



Cándida Ferrero Hernández,
 Linda G. Jones (eds.)

Propaganda and (un)covered identities in treatises and sermons: Christians, Jews, and Muslims in the premodern Mediterranean

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Introduction

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This book presents some of the findings of the 5th Islamolatina Seminar, which was held at the Pompeu Fabra University and the Autonomous University of Barcelona on 18 and 19 October 2018 and was titled “(Dis)covering identities-(Des)velando identidades.” The seminar was part of a project called “Medieval and modern sources for the study of transcultural relations in the Mediterranean: Writing and transmission,” which in turn was made up of two subprojects: “Medieval and modern sources for the study of transcultural relations in the Mediterranean: Writing and transmission” and “Interdisciplinary and comparative studies on (trans)cultural, religious identities and gender in the Iberian Peninsula and the medieval and modern Mediterranean.” This book is one in a series that also includes the published proceedings of the 1st Islamolatina Seminar, *Musulmanes y cristianos en Hispania durante las conquistas de los siglos XII y XIII* (J. Martínez Gázquez and M. Barceló, eds.; Bellaterra: UAB, 2005), the 2nd Seminar, *Ritus Infidelium* (J. Martínez Gázquez and J. V. Tolan, eds.; Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2013), the 3rd Seminar, *Vitae Mahometi* (C. Ferrero Hernández and Ó. de la Cruz Palma, eds.; Madrid: Col. Nueva Roma CSIC, 2014), and the 4th Seminar, *Representación y controversia en el mundo ortodoxo y latino* (*Medievalia* 29, no. 2, 2016).

The present volume offers a selection of the revised papers on premodern authors and their works—written in Latin, Castilian, Catalan, Arabic, and Turkish—that reflect some aspects of our team’s research on Christians, Jews, and Muslims in the Mediterranean, such as self-representation and the perception of the (political, cultural, and religious) other, as well as the interaction between these religious groups. They offer critical re-readings of many works that are obscure or have not yet been studied. The volume addresses not only the issue of the construction of identities—that is, the construction of the identity of the other and the religious self—but also the propaganda strategies rooted in the intellectual background of each source. This supposition is the basis for the overall argument of this book, which gives it cohesion in spite of the different research interests of the multidisciplinary team. Thus we are able to provide a broad-based inquiry that looks at anti-Islamic polemics (Martínez Gázquez, González Muñoz, Justicia Lara, Biosca i Bas, Coronel Ramos, Di Cesare), the Christian perception of Jews and converts (Catalán, Gómez Llauger, Biosca i Bas, Arsić), the use of the sermon and the disputation as tools of conversion (Biosca i Bas, Catalán, Coronel Ramos, Jones, Felek), exegesis, in the broadest sense (Martínez Gázquez, Di Cesare, Gómez Llauger, Biosca i Bas, Jones, Felek), and Christian rhetoric as legitimizing polemic (Biosca i Bas, Catalán, Coronel Ramos, Gómez Llauger). We also provide editions of some manuscripts and critical analyses of sources (Martínez Gázquez, González Muñoz, Justicia Lara,

Biosca i Bas, Arsić, Di Cesare), and offer new perspectives on the study of gender (Jones, Felek, Arsić). Taken together, all the chapters aim to offer a view of the agents of propaganda involved in unifying religious, cultural, and political groups in the premodern era. They have been organized into four sections according to their methodology and their contents.

The first section, “Uncovering new readings of the *Corpus Islamolatinum*,” includes three chapters with a common focus on the study of the Latin manuscripts that transmitted the first translation of the Qurʾān and other texts from the Islamic tradition, which Peter the Venerable (1142) commissioned and constituted the first “encyclopedia” of Islam. The chapters by Martínez Gázquez, González Muñoz, and Justicia Lara each approach this corpus in a different way, but they all show the important role this “encyclopedia” played in spreading knowledge about Islam among European intellectual circles and in contributing to the creation of propaganda and polemics against Islam. In this section, Martínez Gázquez analyses Nicholas of Cusa’s readings of two different manuscripts of the *Alkoranus Latinus*, Kues 108 and BAV Vat. Lat. 4071, where he left his mark in the form of autograph glosses. These manuscripts are thus a magnificent example of the activity of writing and rewriting, since the glosses are witnesses to the process of composing the works in which Nicholas of Cusa expressed his perceptions of Islam. These works are the *De pace fidei* and the *Cribratio Alkorani*, which in turn left a deep impression on later Christian readers.

González Muñoz describes and analyzes the contents of MS Beinecke 979, at Yale University, which contains a large arsenal of works, whose reading (and transmission) reflects a need to understand religious “errors” that persisted over time. MS Beinecke 979, which contains a varied collection of texts by different authors, constitutes a “summa” that was possibly assembled during preparations for the Council of Basel. In particular, it contains excerpts from the Qurʾān, which González Muñoz compares to other manuscripts that contain the *Corpus Islamolatinum*, and of which he provides a transcription.

Whereas the two previous chapters focus on the reception of the *Corpus Islamolatinum* in the fifteenth century, Justicia Lara’s chapter takes a close look at the use of the *Corpus* in the fourteenth century, in the *Itinerarium*, which has come down to us in only one manuscript (MS Corpus Christi College 407). This work was written by the Irish Franciscan Symon Semeonis, and in it he describes his encounter with Islam in Egypt, using the tools offered him by fragments of the Qurʾān and the *Doctrina Mahumet* to articulate his anti-Islamic polemic. Of particular interest is the way he assimilates culture to religion.

The second section, “Uncovering polemical identities,” has two chapters that—though focusing on different topics, Muḥammad and Pedro de la Cavalleria—coincide in that they both make use of the philological and comparatist method for reading texts. In her study of the life (or lives) of Muḥammad, Di Cesare begins with the reading of the twelfth-century Christian authors Guibert of Nogent and Embrico

of Mainz, whom previous scholars have understood as providing misinformed interpretations of Islam by virtue of the literary techniques used to discredit Muḥammad by portraying him as a counterpoint to the figure of Jesus. However, Di Cesare ultimately shows that some of the motifs in these medieval Latin biographies of the Prophet regarding his death, his tomb, and his relics do not reflect a calculated polemical strategy but rather have their origin in Arab legends. This suggests that the life of Muḥammad is a hermeneutic space that allows Islam to be reinterpreted and understood on the basis of overlapping narratives that would be transmitted to Christendom through crusaders.

The second chapter in this section uncovers some of the features of the identity of the author of the *Zelus Christi*, Pedro de la Cavalleria, in whose work there is a suggestive return to exegesis on the Psalms and the epistles of Saint Paul as a discursive strategy. Gómez Llauger suggests that this recurring reference to Paul's letters allows us to read the *Zelus Christi* in the light of Pauline Humanism, which first appears in the Iberian Peninsula in the fifteenth century, mainly among *converso* circles. Among the most eminent representatives of these circles were different members of the Santa María family, who were in turn related to the Cavallerias. This study therefore constitutes a step toward identifying Pedro de la Cavalleria as an important author for the analysis of works by *converso* writers and for the study of self-representation through hermeneutical exegesis.

The third section, “Uncovering Christian propaganda,” includes three chapters containing complementary perspectives, all of which provide insight into the polemical propaganda that was disseminated through sermons and disputations. These disputations and sermons have a long history, but starting in the twelfth century the hermeneutics of *Disputatio* and *Praedicatio* were broadly developed, with various ramifications, resulting in an effective propaganda weapon whose objective was conversion, either through persuasion or sometimes, through compulsion. In the Iberian Peninsula there are abundant examples of these kinds of texts, whose emphasis varies according to historical and political circumstances and according to the target of the propaganda—whether Christian, Muslim, or Jew—although the rhetorical argumentation displays important similarities and draws upon a common canon.

Biosca i Bas introduces us to the culture of the disputation—whether real or fictitious—in the Iberian Peninsula through *La Disputa del bisbe de Jaén contra los jueus* (according to the version found in MS University Library of Barcelona, 75, fifteenth century), a work attributed to the Mercedarian Pere Pasqual (thirteenth century). He provides a study and an edition of the fragments from the work that attack Muḥammad and Muslim beliefs, which are found in chapters 48 and 49. He argues that the author uses unoriginal rhetoric in his arguments, given that he is drawing from existing works against Islam in the Christian tradition. For example, his insertion of two chapters concerning Muslims into a dispute against the Jews recalls a strategy used by Pedro Alfonso. However, Biosca i Bas compellingly points to Ramon Martí's *De seta Machometi* as the closest source, though some direct influence from an Arabic source can also be seen in the interpretations of the Arabic.

Just as Biosca i Bas detects anti-Islamic arguments in Pere Pasqual's attack on Judaism, in his chapter Catalán detects the use of anti-Jewish and anti-Islamic arguments in a rebuke addressed to bad sinful Christians. This reinforces the common and widespread use of the prescriptive moral standard Christian identity, which Christian propaganda disseminates through treatises and sermons. Exploring texts from the patristic tradition, especially Augustine, Catalán traces the development of this propaganda through texts by Dominicans, especially Thomas of Aquinas, Vicente Ferrer, Savonarola, and Ramon Martí, among others, and Franciscans such as Bernardino da Siena, who—basing their arguments on earlier authors, such as Raoul Ardent, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Peter the Venerable—set about establishing moral guidelines to lead those who stray back toward Christian orthodoxy. Through the use of *exempla*, this work makes visible the qualification of *Vitia* and *Virtutes*, a rhetorical device that flourished in the thirteenth century in the works of the Dominicans and Franciscans and that offers a model consistent with suppositions about the unification of all Christians in one body, previous to conversion.

These same suppositions also characterize Bernardo Pérez de Chinchón's works *Antialcorano* and *Diálogos Christianos*, in which he attempts to offer a "solution" to the conversion of the Moriscos in Valencia in the sixteenth century. These works were written in the midst of the maelstrom over whether to attempt side-by-side coexistence with the Moriscos or to force this stubborn minority to convert and to assimilate once and for all. After the conquest of Granada (1492), the obsession with the complete eradication of Islam in Iberia led the Church to sponsor numerous works that would be used to train Christian preachers so that they could spread their teachings, in turn, among Mudejars and Moriscos. Bernardo Pérez de Chinchón's works were written in this context, but they also reflect the influence of Erasmianism as well as Pérez de Chinchón's interaction with the humanist Luis Vives (the intertextuality between the works of the two men is striking). According to Coronel Ramos, Bernardo Pérez de Chinchón introduces an interesting twist that distinguishes him from other, almost contemporary authors, which is his careful attempt to use rhetorical arguments inherited from the classical tradition. That said, it should be noted that, in the sermons he inserted into the *Antialcorano* in particular, he uses the same kind of polemical argumentation as do other authors. The *Diálogos Christianos*, on the other hand, present an interesting encounter between a Christian and a Morisco who is his former teacher in a space that recalls the literary topos of the *locus amoenus*, which is also characteristic of some of Ramon Llull's works, such as the *Diálogo del Gentil y los Tres Sabios*. This rhetorical space was thus divorced from the reality in which the Moriscos lived.

The fourth section, "Uncovering gender identities," includes three chapters that take the novel approach of looking at the construction of gender, which can be (un)covered through a reading of the chapters by Arsić, Jones, and Felek. First, Arsić takes a snapshot of passages from Inquisition records in MS ACA, Cancellaria, reg. 3684, written by the notary and humanist Pere Miquel Carbonell. These are records of trials of female Jewish converts, in which it is possible to uncover, through Ar-

sić's reading and interpretation, the role played by women converts in preserving Jewish traditions despite the surveillance of the Christian authorities. Arsić demonstrates this through the examples of three sisters who were tried in 1496 by the recently established Inquisitorial court in Barcelona. All three confessed that their mother had played a key role in the observance of holidays and in food preparation according to Jewish precepts. It is remarkable how detailed the inquisitorial records were regarding food; moreover, the purchase and preparation of food was handled by women. In this way, we are able to glimpse, in these and other examples, the role of mothers, who act as teachers and mediators of tradition, within the domestic sphere. However, their function also transcends the private sphere when cultural activities are scrutinized as religious manifestations. Thus, their culpability is clear, in that they instigate and disseminate the traditions of Judaism; they are accused of a double crime: being Judaizers themselves and educating their children in the tradition and inciting them to Judaize.

For their part, Jones and Felek both address the construction of the gender of Muslim women through the study of different documents in which it is possible to glimpse their role as subject(s) and as object(s) of preaching. Jones's broad, introductory study situates the issue of the role of women within the different currents of the Islamic religion. Thus, different roles can be perceived: holy women, women preachers, and women as the recipients of the preaching of religious men. Despite the fact that the biographical dictionaries (*ṭabaqāt* or *tarājim*) of the Muslim world contain only brief notes and stereotyped information about women, it is possible to glean interesting information about the perception of gender. Moreover, from her reading of historiographical sources, Jones demonstrates the existence of women preachers such as the Andalusian Rashīda "al-Wā'iza", who travelled throughout al-Andalus and achieved great fame, according to the Valencian historian Ibn al-'Abbār. This situation does not seem to be merely anecdotal but rather reflects a reality that was concealed through censorship by the Islamic authorities, since female preaching was generally proscribed by Islamic law and tradition, apart from the occasional case of preaching to other women. A broader study of the prosopographic and hagiographic literature could reveal additional information about women preachers. A greater amount of information can be gleaned from sermons, through which we perceive the function assigned to women, a clear example of the propaganda that sought to guide daily life along the right path in accordance with religious precepts.

Using a similar methodological approach, Felek analyzes the treatise *Tarīkatü'l-Muhammediyye*, written in Arabic by Birgivī (1573) and later translated into Turkish. This work enjoyed immense popularity, as is clear from the more than one thousand copies that exist in Middle Eastern and European libraries. This long treatise—a manual for preachers—includes a section on precepts for husbands and wives. One of the most striking things about this section is the list of the wife's obligations to her husband, compared to the relatively small number of the husband's obligations. The authority of the latter is based on appeals to proverbs and tales, despite the fact that contemporary scholars criticized this method, which was in-

consistent with Islamic jurisprudence. This shows that sermons were sometimes left up to the preacher's judgement. Felek also calls attention to the constant reference to women in this treatise as wives who needed protection, rather than as part of the social body. This contrasts with the message of the Sufi preacher 'Azīz Maḥmūd Hūdāyī, who was a contemporary of Birgivī but who made no gender distinctions in his sermons. What Felek shows is the multiplicity that existed with respect to the treatment of women and the gender distinctions made by different preachers, whether Sufi or non-Sufi. These different traditions and views of women influenced the construction of female Muslim identity.

Finally, we would like to thank not only all the scholars whose chapters make up this book for their valuable contributions but also all those who participated by attending the 5th Islamolatina Seminar, "(Dis)covering identities." The publication of this book was kindly supported by the AGAUR – Islamolatina research project 2017 SGR 0187 (GRC), led by Cándida Ferrero Hernandez at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.