are also important from the point of view of knowledge transfer and are connected to the beginnings of Orientalism, as is shown by the contributions presented here that explore the connection between polemics and the origins of Arabic and Islamic studies and Hebrew and Judaic studies (studied by Starczewska and Freudenthal). Knowledge about Islam and Judaism also influenced the birth of comparative (religious) studies and the concept of religious tolerance among European elites. Various contributions (Giordano, Yisraeli, Starczewska) show how converts participated in this knowledge transfer and in religious polemics, often defending the spiritual assimilation and the legitimacy of the converts themselves.

Without a doubt—and this is the point that attracts most attention, as can be seen from the views about polemics of such scholars as Michel Foucault²—the genre of religious polemic is made up of texts that are vituperative, aggressive, and caustic. But during our three days of collaboration at the abovementioned conference, a different idea came to the fore, and it was this idea that guided the selection of articles presented in this volume. What the conference confirmed was that religious polemic is more than mere invective; it involves and produces familiarity, connectedness, scientific or pseudo-scientific exchange. To be sure, the kind of encounter and transmission that often takes place comes about willy-nilly and unconsciously, despite the intentions of the participants, and therefore only with difficulty can it be considered a “dialogue.” In fact, when it is detected, sometimes this (“lay” or popular) familiarity or friendship is considered dangerous (see the chapters by Tolan and Echevarría) and harmful, and those who engage in it come under the shadow of suspicion. At other times, it is consciously employed in the service of an ideological, cultural, and social strategy either by converts or, in a good many cases, by those who promoted the real integration of converts into Catholic society (Rodríguez Porto). Christianity itself took different forms in Iberia. In any case, it is precisely in “polemical” texts where we find evidence for the very thing that such texts were meant to avert. That is, these texts demonstrate that the borders between religions were not fixed and impenetrable. This was clearly not the case in fifteenth-century Iberia, nor was it really so even during later periods. The approach based on stable ethnic or religious divisions, as well as the aggressive tone of most polemical texts, has until now blinded historiography to the transversal logic of social and cultural intimacy, of a sort that is made manifest by the articles gathered in this volume.

2 Michel Foucault, “Polemics, Politics and Problematizations,” in *Essential Works of Michel Foucault*, Vol. 1 *Ethics*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: The New Press, 1997), 111–19.

And yet, civil and religious authorities in the Middle Ages and early modern period perceived the risk posed by religious dispute insofar as it entailed proximity. This point is made in John Tolan's opening chapter in this volume, which deals with the legal and conciliar mandates that, beginning in the thirteenth century, prohibit and restrict interreligious disputes as part of an effort to regulate relations between Jews and Christians. Tolan demonstrates how these prohibitions against religious disputation are included among other prohibitions such as those against Jews having Christian servants or nursemaids, or against Christians having nursemaids from other religions (see also Pereda's contribution) or engaging in sexual relations with members of other religions, as if the disputes were an occasion for closeness and intimacy. Prohibiting disputes is part of an effort to stabilize relations between Christians, Jews, and Muslims and at the same time keep converts cut off from their former religion, thereby also safeguarding the faith of lay Christians. Iberian Muslims, both before and after their forced conversion to Catholicism, also alluded to Islamic restrictions against disputing about religion, as is pointed out time and again by Christian polemicists (such as Juan Andrés or Martín de Figuerola, who are dealt with in the chapter by Starczewska) who wanted to dispute with Aragonese Muslims. Disputation involved hearing attacks and blasphemy against one's own religion (as the theologians and clerics who were opposed to it pointed out), but it also entailed the implicit risk of having doubts sown, of gaining knowledge about another religion, its religious concepts and claims; in many ways, it entailed a dangerous closeness and intimacy. It required above all a discussion of religious representations and dogma (regarding the Trinity, for example), whose subtleties were not universally considered appropriate subjects for the uneducated, for those who did not have the benefit of enlightenment, as is shown by Yisraeli.

Echevarría's chapter approaches, from yet another angle, this issue of how the Middle Ages dealt with the existence of different religions within a single society and attempted to avoid familiarity among them. Her analysis of a particular episode that took place in a small town in the province of Toledo (Talavera de la Reina) around the middle of the fifteenth century—the conversion of a Muslim woman to Judaism (who, according to her defense, had been kidnapped and raped by her Jewish lover) and the ensuing scandal—draws attention to the desire on the part of the Christian authorities to maintain clearly defined borders between religious communities. Alonso Fernández de Madrigal, El Tostado, a famous man of letters (who would later become the bishop of Ávila), wrote an extraordinary text (in the genre *quaestio-responsio*) about this case in response to a legal consultation regarding the limits of religious jurisdiction and the legal responsibility of the different parties involved

in the conversion of the young woman. What was at stake here was compliance with the agreements signed with the minority religions, the role of the Church as the protector of legally recognized religious communities, and the definition of the role of civil or royal jurisdiction with respect to the minority communities' juridical and religious systems. El Tostado makes clear that the Jews and Muslims are allowed to live in error (that is, practice their own religion) because they were born into it and it belongs to them "by nature." However, if they abandon their nature, they can only do so by converting to Christianity and not to the other of the false religions, which he describes as "sects." In the case under consideration, conversion from Islam to Judaism involves an implicit rejection of Christianity and as such should be prohibited and the parties should be punished, both the young Muslim woman for having converted and the Jewish community for having welcomed her into their midst. However, the case ended with the woman's reversion to Islam without being punished by her community for apostasy, the sentence for which according to the "Moorish laws" of Castile was death. Both the court case and the text analyzed by Echevarría are extraordinary; they prove that at the middle of the fifteenth century the system of recognized religious communities—what El Tostado's text calls *cohabitatio*—was still considered valid, although it required segregation of the communities in order to function. The case also shows that the notion that one belongs to a religion by "nature" (expressed in ideas such as the "naturally Christian soul" or the Islamic "natural disposition of a human being"), i.e. by virtue of having been "born" as such, was already present in interreligious relations, ideas that would a few decades later play a role in the racialization of religion. The case of the young Muslim convert and her trial took place at the same time as the anti-convert riots in Toledo. It is no coincidence that El Tostado's text is preserved in the archive in the same binding as texts by Alonso de Cartagena, of whom we will speak shortly.

Bodily closeness and intimacy was to be avoided or regulated in various ways by the dominant religion, and respect for Christianity on the part of the Jewish and Islamic religions as well as mutual respect between the two minority groups had to be enforced. Everything related to the body and its functions (physical, dietary/digestive, sexual) becomes a field of contact and frequently also a battleground. And the body is cared for by the physician, a profession in which medieval Jews and Muslims excelled and were greatly esteemed, surpassing the Christians. The chapter by Freudenthal (the only one that does not deal with Iberia but rather with French Provence, a region that was closely related to Peninsular Judaism) focuses on polemical encounters between Christian and Jewish physicians, showing that profane science and the transmission of scientific knowledge were not without religious significance. The

juxtaposition of the reports on Jewish medicine with Latin university practices looks closely at positive effects of conflictive contact. In the transmission of not only medical but also astronomical knowledge (including chronologies and calendars), the religious factor was unavoidable. Calendars and the manner of dating texts themselves also appear charged with relevance in Gutwirth's essay. Freudenthal centers his study on translations (from the thirteenth century onward) of medical texts from Latin to Hebrew, translations that were not simple vehicles for transmitting neutral scientific knowledge but rather served to introduce Christian ideas into Jewish culture. To work in Latin and with the Latin language implied already from the outset the absorption of a whole universe of cultural notions and concepts. The Jewish translators—the first to have to confront this implicit religious material in scientific texts, which they frequently also confronted in their encounters with Christian medical colleagues—by virtue of their immersion in the Latin language opened a door that could eventually lead to conversion. Moreover, Jewish translators of medical texts from Latin to Hebrew were subjected to controversy on two fronts: the Christian physicians' animosity and competition on the one hand, and the resentment and censure of the traditionalist circles within their own community on the other. Conversion is also revealed as a way to avoid both of these sources of pressure. In fact, many of the translators that Freudenthal cites ended up converting to Christianity. Such was the case of Leon Joseph or Leonardus Benedictus, whose conversion can be situated within the web of interactions with Christian culture that was established beginning with his studies at the university, his medical practice, and his role as intermediary between the Jewish and Christian cultures.

The chapters by Echevarría and Freudenthal give us a sense of the local; they allow us to see the importance of the landscape and of the city/built environment. The following chapter, by Gutwirth, also demonstrates an assiduous interest in the local, beginning with an analysis of a specific locality, the city of Arévalo, in Castile, as a literary topos, telling the history of Arévalo through contemporary literature, and using literally shared local space as a justification for literary comparison of the works of a Jew, Yosef ibn Saddiq, and a Muslim known as the "Mancebo de Arévalo." Both wrote compilations and works of dissemination on their own religion and their cultural precepts at a time in which the very survival of Judaism and Islam in Iberia was threatened. Gutwirth argues that there are certain parallels and shared religious attitudes in the works of Ibn Saddiq and the Mancebo de Arévalo that can be explained by the specific background of the history of Arévalo in the fifteenth century. The uses of Hebrew sources in the *Aljamiado* text of the Mancebo for purposes that are not at all polemical are extraordinary and yet, in the context of the Mancebo'

Tafsira, they are not. Gutwirth's close reading of prologues, dedications, and colophons brings to the fore constructive and innovative aspects of polemics. He shows that a more thorough approach to the texts and ideas of the Judeo-Christian polemic will take into account the various factors of historical (legal, fiscal, economic, institutional) specificity impinging on their period and place. This close attention to the local as an explanation for certain aspects of specific polemics is also a feature of Glazer-Eytan's study, which looks at Daroca, and Pereda's and Rodríguez Porto's analyzes, which focus on Seville.

The next three chapters (Giordano, Yisraeli, Rodríguez Porto) are devoted to analyzes of specific texts and address the question of how dynamic the borders between Judaism, Christianity, and recent converts from one religion to the other were during this period (middle of the fifteenth century). These texts are indicative of a three-way conversation. The essays allude to another type of familiarity—the acquaintance that converts maintained with their old religion, its sacred texts, its modes of exegesis and argumentation—and the effect that this familiarity had on the converts' efforts to assimilate Christianity, or rather, to create a new Christianity. In the first two essays (by Yisraeli and Giordano) we hear a distinct *converso* voice that challenges the boundaries between Jewish and Christian groups. Thus, Yisraeli proposes a new reading of the polemical strategies used by the convert and bishop of Burgos, Pablo de Santa María—known before his conversion as Rabbi Salomon Ha-Levi—author of an anti-Jewish treatise entitled *Scrutinium scripturarum* (1432). Despite its virulence, the *Scrutinium* reflects a unique moment in the evolution of the polemic that takes place between converts and Jews and the different way of treating the spiritual assimilation of the former to their new Christian faith. Yisraeli demonstrates that Pablo's approach to rabbinic traditions and to putative Jewish skepticism differs profoundly from the scholastic polemical traditions that had been used, for example, in the famous Dispute of Tortosa. Yisraeli argues that as part of this specific polemic, the *Scrutinium* proposed themes and views that were generally unfamiliar to Christian scholastic literature and that, moreover, often subverted the aggressive polemical language of the Christian mission. The *Scrutinium* portrayed a Judaism that was essentially foreign to Christian readers and articulated novel ways to integrate rabbinic traditions into Christian history and scholarship. Not only rabbinic thought but above all the rabbinic way of reasoning infiltrates the Christian dialectic. The unique perspective born of his thorough knowledge of both Christian scholastic theology and the rabbinic disciplines permits Pablo de Santa María to present ideas based on Jewish biblical hermeneutics to his readership of Christian theologians in an oblique or implicit way, defending the Jewish origin of the Church, the value of Hebrew and rabbinic erudition,

and even the role of Jewish converts in the history of salvation. These are the ideas that shortly thereafter would give rise, in Iberia and Northern Europe, to what is known as “Christian Hebraism.”

To state this in other terms, the *Scrutinium scripturarum* constitutes an important witness in the debate between Jews and converts. It provides a missionizing ideology and polemical strategies to converts who championed spiritual assimilation to Christianity, among whom its author, Pablo de Santa María, was a well-known representative. This ideology held that Christianity was the materialization of Jewish ideals and emphasized those Christian teachings that made it possible to defend the idea that the two biblical covenants are in agreement. This proposition meant that conversion from Judaism to Christianity did not require a complete substitution of beliefs or identity but rather their perfection. It implied that there was a binding continuity and intimacy between the two religions. This extremely important proposition of Pablo de Santa María’s prefigures, as we mentioned, ideologies that would proliferate two centuries later in Northern Europe.

Giordano’s chapter focuses on the work of Pablo de Santa María’s son, who was born a Jew before his father’s conversion. Known after his conversion by the name Alonso de Cartagena, he likewise became a bishop and held very important positions at the Castilian court. His 1450 *Defensorium unitatis Christianae* is a polemic addressing not the Jews and their assimilation as converts to the Christian world but Christians who held that it was necessary to discriminate between Old and New Christians and to block New Christians from gaining privileges and social advancement because their Jewish origin carried *macula*, as opposed to *pulchritudo*. In the *Defensorium* we hear the voice of a convert speaking out against that particular rhetoric and in defense of non-discrimination on the basis of the Pauline understanding of Christianity. Cartagena uses the Bible’s own words as a sword in defense of the position of (Jewish) converts—converts who in turn defend the idea of a single Christian body unified by the grace conferred by baptism. Imbued with Pauline doctrine, Cartagena is a convert who is clearly familiar with the tenets of humanism as well as theological concepts like justification by faith and the *Beneficium Christi*. Like his father before him, Alonso defended or highlighted Christian teachings that support the notion of an agreement, a harmonious continuity between Judaism and Christianity, and he maintained that all Christians were converts, since all are changed into a new man at the moment of baptism. Against the idea of “pure blood,” Cartagena argues that all blood has been washed by the “blood of Christ” and that it is faith in Christ that guarantees salvation.

The next chapter analyzes a manuscript copy of a *Biblia romanceada*, that is, a Bible translated from Hebrew into the Castilian vernacular. Rather, the analysis centers on the illustrations contained in the splendid manuscript held at El Escorial, Ms. I.1.3. These illustrations make up an extraordinary pictorial cycle, a genuine visual narrative. The Bible belongs to a tradition of Bibles translated from Hebrew for a Christian readership and illuminated under the auspices of an aristocratic patron, a phenomenon that in itself is full of significance and worthy of further study. The particular manuscript studied here by Rodríguez Porto was, according to her article, commissioned in Seville by Enrique Pérez de Guzmán, second Duke of Medina Sidonia (d. 1492). Enrique Pérez de Guzmán had vigorously defended converts, retained converts among his entourage, and was part of a web of family members and clients that formed what we might call a “pro-convert” faction, possibly even a case of Christian Hebraism *avant la lettre*. He and his wife, Leonor Ribera y Mendoza, had family connections with other well-known figures who had commissioned illuminated Castilian Bibles—such as the famous Biblia de Alba or Arragel Bible, commissioned by Don Luis de Guzmán—and with Alonso de Guzmán, who had commissioned the translation of Lyra’s *Postillae* in 1420. The efforts of the Guzmán family and their associates and their interest in producing richly illustrated biblical translations from the Hebrew is an expression of their interest in a literal translation of the Bible. It is important to bear in mind the uniqueness of a certain medieval Spanish tradition that was closer to the Hebrew tradition than to the Vulgate, closer to the text of the Hebrew Bible than to the Church Fathers. This was a local tradition that ran parallel to Hispanic Judaism, which was more closely attached to the grammatical analysis of Scripture. The literal or historical reading created an exegetical juncture at which both Christian and Jewish writers were able to reach some common ground in their interpretation of the Bible, as is shown by the interest in Nicholas of Lyra’s *Postillae litteralis* attested for fifteenth-century Seville. We should remember here as well Pablo de Santa María’s interest in Lyra’s *Postillae*, for which he wrote numerous *Additiones* (Yisraeli). The explicit request by Don Luis de Guzmán for a Bible (known as the Biblia de Alba) provided with an up-to-date rabbinic commentary expanding on Lyra’s for the understanding of Scripture’s “obscure passages” should be considered as the other side of the same coin. Yet literal reading was also an intellectual pursuit in which the Bible study so cherished by Hieronymites, who made rumination on the Bible the core of their religious experience, could converge with the philological zeal shown by early humanists. That was the cultural and religious background of the Bible translations from Hebrew commissioned by aristocratic patrons in Castile. Jews and more often converts were at the

crossroads of this network but were not the sole intermediaries in this religious dialogue, especially from the end of the fifteenth century onwards, when the spirituality of New Christians had permeated different layers of society.

Rodríguez Porto shows how the extraordinary illustrations in the Escorial Bible have the ability to create their own historiographical discourse. For example, the struggle of the Jewish people against their enemies is made into a precedent for or a counterpart of the feats achieved by the Castilians against Granada (which was at that time still under Islamic rule but in the last stages of its conquest by the Christians), of the struggle of the Christians against Islam, making the Christians in effect into the “new chosen people.” The richest pictorial cycles in the manuscript studied by Rodríguez Porto are those that illustrate the books of Maccabees and Esther. Enrique de Guzmán, a descendent of Guzmán el Bueno (conqueror of Tarifa from the Muslims) and Count of Niebla, fancied himself something of a champion not unlike Joshua or Judah Maccabee. The illustrations support, as Rodríguez Porto shows, a continuity between the Jewish people and all the Christian faithful (without regard to their origin), united in the struggle against the infidel. Especially significant is the pictorial cycle dedicated to Queen Esther, which seems to transform the biblical past into a mirror of the present tragedy—the Inquisition having been recently established and in operation in Seville—making the eyes of the converts and their defenders look to Queen Isabella, in the form of a new Esther, imploring her protection.

The literal translation of the Bible and knowledge of Hebrew emerge here as fundamental concerns in Iberia at the end of the Middle Ages and the dawn of Modernity. The relationship between Judaism and Christianity, a crucial and pressing problem, is articulated through the way Spaniards during this period deal with the Hebrew language.

Thus, Glazer-Eytan explores the complex uses of Hebrew letters and writing in late medieval Christian art. He focuses on an inscription in Hebrew—which he analyzes as both image and text—that appears in the *Piedat* (painted c. 1474, at almost the same time as the Escorial Bible studied by Rodríguez Porto was produced) by the painter Bartolomé de Cárdenas, El Bermejo. Bermejo himself and the Darocan milieu in which he was working and living were suspected of being *conversos* at the end of the fifteenth century. This is also the view held by modern scholars of Bermejo, who saw in it an explanation for the peculiar Hebrew inscription.

Glazer-Eytan’s highly suggestive revisiting of this painting in its local context relates the inscription—which contains a Christological text that paraphrases Paul and Augustine—not so much to the painter’s and the patron’s *converso* origins but to the general fascination with the Hebrew language, and

to a unique iconographical tradition of the Man of Sorrows in Aragon that used pseudo-Arabic inscriptions on Christ's sepulcher. He thus looks at the *Piedat* as a visual attempt to situate Christ's tomb in an ancient "East" imagined as the historical and religious roots of Christianity. This visual argument is accompanied by a polemical textual argument that appropriates Hebrew from Judaism and uses it to sacralize and archaize Christianity. Glazer-Eytan therefore argues that it is not a pro-*converso* painting; it is a polemic with Judaism and it has a humanistic-Hebraistic agenda that was, in a way, a polemic with the more conservative, traditional Catholicism that favored Latin and avoided Hebrew.

In our view, the pictorial representation of a Hebrew phrase also reflects the fascination with humanity's and the chosen people's primeval language and the search for sacred, ancient origins that is distinctively Hispanic. The tomb united the entire Christian community with Christ and at the same time was a symbolic fabrication that served to situate sacred history in the ancient Jews' own territory. As Glazer-Eytan shows, this painting, with its specific context in Daroca's devotional life through the relation it had to the town's famous miraculous bloodstained corporals, had also broader, universal resonances. The Eucharistic connotations of the image and its salvational message, conveyed through the medium of Hebrew letters, were a universal Christian message.

These four, highly interwoven texts (Yisraeli, Giordano, Rodríguez Porto, Glazer-Eytan) all make reference to the polemical encounter between Judaism and Christianity as mediated by the *converso* question. And this is because the fifteenth century is a century defined by this question. The (forced) conversions of Muslims, who were afterward called Moriscos, took place during the following century, the sixteenth, but were remarkably similar. Starczewska's chapter demonstrates this similarity by bringing to light the same issues: the translation of the Qur'an and its glosses in a polemical environment and the role (and the knowledge) of recent converts in this polemic. Starczewska analyzes the role of the *alfaquí* convert Juan Gabriel as the translator and teacher of the Aragonese polemicist and missionary Martín de Figuerola, on the one hand, and the translator and glosser of the Qur'an for the Italian cardinal Egidio da Viterbo, on the other. In this chapter as well, we note the importance of the local context for generating different polemics and encounters, since Starczewska suggests that Juan Gabriel had a different attitude toward texts when he worked in Aragon with Christian missionaries than when he worked outside that context in Italy, even when he worked with the same Qur'anic verses. When collaborating with Figuerola, he provided him with exegetical material that would be appropriate for use in an anti-Muslim polemical context, whereas the exegesis that he worked on in Italy sought to bring to light the features of Islam that are most compatible with Christianity. In Italy, Juan

Gabriel attempted to blur the boundaries between Christianity and Islam and to present them as a continuity. For example, he defended the idea that the patriarch Abraham/Ibrahim, who was venerated by his patron, Egidio, was really a “Catholic” prophet, and therefore a place might be found for Islam within Christendom. This is a very similar strategy to the ones used, as we have seen, by Jewish converts or by those who defended converts, including the strategy of presenting Judaism and Christianity as united in a common struggle against Islam. It can be deduced that both minority religions—Judaism and Islam—appealed to the same arguments and the same ideology, giving priority to the question of origins in an attempt to present themselves as united to Christianity in their origins and opposed to a common enemy: Islam or Judaism, respectively. In any case, there were Morisco efforts, such as the Sacromonte Lead Books (see Pereda’s chapter), that made use of strategies similar to those pointed out by Starczewska and Glazer-Eytan and that were part of Iberia’s intellectual current at the time: the search for sacred origins and ancient origins, the connection of this antiquity with the East, specifically an East that was passed down through the Bible but that could also be used to maintain that Christianity was the materialization of Islam’s ideals or that Islam fulfilled or completed Christian ideals. And if not, then that Islam, or at least the Arabs, who originated in the East out of various ancient Arabic-speaking peoples (supposedly Arabic-speaking biblical tribes who came to Iberia such as the Edomites and Phoenicians) gave Spaniards a sacred origin and helped to make them a new chosen people.

Attaining salvation was a problem that had an immediate social implication in the question of how to integrate converts into Catholicism. And here is where the questions of blood, milk, “nature,” purity, and stain arise. As Pablo de Santa María said (Yisraeli), converts were “newborn infants, longing for pure, spiritual milk through which they may grow into salvation.” These newborn infants or brothers in milk are at the forefront of the painter Juan Roelas’s work *Alegoría de la Inmaculada Concepción*, which is analyzed by Pereda, and of the interpretation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception put forward by Juan de Roelas’s painting. The believers in the Immaculate Conception wanted to press Rome to declare it a Catholic article of faith: Mary had been conceived without original sin. Pereda explores the way that the idea/symbol (though not the dogma approved by Rome in a later period) of the Immaculate Conception was defended in Seville by Pedro de Castro (the same archbishop who championed the Lead Books of Sacromonte, Arabic texts that extolled the idea of the Immaculate Conception) and how the Immaculate Conception can be opposed to the idea of blemish and stained blood. The Immaculate Virgin was thus transformed into a symbol of a single, uniform, and impermeable

social body comprising all Christians, Old and New. Felipe Pereda is in fact speaking of another polemic in a different local context, this time between Dominicans (against the belief of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin and for that reason also against the Lead Books) and defenders of the belief of the Immaculate Conception in Seville at the beginning of the seventeenth century. He analyzes the racial anxiety underlying the conflict between the dogma (which the Spanish monarchy had endorsed since the Middle Ages) and the Dominican order, which boasted of having “no Jews, no Moors, no Moriscos, no Mulattoes like in all other religious orders” (including the Jesuits). The question is no longer just about converts, but also Indians, Blacks, and Mulattoes. It is no longer confined to medieval Iberia, but extends across the global Empire (the ideal republic). Through his reading of Juan de Roelas’s painting *Alegoría de la Inmaculada Concepción*, Pereda connects the dogma of Mary’s transcendent purity to the social and racial prejudices from which that belief arose in the specific context of Seville and above all draws attention to what the dogma of Mary’s purity implies for the creation of an “imagined community” nourished by the Virgin’s pure, spiritual milk, a universal community of Christians free from the racial prejudices represented by blood.