The religious polemics of the Muslims of Late Medieval Christian Iberia
Colominas Aparicio, M.

Citation for published version (APA):
Introduction

This dissertation is about the polemics of the Muslims of Late Medieval Christian Iberia. It is a study of their literature against the Christians and the Jews, and an inquiry into the discourses on Islam revealed in these works. Before entering on the subject, I would like to provide the reader with some essential information about the presence of Muslim communities in the Christian territories. This presence extends from approximately the eleventh to the sixteenth century and begins with the Christian conquest of large parts of the Muslim territory of al-Andalus (often referred to as ‘the Reconquista’), when many of the former inhabitants were made subject to the new Christian rulers. By swearing allegiance to the new rulers by treaties of surrender or capitulations when their territories were conquered, Muslims were officially allowed to practise Islam publicly and became part of a growing majority Christian society which, like the society in al-Andalus, consisted of three religious communities, Muslims, Christians and Jews. However, in this case not Muslims but Christians were the dominant group in the political and the economic domains. These Muslims and their descendants are commonly known as Mudejars.

The use of the term Mudejar (mudajjan, from the Arabic dajn, or ‘treaty’) is rarely found in late Muslim and Christian medieval sources. It occasionally appears in Muslim sources, especially from the fourteenth century, in Christian sources c. 1462 CE and in the context of the Conquest of Granada, with the double meaning of ‘the one who remains behind, a laggard, and of “tributaries”’. Later, Mudejar was first widely used by nineteenth-

---

1 Lapiedra Gutiérrez, 1999-2002, 23-24 and 31 for the occasional use of mudajjan in Arabic sources. A fourteenth-century Muslim captive in the Christian territories, al-Qaysi, refers to these Muslims contemptuously as al-mudajjalin, which, as Van Koningsveld and Wiegers rightly note, is reminiscent of ad-dajil ‘the Deceiver’ or ‘Antichrist’. Van Koningsveld and Wiegers, 1994, 174 n. 47 and 178 n. 64. This association is also provided by the sixteenth-century historian Luis del Mármol Carvajal, who claims in his chronicle: “Los mudejares [ ... ], porque servían y hacían guerra contra los otros moros, los llamaron por oprobio mudegelin, nombre tomado de Degel, que es en arábigo el Antecristo” [‘The Mudejars [...], because they were servants and waged war against other Moors were called disparagingly mudegelin, a name derived from Degel, which is the Antichrist in Arabic’]. Mármol Carvajal, 1991, 64, emphasis in the original. Unless mentioned otherwise, all translations are mine. My interpolations and additional explanations are indicated by the acronym MCA.

century art historians and later by historians more generally. Apart from this usage, Mudejar is employed either to refer to the arts and crafts produced by the members of these communities or, in a broader sense, as a concept with 'aesthetic' significance which stands for all kinds of cultural expressions resulting from the contacts between Christianity and Islam, not only in the Middle Ages but also in the present day. Hence, such scholars as Guillermo Gustavino talk about a cultural ‘Mudejarism’ which would extend beyond the seventeenth century. At the other extreme, other scholars, among them Márquez Villanueva, venture as far as to consider one of the works written by Christians living under Muslim rule in al-Andalus (Mozarabs) as an early example of Mudejarism. A present-day case of ‘Mudejarism’ is the novel Makbara by the Spanish novelist Juan Goytisolo. It is worth noting that the Mudejars did not refer to themselves as anything other than simply Muslims. Taking these considerations into account, Mudejar will be used throughout this dissertation to refer to those Iberian Muslims who, as individuals or as communities, lived as Muslims within a majority Christian society, and to all cultural artefacts they produced.

The rights of the Mudejars were understood as part of a feudal system which regulated religious difference by taxation. Scholars hold different views about the taxes paid by the Mudejars. Whereas Leonard Patrick Harvey points out their close resemblance to the tax called jizya levied on the non-Muslim subjects of a Muslim state (dhimmīs), Kathryn Miller notes that the similarities between the two levies lessened as the Middle Ages progressed, because at times agreements were broken or changed. The free Muslims living under Christian rule (franci) were exempted from paying taxes to the king, either

---

1 Especially since the publication by José Amador de los Ríos, ca. 1859, El estilo mudéjar en la arquitectura. Márquez Villanueva, 2009, 23ff.
4 Márquez Villanueva, 2009, 48-49, where he quotes a passage from Álvaro de Córdoba Indiculus Luminosus (written in 854 CE).
5 For a ‘Mudejar’ reading of this novel, see López-Baralt, 1992, Chapter Eight (259-300), “Toward a ‘Mudejar’ reading of Juan Goytisolo’s Makbara”.
6 During the reading of some Aljamiado (Romance in Arabic script) and Latin manuscripts in the Library of the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC) in Madrid, I came across various instances in which Mudejars and Muslims forced to convert to Christianity (Moriscos) in the Christian territories called themselves ‘Muslims’ and sometimes ‘Moros’. In MS J8, f. 426v, we read, for example, “muslim e muslīm” and in MS J9, f. 204v ‘hermanosh mushlimesh’ ['Muslim brothers'].
7 See among others, Salicrú I Llac, 2008, on Mudejars who acted as mediators and diplomats and representatives of Christian powers in Muslim lands. Echevarría, 2003a and b, and by the same author, 2004b.
8 Harvey, 2000, 176-187; especially 178. Miller, 2008, 4. Miller is referring to the Mudejars in the Crown of Aragon, but the situation seems to have been very similar elsewhere in the Peninsula.
because of their wealth or because they claimed to have a secondary affiliation to a noble, or to an ecclesiastical or a military order. Nevertheless, in all cases, the king (and sometimes the queen) had ultimate jurisdiction over all his Muslim subjects and the Jews – who were the other important religious community in the Christian territories. Both communities were considered to be ‘the royal treasure’. The Mudejars were liable for other kinds of taxes and levies which were paid either to the local lords or to the ecclesiastical authorities, and to the king; and this varied over time and by place. Moreover, taxes varied depending on whether they were imposed on Muslims or to Jews. The dispositions regarding the Mudejars, and the restrictions imposed on their communities, paralleled those imposed on the Jews but were not identical to them. Christian dispositions towards the two minorities seem to have played an important role in the relationships between Mudejars and Jews, as each rivalled the other for the favours of their Christian rulers. The competition between Muslims and Jews is illustrated in one of the capitulations of the Treaty of Granada signed in 1491 CE between the last sultan, Muḥammad XII (Boabdil), and the Catholic Monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella. This agreement stipulates that the Jews cannot collect taxes from the Muslim communities: “Their Highnesses would not permit the Jews to have power or command over the Moors, or to be collectors of any tax.”

Given that the vast majority of Mudejars lived in the Iberian Peninsula, it is a truism to say that their history is inextricably linked to the contextual political, economic and social changes in these territories. Without neglecting the contextual distinctiveness of the various Mudejar communities, some leading scholars distinguish three phases in the history of Mudejarism in medieval Iberia. The first stretches from the eleventh to the thirteenth century and is characterized by the emergence of the first Mudejar communities in the newly conquered Christian territories, mostly in Aragon, the Kingdoms of Castile and León and the north of Portugal. Some scholars posit the hypothesis that, in this period, the Mudejars could have even been a majority in some regions. Then comes a period of strong Christian expansion which leads to an increase in the number of Muslims submitting to the

---

10 Harvey, 1990, 317.
11 For a shorter period, some scholars argue the presence of Mudejar communities in Sicily and Hungary as well. Burns, 1997-1998.
12 In the following, I have used the periodization proposed by Ana Echevarría Arsuaga in Echevarría Arsuaga, 2004a. See the same periodization as well as her comments on the importance of taking into account the specific characteristics of each community in Echevarría Arsuaga, 2001-2002, 34-35.
13 See Echevarría Arsuaga, 2007, and the criticism of Molénat because of her lack of documentation at this point. Molénat, 2014, 47.
emerging Christian kingdoms. The third and last phase is marked by a decrease in the Mudejar population, decimated by famine, war and plague, followed by the recovery and later prosperity of the Mudejar communities until the first half of the fifteenth-century. From 1480 CE onwards, the deterioration in the conditions of the Mudejars seems to have been particularly evident and the Mudejars faced increasing pressure and restrictions exerted by the increasingly intolerant Christian society.\footnote{In the Crown of Castile, in the second half of the twelfth century and the first decades of the fifteenth century. García-Arenal, 2003a, 58 and 74.}

At the outset, the treaties or capitulations signed between the Christian kings and their Muslim subjects were generally respected and, apart from sporadic incidents, the Mudejars were fairly well integrated into society. The Mudejar communities, or aljamas,\footnote{\textit{Aljama} means Muslim community but it also can refer to the urban spaces, namely: the Muslim neighbourhoods in the Christian territories. The same applies to the term \textit{morería}. For the sake of clarity, hereafter I use \textit{aljama} with the significance [in the sense of] of ‘social’ group and \textit{morería} to refer to the ‘geographical’ locality. In the latter case, I do not differentiate between neighbourhoods with or without physical barriers.} had their own governance systems and judiciary\footnote{For details of their administrative, judicial and religious organization, see Boswell, 1977, Chapter Two and Hinojosa Montalvo, 2002, 125-233.} – namely: their own religious leaders (\textit{imām}) and those in charge of the call to prayer (\textit{mu’adhdhin}); their own judges (\textit{qādi}) and religious scholars (\textit{faqīḥ}); their own mosques (\textit{masjid}), schools (\textit{madrasa}),\footnote{About the existence of a \textit{madrasa} in Zaragoza and in Segovia, see Wiegers, 1994, 78-79, who uses the scholarship of Ribera y Tarragó and Codera y Zaidín for Zaragoza. See below the views of Van Koningsveld about the existence of a \textit{madrasa} in Zaragoza.} and cemeteries. The judge or \textit{qādi} was in charge of making the final decisions in the community, but the religious authority of the leaders of the Mudejar aljamas was often concentrated in the hands of the \textit{faqīḥ}. Although \textit{sensu stricto} a \textit{faqīḥ} is a Islamic jurist, he fulfilled various functions within the Mudejar aljamas, including that of \textit{imām} or prayer leader.\footnote{Boswell, 1977, 91-92 for the various functions which this charge entailed in fourteenth-century Aragon. One example is al-Raqqī, the copyist of one polemic against the Jews entitled the \textit{Ta’yīd al-Milla} discussed below, or the copyist of various manuscripts, the \textit{imām} and \textit{faqīḥ} of Calatorao. See for the last example Van Koningsveld 1992, 87, referring to MS 40 and MS 27.} The religious leaders of the \textit{aljamas} could also be actively involved in politics and be integrated into the administrative structures of Christian government. Mahoma Sharafi, for example, held the positions of \textit{faqīḥ} and \textit{adelantado} in 1473 CE.\footnote{Wiegers, 2008, 507, following Conte Cazacarro, 1992, 301, 403. See Boswell, 1977, 83 for the various offices held by Faraix de Bellví, a fourteenth-century Mudejar \textit{qādi} of the well-known Bellví family. For the disputes between the Sharafi and Bellvis families for control of the administration of the \textit{aljamas}, see Echevarría Arsuaga 2003a, 2003b.} \textit{Adelantados} were appointed directly by the king of Castile to administer parts of the kingdom in his name. The role of some Mudejar community leaders in both Christian and Mudejar government and the interventionism of Christian authorities in the imposition of penalties established by
Islamic law and in the relations between Mudejars and Jews indicate that the Christians certainly had the final say about the Mudejars, but the *ajamas* still functioned in a semi-autonomous fashion. It is also worth noting that Mudejars, Christians and Jews tended to live near each other in neighbourhoods which had no physical barriers prior to the fifteenth century. In this respect, Molénat refers to the disputes over the occupation of the houses in Toledo, and notes that there was no separated Muslim *morería* in the city, and that, until the fifteenth century, Muslim houses were found among those of the Christians.

However, conditions changed over time and the Mudejars faced increasing restrictions on their personal rights and their *de jure* cultural and religious freedoms. Beginning in Granada in 1499 CE and continuing in the Crown of Castile in 1502 CE and in the northern Crowns of Navarre and Aragon in 1516 CE and 1526 CE, the Mudejars were forced either to convert to Christianity or to emigrate. The new converts who remained in the Christian territories until the edicts of expulsion were known as Moriscos, a term which, as Harvey rightly notes, emerged with the "compulsory conversions in the Kingdom of Granada (1499-1502 CE), but it was in the year 1526 CE that the term became applicable in all lands of the Spanish Crown. The Moriscos often were Christians in name only and adhered to the observance of their Muslim faith in secret. They were later persecuted and finally expelled from the country in 1609-1614 CE. It is therefore inaccurate to set the surrender of Granada to the Catholic Monarchs in 1491 CE, or 1502 CE, when the first forced conversions occurred, as end-dates as some scholars do. Instead, the general consensus is to date the Mudejar period from the Christian conquest of Toledo in 1085 CE by Alfonso VI to the last edict of conversion of the Aragonese Mudejars in 1526 CE.

Eastern and Western Muslim legal scholars (*faqīhs*) disapproved of the Mudejars dwelling outside Islamic territories (*dār al-Islām*). From the surviving legal opinions, or *fatwās*, issued in response to Mudejar questions about whether Muslims were allowed to live under Christian rule, two different approaches can be distinguished: a ‘pragmatic line’ and an ‘uncompromising’ or ‘hard line’. The *fatwās* of the Andalusī legal scholar Ibn Rabī’ (d. 1320 CE) and the North African al-Wansharīṣī (d. in Fez in 1508 CE) are representative of the latter attitude. They stress that it was a Muslim’s duty to flee Spain because, by remaining under Christian jurisdiction, religious contamination would be inevitable.

---

43 On this point, see Nirenberg, 1996, Chapter Six (166-199).
44 However, Toledan Jews had their own neighbourhood. Molénat, 1989, 169.
45 Harvey, 1958, 11.
46 An example is Márquez Villanueva, 2009, 45.
47 Van Koningsveld and Wiegers, 1996, 49.
48 Hendrickson, who has recently studied these *fatwās*, has placed them within the North African context. She does not distinguish between a ‘hard’ and a ‘pragmatic’ line. See, Hendrickson, 2009. Catlos places the views by another Muslim scholar, al-Mahzūnī, within the ‘hard line’. Catlos, 2014, 315.
follows from the understanding that being a good Muslim was subject to the strict adherence to the rules of the *shari‘a* (Islamic law), and that only the subjection of the individual to a Muslim ruler could guarantee compliance with these rules.

Other scholars, among them the twelfth-century Tunisian Mālikī al-Māzari, adopted more pragmatic standpoints. Al-Māzari was quite negative about Muslims travelling to Christian territories for commercial purposes but accepted the soundness of the legal decisions of the Mudejar Sicilian *qādīs*. As Abou El-Fadl states, he distinguished between residence in the Christian lands in general and the individual ethical qualities of the believers.30 The Mālikī jurist al-ʿAbdūsī (d. circa 849 H/1445 CE) also placed authority in the hands of the *qādī* if the community, or *ajama*, itself appointed him.31 Other contemporary *fatwās*, such as those of the Chief Judges of the four Sunnī legal schools (or *madhhabs*) in Cairo around the year 1510 CE, held similar viewpoints with regard to the Mudejars in the Iberian Peninsula. Moreover, there is some evidence that the religious leaders of the Mudejar communities themselves occasionally approved of their living in Christian lands. This is the case of one Mudejar *muftī* quoted by the thirteenth-century Malaga jurist, Ibn Rabil (d. 1320 CE), who relies on prophetic traditions to claim that living in Christian lands was allowed as long as the central duties of Islam, the *ʿibādāt*, could be performed.32 These inter-*madhhab* divergences provide evidence not only of the well-known variations between the schools of jurisprudence, or *fiqh*; they are also an indicator of the complexity of the dilemmas regarding the Mudejars and the intricacy of their exceptional position outside the Islamic jurisdiction of the dār al-Islām. In the eyes of the Muslim jurists, the Mudejars were an exception to the norm and scholars did not develop an independent branch of Islamic law pertaining to minorities (*fiqh al-aqalliyyāt*) to deal with a situation which they considered anomalous and temporary.33 More importantly, the Mudejars’ exceptional status does not seem to have affected their Muslim identities, and their belonging to the transnational community of believers (or *umma*) was never questioned.34 As far as their co-religionists and they themselves were concerned, the Mudejars were Muslims in the full sense of the term.

This dissertation is concerned with the ways in which the members of the Mudejar communities negotiated their religious identities against the background of the multiple

---

30 Abou El-Fadl, 2006, 7-8. See also, Davis-Secord, 2007.
31 Miller, 2008, 56-57.
33 Harvey, 1958, 330.
and at times conflicting loyalties described so far. It focuses on the Mudejar literature of
religious polemics with the Christians and the Jews preserved in codices written in Arabic
and Aljamiado (Romance in Arabic characters). The polemical works of the Mudejars are
not entirely unknown to scholars, as the nineteen-century catalogues of Moritz
Steinschneider and Gustav Leberecht Flügel among others, show. However, for a long time
the focus of research has long been placed either on polemics produced in al-Andalus or on
polemics over an extended period of time. Certainly, at other times, scholars have focused
on the study and edition of a single polemical text. There are some exceptions to this rule,
such as the monograph by Louis Cardaillac about the polemics of the later converts to
Christianity, or the Moriscos from the fall of Granada until the mid-seventeenth century.34
It is very much the question whether the views of Cardaillac on the subject can be still
maintained for two reasons: firstly because of some constraints imposed on scholars by
access to the sources and proper cataloguing of the manuscripts and secondly in the light of
the most recent advances in the field.35 Moreover, some publications have dealt with
polemics written by Mudejars, but as far as I know, no monograph has yet been dedicated
to the Mudejar polemics as a whole.36

The discovery of Mudejar manuscripts in such towns as Hornachos, Ocaña,
Calanda, Serós and Cútar after the demolition of some houses, the majority secreted
between the walls or under a raised floor and in many cases hidden by Moriscos from the
authorities, has been a very important advance in the field. These manuscripts have
brought new insights into the life and culture of the members of these communities and of
their agency in constructing their political and religious affiliations.37 Scholars have shown
an increased interest in incorporating these and other texts in Aljamiado and Arabic into
already existing accounts on the Mudejars mainly based on Christian sources.38

34 Cardaillac, 1977.
35 The following passage from Leonard Patrick Harvey in which he refers to his visits to Spanish libraries
illustrates the difficulties encountered by scholars: “Indeed, the very existence of this collection was brought into
doubt by the authorities in December 1955 when we wished to consult certain mss., although the efforts of the
staff of the library did eventually lead to the rediscovery of these mss.” And “from Saavedra’s description we
would assume that Saa 126 is not a Morisco document, but since it is, at the moment, impossible to consult this
MS, it has been allowed to stand until the doubt can be resolved.” Harvey, 1958, 46-47 and 52.
36 Kassin, 1969. Van Koningsveld and Wiegers rightly note that the production of polemics
in Arabic and
Aljamiado (and, I would say, in Romance more generally) has not yet been determined, Van Koningsveld and
Wiegers, 1994, 196.
38 Such as the proceedings of the Brotherhood of Toledo studied by Echevarría Arsuaga and Mayor; Echevarría
Arsuaga and Mayor, 2010. There are also a number of Christian archives which have not yet been fully studied by
scholars, including those in the Archivo Ducal de Medinacli or in the Archives in Venice (Echevarría Arsuaga,
2008a, 54 and 59). This is the appropriate place to mention the new uses of extant sources such as the use of
pottery or the funerary gifts in cemeteries to date the remnants of the Mudejar population in a territory.
Echevarría Arsuaga, 2008a, 60; Jiménez Gadea, 2002 and 2009, passim.
interest has become even more pressing, especially since the number of documents in
Arabic pertaining to these communities in Castile, Aragon and Valencia appears to be
higher than had hitherto been assumed. This assertion is not only valid for recent findings
but is equally applicable to Aljamiado works thought to have been composed by the
Mudejars and the Moriscos and already in circulation in Arabic and probably composed by
Mudejars. The important contribution to the literature of the Moriscos by the prominent
historian Leonard Patrick Harvey includes works which might have circulated among
Mudejars and whose Arabic originals have yet to be discovered. An example of this is the
work entitled Kitāb Miftāḥ ad-Dīn ['The Key to Religion'] by Muḥammad al-Qaysi, whose
Arabic original has been studied by Van Koningsveld and Wiegers. Previously, we had only
the Aljamiado versions of this work, but evidence shows that an earlier Arabic version had
been in circulation among the Mudejars. On some occasions, Mudejar manuscripts have
been erroneously attributed to the Moriscos. One example of this confusion is two texts
about travellers to the East in which the later translators rendered the Arabic term for
‘Mudejar’ as ‘Morisco’, perhaps with the connotation of Spanish Muslim.

Mudejar Polemics

The study of the extant polemical works written, copied or adapted by the Mudejars either
in Arabic or in Aljamiado is a very suitable instrument through which to provide insight
into the Mudejar identities as Muslims. This is especially so because the Christian
ordinances, the local laws or fueros (local charters, carta-puebla), royal privileges and
inquisitorial reports or prosecutions are of great importance in discovering the
practicalities of ‘being’ a Mudejar and a Morisco, but say very little about the ‘inner’ life of
the members of these minorities.

Above all, it is essential we know which manuscripts form the corpus of the
Mudejars’ polemical literature but the first step is to pose the question of what we mean by
‘religious polemic’. The word has recently been defined by scholars of religion as a virulent

---

40 Harvey, 1958, passim.
41 Van Koningsveld and Wiegers, 1994, passim.
42 Epalza, 1982-1983: 61-63 (Arabic), 103-106 (Spanish).
43 Using Harvey’s expression in his survey of the Morisco literature. Harvey, 1958, 18. In this way, when an author
such as Hinojosa Montalvo discusses the relationships between the Mudejars and the Christians and the Jews, he
underpines his analysis only with the evidence found in Christian records. These accounts are obviously partial
and need to be complemented (and/or refuted) by accounts of these relations by the Mudejars themselves.
(and even violent) written or oral attack against someone else’s arguments or beliefs.\textsuperscript{44} It usually refers to a situation in which there are two or more contenders who hold fairly rigid and/or dogmatic points of view and whose main purpose is to deprecate the opponent.\textsuperscript{45} These ideas are common currency, but recent studies such as that by Jesse Lander note that they have modern roots: ‘polemic’ as a discrete category has emerged as a reaction to the modern ideas of dialogue, discussion and literature; all concepts to which polemics are unequivocally opposed.\textsuperscript{46} Usually scholars have uncritically adopted the existing meaning to address polemics in the Middle Ages but, as the study by Alex Novikoff illustrates, it is very much the question whether contemporary conceptions of polemics are best suited to that end.\textsuperscript{47} This is not only because of the specific and modern origins of the term, but also because the relationship established between violence and polemics by some authors limits the Mudejars’ polemical treatises simply to attacks on their religious opponents\textsuperscript{48} and obscures our appreciation of their role as tools in the self-government of the Mudejars which buttressed the internal cohesion of their communities, and furthered the practice of Islam.

An example of how this corpus might shed light on the performative contexts and the Mudejars’ own understandings of polemics and of Islam is the following argument in one of these treatises. A Mudejar author attempts to refute the claim of the Jews and the Christians that Ibrāhīm (Abraham) was a Jew merely because “he was born in the land of the Jews, that is to say Judea”.\textsuperscript{49} He refutes this by saying that, “not everyone who lives in Toledo is a Jew; in [the city] live Jews, Christians and Muslims” and he adds that, “[i]t is for this reason that someone who lives in Toledo calls himself Toledan and, if there are many, they call themselves Toledans.”\textsuperscript{50} This polemic contains various references to Toledo, which suggests that the city was seen by this author as an exemplary case of a multi-religious society and, moreover, that the claim of religious affiliation on ‘local’ grounds could have had a wider currency in the Christian territories of the Iberian Peninsula. The claims of this Mudejar are part of a larger argument whose purpose is to show that ‘location’ is not a determinant of religious affiliation, and that belief and practice are central to the determination of whether someone is a Christian, a Muslim or a Jew, instead. We shall see below that such a claim was of great importance to the Mudejars in authorizing their residence in Christian lands but, at this point, it is important to note that the reference to

\textsuperscript{44} Klostergaard Petersen, 2015.
\textsuperscript{45} See, for example, ‘polemic’ in Morris, 1969, i,14.
\textsuperscript{46} Lander, 2006.
\textsuperscript{47} Novikoff, 2013, 1-3 and passim.
\textsuperscript{48} An example here is Michel Foucault, Foucault, 1997.
\textsuperscript{49} MS Af 58, f. 41v.
\textsuperscript{50} MS AF 58, f. 41v.
the city of Toledo in which not one, but three religious communities live together shows the use of polemical treatises to negotiate community boundaries and power relations between communities in the Christian territories.

A most significant aspect in this example is that the Mudejar polemicist also cites verses from the Torah to support his claims and, hence, he seems to refer to scriptural evidence and to evidence of the same rhetorical power emerging from the social relations between Christians, Muslims and Jews to convince his audiences. He argues about a well-known topic of religious controversy using non-religious language, a strategy also illustrated in the arguments (probably not unfamiliar to the modern reader) stated in the following passage of this same polemic. “You know”, claims the Mudejar polemicist as he addresses the Christians, “that God’s condemnation of Adam and his wife did not disappear with Yasû’s death”. [This condemnation is made clear in the light of, MCA] the women’s pangs of childbirth and the women's mockeries of their husbands today. It is very much the question whether childbirth and marital relationships are equally successful in explaining the idea of ‘sin’, but, no doubt, these two examples are illustrative of how the polemicist provides an answer to religious claims by stressing the conciliatory role of Jesus in this respect and by locating it as part of a socially embedded rebuttal.

The proximity between the Christian, Muslim and Jewish populations in the Christian territories could be an explanation of the references made by this Mudejar to a reality which he clearly assumes was well known to his religious opponents. Daily contacts could have prompted the vilifications of the Christians, who call the Mudejars ‘dogs’ in the same treatise. The author retorts with arguments based on ritual purity and claims that the Christians, not the Mudejars, are ‘dogs’ because they are the ones “who consume blood, walk around without being circumcised, without being in a state of ritual purity and who eat carrion.” The differences in social status of the three religious communities could also be a mainspring for polemics and the Jews and the Mudejars seem to have kept up a certain degree of competition between each other which can be observed, for example, in conflicts for pre-eminence at public events such as the festivities organized by the Christians.

---

51 The use of Yasû, which is the name for Jesus among Arabized Christians, is remarkable, and might possibly be attributed to the use of sources belonging to or in circulation among Arabized Christians by the author of this polemic. I shall return to this issue below.
52 Ms AF 58, f. 35r.
53 Ms AF 58, f. 60r/v.
54 On these claims, see also Colominas Aparicio, 2014b.
Likewise, the Muslims did not want the members of the Jewish minority communities to exert any control over them, as is illustrated in the Treaty of Granada. Furthermore, the more privileged position of some members within the own community was also a source of conflict. We see this in the attack on the Mudejar alguacil (or the officer of the court) of the Mudejar community of Atajate, in Málaga, who was in charge of collecting taxes for the Crown of Castile at the end of the fifteenth century. He was disparaged by his co-religionists: “disyéndole que hera christiano e que tenía vendidos a los moros” ['saying to him that he was a Christian and that he had sold the moros out', MCA]. The accusation levelled at the Mudejar alguacil of being a Christian and, moreover, of betraying his own community for personal gain is grounded in the high fiscal pressure exerted on the Mudejars after the conquest of the Kingdom of Granada by the Catholic Monarchs.

These examples show that disputes about socio-economic disagreements between Christians, Muslims and Jews were sometimes articulated in religious terms and these polemics were the transformed into mainly religious polemics. They suggest that polemics were not only theologically oriented but also seem to have become expressions of the socio-cultural dynamics between religious communities in the Christian territories of the Iberian Peninsula. This postulation is consistent with recent scholarship which regards disputation and polemic as part of the Christians’ cultural practices in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern periods. In the light of these considerations, hereafter I would like to approach polemics as those oral or written interactions which, with or without verbal violence, oppose the beliefs or the standpoints of an adversary by sound arguments. The interactions in these works are dialectical (namely: they are bi-directional) and can include two or more parties, and can attempt (and eventually, succeed) in convincing either the adversary or the group to which the polemicist belongs. In every case, they function as devices of identity construction of the individuals and groups involved. My ‘definition’ is deliberately broad as it is meant to be a point of departure for the analysis which follows and which will be explained below. Moreover, it will be revised later, if necessary.

---

54 See, for example, the studies carried out by David Nirenberg, Gonzalo Viñuales Ferreiro and Jaume Riera i Sans. Nirenberg, 1993, Riera i Sans, 2003, Viñuales Ferreiro, 2009.
55 See above.
57 There were other internal dissensions among the members of the Mudejar aljamas such as that of the faqih Mahomat Alhaig. Ferrer i Mallol, 2001-2002. In the later period, some Granadan faqīhs converted; see, Galán Sánchez, 2008. For the conflicts and episodes of violence within the aljamas because of patronage networks with the Christians and tax exemptions granted some Mudejar and families in the fifteenth century, see Ortego Rico, 2015.
Scholarship on the Mudejars and their Literature

Since the nineteen seventies, a large and growing body of literature has investigated daily life in the Mudejar aljamas, and since then scholarship on the Mudejars has evolved into a well-established field of research. This is in part thanks to the numerous publications on the subject (by far the most numerous in Spanish, French and Portuguese), and to the scholarly efforts which have led to valuable comprehensive surveys of the Mudejar communities. Nonetheless, this has been carried out more consistently in some areas such as Aragon or Valencia. Together these studies have provided important insights into such issues as, for example, geographical location, prosopography and the organization of the Mudejar communities and of their urban spaces (morerías) during the gradual expansion of the Christian kingdoms; the scope of the duties and responsibilities of the religious and judicial institutions of the aljamas, as well as the various occupations of Mudejar individuals; the changes in the Christian legislation on their communities and on the taxation rates; the Mudejars’ hierarchies; their influences in the field of arts; their daily contacts with the Christians and the Jews; and their Islamic practices, including their pilgrimages to Mecca.\(^59\) To all this can be added the valuable initiatives made by various institutions, Internet portals and web resources. For example, the Centro de Estudios Mudéjares, the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, the web Alhadith developed at Stanford University by Vincent Barletta, the web of the ‘Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes’ or blogs such as that of David A. Wacks.

Over the last ten years, publications on the Mudejars have dealt with three major areas of interest to students of Islam: a) the functioning of the aljamas as social bodies; b) the transmission of knowledge, more particularly Islamic knowledge, within these communities; and c) the relations between Muslims, Christians and Jews.\(^60\) One of the most significant changes has been not so much the topics covered, but the approaches and theoretical tools used which have produced some instances of co-operation between various fields of research (such as Medievalism, Arabism, Religious Studies, Linguistics, Hispanic Studies, and others).\(^61\) Greater insight into the religious beliefs and practices of the members of the Mudejar minority communities has been possible mainly thanks to the new evidence provided by the study of their material culture (in particular, the archaeological excavations in mosques and cemeteries) and of Mudejar manuscripts. These studies have provided evidence about the practice of Islam and the use of Arabic in Castile.

\(^59\) See the most recent publication about the pilgrimage, or ṭhrīḥ, to Mecca by a Mudejar from Ávila (Castile), Omar Patún, between 1491-1495 in Casassas Canals, 2015.
\(^60\) This division is taken from Colominas Aparicio and Wiegers, 4-5, 2016 (in press).
\(^61\) For example, Echevarría Arsuaga, 2013; Robinson and Rouhi, 2005; Feliciano and Rouhi, 2006.
until the end of the fifteenth-century and early sixteenth century. Questions about Mudejars in Castile, but also about Aragon, have become closely integrated with the Mudejar elite, more specifically with the Mudejar legal scholars *faqīhs*, who seem to have played an important role in the composition, copying and transmission of legal and religious treatises within their communities. The survey of a corpus of Arabic and Aljamiado primary sources from fifteenth-century Aragon by Kathryn Miller shows the various ways in which these scholars gave their co-religionists advice on legal and religious matters; how they created and maintained contacts with other Muslims both inside and outside the Christian territories of the Iberian Peninsula; and how they preserved and transmitted Islamic knowledge. Moreover, the various activities of these scholars, working as they did on the periphery of the main Muslim centres of their time, provides evidence of their strategies to secure religious authority through the exercise of individual agency, social networking, teaching, preaching and polemicizing. These scholars kept close contacts both with each other and with the centres of learning in contemporary majority Muslim lands in order to preserve the Islamic practices of their co-religionists. Serving the same purpose, they wrote, copied and transmitted legal and religious treatises. The studies by Van Koningsveld have indeed shown that the religious leaders of Mudejar communities constituted the most important milieu for the dissemination of Islamic texts. All this seems to indicate the need to revise current assumptions about the marginality and ‘minority’ status of the Mudejars. The Mudejars are no longer viewed as a ‘deviation’ from an ‘orthodox’ Islam which needs to be addressed by comparison to – and always at a disadvantage to – Islamic beliefs and practices in majority Muslim lands; their groups have begun to be seen for what they are, namely: Muslims, whose communities are valuable studied by themselves. This is in line with understandings that ethnic and religious minorities are not only directly affected by majority policies, but that those communities have an impact on the identity of the majority society as well, a perspective which could

---

63 Miller, 2008, *passim*.
64 See, for example, Wiegens, 1994; Jones, 2007; Miller, 2008; Echevarría Arsuaga and Mayor, 2010. From Jones, see also Jones, 2012, in which this author deals with Medieval Muslim sermons, including Mudejar sermons and their use to construct and contest identities at the time. Also interesting, but for a later period, is Vincent Barletta’s monograph on the Moriscos’ literary practices. Barletta, 2005. Some new areas about these communities have also attracted the interest of scholars, including the role of some individuals as cultural brokers and diplomats at court or the role of Mudejar women working as physicians. See for an exhaustive overview of these topics and the appended bibliography in: Hinojosa Montalvo, 2007; Ladero Quesada, 2013, and in the same volume Lopes de Barros, 2007, and Epulza and Gafsi-Slama, 2007; see also Molénat, 2014. Echevarría Arsuaga, 2001-2002 and the edited volume by this scholar, 2008b, and Colominas Aparicio and Wiegens, 2006 (in press).
serve to reconstruct the past of the religious minorities of Europe to gain a greater understanding of its relations to the Islamic world in past and present times.67

Main Questions and Chapter Overview

The present dissertation builds on recent scholarship and addresses the Mudejar religious polemics in terms of their contribution to identity discourses. The available sources and historical data about the Mudejars are approached in an interdisciplinary way which combines insights from Social Identity Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis. This departs from the conviction that language is a major mechanism in the process of social construction and that the language in the polemics echoes the discourse dynamics of Mudejar minority communities. In particular, I focus on the Mudejars’ reliance on the Arabic corpus and on change in their polemical arguments, and I stress the contextuality of their works. This is in line with the views of Norman Fairclough that changes in discourse (and, hence, in language) and social changes are dialectically interrelated and that discourse figures in social practices “in the constitution of identities”.68 I am therefore inclined to follow Nirenberg, who argues for this period that,

any inherited discourse about minorities [read here: about polemics, MCA] acquired force only when people chose to find it meaningful and useful, and was itself reshaped by these choices. Briefly, discourse and agency gain meaning only in relation to each other. [...] Thus when medieval people made statements about the consequences of religious difference, they were making claims, not expressing accomplished reality, and these claims were subject to barter and negotiation before they could achieve real force in any given situation.69

67 This is an endeavor perhaps more pressing now owing to the large flow of refugees with a Muslim background in recent months of this year 2015. This flow which has led some member states to build physical barriers to prevent the entry of refugees into their territories. In one of his recent articles, Jean-Pierre Molénat notes in this respect that “[l]e fait que nos sociétés européennes, y compris celles traditionnellement productrices d’émigrants, se trouvent maintenant, du fait de la pression croissante d’une immigration issue du Tiers-Monde, et principalement de pays arabes et musulmanes, face à des minorités partiellement comparables à celles que furent les mudéjars, ne pouvaient manquer de provoquer l’intérêt envers ces derniers.” [“the fact that our European societies, including those which traditionally produced emigrants, are now, on account of the increasing pressure of immigration from the Third World mainly from Arab and Muslim countries, dealing with minorities partially comparable to those of the Mudejars, cannot but provoke interest in them.”] Molénat, 2014, 42.

68 Fairclough, 2003, 206 and passim.

When it is applied to the study of religion, Nirenberg's approach comes close to the views of Islam of Talal Asad who sees it as a ‘tradition’, especially as a ‘discursive tradition’. Heavily indebted to Foucault, ‘tradition’ Asad’s view is essentially composed of discourses that seek to instruct practitioners regarding the correct form and purpose of a given practice that, precisely because it is established, has a history. These discourses relate conceptually to a past (when the practice was instituted, and from which knowledge its proper performance has been transmitted) and a future (how that practice can best be secured in the short or long term, or why it should be modified or abandoned), through a present (how it is linked to other practices, institutions, and social conditions).\(^7\)

Accordingly, Islam can be studied as a “tradition of Muslim discourse that addresses itself to conceptions of the Islamic past and future, with reference to a particular Islamic practice in the present.” Or, in other words, Islam rests upon a set of statements which are constitutive of the reality and grounded in practice.\(^7\) Consequently, it follows that I should look at how existing discourses were activated and, hence, changed in different ways and under different conditions. I am particularly interested in questions about identity in the face of the constraints resulting from the Mudejars’ subjection to the Christians and their competition with the Jews in the economic and social spheres. These questions include looking at what polemics – their language, audience, transmission and consumption – tell us about the mechanisms by which the Mudejars established and negotiated their intergroup relationships with the members of the other two religious communities. My purpose is to understand how frameworks of religious authority enshrined in treatises of religious polemics helped the Mudejar leaders to secure the governance of the aljamas in religious matters and to authorize residence of the Mudejars outside the Muslim lands. In other words, I want to determine the contribution of the literary corpus of religious polemics to Mudejar Islam.

The principal question which runs like a scarlet thread through this dissertation is: in their religious polemics how did Mudejar authors articulate ideas of identity and religious authority (1) in relation to the Christians and the Jews and (2) in their own communities? In order to provide answers to these questions, I address a number of sub-questions: among them which manuscripts form the corpus of the Mudejars’ polemical literature and what place do these writings hold within the Islamic tradition in general, and the traditions in al-Andalus and the Maghreb in particular? Furthermore, what do these

---

\(^7\) Asad, 1986, 14.
\(^7\) Asad, 1986, 14 and 8.
works tell us about identity and religious authority, in particular the authority of the religious leaders of the Mudejars, and their approaches to Islam?

The chapters are designed to inquire into these issues. In Chapter One, I provide the background necessary to the discussion of religious authority and identity in the treatises of polemics of the Mudejars. I briefly address three contexts of religious authority and identity in the works of religious polemics of the Mudejars, namely: their understandings of Islamic law, or shariʿa; the relationships of the Mudejars with the Christians and the Jews; and the practice of religious polemics within the Mudejar aljamāṣ. In Chapter Two, I discuss the meaning of ‘religious polemics’. Following the scholarship of Lander and Novikoff, I talk about the modern roots of the terms and the main shortcomings revealed in current approaches to the study of religious polemics in the medieval period. Next, I delineate the theoretical framework and methods used in the analysis of the Mudejar corpus of treatises of religious polemics. In Chapter Three, I identify the polemical manuscripts of the Mudejars, and discuss what research has been carried out in the field to date. As noted above, the polemical literature of the Mudejars is a relatively unexplored field and codicological analysis will help to determine which polemical manuscripts circulated among or were composed by the Mudejars. As is the case of some Mudejar Aljamiado polemics, polemics could be versified and poetry could also turn polemical. Moreover, narratives with non-explicit polemical aims could challenge the religious views

---

72 The important survey of Morisco literature by Harvey has shown that there is some continuity between this literature and that produced in the previous period. Harvey, 1958, 329–332.

73 We shall see that some Aljamiado adaptations of Mudejar polemics provide religious narratives in verse form, too, something not uncommon at the time. In other parts of the Muslim world, non-poets, for example, the oriental author Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328 CE) wrote a poem in which he disputes the topic of predestination. Holtzman, 2012.

A later Morisco example is a versified sermon on the Islamic lunar calendar with polemical tones written in Romance in Latin characters in the sixteenth or seventeenth century kept in the Biblioteca de Catalunya, MS 1574/al, in which we read on f. 16v: “A defender la unidad/cada qual esta obligado/si en esto esta descuidado/falto es de fe y caridad/Alla es la suma bondad/solo señor soberano/y con la espada en la mano/se defienda esta verdad” [‘Everyone is obliged to defend the Unity, if he be remiss in this, he is devoid of faith and charity. Allāh is the highest good, the only sovereign God, and this truth has to be defended with sword in hand’]. Very interesting, is the “Degüella” in this manuscript, in which Ismāʿīl is referred to constantly but Sara (sic) is referred to as his mother, a mistake which the copyist tries to emend by changing “e Sara” to “hechara”. So we read on f. 11r: “y del monte descendio/yba para su posada/hechara muy congojada/a recebirlos salio//porque nunca habia podido/sosegar todo este dia/de cuydado que tenia/de su hijo y su marido//” [and (Abraham) came down from the mountain/he went to his inn/and Sara very distressed/came out to greet them// because she had never been able to/ be at peace whole day/for the care she had/ for her son (sic) and husband//]. Some scriptural errors such as a verse left in a strophe on f. 11v suggest that this is probably a copy of an older work. On f. 24v we find some notes in Arabic and in Latin we read “de como el rey don sancho” (about how King Don Sancho (1258-1295 CE)), an annotation which also indicates a compilation of earlier works. In 2/2010, Juan Carlos Villaverde Amieva notes that Juan Carlos Busto Cortina was working on an edition of these poems – I do not know if it has already been published. Villaverde Amieva, 2/2010, 115. For the Arabic collection in this library and in other institutions in Catalunya, see Giralt, 2/2032. For an overview of Morisco manuscripts containing Islamic calendars and, particularly, that of the Morisco known as Mancebo de Arévalo, see Bernabé Pons, 1999-2/2032.
of the Christians and the Jews. However, I am primarily concerned with treatises specifically designed to refute the religious principles of an opponent or, in other words, treatises in which there is an implicit or explicit interaction between two or more parties. A narrative such as the *Historia de Buluqiyyā* ['The Story of Buluqiyyā'] recently studied by Luce López-Baralt,\(^4\) which is one of the narratives of the *Qīṣāṣ al-anbiyā* ['Stories of the Prophets'], is addressed only on a secondary level since in the *Buluqiyyā* polemics only operate in the background to a fantastical story which tells of the travels of the son of the ruler of Israel. Among his father's belongings he discovers some fragments of the Torah which reveal the prophecy of Muḥammad. The same applies to other narratives including the *Leyenda de Ibrāhim* ['The Legend of Ibrāhim'] and some prophetic writings. On account of the same considerations and for reasons which will be given in due time, I include the conversion narrative of the "demandas de los judíos" in my analysis. The examination of the polemical corpus is used to address the production and consumption of this kind of works by the Mudejars and to construct some hypotheses about who the authors of the treatises of religious polemics under study were.

In Chapter Four, I present an overview of the Muslim polemical literature known to us, both from the Muslim territories and from Christian Iberia. I address polemics in al-Andalus, in the Western and Oriental parts of the Muslim world (known as the Maghreb and the Mashriq, respectively) and in Christian Iberia. I attempt to determine the place of the corpus under study within this tradition, and to disclose the particular characteristics of the polemical treatises of the Mudejars. I pay particular attention to the uses of Muslim arguments against the Christians and the Jews largely produced in Muslim lands during the Middle Ages and to the question of how the Mudejars infused traditional arguments with new forms and meanings by drawing on the contemporary discourses of the Christians and the Jews against Islam and against each other, in the particular socio-historical context in the Christian territories.

In Chapter Five, I focus on religious authority and identity in the Mudejar religious polemics against the Jews and on the possible concomitance between the Mudejars' discourses against this minority and the Christian proselytism and/or restrictive policies imposed on both Mudejars and Jews. To this end, I have placed most emphasis on the production and consumption by Mudejars, namely: the discursive practices in polemical works. I do this by raising such questions as: were the Mudejars' anti-Jewish discourses boosted by the growing anti-Judaism among the Christians which reached its peak in the Later Middle Ages and Early Modern period? Or, instead can their arguments be most readily explained by recourse to Muslim discourses about the Jews? In Chapter Six, I

address religious authority and identity, this time in the Mudejars' discourses against the Christians, and against other Muslims. I argue that philosophy figures prominently in the Mudejars' polemical discourses directed towards the Christians and, the fact, that its use in the inquiry into religious topics was controversial among Muslims. In this chapter, I also look at how the Mudejars dealt with the contemporary internal disputes about philosophy as an authoritative source in Islam and a tool in religious polemics. In the last chapter, Chapter Seven, I re-examine the entire thesis and look at Mudejar Islam as a discursive tradition. From this perspective, I investigate the main mechanisms of identity construction used by Mudejar authors of religious polemics in their refutations of the claims of the Christians and the Jews. I also look at ideas of government and minority in the Mudejar aljamas and at the adherence of the Mudejars to the normative views of the centres of Muslim knowledge at their time.

Chronologically, I focus on the Later Middle Ages and geographically on the Crowns of Aragon and Castile because a large number of polemical treatises are dated in this period and to these regions. Although a full edition of the manuscripts is not given, I provide the reader with a transcription and translation of several important passages in order to illustrate my arguments. I made this choice because, even though I deal with a modest number of polemical manuscripts written by the Mudejars, their comprehension, both on the level of language and of content, is challenging. Moreover, my main concern is not the texts themselves but rather the articulation of discourses in these treatises. On the other hand, I do provide a detailed codicological description of the Kitāb al-Mujādala maʿa-l-Yahūd wa-n-Nasārā [‘The Book called Disputation with the Jews and the Christians’] in MS AF 58, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna; and, in the Annex, I give a transcription and Spanish translation of the Aljamiado version of the Mudejar polemic against the Jews of the Taʿyid al-Milla [‘The Fortification of the Faith, or Community’], in MS BNE 4944, Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid and of the beginning of the Aljamiado version of the Taʿyid in MS L 536, Fondo Documental Histórico de las Cortes de Aragón, Zaragoza. In closing, I have to say that, because of the historical consideration that Spain as a body politic was a reality in the making in the period under study, and, moreover, different languages were spoken in the Peninsular territories, I have avoided the term Spanish and I refer to individuals and languages as Castilian, Navarro-Aragonese, et cetera, and to Romance in case of doubt about the language.