Convivencia Contested
Papal and Monastic Influence on Castilian Royal Policy toward Religious Minorities

Kate Randazzo

Honors Thesis Submitted to the
Department of History, Georgetown University
Advisor: Professor Jonathan Ray
Honors Program Chair: Professor Amy Leonard

8 May 2017
# Contents

Acknowledgments ............................................................................................................. 3
Introduction ......................................................................................................................... 4
Chapter I: The Papacy ........................................................................................................ 16
   The Reform of the Mozarabic Liturgy ........................................................................... 17
   The Struggle over Jewish and Muslim Tithing ............................................................... 22
   Implementing the Fourth Lateran Council in Castile .................................................... 26
Chapter II: The Crusading Ideal ....................................................................................... 37
   The Castilian Kings ....................................................................................................... 42
   The Papacy .................................................................................................................. 45
   Foreign Crusaders ...................................................................................................... 48
   The Influence of Crusade Ideology in Iberia ................................................................. 55
Chapter III: The Monastics ............................................................................................. 57
   Cluniacs ....................................................................................................................... 59
   Dominicans and Franciscans ....................................................................................... 66
Conclusion ......................................................................................................................... 75
Bibliography ..................................................................................................................... 79
Appendix ............................................................................................................................ 82
Acknowledgments

Thank you to everyone who helped me through the process of writing this thesis, especially: Professor Astarita, who explained the concept of an honors thesis to me and convinced me to write one; Professor Leonard, for her guidance and insightful feedback; Sylvia Mullins, for her excellent Latin translations; and the other members of the history honors seminar, whose comments helped me work through some of the roughest patches of this project, and whose brilliant work inspired me by example. Most of all, thank you to Professor Ray, whose class “Judaism under Crescent and Cross” sparked my interest in *convivencia* in medieval Spain, and who challenged me to make this thesis the best it could be.
Introduction

In eleventh-century Iberia, a gradual but significant shift occurred in the power relations between the Muslim territory of al-Andalus and the Christian kingdoms to the north. Since the invasion of 711, Muslims had been politically ascendent in Iberia: the Umayyad dynasty, an offshoot of the former ruling family of the Muslim East, controlled the majority of the peninsula, and established a caliphate that rivaled the Abbasids in Baghdad. Meanwhile, the small, mountainous Christian kingdoms of Asturias-Leon, Navarre, Castile, and Aragon maintained a precarious independence, despite frequent Muslim raids. However, three centuries of Muslim dominance came to an end in 1031 when the Umayyad caliphate collapsed, fragmenting into a multitude of unstable city-states, or taifas.

Even as al-Andalus fell into disunity, the Christian kingdoms of northern Iberia were engaged in a process of consolidation. Sancho III of Navarre (r. 994-1035) spent the first decades of the eleventh century uniting his own kingdom with Asturias-Leon, Aragon, and Castile, using military alliances, political marriages, and cultural patronage to forge a common Christian identity. Although Sancho’s realm splintered again after his death, his grandson Alfonso VI (r. 1065-1109) would reconsolidate the kingdom of Castile-Leon. Alfonso’s conquest of the Muslim city-state of Toledo in 1085 was a turning point in medieval Iberian history, marking the beginning of nearly two centuries of Christian territorial expansion that later historians would term the Reconquest. While the Christian kingdoms would suffer numerous setbacks in the form of political

---

1 This thesis deals primarily with the culture and politics of medieval Christian Iberia. For a thorough account of the political history of Muslim Iberia, see Hugh Kennedy, *Muslim Spain and Portugal: A Political History of al-Andalus* (London: Longman, 1996).
2 Kennedy, *Muslim Spain and Portugal* 54-59.
3 Kennedy, *Muslim Spain and Portugal* 124-129.
5 Dodds, *The Arts of Intimacy* 33.
division and military defeats, the overall trend of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries would be one of increasing Christian political and cultural power in the Iberian Peninsula. In particular, this era witnessed the ascendance of Castile, which transformed from a small, mountainous county into the wealthiest and most powerful realm in Christian Iberia: a large, centralized kingdom whose rulers would claim sovereignty over, and eventually unite, the entire peninsula.

As the Castilian kings expanded their realm through the conquest of Muslim territory, they found themselves ruling over a diverse population of Muslims, Jews, and Arabized Christians. The Muslim inhabitants of al-Andalus included Arabs and North Africans who settled in Iberia after the 711 conquest, but they were outnumbered by *muwallads*, indigenous Iberians (most of them ethnically Roman or Visigothic) who converted to Islam under Umayyad rule. Many Iberian Jews and Christians also remained in al-Andalus after the Muslim conquest, maintaining their religious practices and a measure of communal autonomy. As “People of the Book” or members of revealed religions, Jews and Christians in Islamic society were protected by the *dhimma* contract, which granted them security and religious freedom. In return, they had to accept their subordinate status and pay the *jizya* tax. Despite their political marginalization, Iberian Jews and Christians often flourished culturally under Muslim rule. From the ninth to thirteenth centuries, al-Andalus was a major center of Jewish intellectual life, with writers like Abraham ibn Daud and Judah Halevi pioneering new schools of philosophy, poetry, and scriptural commentary. Meanwhile, Christians in al-Andalus diverged from their correlligionists in Latin Europe, forming their own distinct

---

6 For an analysis of the military developments during this period as well as the ideological framework underpinning them, see Joseph O’Callaghan, *Reconquest and Crusade in Medieval Spain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 4-10.
7 Kennedy, *Muslim Spain and Portugal* 67-70. Widespread intermarriage between Arabs, Berbers, and *muwallads*, especially among elites, blurred ethnic lines in Andalusi society.
8 Dodds, *The Arts of Intimacy* 16-17.
9 See Esperanza Alfonso, *Islamic Culture through Jewish Eyes: Al-Andalus from the Tenth to Twelfth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2008).
practices and traditions. These Christians, known as Mozarabs, preserved the ancient Visigothic rite while also adopting aspects of Arabic language and culture.\textsuperscript{10}

Rather than expelling religious minorities from recently conquered territories, the Castilian kings encouraged Andalusi Muslims, Jews, and Mozarabs to remain in Castile, aware that their continued presence would the bolster Castilian economy and provided a useful source of income to the royal treasury.\textsuperscript{11} The need for a large population to farm the land and pay taxes became even more pressing when the North African Almoravids invaded Iberia in 1086, transforming Toledo from the center of a victorious and expanding empire into a frontier city constantly under siege. Alfonso VI granted \textit{fueros} or charters of privilege to the Jewish and Muslim communities of Toledo, guaranteeing them legal equality, judicial autonomy, and freedom of worship, on the condition that they accept the authority of the king and pay him tribute.\textsuperscript{12} As Castile continued to expand into al-Andalus through the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the monarchy issued similar \textit{fueros} to minority religious communities throughout the Castilian frontier, offering legal and economic privileges to encourage settlement.\textsuperscript{13} Thus it was that even as Castile channeled its military resources into raiding and conquering Muslim lands to the south, within Castile itself, Christians, Jews, and Muslims maintained a fragile and tense, but often productive, state of coexistence, which twentieth-century historians would label \textit{convivencia}.

\textsuperscript{10} Dodds, \textit{The Arts of Intimacy} 55.
\textsuperscript{11} Dodds, \textit{The Arts of Intimacy} 53.
\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Fueros} were legal documents that defined the rights and privileges of specific towns and communities. While the original \textit{fueros} that Alfonso VI granted to Toledo’s Jews and Muslims have not survived, the \textit{Primera crónica general} describes how the Muslim population surrendered on the condition that they be allowed to remain in the city, retain their property, and continue to worship at the mosque. In return, they would pay “the rents and tributes they were accustomed to give to their Moorish kings” to Alfonso. “The Conquest of Toledo,” in \textit{Medieval Iberia: Readings from Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Sources}, edited by Olivia Remie Constable (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 134.
Coined by Spanish cultural historian Américo Castro in 1948, the term *convivencia* refers to the coexistence of Christians, Muslims, and Jews in medieval Iberia, and the resulting cultural interaction and exchange between these communities. The concept became both popular and contested in the late twentieth century: Spanish historians tended to view medieval Iberia as a model for peaceful interfaith relations, which complicated common assumptions about the Middle Ages as an era characterized by close-minded fanaticism and religious violence; while Jewish scholars more often emphasized the violence and persecution directed against religious minorities in medieval Iberian society. More recent studies of *convivencia* explore the productive economic relations and cultural exchange that occurred between faith communities in medieval Christian Iberia, while resisting the temptation to idealize this society as a tolerant utopia, acknowledging the often fraught relations between the Christian ruling class and minority Jewish and Muslim communities. For the purposes of this thesis, Lucy Pick’s definition of *convivencia* is most useful: “A cultural situation in which potential cooperation and interdependence in economic, social, cultural, and intellectual spheres coexist with the continual threat of conflict and violence.”

The problem for historians of medieval Iberia is not only to determine the cultural, political, and economic conditions that enabled *convivencia*, but to explain why it eventually failed. The legacy of early modern Spain is tarnished by religious violence and intolerance: the expulsion or

---

forced conversion of remaining Jews and Muslims, strict blood purity laws that marginalized individuals with Jewish or Muslim ancestors, and most infamously, the Spanish Inquisition, which employed torture and interrogation to root out suspected false converts.\textsuperscript{18} It is difficult to reconcile the relative stability of interfaith relations in Christian Iberia in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries with Spain’s violent rejection of its non-Christian population two centuries later. In order to explain this apparently dramatic shift in policy and attitude, some historians have pointed to outside influences: specifically, Latin Christians from north of the Pyrenees.

Since the early eleventh century, the Christian kingdoms of Iberia had been increasing their political and cultural ties to the rest of Latin Europe. This process began with Sancho III, who forged links across the Pyrenees through a variety of means: he built diplomatic ties with courts in France, patronized northern monasteries, and promoted pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela.\textsuperscript{19} The Castilian monarchy, in particular, would establish a strong relationship with the powerful French monastery of Cluny: Alfonso VI patronized Cluniac monks through land and monetary gifts, appointed them to his key bishoprics, and even married the niece of Abbot Hugh of Cluny.\textsuperscript{20} The eleventh century also marked a shift in relations between the papacy and Iberian rulers, with a series of ambitious, reform-minded popes attempting to assert control over ecclesiastical affairs in Iberia. Papal interest in peninsular affairs would only increase in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when Christian expansion into al-Andalus coincided with the crusades to Anatolia and the Levant.\textsuperscript{21} The papacy would eventually define military campaigns against Muslims in Iberia

\textsuperscript{18} Helen Rawlings, \textit{The Spanish Inquisition} (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006).
\textsuperscript{19} Dodds, \textit{The Arts of Intimacy 27}.
\textsuperscript{21} O’Callaghan, \textit{Reconquest and Crusade} 23-24.
as an official crusade, drawing a substantial number of French, English, German, and Italian soldiers and mercenaries to Iberia.\textsuperscript{22}

Castile’s political and cultural integration into Latin Christendom came at a time when the status of religious minorities in Western Europe was deteriorating. Jews in Christian Europe had always been vulnerable to violence and economic exploitation, but they were protected under ecclesiastical law by Augustine’s “doctrine of witness,” which justified their presence in Christian society because their scriptures testified to the truth of the Christian faith.\textsuperscript{23} But in the eleventh century, a strong reformist impulse within the Church generated heightened concern with doctrinal unity and the subjugation of non-Christians. In order to strengthen its own authority over its secular rivals, the Church launched an attack on enemies both internal and external, persecuting heretics and curtailing Jewish rights even as it launched numerous crusades against the Muslim East in an attempt to expand the borders of Christendom.\textsuperscript{24}

This shift in ecclesiastical policy was accompanied by growing animosity toward religious minorities at the popular level, as rapid economic growth and urbanization in the twelfth century created competition between the Christian middle class and Jewish traders and moneylenders. European Christians began to perceive their Jewish neighbors as malicious enemies who actively plotted against them, spreading rumors that Jews desecrated the host and ritually murdered Christians on Good Friday.\textsuperscript{25} Meanwhile, as the crusades became a driving force in European culture, a pervasive sense of the threat of Islam entered the Latin Christian imagination. The

\textsuperscript{22} O’Callaghan, \textit{Reconquest and Crusade} 24-27.


\textsuperscript{24} R.I. Moore has argued that the increased persecution of religious minorities in Western Europe in the tenth through thirteenth centuries resulted from the growth and centralization of ecclesiastical and state institutions, which targeted outsiders in order to reinforce their own authority: R.I. Moore, \textit{The Formation of a Persecution Society} (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007).

crusading ideal, with its focus on the crusader as an armed pilgrim fighting to defend the Christian faith and achieve salvation, reinforced a negative image of Muslims as enemies of Christ and his Church who must be defeated and subdued.

In light of the opposition to religious difference expressed in both ecclesiastical policy and popular sentiment north of the Pyrenees, the influence of northern intolerance seems a likely explanation for the eventual collapse of *convivencia* in medieval Iberia. One could argue that as Iberian Christians built stronger ties to the papacy, reformed monastic orders, and northern secular courts, they began to absorb new values, such as the crusading ideal, a highly orthodox conception of Christianity, and a violent rejection of religious and cultural nonconformity. One well-known work that makes this argument is María Rosa Menocal’s *The Ornament of the World*, a survey of Islamic, Jewish, and Christian cultural history in medieval Spain. The author argues that the coexistence of multiple faith communities in Spain enabled the formation of a “culture of tolerance” characterized by cultural flexibility and open-mindedness.26 In Menocal’s view, the demise of this tolerant culture came about due to the foreign cultural influences that invaded Iberia on two fronts: from the south, the Almoravids and Almohads, who adhered to a stricter, more traditional interpretation of Islam, and from the north, the crusaders and religious reformers of Latin Christendom. “The effects of the long-term presence of two expansive ideologies, each originally foreign to the Andalusian ethic, transformed the nature of the conflicts at hand,” Menocal writes. “They made religious-ideological warfare a reality, cultural orthodoxy a real possibility, and monochromatic identity a realizable ideal.”27

The image of a flourishing multicultural society, undermined from without by the forces of zealotry and intolerance, is an emotionally appealing one. Certainly, in an era when societies across the world grapple with the dual realities of religious pluralism and religious violence, it is important to challenge the historical narrative that frames interreligious conflict as inevitable. But the rigid dichotomy that Menocal establishes between the “culture of tolerance” in medieval Spain and the rigid fanaticism of the rest of Latin Europe ultimately obscures the social tensions within Iberian society. The success of convivencia cannot be attributed simply to tolerance, in the modern sense of the word; it was grounded in a complex web of ever-shifting social, political, and economic interests.

Several scholars have analyzed the rise and fall of convivencia as a phenomenon internal to Iberian society, focusing on the concrete, material conditions that enabled Jews and Muslims to carve out a space in Christian Iberia. In a recent study on Jewish-Christian relations in medieval northern Castile, Maya Soifer Irish asserts that Castilian convivencia did not reflect a cultural orientation toward tolerance, but was rather a practical necessity in a society organized for war, conquest, and expansion. Disputing the common argument that Castilian legal protections for religious minorities were modelled on the Muslim dhimmi system, she argues that the Castilian kings crafted fueros on a case-by-case basis in response to the present need for settlers to farm the countryside and fund military campaigns. Likewise, Jonathan Ray has argued that Christian Iberia’s rapid territorial expansion in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries resulted in greater social mobility for non-Christians than elsewhere in Latin Europe: Jews on the Iberian frontier purchased urban and rural properties, hired Christians as laborers, and owned and operated mills.

28 Soifer Irish, Jews and Christians in Medieval Castile 5.
If *convivencia* is seen as a product of the Reconquest, then it is unsurprising that after Castile conquered Seville in 1248, bringing two centuries of conquest and expansion to a close, the legal status of religious minorities in Castile began to deteriorate. Moreover, Teofilo Ruiz has identified the late-twelfth to mid-thirteenth centuries as a period of great social and economic reform in Castile, when the mercantile middle class promoted new ideologies of land and lineage that allowed them to articulate their interests against those of the Church and old nobility. While Ruiz addresses Jews and Muslims only indirectly, he notes that the trends described in his study gave rise to new, exclusionary discourses of Castilian identity that marginalized religious minorities. Somewhat ironically, it is possible that the urban merchant class played a more significant role than the Church in disseminating anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim attitudes in late medieval Castilian society.

Building on this historiographical conversation, this thesis evaluates whether and to what extent Christian institutions and ideologies from north of the Pyrenees influenced Castilian royal policy toward religious minorities from the late eleventh to mid-thirteenth centuries. In doing so, my goal is to determine whether the collapse of *convivencia* in late medieval Castile can be more readily attributed to outside influences, or to factors internal to Castilian society. Chapter one analyzes the papacy’s efforts to enforce religious orthodoxy and reform in Castile, especially with regards to royal policy toward Jews and Muslims, and how the rulers responded. Chapter two examines the introduction of crusading ideology to Spain, analyzing how Iberian Christians conceived warfare with their Muslim neighbors and comparing their attitudes with those of both the papacy and the foreign crusaders who fought in Iberia. Finally, chapter three explores the

---

31 Ruiz, *From Heaven to Earth* 92-94.
impact of ultra-Pyrenean monasticism on Castilian treatment of Jews and Muslims, focusing on the Cluniacs, Dominicans, and Franciscans.

Throughout, one of the central goals of this thesis is to challenge the dichotomy between “ideologically motivated” northerners and “tolerant” or even simply “pragmatic” Castilians, analyzing the political, economic, and religious interests that motivated actors on all sides. While historians of medieval Iberia have addressed the various motives drove Castilian royal policy, from political ambition and military glory to religious piety and financial greed, less attention has been paid to the complex motives of ultra-Pyrenean religious institutions like the papacy and monastics for their involvement in the Iberian Peninsula. To understand how these institutions influenced Castilian convivencia, it is first necessary to evaluate what they themselves hoped to achieve in Iberia, and where religious minorities fit into their goals.

Rather than attempt to survey the entirety of medieval Christian Iberia, this thesis focuses on royal policy in twelfth and thirteenth century Castile, beginning with Alfonso VI’s conquest of Toledo in 1085 and ending with the reign of Alfonso X in 1284. These two centuries formed the core of the Reconquest: the vast majority of the Iberian Peninsula fell into Christian hands during this period, with Muslims only maintaining their political hold on the small taifa of Granada. The conquest and settlement of formerly Muslim lands forced Iberian Christians to reorganize their society to accommodate the presence of unprecedented numbers of Muslim and Jewish subjects. The twelfth and thirteenth centuries thus marked the height of convivencia in medieval Christian Iberia. This period also saw significant developments in Latin Christian society north of the

---

32 The kingdoms of Castile and Leon were united and divided several times during this period as a result of political marriages or inheritances. For the purposes of this study, “Castile” will refer to both Castile and Leon, with Leon only discussed as a separate entity at the times when it was operating independently of Castile.
Pyrenees: monastic reform, a heightened preoccupation with heresy, and of course, the crusades. This context shaped the responses of ultra-Pyrenean Christians to Iberian *convivencia*.

Castile has been chosen as the focus of this study both because of its prominence in Christian Iberia and because of the centrality of Jews and Muslims in Castilian society. The most powerful and extensive of the Iberian Christian kingdoms, Castile would come to dominate the peninsula politically and culturally, eventually defining the language and culture of what we now know as the Spanish nation. As such, the history of interfaith relations in Castile is of particular relevance to modern Spain. Moreover, Castile was at the forefront of Christian territorial expansion into al-Andalus, and compared with its neighbors Aragon, Navarre, and Portugal, it absorbed significantly more Muslim land. Incorporating the diverse populations of these territories into their domain forced the Castilian kings to create policies that accommodated Jewish and Muslim communities. Toledo, the center of Castilian royal power from 1085 to 1254, exemplified the tensions and ironies of medieval Castilian culture: a frontier city that frequently bore the brunt of Almoravid and Almohad raids, it was also a cultural hub, where Christians collaborated with Jews and Muslims to translate the vast intellectual corpus of al-Andalus from Arabic into Latin.

The decision to focus on Castilian royalty is in part one of practicality: the extant sources for this period, from royal *fueros* and decrees to narrative chronicles, overwhelmingly provide an elite perspective. This does limit our understanding of Castilian *convivencia*, since it is impossible to know for certain how the average Christian farmer or artisan would have felt about his Jewish and Muslim neighbors. However, the Castilian kings wielded the power to implement laws and

---

33 Dodds, *The Arts of Intimacy* 266-269.
34 A map of the Iberian Peninsula shortly after the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa illustrates the comparative extensiveness of Castilian contact with Muslim Iberia: the Castilian frontier with al-Andalus is more than twice as long as either Portugal or Aragon. See Appendix, Map 2.
policies that affected Jewish and Muslim communities, as well as to patronize artistic and literary endeavors that influenced wider cultural perceptions of religious minorities. Moreover, their diplomatic efforts on behalf of Castilian interests frequently put them into contact with influential ultra-Pyrenean actors. The negotiations between the king of Castile and his northern allies, such as the pope, the abbot of Cluny, or other kings and magnates north of the Pyrenees, dealt with issues of power, orthodoxy, and religious difference that would affect all levels of Castilian society.

With interfaith conflict becoming an ever more frequent source of violence and political oppression in the modern world, medieval Iberia has drawn both scholarly and popular interest as a potential model for the coexistence of different religious communities, outside of the modern paradigm of secular liberalism. While it is tempting to attribute Castilian convivencia to some intrinsic element of tolerance in Castilian culture, we should not discount the complex web of political, social, and economic factors that influenced the treatment of Jews and Muslims in Christian Castile. By untangling this web, we can gain a clearer sense of the underlying causes of religious persecution, both historically and today.

---

36 For example, the famous Cantigas de Santa María manuscript, produced at the court of Alfonso X, visually reframed the Jewish-Christian relationship: see Pamela Patton, Art of Estrangement: Redefining Jews in Reconquest Spain (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012), 135-169.
Chapter I: The Papacy

From the eighth through tenth centuries, the Iberian Church operated largely outside the sphere of papal control, a state of affairs that mirrored Christian Iberia’s political and cultural isolation from the rest of Latin Europe. In the eleventh century, however, the expansion of the Iberian Christian kingdoms and their military victories over their Muslim neighbors attracted renewed interest from the papacy. At this time, the chair of St. Peter passed into the hands of ambitious reformers such as Alexander II (1061-1073) and Gregory VII (1073-1085) who sought to expand papal authority over the ecclesiastical hierarchy and ensure the Church’s freedom from secular control.¹ These popes began to direct their energies toward Iberian affairs, regularly sending letters and legates to Iberian Christian rulers.² One aspect of Iberian royal policy which the papacy tried to influence from the eleventh century onward was the treatment of religious minorities.

As the spiritual leaders of Christendom, the medieval popes considered it their obligation to work for the reform of Christian society along lines consistent with Church doctrine. Frequently, this entailed the strict delineation of religious communities and the systematic subordination of Muslims, Jews, and non-orthodox Christians. This ideal conflicted with social conditions on the ground in Castile, where the need for a large population to pay taxes and settle newly conquered land along the frontier with Muslim Iberia prompted the kings to grant Jews and Muslims

¹I.S. Robinson, *The Papal Reform of the Eleventh Century* (Manchester University Press, 2004), 1-4. The papacy’s efforts at church reform often took the form of campaigns to eliminate corrupt practices such as simony and clerical marriage.
commercial and legal privileges.³ Through the thirteenth century, the papacy pushed the Castilian kings to implement policies that standardized liturgical practice, restricted social and economic opportunities for non-Christians, and minimized interactions between members of different faith communities. At the same time, the papacy had more self-interested political and economic motives that often took precedence over their ideological concerns. This chapter will explore the motivations of both the papacy and the Castilian monarchy in their negotiations over the treatment of religious minorities, as well as the extent to which the papacy succeeded in influencing Castilian royal policy.

The Reform of the Mozarabic Liturgy

Pope Gregory VII was known for his relentless efforts to exert his authority over both ecclesiastical and secular affairs in Latin Europe; his policies toward Castile were characteristic in this regard. Soon after his election, Gregory wrote to a group of French barons who planned to launch an expedition against the Muslims in Iberia. In this letter, the pope asserted that the Holy See had rightful jurisdiction over the Iberian Peninsula: “The kingdom of Spain was from ancient times subject to St. Peter in full sovereignty.”⁴ He commanded the barons that if they were to win land from the Muslims, they should hold it “in the name of St. Peter,” which presumably entailed swearing fealty and paying tribute to the pope. Gregory had reason to be hopeful for his political ambitions in Iberia: in 1068, King Sancho I of Aragon had declared himself a vassal of Pope Alexander II and promised to pay tribute to the Holy See.⁵ However, Gregory would find King

⁴ Ephraim Emerton, trans. The Correspondence of Pope Gregory VII: Selected Letters from the Registrum (New York: Norton, 1969), 6. The source of Gregory’s claim to sovereignty over Spain was probably the Donation of Constantine, a forged imperial decree in which Emperor Constantine allegedly granted Pope Sylvester I jurisdiction over Italy and Western Europe.
⁵ O’Callaghan, “The Integration of Christian Spain into Europe” 103.
Alfonso VI of Castile far less receptive to his claims to sovereignty in Iberia. Alfonso had expansionist political ambitions of his own, which brought him into conflict with Gregory’s vision of church and state united under papal leadership.

In 1077, Pope Gregory raised the issue of sovereignty with the Iberian Christian kings directly. Asserting that “the kingdom of Spain belongs to St. Peter and the Holy Roman Church, as handed down in ancient grants,” he exhorted them to recognize his rightful jurisdiction over Spain through the payment of tribute. But despite the authoritative tone of his letter, Gregory lacked the means to enforce his claim to sovereignty. His authority to excommunicate secular rulers or place their kingdoms under interdiction gave him not inconsiderable political clout, but when it came to asserting direct jurisdiction over independent territories, it seems that he overestimated his power. In fact, Alfonso VI never responded to the pope’s assertion of sovereignty over the Iberian Peninsula, but in the same year, he began to employ the title “imperator totius Hispaniae,” meaning emperor of all Spain. It is possible to read Alfonso’s adoption of the imperial title as a subtle rebuke to Gregory VII for overstepping his bounds. The pope must have realized he could not prevail in a direct power struggle with Castile, because he soon turned his attention to a more realistic goal: the reform of the Hispanic liturgy.

Over centuries of Muslim occupation, the Christian Church in the Iberian Peninsula had developed its own distinct liturgy and forms of worship, known as the Mozarabic rite. Gregory VII condemned the Mozarabic rite from a doctrinal standpoint: he believed it contained traces of the Priscillian and Arian heresies, as well as Muslim influences, which caused it to diverge from the orthodox Roman rite. Of course, the issue of doctrine had fundamentally political dimensions:

---

6 Emerton, The Correspondence of Pope Gregory VII 124.
7 Reilly, The Kingdom of León-Castilla under King Alfonso VI 102-104.
8 Emerton, The Correspondence of Pope Gregory VII 29.
adopting the Roman rite meant submitting to the authority of the pope. In a letter composed in 1074, Gregory VII exhorted the kings of Castile and Navarre to “accept the order and ritual of the Roman Church, not those of Toledo nor any other” – in other words, to accept his own authority in spiritual matters over that of more local ecclesiastical bodies.⁹

Alfonso VI proved receptive to the pope’s appeals for liturgical reform, largely due to the presence at his court of influential Cluniac monks, who mediated between king and pope and encouraged the adoption of the Roman rite.¹⁰ However, Alfonso faced domestic opposition to reform, especially from bishops and other clergy reluctant to abandon their traditional practices. In a letter to Abbot Hugh of Cluny, he complained of the political upheaval the project had engendered: “Our realm is wholly desolated on account of the Roman office which, on your command, we accepted.”¹¹ Hints of these tensions are discernible in the letter Gregory VII sent to Alfonso in 1079, encouraging him not to abandon the reform of the Mozarabic liturgy: he praised him for his efforts, while at the same time grimly reminding him of the damnation that awaited him should he fail to remain in “unity and concord” with the teachings of the Apostolic See.¹² He also announced his intention to send his legate, Cardinal Richard, to assist Alfonso in implementing the Roman rite. This combination of diplomacy and spiritual pressure succeeded where Gregory’s push for territorial sovereignty had failed: in 1080, Alfonso VI and Cardinal Richard convened the Council of Burgos, which formally abolished the Mozarabic liturgy and decreed that the Latin rite would be celebrated throughout the realm of Castile.¹³

---

¹⁰ The influence of the Cluniacs on Castilian royal policy will be explored further in the third chapter.  
¹¹ O’Callaghan, “The Integration of Christian Spain into Europe” 107.  
¹² Emerton, *The Correspondence of Pope Gregory VII* 144-146.  
¹³ O’Callaghan, “The Integration of Christian Spain into Europe” 111.
However, the expansion of Castile into Muslim territory in the subsequent decade would test the practical limitations of the king’s decree. When Alfonso VI conquered Toledo in 1085, he assimilated not only a substantial Muslim and Jewish population into his realm, but also an entrenched Mozarabic Christian community. These Christians did not welcome the Castilians as liberators; instead, the Mozarabic clergy perceived Alfonso’s efforts to reform the Hispanic liturgy as a threat to their religious practices and their status in the Christian community. Many Toledan Mozarabs fled for Muslim-held Valencia, contributing to a precipitous decline in Toledo’s population that reduced agricultural production and nearly collapsed the economy.

In order to incentivize Mozarabs to remain in Toledo, in 1101 Alfonso VI granted the Mozarab community a *fuero* similar to those he had already granted the city’s Muslims and Jews. The charter guaranteed Mozarabs equal land and property rights, as well as the right to conduct their legal proceedings according to the traditional Visigothic Code. It made no explicit mention of religious freedom, probably because Castilian civil authorities did not wish to openly contradict the Council of Burgos and create conflict with the pope, but there is evidence that *de facto* toleration of the old Hispanic rite remained the norm through the thirteenth century. There were six Mozarabic parishes active in Toledo in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and eight liturgical manuscripts containing elements of the Mozarabic rite were produced at the Toledo cathedral during this period, one commissioned by the archbishop himself. Thus it is apparent that while Alfonso VI legally abolished the Mozarabic liturgy, he and his successors implemented this policy

---

only sporadically, especially when doing so would undermine their economic interests or alienate useful allies.

Castile’s failure to fully adopt the Roman rite signaled the limits of papal authority, even at the height of the Gregorian Reforms. For Gregory VII, centralizing the power of the Holy See required establishing unity of belief and practice throughout Christendom. While the pope was more concerned with internal dissent than with challenges from outside the Church, his vision of a unified Christian society subordinated to papal authority had far-reaching implications for Muslims and Jews under Christian rule, since it necessarily excluded and marginalized anyone who did not embrace orthodox Christian doctrine.

In fact, Gregory addressed the place of Jews in Christian society in a letter to Alfonso VI composed in 1081. In this letter, he rebuked the king for employing Jews as diplomats, physicians, and tax collectors at his court: “To place Christians under Jews or to subject them to their jurisdiction – what is that but to oppress the Church of God, to exalt the synagogue of Satan, and in aiming to please the enemies of Christ to throw contempt upon Christ himself?” By elevating Jews to public office, Alfonso had not only infringed on the rights of individual Christians, but more importantly, he had offended the Church as an institution – an institution which Gregory framed as interchangeable with Christ himself. Gregory’s efforts to reform the Mozarabic liturgy and his arguments for curtailing Jewish social rights can be seen as two manifestations of the same worldview: a political theology that understood the Church to encompass and subordinate secular society. But implementing this vision required the cooperation of secular authorities, and in the case of Castile, Gregory found it difficult to convince King Alfonso to take concrete steps to eliminate doctrinal diversity in his realm. For Alfonso, the economic benefits of maintaining a

---

18 Emerton, The Correspondence of Pope Gregory VII 177-178.
robust, diverse population in Toledo and the surrounding regions seems to have outweighed the political advantages of staying in the pope’s good graces.

**The Struggle over Jewish and Muslim Tithing**

The first half of the thirteenth century witnessed major socio-political shifts both in Iberia and throughout Latin Christendom. Castile defeated the Almohads at Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212, then conquered Cordoba in 1235 and Seville in 1248, shifting the balance of power in the peninsula decisively in favor of the Christians. Castile’s military successes and rapid territorial expansion during the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries enabled the Castilian monarchy to consolidate power through the creation of more centralized bureaucratic institutions. At the same time, under the leadership of a series of ambitious and capable popes, the medieval papacy reached the height of its authority. Beginning with Innocent III (1198-1216) the early-thirteenth-century popes sought to strengthen ecclesiastical institutions and exert their influence on every aspect of society. Increasingly, this included the place of non-Christians in Christendom: their rights, their obligations, and how the secular authorities ought to deal with them.

Historians of medieval Judaism often point to the late-twelfth and early-thirteenth centuries as a turning point in Christian-Jewish relations in northern Europe, during which time heightened anti-Jewish hostilities found expression in ecclesiastical policies that increasingly restricted Jewish rights. The crusades generated intense feelings of religious fervor among the laity that sometimes spilled over in acts of anti-Jewish violence, such as when crusaders marching to the Holy Land

---

massacred Jewish communities in the Rhineland in 1096.\textsuperscript{21} Rapid economic growth and urbanization in the twelfth century also increased tensions between Christians and Jews, since it drew many European Jews into the money trade, an occupation largely inaccessible to Christians because of Church prohibitions on usury. The secular authorities encouraged Jewish moneylending, since it contributed to the economy and built their own tax base. However, the average Christian resented his Jewish creditors, while the clergy decried the loss of ecclesiastical revenues to Jewish commerce.\textsuperscript{22} This atmosphere of anti-Jewish resentment gave rise to the conviction that Jews harbored a deep and intrinsic animosity toward Christians, which manifested in widespread rumors that Jews desecrated the host and ritually murdered Christians on Good Friday.\textsuperscript{23}

As one of the most powerful and politically assertive medieval popes, Innocent III is often considered a driving force of thirteenth-century anti-Judaism, who through his policies and rhetoric contributed to the deterioration of Christian-Jewish relations in Latin Europe.\textsuperscript{24} It is true that Innocent expressed fear of Jewish blasphemy and hostility in his letters, warning King Philip Augustus of France that Jews “surreptitiously killed” Christians.\textsuperscript{25} However, the pope’s interest in the Jews (and Muslims) of Castile generally reflected a more pragmatic interest in maintaining the flow of income to the Iberian Church, even if he sometimes framed his concerns in ideological terms.

\textsuperscript{23} Chazan, “Pope Innocent III and the Jews” 200.
\textsuperscript{24} “There has been, from the days of Heinrich Graetz onward, a sure sense of the pontificate of Innocent III as a turning point, a juncture at which medieval European Jewry began a steady decline from which it never really recovered.” Chazan, “Pope Innocent III and the Jews” 188.
\textsuperscript{25} Chazan, “Pope Innocent III and the Jews” 197-201.
In a 1205 letter to King Alfonso VIII of Castile, Innocent complained that the king favored the Jews and Muslims of his realm excessively, at the expense of the clergy. His main concern was the collection of the tithe, a ten-percent tax on production traditionally granted to the local church. Innocent rebuked Alfonso for exempting Castile’s Jews and Muslims from their obligation to pay this tax: “You have not only refused to have them compelled to pay the tithe, but have even granted them greater opportunity not to pay the tithe, and given them greater rights in the buying of more extensive possessions.”

He also complained that when the slaves of Jewish masters converted to Christianity, thus earning their freedom under ecclesiastical law, Alfonso reimbursed the Jews for their lost property with goods from the local bishopric. Innocent urged Alfonso to correct his behavior “lest you seem to be decreasing the freedom of the Church and to be exalting the Synagogue and Mosque” and threatened him with “ecclesiastical punishment without appeal” should he fail to comply.

Although Innocent III framed his appeal as a demand for Alfonso VIII to remain steadfast in his faith and maintain the proper hierarchy between Christians and non-Christians, his real concerns were clearly more pragmatic. The tithe was an important source of income for the Church; and in Iberia, where the conquest and settlement of al-Andalus had opened up frequent opportunities for Jews and Muslims to acquire land, their exemption from the tithe resulted in the loss of substantial ecclesiastical revenues. Thus the pope’s objection to giving non-Christians “greater rights in the buying of more extensive possessions” – when property passed from Christian hands into Jewish or Muslim hands, it hurt the Church financially. For his part, King Alfonso had political and economic incentives to protect Jews and Muslims from ecclesiastical

---

taxation and to guarantee their property rights. Since the early twelfth century, the kings of Castile had claimed the exclusive right to collect taxes from the kingdom’s religious minorities. Beginning in the 1190s, Alfonso VIII defined Castile’s Jews and Muslims as *servi regis*, or serfs of the king, a term that implied dependency and obligation: Jews and Muslims were royal vassals who paid tribute to the royal treasury in return for protection of their rights. For Alfonso, therefore, exempting Castile’s Jews and Muslims from the tithe both increased his own tax base and reinforced his sovereignty in the face of ecclesiastical counterclaims.

In fact, Innocent III’s efforts to convince Alfonso VIII to compel his Jewish and Muslim subjects to pay the tithe should be viewed in the context of a long struggle between the Castilian monarchy and clergy over finances. During the Reconquest, the Christian kings of Iberia frequently appropriated the *tercias*, the royal third of the tithe traditionally allocated to the maintenance of churches, to finance their military campaigns. The Castilian clergy paid a particularly steep price for the Castilian victory at Las Navas de Tolosa, which drained half their annual income. In this respect, the pope’s concern with Jewish and Muslim tithing in Castile can be seen less as an expression of increased Christian hostilities toward religious minorities than as a reflection of the Church’s anxieties over its diminished political stature and financial security in the Iberian Peninsula.

In 1199, for instance, Innocent III received a complaint from the prelates of the cathedral chapter of Avila that rural landowners were selling their property to local Muslims. As a result, the churches of Avila lost the tithe they previously received from these properties. Innocent

---

30 Ray, “The Jews between Church and State in Reconquest Iberia” 158.
32 “The owners of the previously-mentioned gardens and mill houses hand them over to the Saracens, to the grave detriment of the churches.” Demetrio Mansilla, *La documentación pontificia hasta Inocencio III*
authorized the bishop to deny these Muslim landowners the right to engage in commerce with Christians unless they paid the tithe.\textsuperscript{33} The pope’s objection to Muslim landownership in Avila had nothing to do with his concern that nonbelievers would gain political or economic power over Christians. Instead, he wished to ensure that Muslims and Jews payed the same taxes to the local church that Christians did, so that the church would maintain its revenues. Rather than a conflict between a tolerant Iberian monarch and a dogmatic pope, the struggle over Jewish and Muslim tithing in Castile represented two powerful actors defending their political and economic interests.

**Implementing the Fourth Lateran Council in Castile**

Although Innocent III limited his direct interest in Castile’s Jewish and Muslim population to the tithe, his broader policies did often reflect a more hostile attitude toward non-Christians. Most famously, in 1215 Innocent presided over the Fourth Lateran Council, a gathering of prelates from across the Christian world to discuss and codify ecclesiastical doctrine. At the council, the pope reiterated his concerns regarding Jewish non-payment of the tithe, declaring: “Jews shall be compelled to offer satisfaction to the churches for the tithes and offerings due them.”\textsuperscript{34} However, he also addressed growing Christian concerns with Jewish usury, fears that reflected a heightened Christian sense of Jewish enmity toward themselves and their faith more than an actual economic threat. In order “that [Christians] should not be excessively oppressed by the Jews,” Innocent placed a limit on the interest rate Jewish moneylenders could demand from their Christian debtors.\textsuperscript{35} The claim that medieval Jews had the social or economic power to oppress Christians

\textsuperscript{33} Mansilla, *La documentación pontificia hasta Inocencio III* 193.
\textsuperscript{34} Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews* 309.
\textsuperscript{35} Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews* 307.
is, of course, profoundly divorced from reality, but it is indicative of thirteenth-century Christian anxieties.

The Fourth Lateran Council also passed expansive measures to enforce appropriate boundaries between Christians and their Jewish and Muslim neighbors. Fearing that Christians would unwittingly have intercourse with non-Christians, Innocent III decreed that “Jews and Saracens of either sex, and in all Christian lands, and at all times, shall easily be distinguishable from the rest of the populations by the quality of their clothes.” The pope also forbade Jews from holding public office – “since this offers them the pretext to vent their wrath against the Christians” – and threatened with financial penalties any Christian official who dared to appoint a Jew to a public position. These canons set a new precedent for the segregation and repression of Jews and Muslims in Christian society.

But while the Fourth Lateran Council enshrined anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim measures into canon law, implementing these measures presented the Church with a number of difficulties. While the pope could use ecclesiastical punishments such as excommunication against Christians who violated the decrees of the council – for instance, by borrowing money from Jews at excessive interest or appointing them to public office – he had no jurisdiction over Jews and Muslims themselves. As a result, he depended on the secular authorities to enforce his will. However, Innocent III and his successors would often find it difficult to obtain secular cooperation. The kings of Castile, in particular, doggedly resisted the requirement for their Jewish and Muslim subjects to

36 Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews* 309.
37 Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews* 311. Presumably this decree also applied to Muslims in places such as Castile with a substantial Muslim population.
38 Innocent III acknowledged his dependence on the secular authorities in several of the IV Lat. canons: he declared that any Jew or Muslim who blasphemed Christ “shall be duly restrained by fitting punishment meted out by the secular rulers” and his prohibition on Jewish usury called for the princes of Christendom to limit interest rates. Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews* 307-309.
distinguish themselves from Christians by wearing distinctive clothes, concerned that such measures would cause social unrest and result in a loss of their taxable Jewish population.

Innocent III died shortly after the Fourth Lateran Council, but his successor, Honorius III, soon took up the task of convincing the Castilian kings to enforce the council’s decrees with regards to their non-Christian subjects. In 1218, Honorius wrote to Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, the Archbishop of Toledo and a close confidante of King Fernando III, reminding him that the Fourth Lateran Council had established “that by their clothes Jews are to be distinguishable from Christians” and that “they are to be compelled to give satisfaction to the churches for the tithes and offerings” which those churches would have received from their property before it passed from Christian to Jewish hands. The pope claimed to have heard reports that the Jews of Toledo did not comply with these statutes; and he ordered the archbishop to compel their obedience by “removing from them the possibility of relationships” (presumably commercial relationships) with Christians. The concern about Jewish tithing was, of course, a well-established one, but Honorius’s complaint that the Jewish community of Toledo did not adopt a badge to mark them as distinct from Christians represented a new point of conflict between the papacy and the Castilian monarchy, an issue seemingly more grounded in religious ideology than political or economic pragmatism.

One year later, however, Honorius wrote another letter to Archbishop Rodrigo, revising his position on the Jewish badge. Apparently, both King Fernando and the archbishop had complained to the pope that attempting to enforce this policy had caused such upheaval among Castile’s Jewish population, it threatened both the security and economic stability of the realm:

40 Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews* 145.
We have been informed that the Jews who reside in the Kingdom of Castile are so seriously wrought up over that which was decided with regard to them in the General Council in the matter of wearing a sign, that some of them choose rather to flee to the Moors than to be burdened with such a sign. Others conspire because of this, and make secret agreements. As a result, the King, whose income in large measure derives from these very Jews, can hardly raise his expenses, and serious misfortune may befall the kingdom.\textsuperscript{41}

The king’s reasons for objecting to the Jewish badge, as reflected in Honorius’s letter, were both economic and political. As \textit{servi regis} the Castilian Jews, whether as merchants or as landowners, comprised an important tax base for Fernando III. If a substantial number of Castile’s Jews were to migrate to Almohad territory – as Fernando apparently claimed to the pope – not only would the demographic shift affect the Castilian economy overall, but the king in particular would lose a reliable source of income. Fernando also framed Jewish unrest over the badge as a threat to the political stability of Castile, since discontented Jews would “conspire” and “make secret agreements” with Castile’s Almohad enemies. This perception of Jews as potential traitors who would conspire with the enemies of the Christian faith had a long history in Castilian society: chronicles like the \textit{Chronicon mundi} and \textit{De rebus Hispanie} portrayed Iberian Jews as aiding the Muslim invaders who overthrew the Spanish Visigoths in the eighth century.\textsuperscript{42} In this case, however, an anti-Jewish stereotype served not to justify the implementation of repressive policies, but to explain why such a policy should not be adopted. As long as Fernando III needed Jewish financial support, he could not afford to alienate them through repressive dress policies.

In order to “assure the peace of [Fernando III] and his Kingdom,” Honorius exempted the king from his obligation to ensure that Castilian Jews wear a distinctive badge.\textsuperscript{43} Honorius’s willingness to compromise with Fernando on the matter of the Jewish badge suggests that, while the pope considered the issue important, he did not prioritize it more highly than maintaining good

\textsuperscript{41}Grayzel, \textit{The Church and the Jews} 151.
\textsuperscript{42}Pick, \textit{Conflict and Coexistence} 173-176.
\textsuperscript{43}Grayzel, \textit{The Church and the Jews} 151.
relations with the Castilian monarchy. This flexibility stands in contrast to Honorius’s attitude toward the tithe, on which the thirteenth-century papacy always took an uncompromising stance. In fact, not long before sending this letter, Honorius had written to Archbishop Rodrigo asserting that the Church’s right to Jewish tithes extended not only to land Jews bought from Christians, but also to new houses and properties the Jews build on those lands. Lucy Pick has suggested that Honorius exempted Fernando III from enforcing Jewish dress restrictions on the tacit condition that the Church be permitted to extend its claim to Jewish tithes in Castile. If this is true, it demonstrates that while the pope had ideologically-motivated goals – the enforcement of appropriate boundaries between Christian and Jewish communities – he was willing to subordinate ideology, at least temporarily, to his more pragmatic economic interests.

However, Honorius’s compromising attitude did not last. Two years later, in 1221, he wrote once again to Archbishop Rodrigo, complaining that the Jews of Toledo did not distinguish themselves in dress from their Christian neighbors, as decreed by the Fourth Lateran Council, and commanding the archbishop to compel the Toledan Jews to obey the statute. In this letter, the pope made no reference to the exemption he had given Fernando III, nor did he explain his sudden change of policy. He mentioned a friend, Gundeslav of the Friar Hospitallers of Jerusalem, who had informed him that the Toledan Jews failed to observe the decree; it is possible that this man persuaded him to take a firmer stance on the Jewish badge in Castile. However, it could also be that Honorius received new information that convinced him the Jewish badge did not actually pose a threat to Castilian political and economic stability. Without knowing the political maneuverings

---

44 “It has reached our ears that the Jews who dwell in your Province exert themselves by means of their subterfuges, to get around the decree of the General Council [IV. Lateran] by building new houses, for which they refuse to answer to the churches in whose parishes the houses are constructed.” Grayzel, The Church and the Jews 149.
45 Pick, Conflict and Coexistence 173.
46 Grayzel, The Church and the Jews 169.
that undoubtedly occurred behind the scenes of this formal correspondence, it is difficult to make any conjectures as to why the pope stringently demanded the enforcement of the Jewish badge at certain times and took a more flexible approach at others. But the fact that Honorius modified his position several times in the course of only a few years suggests that he did not feel completely bound by the decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council, but was willing to adapt his policies to suit the circumstances.

Although this thesis is only peripherally concerned with the local Iberian Church, it is worth considering the role that Archbishop Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada played as intermediary between Pope Honorius III and King Fernando of Castile. One might expect that, as a member of the clergy, Rodrigo’s primary loyalty would be to the pope; and indeed, the fact that Honorius wrote to Rodrigo rather than corresponding directly with Fernando, suggests that he expected the archbishop to advocate for papal interests to the king. Yet Rodrigo resisted the implementation of the Jewish badge as vigorously as Fernando, arguing alongside the king that if Castile’s Jewish community fled to the Almohads, it would result in a loss of royal incomes. Rodrigo’s behavior can be understood in light of the dual role he played in Castilian society: while a cleric and spiritual leader, he also served in the capacity of a temporal lord, owning lands and receiving income from his vassals. These vassals most likely included Jews: although the king claimed jurisdiction over the Jews, he could, and often did, grant lords or bishops the right to collect taxes from specific Jewish communities. Accordingly, Rodrigo might portray Jews as perfidious enemies of the faith in his abstract theological writings, but in dealing with his own Jewish vassals, he felt a sense of social obligation, as well as financial self-interest.

---

47 Soifer Irish, *Jews and Christians in Medieval Castile* 94.
While Archbishop Rodrigo’s financial ties to Toledo’s Jews explains his reluctance to enforce the Jewish badge, it is more surprising that he made no attempt to implement the Jewish and Muslim tithes required by the Fourth Lateran Council, which would have provided income to his own archdiocese. Instead, Rodrigo and King Fernando replaced this tithe with a head tax, which required every Jewish male over twenty years of age to pay one-twentieth of a gold morabetino to the archdiocese. This tax aligned more closely with traditional Castilian practice, in which the king maintained control over the taxation of the Jewish community, but delegated a portion of those taxes to local ecclesiastical bodies. Ultimately, Rodrigo received the same benefits through a policy that did not threaten Fernando III’s sovereignty. It is, however, significant that when caught between Fernando and Honorius, Rodrigo chose to align himself with royal interests, at the risk of alienating the pope, his ecclesiastical superior. His behavior reveals that, while the papacy framed itself as the defender of the Iberian Church, Castilian churchmen often found the local secular authorities better suited to defend their interests than the pope.

Nonetheless, the thirteenth-century popes would continue to request that Castilian clerics intercede with the king on their behalf. Writing to the Bishop of Burgos and the Deans of Burgos and Calahorra in 1231, Pope Gregory IX decried the abuses to which Fernando had subjected the Church of Calahorra, including his preferential treatment of the city’s Jews:

In contempt of the decrees passed in the General Council about Jews, and upon his own authority, he annulled the regulation that required the Jews to wear signs by which they might be distinguished from the faithful, or to pay tithes from the estates which are known to have come into their possession from Christians.

---

48 Pick, Conflict and Coexistence 177-179. Pick argues that the head tax would have been more acceptable to Toledo’s Jewish community than the tithe because it was crafted to resemble the *jizya*: a poll tax collectively paid by the community in return for defense and security.
49 Grayzel, The Church and the Jews 189.
According to Gregory, the king’s behavior had resulted in the financial ruin of the parish churches, since “the properties from which tithes used to be paid them” had passed into Jewish hands. He ordered the Burgos clergy to urge and persuade Fernando to change his behavior.

Likewise, Gregory wrote to the Archbishop of Compostela in 1233, complaining that the Castilian Jews “have become so insolent that they are not afraid to commit excesses which it would not be only improper but even inhuman for the faithful of Christ to tolerate” – namely, that they failed to wear the badge, continued to hold public office, and lent money to Christians at excessive interest.50 “We have had [Fernando III] insistently asked and urged, and we join thereto a remission of his sins, that he should suppress and punish the above-named excesses of the Jews in Castile and Leon,” the pope explained.51 He asked the clergy of Compostela to support him in these efforts, by warning and entreating the king against his permissive treatment of the Jewish population in his realm.

This strategy of influencing Castilian rulers through the mediation of local clergy seems to have been largely unsuccessful. The Castilian clergy demonstrated little interest in upsetting the status quo between the monarchy and the Jews, especially since they themselves frequently engaged in business dealings with local Jews or borrowed money from them.52 Accordingly, papal demands for the Castilian king to enforce the decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council continued to fall on deaf ears throughout the thirteenth century. Fernando III did eventually implement an ecclesiastical head-tax in 1238, which required every Jewish adult male to pay an annual tax of thirty *dineros* to their local diocese. While this tax fulfilled a similar purpose as the tithe, Fernando

50 Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews* 205.
51 Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews* 205. This is the first instance in which the pope offered the Castilian king remission of sins in return for enforcing the decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council. Most likely, Gregory IX felt the need to employ stronger incentives after his previous attempts had failed.
52 Soifer Irish, *Jews and Christians in Medieval Castile* 89-93.
granted this privilege separately to individual bishops and cathedral chapters, rather than extending it to the Castilian Church as a whole. This placed the thirty *dineros* tax in a long Castilian tradition of royal donations of Jewish taxes to ecclesiastical lords, which probably made it more acceptable to Fernando than the tithe.\(^{53}\)

But despite continued protestations through the pontificate of Innocent IV, Castile refused to compromise on Jewish dress regulations until the reign of Alfonso X, when the royal law code *Siete Partidas* ordered Castilian Jews to “bear some distinguishing mark upon their heads” to prevent them from mingling with Christians.\(^{54}\) By this time, the conquest of Seville had brought all of Iberia into Christian hands, with the exception of the vassal state of Granada. Accordingly, Alfonso X would have felt little pressure to accommodate his Jewish subjects, since he did not depend on their taxes to fund military campaigns against the Muslims, nor did he need to fear them fleeing Castile for Muslim territory. Even so, the *Siete Partidas* were not formally implemented in Castile until the mid-fourteenth century, and there is little evidence that the Castilian monarchy ever actually enforced dress regulations before that time.

Overall, the conflict between the papacy and the Castilian monarchy over the treatment of religious minorities in the eleventh through thirteenth centuries reveals that both religious and secular authorities in medieval Christendom held complex motivations, none of which can be reduced to pure ideology or pure pragmatism. For the Castilian kings, the need for settlers to populate newly-conquered land, as well as a taxable population to fund their military campaigns, incentivized them to adopt policies that maintained a large Jewish, Muslim, and Mozarab

---


population in their realm. As the Reconquest progressed, their need for income drove the monarchy to exert more direct jurisdiction over minority religious communities, creating a relationship of mutual obligation and dependence. At the same time, the Castilian kings did not necessarily lack religious sentiment: Alfonso VI’s willingness to adopt the Latin rite in Castile seems to have reflected genuine piety as much as a desire to build good relations with the pope. Yet when it came to abolishing the Mozarabic rite in practice as well as theory, Alfonso prioritized retaining Toledo’s economically vital Mozarabic population over enforcing orthodoxy.

Likewise, the papacy cannot be characterized solely as a force for religious dogmatism in Iberia. It is true that Gregory VII pushed to impose religious orthodoxy in the peninsula at the expense of Mozarabic Christian traditions, while thirteenth-century popes like Innocent III, Honorius III, and Gregory IX called for Jews and Muslims to be segregated from Christians, barred from public office, and restricted from lending money at interest. But while religious prejudice undoubtedly motivated many of these policies, the issue of primary importance to the papacy, Jewish and Muslim tithing, had more to do with economic self-interest than ideology. Honorius III’s negotiations with Fernando III suggest that the pope considered the tithe his top priority; on other issues, he showed himself willing to compromise. Thus, while the popes were, on the whole, more ideologically motivated in their dealings with religious minorities than the Castilian kings, both groups proved willing to subordinate their ideals to their more pragmatic interests. Moreover, even when the papacy clearly did advocate for a more intolerant and exclusionary vision of Christian society, these efforts should not be seen as lacking political motivation. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the rapid expansion and consolidation of papal power meant that the papacy claimed authority over all aspects of Christian society, including those that had traditionally been the domain of secular authorities, such as regulating Jewish rights. In this
respect, religious minorities in Castile were a battleground on which the pope and the king struggled over sovereignty.

There can be little doubt that the king ultimately came out ahead in this struggle. While the papacy did occasionally convince the Castilian monarchy to change its policies with regards to religious minorities – Alfonso VI’s reform of the Mozarabic liturgy, Fernando III’s ecclesiastical head-tax – these changes were concessions more than actual attempts to restructure social relations between religious groups. On the ground, the papacy’s impact on interfaith relations in Castile was minimal.
Chapter II: The Crusading Ideal

Thus far, I have focused on Castilian royal policy toward religious minorities within the realm of Castile itself: Jews and Muslims living under Christian rule. However, Castile also engaged in centuries of warfare, negotiation, and trade with the Muslim polities of al-Andalus. Although the Muslims of al-Andalus did not play a part in Castilian *convivencia*, the ways the Castilian kings engaged their Muslim neighbors reflected more broadly on their attitudes toward religious difference and their willingness to accommodate non-Christians. This chapter will analyze how the Castilian monarchs differed from the papacy and their other foreign allies in their attitudes toward Muslim Iberia and their purpose for engaging in anti-Muslim warfare. It will also explore whether the ideology of crusade had a meaningful influence on how the Castilian kings executed the Reconquest.

Since as early as the ninth century, Iberian Christians expressed the belief that they were the rightful rulers of the peninsula and would eventually, with God’s help, reconquer Iberia from the Muslims.¹ Not until the mid-eleventh century, however, did the shifting balance of power in Iberia give the Christian kings of Castile, Leon, Aragon, and Navarre the opportunity to expand into formerly Muslim territory. The three centuries of Christian expansion into al-Andalus have traditionally been labeled ‘the Reconquest’ in modern historiography. Some scholars, however, have questioned the utility of this term, given that the secular leaders of medieval Christian Spain were more interested in raiding Muslim lands and winning booty than in permanent conquest and settlement, and fought to expand their borders at the expense of their Christian neighbors as often

---

¹ In Asturias, church chroniclers claimed that the Asturian kings were descended from the Visigothic royal line and therefore had a right to the former territories of the Visigothic Spanish kingdom. Joseph O’Callaghan, *Reconquest and Crusade in Medieval Spain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 4-7.
as they fought Muslims.\(^2\) Regardless of whether these military campaigns are framed as a single, unified phenomenon of Reconquest, they undoubtedly transformed Iberian society; Castile in particular went from small, rugged feudal territory in the mid-eleventh century to a wealthy, centralized kingdom spanning most of the Iberian heartland in the mid-thirteenth century.\(^3\)

The military ascendancy of Christian Iberia coincided with the emergence of the crusading ideal in Latin Europe. Although warfare between Christians and Muslims occurred often in the centuries following the emergence of Islam in the seventh century, the concept of the crusade, an armed pilgrimage to liberate formerly Christian territory from Muslim rule, did not develop until the eleventh century. Jonathan Riley-Smith defines a crusade as “an expedition authorized by the pope” in which participants took vows and consequently enjoyed specific privileges, such as remission of sins and protection of their goods and property until they returned.\(^4\) Pope Urban II summoned the First Crusade in 1095, in response to the military aggression of the Seljuk Turks in Byzantine Anatolia and their mistreatment of Christian pilgrims in Jerusalem. Urban’s appeal generated an enthusiastic response from all sectors of Latin Christian society, and in 1099, an army of Christian knights captured Jerusalem from the Turks. Their victory inspired an unprecedented sense of religious unity in Latin Christendom that would drive many more crusades in the subsequent centuries, not only against the Seljuk Turks, but also against other perceived enemies of Christendom, such as the pagan Slavs in Eastern Europe, the Albigensian heretics in Provence, and of course, the Muslims in Iberia.


\(^3\) Compare Maps 1 and 2 in the Appendix.

Thus, for several centuries, Castile’s goal of conquering land and resources from Muslim Iberia overlapped with the papacy’s goal of reestablishing Christian control over formerly Christian lands under Muslim occupation. A number of popes in the eleventh through thirteenth centuries encouraged Christians both native to Iberia and from north of the Pyrenees to participate in military campaigns against the Muslims in Iberia, offering the same spiritual and financial rewards to these warriors as they did to eastern crusaders. Increasingly, the papacy framed these campaigns as crusades on par with those to the Holy Land.

Pope Alexander II established a precedent for papal interference in the war against Iberian Muslims when he encouraged an army of French, Burgundian, and Norman knights to besiege the Muslim stronghold of Barbastro. In a bull issued in 1063 to the clergy of Volturno, the pope assured “those who are determined to set out for Spain” that he would relieve their penance and grant them remission of sins.5 This letter marks the first papal offer to relieve participants in a military expedition of the penance they had earned for their sins, a precursor to the doctrine of indulgence that would be more fully articulated in the twelfth century.6 The wording of the letter suggests that French and Italian knights had already taken the initiative to organize the expedition to Barbastro and that the pope only wished to provide further encouragement. Urban II continued this policy toward Iberia after declaring the First Crusade. While Urban did not formally define warfare against the Iberian Muslims as a crusade, he did reassure Iberian Christians that they would “receive indulgence of sins and participation in life eternal” if they died fighting Islam on their own frontier. Recognizing that the enthusiastic response to the First Crusade threatened to draw

5 “Letters of Pope Alexander II concerning just warfare against the forces of Muslim Iberia (1063-1064)” trans. John S. Ott. The exact location of Volturno has not been identified, but it may have been Castel Volturno in Campania, Italy.
Iberian Christians away from the effort to expel Muslims from their own land, he urged the Iberian aristocracy to direct their attentions locally, asserting: “There is no virtue in delivering Christians from Saracens [in the Holy Land] while exposing Christians here to the tyranny and oppression of the Saracens.”

Calixtus II was the first pope to make explicit Iberia’s legitimacy as a site for crusade. In 1123 he presided over the First Lateran Council, which ratified a number of canons aimed at reforming the church and reducing ecclesiastical abuses. The tenth canon mandated that “those who have put crosses on their clothes, with a view to journeying to Jerusalem or to Spain” must complete the journey within a year or face excommunication, suggesting that the Church considered donning the symbol of the cross to represent a binding oath, regardless of the pilgrim’s destination. That same year, Calixtus reinforced his support of the Iberian crusade in a bull promising Christians who fought against the Muslims in Iberia the same remission of sins as crusaders to the Holy Land. Establishing Iberia as a crusade destination on par with Jerusalem encouraged Iberian Christians to concentrate their military and financial resources on conquering Muslim territory in al-Andalus. Moreover, it motivated French and Italian knights to fight in Iberia as a more accessible alternative to the Holy Land.

Beginning with Clement III, the papacy gave financial as well as spiritual support to the Iberian crusade by authorizing secular rulers to collect ecclesiastical revenues to finance their

---

7 Urban II to the counts Bernat of Basalú, Hugo of Ampurias, Guislabert of Roussillon, and Guillem of Cerdanya and their knights; quoted in O’Callaghan, *Reconquest and Crusade* 33.
8 The canon also specifies that “those who set out for Jerusalem” will receive remission of sins and protection of their property, without mentioning Iberia. This may reflect a belief that the Iberian crusade was still of secondary importance. Norman P. Tanner, “First Lateran Council 1123 AD,” *Papal Encyclicals Online*.
military campaigns. In 1188, Clement III ordered the Iberian clergy to provide financial assistance to the Iberian crusaders. He also called on them to encourage laypeople to make their own financial contributions, authorizing them to grant partial remission of sins to those who donated to the cause.10 At the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, Innocent III imposed a one-twentieth tax on ecclesiastical income to support the Fifth Crusade, as well as exempting crusaders from taxation and cancelling their debts.11 Although the revenues from this tax were specifically intended for the Holy Land, the pope assured the Iberian bishops in attendance that he would also support a war against the Muslims in Iberia, if one were to be undertaken.12

Accordingly, major Christian military campaigns against Muslims in Iberia often involved the collaboration of Christians from both sides of the Pyrenees. Armies composed of both native Iberians and foreign crusaders fought to capture Muslim territory, with the papacy offering spiritual encouragement and financial support. But while they were united by their common enemy, the Iberian Muslims, their attitudes toward this enemy often diverged. After centuries of contact with al-Andalus, Iberian Christians were more familiar with Muslim politics and theology than their ultra-peninsular counterparts, and while they viewed the Muslims as their enemies, they were also willing to engage with them peacefully through trade and diplomacy. In particular, Iberian Christian monarchs cultivated a variety of relationships with their Muslim neighbors in order to advance their political goals: they fought with them, but also accepted them as vassals, collected their tribute, and even allied with them against Christian rivals.

10 O’Callaghan, Reconquest and Crusade 55-6, 156.
11 “We further decree that absolutely all clerics shall, in the aid of the Holy Land and for a period of three years, pay into the hands of those appointed by the Apostolic See for this purpose, one twentieth part of ecclesiastical revenues.” H.J. Schroeder, “Twelfth Ecumenical Council: Lateran IV 1215,” Internet Medieval Sourcebook, Fordham University, March 1996.
12 O’Callaghan, Reconquest and Crusade 78.
This behavior often frustrated the popes, who considered Muslim political power (if not individual Muslims themselves) a threat to the Christian faith, as well as the foreign crusaders, whose religious enthusiasm aroused a stronger enmity toward Muslims and their religion. At the same time, the non-Iberian Christians were not driven solely by ideological motives, and their religious rhetoric often disguised more pragmatic concerns.

The Castilian Kings

Castilian narrative sources from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries suggest that the kings of Castile viewed warfare with the Muslims through the lens of local Iberian politics, as a strategy to expand their realm and advance their political goals. They did not consider themselves at war with Islam, but with specific Muslim polities, and these more because of the political and military threat they posed to Castilian sovereignty than because of their spiritual challenge to the Christian faith. The thirteenth-century Latin Chronicle of the Kings of Castile narrates how King Alfonso VIII “made war on the king of Morocco, whose realm flourished at that time and whose power and great glory was feared by neighboring kings,” a description notable for its lack of reference to religion. Rather than using a pejorative ethnic term such as Saracen or Moor, the chronicler, possibly Bishop Juan of Osma, identifies the Almohad caliph as the “king of Morocco,” emphasizing the specific political context. His claim that “neighboring kings,” rather than Christians specifically, feared the caliph’s power, also disregards the religious dimensions of the conflict and implies that Alfonso VIII was motivated by political concerns rather than religious ideology. Likewise, Fernando III’s declaration of war against the Spanish Muslims is more concerned with personal glory than religious zeal: the king does not wish to waste “the flower of

---

13 Joseph O’Callaghan, trans, The Latin Chronicle of the Kings of Castile (Arizona State University, 2002), 24. The “king of Morocco” referred to is the Almohad caliph Ya’qub ibn Abu Ya’qub Yusuf.
14 For evidence of Juan of Osma’s authorship, see Joseph O’Callaghan’s introduction to the Latin Chronicle, xxx-xxxvii.
[his] youth” or let “the light of royal glory” be extinguished through his inaction. This speech reflects the attitude that a successful king must establish his reputation through military victories.

The Castilian narrative sources also displayed an awareness of internal politics in the Muslim world that set them apart from the rest of Latin Europe. The twelfth-century Chronicle of Alfonso the Emperor records how Zafadola, last king of the Muslim taifa kingdom of Zaragoza, became a vassal of Alfonso VIII. According to the chronicler, Zafadola recognized Alfonso’s greatness and hoped the Castilian king would protect him from the Almoravids, who “had killed all of the descendants of the Spanish Muslims and had taken their kingdom from them.” Travelling to Toledo, he swore fealty to Alfonso and delivered him the city of Rota. While this account most likely idealizes Zafadola’s relationship with Alfonso, its portrayal of a petty Muslim ruler is revealing of Castilian attitudes toward their Muslim neighbors. It not only recognizes the distinction between the Muslims of al-Andalus and the Almoravid invaders from North Africa, but acknowledges that tensions between different factions of the same religion could at times take priority over inter-religious conflict.

In this chronicle, the primary conflict is not with Islam as an ideology, but with the Almoravids, whose political ascendancy in the peninsula posed a military threat to Castile. Meanwhile, Muslims like King Zafadola could be peacefully integrated into the Christian political hierarchy, so long as they subordinated themselves to Castilian royal authority. Notably, the Chronicle deemphasizes Zafadola’s religious beliefs in order to stress his common political interests with King Alfonso. Zafadola declares: “[Alfonso] will be lord over all the Moors, because God is his Deliverer and his Helper” – a line that focuses attention on his monotheism, rather than

---

15 O’Calaghan, Latin Chronicle 88.
his ‘infidel’ Muslim beliefs, and so makes him more acceptable to a Christian audience. This is most likely a strategy to justify Alfonso’s alliance with a Muslim lord, suggesting that while the Castilian kings felt few qualms about accepting Muslim tribute and vassalage, such behavior would have elicited a level of discomfort from other elements of Castilian society.

The *Latin Chronicle of the Kings of Castile* employs a similar strategy in describing Abu Muhammad of Baeza and Abu Zayd of Valencia, two Muslim petty kings who offered their allegiance to Fernando III. The author’s portrait of the king of Baeza, who “became [Fernando’s] vassal and faithfully adhered to him until death,” lacks any religious or ethnic descriptors. By contrast, he recalls how Abu Zayd “like a vile apostate” violated his oath of fealty to Fernando.17 When Muslims betrayed or subverted the Castilian kings, royal chroniclers attributed their moral failings to their identity as Muslims. But those same chroniclers downplayed that identity when they wished to make Muslim figures more acceptable to a Christian audience, thus justifying the Castilian monarchy’s tendency to ally with Muslims.

While Castilian narrative sources described a nuanced royal policy toward Iberian Muslims that allowed for political negotiation and even alliance as well as military aggression, Castilian rulers themselves sometimes employed more ideological rhetoric when talking about their Muslim enemies. After his decisive victory over the Almohads at the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212, Alfonso VIII sent a detailed account of the battle to Pope Innocent III. The letter was steeped in the religiously charged language of crusade, with Alfonso recalling how the combined army of Castilian, Aragonese, and Naverrese troops “armed and set out in God’s name, in full array, to do battle with [the Saracens] for the Catholic faith,” defeating a much larger force by virtue of divine assistance: “The battle of the Lord was triumphantly won, by God alone and through God alone.”18

17 O’Callaghan, *Latin Chronicle* 94.
The king presented himself and his allies as united in their Christian faith: not Castilians, Aragonese, Navarrese, and French, but an “army of God” resisting the religious error of Islam both physically and spiritually.

It is impossible to determine whether and to what degree Alfonso sincerely felt these religious sentiments, but there was undoubtedly a strategic aspect to his employment of crusading rhetoric. Papal support was a valuable resource for Castile as it executed its military campaigns: Pope Innocent III, by declaring the campaign a crusade and offering remission of sins to participants, had been instrumental in encouraging French troops to march to Alfonso’s aid. Indeed, Alfonso was selective in the information he gave the pope. Describing how his army took the Muslim-held fortress of Calatrava, the king claimed: “The Saracens inside negotiated about surrendering the place to us, on condition that they should be allowed to leave unharmed, although without their belongings. We were unwilling to accept any such arrangement.”19 In fact, Alfonso spared the lives of Calatrava’s Muslim inhabitants after they surrendered, a decision which caused conflict with the non-Spanish troops and ultimately contributed to their defection from the campaign.20 Admitting this, however, would have undermined Alfonso’s narrative of Christian unity, as well as opening himself up to criticism from the pope for negotiating with Muslims.

The Papacy

At first glance, the medieval papacy held to a firm and uncompromising view of Islam as a military and spiritual threat to Christendom, with papal rhetoric portraying Muslims universally as enemies of the Christian faith that must be destroyed or, at the very least, driven out of formerly Christian lands. In a bull credited to Calixtus II from 1140, the pope attempted to mobilize support for the Iberian crusade by emphasizing the cruelty of the Muslims and their inherent animosity

19 Smith, *Christians and Moors in Spain* 17.
20 Smith, *Christians and Moors in Spain* 15.
toward Christians. He lamented the “many evils and calamities and sufferings” inflicted on Iberian Christians by the Muslims, including churches destroyed, clergy murdered, and Christians killed or sold into slavery, before calling on the whole of Latin Christendom to “attack the Saracens” in Iberia.²¹ Likewise, at the Fourth Lateran Council, Innocent III referred to Muslims as “the enemies of the faith” and “enemies of Christ” and excommunicated any “false and ungodly Christians” who engaged in commerce with them.²² This rhetoric emphasized the universal dimensions of the conflict between Christendom and the Muslim world: Islam was not only a threat to Christian individuals or Christian realms, but to Christianity as a belief system and a civilization.

The twelfth-and-thirteenth-century popes viewed warfare against the Iberian Muslims not in local terms, as a conflict between Castile, Aragon, Navarre, or Portugal and the Almohad caliphate, but as a single front in a larger war between Latin Christendom and the nonbelievers that threatened its borders. As a result, they had little patience for the Christian kingdoms of Iberia and their flexibility in dealing with their Muslim neighbors. In particular, they deplored the tendency for these kingdoms to ally with Muslims against each other. In a bull issued in 1175, Pope Alexander III threatened any Spanish king who made an alliance with the Muslims with excommunication and interdiction.²³ Likewise, Celestine III lamented that while the rest of Christendom stood united in its opposition to Islam, only the Spaniards continued to ally with Muslims, and he demanded that the Christian kings make peace for ten years so that they could form a united front against the Muslims.²⁴ His appeal was largely in vain: in 1196, Alfonso IX of Leon formed an alliance with the Almohad caliph. With his army reinforced by Almohad troops,

²¹ Smith, Christians and Moors in Spain 163.
²³ O’Callaghan, Reconquest and Crusade 56.
²⁴ O’Callaghan, Reconquest and Crusade 60.
he invaded Castile, ravaging the region of Trasiera and briefly besieging Toledo. In response, Celestine III excommunicated Alfonso IX, absolving the Leonese people of their loyalty to their king and offering them crusading privileges if they took up arms against him. This pressure ultimately convinced Alfonso IX to come to terms with Castile. But while papal pressure occasionally succeeded in unifying Iberian Christians, these alliances were temporary and could quickly disintegrate if the rulers found it politically expedient.

However, it would be a mistake to assume that papal motivations for encouraging crusade in Iberia were solely grounded in religious conviction. Their concerns were more universal than those of secular Christian rulers such as the Castilian kings, but that does not mean they lacked a political dimension. As discussed in the previous chapter, the papacy in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries claimed authority over all aspects of Christian society, temporal as well as spiritual. There were a number of reasons why the papacy might have felt the expansion of the borders of Christendom would also enhance its own power and influence. Military victories over the Muslims reaffirmed popular conviction in the truth of the Christian faith, which resulted in greater public support for the pope. Moreover, the conquest of Muslim land meant the establishment of new churches and episcopal sees that answered to Rome. Just as secular rulers like Alfonso XIII used crusading rhetoric strategically to secure papal support for their military objectives, it is likely that the popes themselves employed ideologically-charged anti-Muslim rhetoric to advance their political interests.

Moreover, while popes such as Alexander III and Celestine III criticized the Christian kingdoms of Iberia for negotiating, trading, and allying with Muslims, the papacy could be more flexible in its dealings with the Muslim world than its rhetoric would suggest. For example,

---

Innocent III was known for his militant determination to liberate formerly Christian territories from Muslim rule; his encouragement was instrumental in the success of the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa, a decisive victory that tipped the balance of power in the Iberian Peninsula in favor of the Christians. At the same time, Innocent demonstrated a willingness to engage with Muslims through diplomacy as well as force of arms to achieve his goals.

In 1199, he wrote to the Almohad caliph Muhammad al-Nasir on behalf of the Trinitarian Order, a religious order founded for the purpose of ransoming Christians held captive by Muslims. Addressing the caliph respectfully as the “illustrious king of Morocco,” Innocent assured him that the Trinitarians were unarmed and peaceful, and requested that he permit them to enter his realm in order to ransom Christian captives.27 Innocent also corresponded with Malik al-Zahir al-Ghazi, the sultan of Aleppo, praising him for his fair treatment of Christians in his realm and entreat ing him to protect the Latin patriarch of Jerusalem from Bohemond, Prince of Antioch, who had imprisoned him – an unusual case of a pope asking a Muslim ruler for aid against another Christian.28 Innocent adapted his attitude toward Muslims to the circumstances, demonstrating that popes during the crusader period could often be more pragmatic in their relations with the Muslim world than their bulls and letters suggested.

**Foreign Crusaders**

Throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, many French, English, and Italian knights travelled across the Pyrenees to participate in the crusade against Muslims in Iberia. Fired by the pope’s religiously-charged rhetoric of martyrdom and salvation, some foreign crusaders saw

---


28 Cipollone, “Innocent III and the Saracens” 370.
themselves as religious pilgrims fighting to uphold the glory of Christ and his Church by destroying nonbelievers, in order to obtain salvation. At the same time, many crusaders had more practical motivations, seeing the expedition to Iberia as an opportunity to enrich themselves through plunder. Regardless of their motives, their violent and unruly behavior sometimes brought them into conflict with their Iberian allies.

The 1064 assault on Barbastro illustrated how foreign crusaders differed from Iberian Christian military leaders in their attitude toward Muslims. In order to “assist the spread of the Christian faith and destroy the hateful folly of the Saracens,” an army of French, Burgundian, and Norman knights travelled to Iberia under the leadership of the Norman mercenary Robert Crespin.29 According to the Italian Benedictine monk Amatus of Monte Cassino, “God’s faithful secured victory and a great number of the Saracens were killed.”30 Contemporary Muslim sources expressed shock and horror at their treatment of the conquered population, which had surrendered to the conquering army. The Muslim chronicler al-Bakri wrote: “They massacred the men and took a countless number of Muslim children and women as prisoners.”31 This violence set the French crusaders apart from native Iberian Christians, who more frequently allowed Muslims in conquered territories to depart peacefully, often even retaining their property.

Of course, it would be an overstatement to claim that Crespin and his band of mercenary knights were driven by a pious desire to defend Christendom against its enemies. While they clearly felt a great deal of animosity toward the Muslim inhabitants of Barbastro, it seems to have been grounded less in religious ideology than a base hatred of the outsider, heightened by the excitement of battle and a lack of military discipline. An even stronger motivation seems to have

29 Smith, Christians and Moors in Spain 85.
30 Smith, Christians and Moors in Spain 85-87.
31 Charles Melville and Ahmad Ubaydli, Christians and Moors in Spain: Volume III (Wiltshire: Aris & Phillips, 1992), 71. Charles Smith estimates that some 50,000 Muslims were killed or taken captive.
been greed. Amatus of Monte Cassino wrote that “[Barbastro] was very extensive, full of enormous wealth.” Al-Bakri stated more bluntly: “[The French] gained so many goods and possessions in Barbastro that it beggars description,” recalling how the Christian knights enslaved five thousand beautiful Muslim virgins. In fact, Amatus of Monte Cassino blamed the greed and lustfulness of the Christian soldiers for their eventual loss of the city to the amir of Saragossa: “The knights gave themselves over to the love of women, and Christ was angered. So, for their sins, they lost what they had won, and were defeated by the Saracens.” The picture that emerges from these contemporary narratives is not one of devout Christians zealously defending their religion against the infidel, but of an unruly band of mercenaries eager for battle and plunder.

In their ruthless treatment of non-Christians, the crusaders diverged not only from the policies of the Castilian rulers, but also from the papacy. In a letter composed in 1064, Pope Alexander II praised the Iberian bishops for protecting local Jews “so that they would not be annihilated by those who had set out against the Saracens in Spain,” implying that the crusader army had attacked Jewish communities on their march to Barbastro. Alexander condemned this anti-Jewish violence, since church doctrine protected Jews living under Christian rule and forbade Christians from killing or forcibly converting them. In his letter, Alexander drew on the Augustinian theory of just war to explain why it was acceptable to wage war against the Muslims, but not to kill Jews living peacefully in Christian territories:

The situation of the Jews and the Saracens is completely different. For war is waged justly against those who persecute Christians and expel them from their cities and own homes;

---

32 Smith, Christians and Moors in Spain 85.
33 Melville, Christians and Moors in Spain 71.
34 Smith, Christians and Moors in Spain 87.
these were everywhere created to be enslaved. But [blessed Gregory] even prohibited a bishop who wished to destroy [the Jews’] synagogue [from doing so].

This passage illustrates an important distinction between the papacy’s position on Muslims and Jews, which was grounded in official Church doctrine, and the more zealous attitudes of many of the crusaders, especially those from north of the Pyrenees. The pope was not concerned with the mere existence of non-Christians, but with the political and military aggression of non-Christian states. Violence against Muslims in Iberia and the Holy Land was justified because they had conquered formerly Christian territory and were ruling over Christians. Because the Jews did not wield political power, Judaism did not pose the same existential threat to Christian society as Islam. In the case of Jews (and presumably Muslims) subordinated to Christian rule, Christians should encourage them to convert through preaching and theological debate, but not commit violence against them. The crusaders, however, often did not comprehend the nuances of this justification, grounded as it was in theology and ecclesiastical doctrine. Roused by tales of Muslim atrocities against the Christian faithful in Iberia and the Holy Land, they considered all non-Christians to be acceptable targets of violence.

On the other hand, not all foreign soldiers who travelled to Iberia to fight against the Muslims were disorganized bands of mercenaries. The city-states of southern Italy organized several military campaigns against Iberian Muslims, including the Genoese assault on the port city of Almería in 1147. While the expedition was not a formal crusade, Pope Eugene III encouraged the endeavor, which occurred at the same time as the Second Crusade to the Holy Land. According to the Italian chronicler Caffaro, the Genoese soldiers were “inspired and called by God through the Holy See” to make the journey to Iberia. At the same time, the Genoese leadership had

---

37 Smith, *Christians and Moors in Spain* 173.
economic motives for conquering Almería: the city served as a base for Muslim piracy, threatening Genoese commercial interests in the Mediterranean. Compared with the ill-fated Siege of Barbastro, the expedition seems to have been relatively well-organized. Caffaro described how the Genoese consuls summoned an army “under appropriate oath” to come to the city equipped with weapons, supplies, and engines of war, suggesting that Genoa had some form of paid standing army.\(^{38}\)

However, the discipline of the Genoese navy would not prevent tensions from arising with the native Iberian leadership, specifically over the latter’s willingness to negotiate with the Muslim enemy. Upon arriving in Spain, the Genoese sent an embassy to Alfonso VII of Castile, who agreed to join them in besieging Almeria. But not long after the siege began, the Muslim inhabitants of Almeria “held a secret parley with the representatives of the emperor [Alfonso VII], agreeing to pay them 100,000 maravedís and more beyond that” if Alfonso would withdraw his troops from the siege. Abandoned by the Castilians, the Genoese launched an attack on the city and managed to capture the citadel on their own.\(^ {39}\) Although the Genoese chronicler does not explicitly condemn Alfonso VII, his description of the Castilian king’s reluctance contrasts sharply with his praise for the courage and valor of the Genoese troops.

Their divergent goals and attitudes would bring the Castilian king into more open conflict with his northern allies in 1212, when Alfonso VIII, with the help of Pope Innocent III and Archbishop Rodrigo of Toledo, recruited magnates from southern France to join him in an assault on the Almohads. Hosts of knights from Poitou, Gascony, and Provence gathered in Toledo, where

\(^{38}\) Smith, *Christians and Moors in Spain* 175.

\(^{39}\) Account from *De captione Almerie et Tortuose* by Caffaro of Genoa, in Smith, *Christians and Moors in Spain* 173-179.
Alfonso drained his treasury to provision them with food, arms, warhorses and beasts of burden.\textsuperscript{40} The expedition began on a successful note, with the combined forces of Castile, Aragon, and Navarre, along with the French crusaders, quickly capturing the Muslim fortress of Malagón. But soon afterward, the French, referred to as \textit{ultramontanes} in the Castilian sources, declared their intent to withdraw from the expedition.\textsuperscript{41} In a letter to Innocent III, Alfonso claimed that the \textit{ultramontanes} found the terrain too difficult, while the \textit{Latin Chronicle of the Kings of Castile} attributed their defection to the excessive heat.\textsuperscript{42}

The Muslim sources, however, provide a different explanation. In \textit{al-Mu’jib}, the Moroccan historian al-Marrakushi wrote:

\begin{quote}
The Muslims surrendered [Calatrava] to Alfonso after he had given them a safe conduct. Thereupon, a large number of the Christians withdrew from Alfonso (may God curse him!) when he prevented them from killing the Muslims who were in the castle. They said, ‘You have only brought us along to help you conquer the country, and forbid us to plunder and kill the Muslims. We don’t have any need of your company.’\textsuperscript{43}
\end{quote}

While this source is obviously biased against the Christians, it seems more likely that the \textit{ultramontanes} withdrew from the campaign due to a conflict with the Castilian leadership than because they could not handle the heat. In fact, this quote neatly encapsulates the conflicting interests of the Castilian king and the French crusaders. For King Alfonso, the expedition was a chance to conquer Almohad territory, expanding the borders of Castile and thereby consolidating

\textsuperscript{40} \textit{The Latin Chronicle of the Kings of Castile} 43-44; Smith 14. In his letter to Innocent III after the battle, Alfonso pointedly remarked that “the costs for us and for our kingdom were extremely heavy on account of the huge numbers involved.”
\textsuperscript{41} The Spanish word \textit{ultramontanes} literally meant “those who come from across the mountains” – in this case, the Pyrenees – but the word also connoted faithful Catholics who advocated the preeminence of papal authority over secular authority.
\textsuperscript{42} Smith, \textit{Christians and Moors in Spain} 17-19 and O’Callaghan, \textit{Latin Chronicle} 46. The author of the \textit{Latin Chronicle} writes that the French withdrawal was a gift from God, so that “the glory of the victory in the famous battle should be attributed to the Spaniards, and not to the ultramontanes,” which contrasts with the picture of Christian unity Alfonso VIII provides Innocent III.
\textsuperscript{43} Melville, \textit{Christians and Moors in Spain} 139.
his own power. Offering reasonable terms to the inhabitants of Calatrava would encourage other Muslim cities to surrender to Castile in the future, making it easier for Alfonso to achieve his goal. But the ultraumontanes were motivated by greed and enmity toward non-Christians – they had come to Iberia, in essence, “to plunder and kill the Muslims” – and they would not understand why their own Christian allies were protecting Muslims. The complaint that “you have only brought us along to help you conquer the country” is telling; the ultraumontanes probably realized that Alfonso was more concerned with winning land and resources for Castile than with fighting infidels.

In contrast to both the Castilian kings and the papacy, the foreign lords and knights that participated in the Iberian crusade seem to have been more hostile toward Muslims and Jews, as well as more uncompromising in their opposition to them. However, it is not necessarily true that this enmity on the part of the northern crusaders reflected a fundamentally intolerant cultural background. While the French and German crusaders would not have been familiar with Muslim politics and theology to the same extent as their Iberian coreligionists, they were not entirely unaccustomed to religious diversity. Since the eleventh century, a number of large, prosperous Jewish communities had settled in the Rhine Valley in Northern France. While Jews in Latin Christendom always lived under the threat of violence, many of these communities received charters from local lords guaranteeing their legal and economic rights, and they engaged in productive commercial relations with local Christians. The crusaders came from a society that offered religious minorities fewer opportunities for social and economic mobility than Iberia, but that does not mean they had never experienced productive interactions with non-Christians.

Rather than attributing crusader violence against Muslims and Jews to cultural differences between Iberia and the rest of the Latin West, it might be more useful to consider the identities of

---

the men who went on military expeditions to Iberia. Thus far, this thesis has largely analyzed the policies and motivations of elite actors, such as kings, popes, and high-ranking members of the clergy. By contrast, the majority of the crusader armies would have consisted of common knights and laypeople. Instead of considering large-scale issues of politics and diplomacy or complex matters of doctrine, they would have had simpler motivations: desire for salvation, fear and hatred of the religious other, and often greed. Moreover, crusading required men to take a formal vow and leave behind their homes for years. As a result of these requirements, the crusades may have self-selected for men either particularly dedicated to the Christian faith, or particularly eager for gold and battle.

**The Influence of Crusade Ideology in Iberia**

Between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, Castilian military campaigns against their Muslim neighbors brought them into frequent contact with Christians from north of the Pyrenees. These interactions occurred on an elite level, with Castilian kings negotiating with the papacy for indulgences and financial assistance, as well as on a more popular level, with Castilian soldiers fighting alongside crusaders. However, it is far from clear that their ultra-Pyrenean allies had a significant impact on how the Castilian kings engaged in warfare with Muslims. As this chapter has established, northern Christians often had pragmatic motivations for their involvement in the Reconquest, such as political self-interest or greed for plunder. Even to the extent that the papacy and foreign armies were motivated by a crusading ideology, historians disagree as to whether that ideology ultimately took root in Castilian society.

Joseph O’Callaghan claims that “Christian [military] success in Spain owed much to papal encouragement,” arguing that papal bulls framing the war against Iberian Muslims as a crusade

---

45 Riley-Smith, *The Crusades* 35-36.
helped implant the idea of spiritual warfare in peninsular society.\textsuperscript{46} It is possible that crusading indulgences encouraged the average Castilian soldier to think of the Reconquest as an opportunity for salvation, rather than simply for glory and plunder. But as we have seen, Castilian royal chronicles through the thirteenth century continued to frame warfare with the Muslims in local and political terms, suggesting a limited impact of the crusading ideal at the elite level. Moreover, Lucy Pick challenges the common claim that the focus of Iberian warfare shifted over the course of the Reconquest from raiding and extracting tribute to permanent conquest. She notes that the Iberian kings remained primarily interested in collecting booty and tribute through the mid-thirteenth century.\textsuperscript{47} It is true that Castile experienced unprecedented military success in the first half of the thirteenth century, but those victories can be explained by political factors – Castile and Leon newly united under Fernando III, in contrast to Almohad instability and infighting – more readily than by some newfound Castilian enthusiasm for crusade.

There is some evidence that Castilian kings became more interested in the permanent conquest and settlement of Muslim lands as the Reconquest progressed. The \textit{Primera crónica general}, a vernacular chronicle produced at the court of Alfonso X in the late thirteenth century, records the last words of the king’s father, Fernando III, to his son: “If you should manage to hold [Castile] in the way in which I leave it to you, then you are as good a king as I; and if you should enlarge it, then you are better than I; if you should lose any of it, you are not as good as I.”\textsuperscript{48} According to this quote, a thirteenth-century Castilian monarch’s success depended not on his ability to raid and extract tribute from the Muslims, but on whether he maintained or expanded the borders of his realm.

\textsuperscript{46} O’Callaghan, \textit{Reconquest and Crusade} 209.
\textsuperscript{47} Pick, \textit{Conflict and Coexistence} 69-70.
\textsuperscript{48} Quoted in Ruiz, \textit{From Heaven to Earth} 142.
However, the influence of the crusading ideal is not the only possible explanation for this shift. Teofilo Ruiz has observed that in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, rural Castilian landowners became increasingly preoccupied with a spatial conception of property, marked by clearly-delineated boundaries and tied to a specific family lineage. He argues that as the Castilian middle class gained a sense of local borders, a parallel notion of territorial sovereignty emerged at the elite level. Where the Castilian king once drew his authority from feudal ties of obligation with his vassal lords, now there was a direct link between the monarch and the land he ruled. Under this new conception of royal sovereignty, territorial expansion became a more important objective for Castilian kings. A number of complex socio-political factors affected the Castilian monarchy’s changing approach to warfare in the thirteenth century, and it is too simplistic to reduce these internal transformations to the influence of foreign ideology.

At the level of royal policy, then, the crusading ideal seems to have been limited in its impact. While Castilian kings occasionally employed crusading rhetoric to secure the support of their ultra-Pyrenean allies, this rhetoric was not reflected in their actions. For the Castilian monarchy, the Reconquest remained a fundamentally secular endeavor – a means to enlarge and enrich the realm of Castile, not to strengthen Christendom.

---

49 Ruiz, *From Heaven to Earth* 83-86.
Chapter III: The Monastics

At first glance, it might seem counterintuitive to discuss the impact of monasticism on royal policy in Castile. Christian monasticism from the outset emphasized asceticism and renunciation of the worldly life: the early-sixth-century Rule of Saint Benedict, which played an influential and enduring role in spreading monasticism throughout the Latin West, described the monastery as a self-contained community organized around a schedule of prayer, study, and labor.\(^1\) This lifestyle prevented Benedictine monks from involving themselves in political affairs to the same degree as the papacy, which claimed authority over both spiritual and temporal matters.

But although they claimed to renounce worldly concerns, the powerful monastic orders of the High Middle Ages cultivated ties with the papacy and feudal aristocracy that let them exert an influence in the political sphere, whether as counselors, clerics, or intellectuals. Moreover, the twelfth and thirteenth centuries witnessed the rise of reformed monastic orders such as the Cistercians, who returned to the austere lifestyle of the original Benedictines; and the mendicants, who entirely rejected the Benedictine model of isolated, communal living, choosing instead to adopt an itinerant lifestyle in urban areas, subsisting entirely off of alms. These movements sought to reconcile monastic spirituality with a new sense of obligation to participate in society, laying the groundwork for more active monastic engagement in the political sphere.

This chapter will analyze three monastic orders that established monasteries in Castile and built ties with the Castilian monarchy from the late-eleventh to mid-thirteenth centuries: the traditional Benedictine monastery of Cluny and the mendicant Dominicans and Franciscan friars. Although these orders enjoyed the approval of the papacy, they did not always share the pope’s interests and methods, and their ability to establish monasteries on Castilian soil enabled the monks

to act more directly in Castile than the pope, and at times to gain a more nuanced understanding
of social and political conditions in Iberia. In order to determine whether the Cluniacs,
Dominicans, and Franciscans influenced convivencia in Castile, it is necessary first to establish
what their goals were in Castile, and what ties they formed with the Castilian monarchy, as well
as other sectors of society, that might have enabled them to achieve those goals.

**Cluniacs**

From its foundation in the early tenth century, the Burgundian monastery of Cluny had
close ties with the papacy. When Duke William I of Aquitaine established Cluny in 909, he
declared the monastery immune from secular and ecclesiastical authority, placing it under the
direct jurisdiction of the Holy See.² Over the following two centuries, the papacy would take an
active role in defending Cluny’s rights. The popes issued multiple charters affirming Cluny’s
exemption from the authority of local lords and bishops and lent the monks vigorous support when
said authorities tried to interfere in their internal affairs.³ Because Cluny depended on the papacy
to confirm its privileges and defend it against lay and ecclesiastical rivals, the monastery developed
a strong sense of loyalty toward the papacy and a cultural orientation toward Rome.⁴

For their part, the reformist popes of the late-eleventh century viewed Cluny as a model for
their future efforts. Under Gregory VII, the papacy sought to liberate church institutions from
temporal lordship and bring them under the full and unrestricted authority of the Apostolic See.
For Gregory and his supporters, Cluny represented the ideal of libertas Romana as a monastic
institution directly subordinated to papal authority and protection.⁵ As such, the objectives of

---
⁴ Cowdrey 108-112.
⁵ Cowdrey 151
Cluny and the papacy tended to align during the eleventh century: both institutions were dedicated to the ideal of a universal church that subordinated secular institutions to its authority.

As discussed in chapter one, the Gregorian reformers demanded complete uniformity of Christian belief and practice as well as perfect obedience to the pope, and as such, the movement had negative implications for religious minorities living in under Christian rule. The new conception of Christendom as “an all-encompassing social order contiguous with the church itself” marginalized Jews, Muslims, and all those who did not acknowledge the pope’s doctrinal authority.6 The Gregorian canonists also laid the intellectual groundwork for the First Crusade, developing a theory of legitimate persecution that justified taking up arms in defense of the Christian faith and redefining the concept of militia Christi to signify a literal army fighting to expand Christendom.7

As a Benedictine monastery, Cluny emphasized a life of contemplation and intercessory prayer over active engagement in society, which inevitably limited its role in promoting the ideals of the Gregorian reform. Nevertheless, the Cluniacs during the eleventh century formed close ties with feudal elites, allowing them to promote the papacy’s interests in the secular realm.8 In particular, Alfonso VI of Castile (d. 1109) built and maintained a strong relationship with Cluny, patronizing the monastery through gifts of land and money and appointing Cluniacs to important ecclesiastical positions in his realm.9 However, Alfonso VI’s personal patronage of the Cluniacs did not necessarily translate to a broader impact of Cluniac ideals on Castilian society, especially

---

regarding the place of Jews and Muslims in Christendom. A closer analysis of this relationship is needed to determine the extent of Cluniac influence on Castilian royal policy.

Relations between Christian Iberia and Cluny were established during the reign of King Sancho III of Navarre, who maintained contact with Abbot Odilo through letters and legates, as part of his efforts to open the Christian kingdoms of Iberia to cultural influences from north of the Pyrenees. His son Fernando I of Castile (d. 1066) strengthened the ties established by his father when he initiated an annual tribute of one thousand gold coins to Cluny, setting the stage for an especially strong relationship between Cluny and the kingdom of Castile. However, it was his son Alfonso VI who channeled the most resources into building ties with Cluny, even as he initiated the conquest and settlement of Muslim Iberia. In addition to doubling his father’s annual gift to Cluny, Alfonso granted numerous Castilian monasteries to the order, and promoted Cluniacs to powerful advisory and ecclesiastical positions: the Cluniac monk Bernard of Sédirac became the first Archbishop of Toledo. Alfonso even married Abbot Hugh’s niece Constance, further cementing his alliance with the Burgundian monastery.

Alfonso’s generosity to Cluny was no doubt motivated largely by his sincere appreciation for Cluny’s monastic customs and his desire for the monks to include him in their liturgy. One of Cluny’s primary functions in the eleventh and twelfth centuries was intercessory prayer, a service greatly desired by lay people concerned for their salvation in the world to come. In return for Alfonso’s patronage, Cluny bestowed intercessory privileges on the Castilian king and his

---

11 Cowdrey, The Cluniacs and the Gregorian Reform 217. Lucy Pick has argued that, contrary to scholarly consensus, Fernando I did not actually give this annual tribute to Cluny. Rather, his son Alfonso VI forged the document attesting to Fernando’s tribute, in order to set a precedent for his own patronage of Cluny. Lucy K. Pick, “Rethinking Cluny in Spain,” Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies 5, no. 1 (2013): 1-17.
descendants surpassing those accorded to any other secular ruler, including the Holy Roman Emperor. At the same time, political considerations most likely also factored into Alfonso’s decision to build ties with Cluny. Unlike native Iberian clerics, the Cluniac monks had no familial ties to the noble houses of Castile, and their monastery depended on Alfonso’s patronage. As such, he could depend on their loyalty as diplomats and advisors.

Some historians also argue that Castile’s alliance with Cluny served to counterbalance the union between the papacy and its rival Aragon, which had accepted papal sovereignty in 1068. While it seems unlikely that Cluny would have made an effective ally against Gregory VII’s pontificate, since the monastery depended on him for its liberty, the Cluniacs were well positioned to serve as envoys between Castile and Rome, representing Castilian royal interests to the pope and smoothing relations between the two parties. During Gregory’s campaign to convince Alfonso VI to adopt the Latin rite in Castile, Abbot Hugh of Cluny served as a mediator between the two men, helping to resolve a brief crisis that arose in 1080 when the pope believed Alfonso to be lax in implementing the orthodox rite. In this manner, the Cluniacs contributed to Castile’s formal abolition of the Mozarabic liturgy, and corresponding shift toward religious uniformity with the rest of Latin Europe.

But while the Cluniacs took an interest in the reform of the Iberian church, there is little evidence that they were concerned with the status of Jews and Muslims in Castile. In fact, Abbot Hugh’s principal goal was to maintain the generous flow of donations from the Castilian royal treasury. Alfonso VI’s annual census of two thousand gold coins was the primary source of funds for the construction of Abbot Hugh’s massive new Romanesque cathedral in France. When

---

13 Bishko, “Liturgical Intercession at Cluny”
14 Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Alfonso VI* 114.
15 See Pick, “Rethinking Cluny in Spain” 11-12; and Williams, “Cluny in Spain” 93.
Alfonso failed to send the census for three years after the conquest of Toledo, Hugh personally travelled to Castile to secure written confirmation of Alfonso’s intention to continue donating to Cluny.\(^\text{17}\) Notably, Alfonso could afford to gift Cluny with such enormous sums of money because of the vast amounts of tribute he exacted from local Muslim *taifas*.\(^\text{18}\) The census that Alfonso offered Cluny almost certainly consisted of dinars, Islamic gold coins inscribed with Arabic script. While the papacy often expressed frustration with the Castilian monarchy’s tendency to negotiate with Muslim rulers, rather than conquering and subjugating them in the name of the Christian faith, the Cluniac abbot clearly had no such qualms when Castile’s economic bargains with Muslims helped him achieve enrich his abbey.

One source does suggest the possibility that the Cluniacs took a more zealous and uncompromising approach to interfaith relations than the Castilian king. In a chronicle of Iberian history composed more than a century later, Archbishop Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada of Toledo describes how Alfonso VI, upon conquering Toledo in 1085, guaranteed the city’s Muslim community the right to maintain their central place of worship. Rodrigo places the blame on the Cluniac Archbishop Bernard of Sédirac and the Burgundian Queen Constance for forcibly converting the mosque into a church, forcing the king to break his word to his Muslim subjects:

> When the King had gone off to León, the Archbishop-elect, with Queen Constanza encouraging him, and with the approval of the Christian troops, entered the chief mosque of Toledo, and having purged it of the filth of Muhammad, set up an altar of the Christian faith, and placed bells in the main tower so that the Christians could be called to worship. When news of this reached the King, he was outraged and deeply grieved, because of the agreement he had made with the Saracens concerning the mosque.\(^\text{19}\)

\(^{17}\) Williams, “Cluny and Spain” 94.

\(^{18}\) Williams, “Cluny and Spain” 94.

For Alfonso, the conversion of the mosque was not a victory for the Christian faith, but an offense to his own personal honor: “Up to this point my trustworthiness was unquestioned; now in other matters I shall not be able to boast of that trustworthiness.”20 His ability to govern effectively depended on his reputation as a just and fair ruler toward all of his subjects, regardless of their religion.

It is tempting to read this passage as evidence that the Cluniacs encouraged Alfonso VI to adopt a less accommodating policy toward religious minorities in Castile. Archbishop Bernard ultimately succeeded in his goal, and the mosque was permanently consecrated as a Christian church, which, the chronicle implies, Alfonso would not have done of his own volition. However, Archbishop Rodrigo’s account cannot be accepted as wholly unbiased. A native of Navarre and a royal chancellor under Alfonso VIII, he would have had good reason to blame the foreign queen and archbishop, rather than the king, for breaking faith with Toledo’s Muslim community. Indeed, it seems hard to believe that Bernard and Constance could have converted the mosque entirely without Alfonso’s awareness or approval.

The account also mentions that Bernard had “the approval of the Christian troops,” presumably Castilians, suggesting that Alfonso’s desire to protect the rights of Toledo’s Muslim community stemmed more from his position as king than from any particular Castilian inclination toward tolerance. Alfonso had an incentive to treat Toledo’s Muslim and Jewish population fairly, since they contributed to the city’s demographic stability and economy, as well as providing the royal treasury with an important source of revenue – a consideration which the average Castilian Christian would not have shared. When the Toledan Muslims (purportedly) released Alfonso from his promise to guarantee their freedom of worship, the king was delighted “that he could have the

---

mosque without any breach of faith” and immediately supported its conversion into a church.\textsuperscript{21} Thus it seems that the central conflict in this incident did not arise from different Castilian and Burgundian cultural attitudes toward religious pluralism, but from the divergent concerns of secular and ecclesiastical authorities within Castile.

In the mid-twelfth century, Cluny began to take a more active pastoral approach to the defense of the Christian faith under Abbot Peter the Venerable. Peter is best known for his polemical writings, which systematically attacked heretics, Jews, and Muslims as threats not only to the Christian religion but to the foundation of Christian society.\textsuperscript{22} The abbot considered it impossible for Jews and Muslims to be integrated into Christian society, and he discouraged secular authorities from protecting Jews or showing them economic favor, arguing that Jews should only exist under Christian rule in an oppressed condition of serfdom.\textsuperscript{23} But while Peter’s polemical writings marked an important shift in the Christian tradition of intellectual engagement with Judaism and Islam, his ideas had a limited impact on Christian society even in France, since his works were read primarily by fellow theologians.

Even if Peter the Venerable had the political clout to convince secular authorities to implement his ideas, it is unlikely he could have done so in Castile, where Cluniac influence had already begun to wane. During the reign of Alfonso VII, Castile drastically reduced its patronage of Cluny: the king decreased the annual tribute from two thousand to two hundred gold coins, and royal gifts offered to the monastery tended to be minor, usually granted to Cluny’s peninsular dependencies rather than Cluny itself.\textsuperscript{24} It is thus apparent that Cluny lacked the institutional

\textsuperscript{21} Constable, \textit{Medieval Iberia} 135.
\textsuperscript{22} Iogna-Prat, \textit{Order and Exclusion} 132-138.
\textsuperscript{23} Peter’s 1147 letter to the crusading king Louis VII of France exemplifies his views on how Christian rulers ought to treat their Jewish subjects: Iogna-Prat, \textit{Order and Exclusion} 280-284.
\textsuperscript{24} Bishko, “Liturgical Intercession at Cluny”
mechanisms to exert a lasting influence on Castile, but rather depended on Alfonso VI’s personal interest to gain a foothold in the kingdom. With Alfonso’s death, Castilian royal interest shifted toward other monastic movements.

**Dominicans and Franciscans**

Emerging in southern Europe in the early thirteenth century, the Dominican and Franciscan Orders offered a new vision of monastic life in response to changing social and economic conditions in Europe. In contrast to the decadent and often corrupt secular clergy, the Dominicans and Franciscans embraced a life of poverty and subsisted exclusively on alms. At the same time, Dominican and Franciscan monasticism did not entail withdrawal from the world, but instead demanded active engagement with lay society, especially with the increasingly important world of the town and marketplace.25 Their dedication to remaining in the world as preachers and proselytizers, as well as their commitment to orthodoxy, made the mendicant friars ideal agents to carry out the pope’s fight against heresy.

The Dominican Order was founded in 1215 by Dominic of Caleruega, a Castilian priest sent by Pope Innocent III to convert the Cathar heretics in the Languedoc region of southern France. Dominic’s community of mendicant preachers received papal approval at the Fourth Lateran Council, and soon built the institutional capacity to spread throughout Christendom, teaching, missionizing, and fighting heresy.26 The Franciscans, on the other hand, were not initially conceived as preachers or inquisitors; their founder, Francis of Assisi, emphasized complete poverty and simplicity of life, and wished to remain independent of the clerical establishment.

---


Nonetheless, the Franciscan ideal of witnessing the truth of the Christian faith to nonbelievers proved useful to church authorities. Honorius III formally recognized the Franciscans in 1216, and within a decade, the order had become a permanent institution within the church.\(^{27}\) When Pope Gregory IX established the Inquisition, a judicial institution that operated outside the diocesan hierarchy to prosecute heresy, in 1227, he employed Dominicans and eventually Franciscans to carry out the project.\(^{28}\) The mendicant orders were thus from their inception bound closely to the church’s efforts to impose doctrinal uniformity and stamp out internal dissent.

But while the Inquisition had technical jurisdiction only over heretics – Christians who had rejected the authority of the church – the Dominicans and Franciscans would soon turn their intellectual energies to combatting theological error outside of the church. Since the early Middle Ages, Jews had been officially tolerated within Christian society on the basis of Augustine’s doctrine of witness. According to Augustine, the Jews should be permitted to live in Christian lands because they preserved and transmitted Old Testament scriptures, which bore witness to the truth of the Christian faith, even if the Jews themselves did not realize it.\(^{29}\) This long-accepted stance toward Judaism began to shift in the thirteenth century, when Christian theologians became more familiar with Jewish post-biblical rabbinic texts, such as the Talmud and Midrashim, and used them to argue that Judaism had abandoned its biblical roots and become no better than heresy. This new Christian understanding of Jewish belief and practice challenged the basis upon which Jews had traditionally existed in Christian society.\(^{30}\)

---


\(^{28}\) Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews* 44-46


The Dominicans and Franciscans spearheaded the church’s efforts to rebrand contemporary Judaism as heretical. In 1239, when Pope Gregory IX learned from a Jewish convert that the Talmud contained “matter so abusive and so unspeakable that it arouses shame in those who mention it,” he ordered the prelates and rulers of France, England, and Iberia to seize Jewish books and turn them over to the Dominican and Franciscan friars for inspection. Gregory instructed the friars to burn those books in which they found theological errors: “By Apostolic Power, and through use of ecclesiastical censure, you will silence all opponents.” While only the pious King Louis IX of France followed the pope’s instructions, the burning of the Talmud in Paris in 1242 set a dangerous precedent for Christian intrusion into Jewish internal affairs.

It is generally accepted among scholars of Jewish history that in the mid-thirteenth century, the Christian Church launched an unprecedented missionizing assault on European Jews, with the mendicant friars at the helm. For the first time, Christian preachers and polemicists did not merely wish to confirm the truth of the Christian faith for their own community, but actively sought to convert Jews. On the surface, the evidence of mendicant activity in the Iberian Peninsula bears out this assumption. The Christian kingdoms of Iberia presented an ideal environment for Dominicans and Franciscans seeking to confront the spiritual errors of non-Christians, since they could proselytize to large, prosperous Jewish and Muslim communities.

Iberian mendicants like the Aragonese Dominican Raymond de Peñafort pushed for more direct engagement with Jews and Muslims through preaching and debate. They entered synagogues, where they interrupted worshippers in order to proselytize, and held public debates

---

34 Chazan, *Daggers of Faith* 29-30.
with respected Jewish authorities, the most famous being the disputation between Dominican Friar Pablo Christiani and Rabbi Moses Nahmanides held at Barcelona in 1263. The Iberian mendicants also emphasized learning foreign languages, such as Hebrew, Arabic, and Aramaic. Raymond de Peñafort founded missionary schools to teach Arabic and Hebrew in Murcia, Jativa, Valencia, and Barcelona; and likewise, the Mallorcan Franciscan Raymond Llull learned Arabic and encouraged the pope to promote Arabic studies. These mendicants argued that only by understanding the languages and beliefs of the infidels could Christian missionaries effectively convert them to the true faith.

If the Dominicans and Franciscans did in fact hold the conversion of Jews and Muslims to be their central goal in Iberia, then their missionizing activities would likely have had some impact on Castilian convivencia, at least at the popular level. The social hierarchy in medieval Castile depended on the legal guarantees that Jews and Muslims could practice their religious traditions and autonomously govern their own communities – in essence, that they could continue to exist within the realm of Castile as Jews and Muslims. The Siete Partidas, a law code compiled during the reign of Alfonso X, established Jews and Muslims as legitimate, if subordinate, subjects of the Castilian Crown: “Jews should pass their lives among Christians quietly and without disorder, practicing their own religious rites,” and “Moors shall live among Christians by observing their own law and not insulting ours.” A concerted attempt on the part of the mendicant friars to convert Castilian Jews and Muslims would have undermined the stability of this arrangement, since the missionizing project was grounded in the belief that Jews and Muslims had no legitimate

place in Christian society. Moreover, their integration into populated urban areas, as well as their tendency to preach in the vernacular, in language accessible to lay people, meant that the mendicants were well positioned to exert a broad influence on Castilian Christian society.\textsuperscript{38} Their preaching could have contributed to a rise in anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim sentiment.

However, all of these speculations depend on the assumption that the mendicant orders engaged in major missionizing activities in Castile. Recently, some historians have questioned this claim, arguing that there is almost no evidence for mendicant missionizing to Castilian Jews and Muslims in the thirteenth century.\textsuperscript{39} The missionary activities that did occur were mostly concentrated in Aragon, and even there, the work of a few prominent mendicant preachers and polemicists like Raymond de Peñafort, Raymond Martini, and Raymond Llull cannot be assumed to reflect the broader activities of the Dominican and Franciscan Orders.\textsuperscript{40} Moreover, Harvey Hames has argued that the majority of mendicant anti-Jewish activities were not conversionary in purpose, but rather were intended to reinforce the faith of a Christian audience. Hames distinguishes between public disputations and polemics like Raymond Martini’s \textit{Pugio fidei}, intended to strengthen Christian identity, and sermons addressed directly to Jews and Muslims, which were genuinely missionizing in nature. The latter, he argues, were only a secondary element in the mendicant program.\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{38} Cohen, \textit{The Friars and the Jews} 244.
\textsuperscript{39} “One of this study’s more surprising findings is the apparent absence in Northern Castile of a transition toward a practical application of argumentative strategies developed by Christian polemicists to counter the unbelief of Jews and Muslims.” Maya Soifer Irish, \textit{Jews and Christians in Medieval Castile} (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press, 2016), 79.
It is possible that the Dominicans and Franciscans engaged in some degree of missionizing to the Jews and Muslims of Castile, but that evidence for these activities has not survived in the documentary sources. But even if the mendicant orders attempted to convert Castilian Jews and Muslims in the thirteenth century, it is unlikely that the Castilian kings would have supported their efforts. In general, the mendicants enjoyed the support of the Castilian monarchs in founding their convents. Ten Dominican convents had been established in Castile by 1250, as opposed to only four in Aragon, four in Portugal, and one in Navarre.42 The rapid expansion of the Dominican Order in Castile can be partially attributed to the large number of bustling urban centers like Burgos, Zamora, and Palencia, but no doubt royal willingness to defend their rights was also a factor. In 1222, Fernando III issued a decree granting the Dominicans royal protection, an action repeated by his successors; and Alfonso X several times intervened in favor of the Dominicans when they disputed with secular or ecclesiastical rivals.43

Still, neither Fernando III nor Alfonso X ever lent their support to mendicant anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim polemical or missionizing activities. To the contrary, Alfonso X forbade Christians to deface synagogues or disrupt Jews at their worship, since “a synagogue is a place where the name of God is praised,” reaffirming the Jewish community’s right to practice their religion without interference.44 He also declared it unlawful to “place any hindrance in the way of the Jews while they are performing their devotions,” which could have limited the ability of the mendicant friars to enter synagogues in order to proselytize.45 In fact, it is possible that Jewish

44 Burns, Las Siete Partidas 1434.
45 Burns, Las Siete Partidas 1434.
complaints about this sort of behavior to the king contributed to the inclusion of this provision in
the royal law code.

By contrast, King Jaime I of Aragon convened and presided over the Barcelona disputation
between Pablo Christiani and Moses Nahmanides in 1263, compelling Nahmanides to attend and
(unsurprisingly) declaring Christiani the winner at the end of the debate.46 Within a month of the
disputation, Jaime issued decrees ordering the Jews of Aragon to attend Dominican sermons and
instructing the Dominican friars to confiscate Jewish books containing blasphemous material.47
Jaime’s open support of Dominican anti-Judaism has been taken as evidence that the Iberian
Peninsula was the main front of the thirteenth-century Church’s spiritual war against Jews and
Muslims.48 But when compared with the Castilian kings, Jaime I appears as the exception rather
than the rule. Jaime’s policies can be attributed to his individual piety, or to the personal influence
of his confessor, Raymond de Peñafort, more readily than to broader religious or political trends
in the Iberian Peninsula.

As for the Castilian kings, their financial ties to the realm’s Jews and Muslims provide the
most likely explanation for their lack of interest in supporting mendicant missionizing. As
discussed in chapter one, the Castilian monarchy claimed exclusive sovereignty over the Jews and
Muslims of the kingdom, a claim that only strengthened with Alfonso VIII’s articulation of their
status as servi regus in the late twelfth century.49 While Castile’s Christian subjects often
recognized the sovereignty of numerous different actors, including bishops, local lords, and,

46 An anonymous Latin scribe wrote: “Moses, called Master, a Jew, had been summoned from Gerona by
the lord King himself at the instance of the Preaching Friars.” Nahmanides himself recalled after the fact:
“Our lord the king commanded me to debate with Frai Pul before him and his council in his palace in
Barcelona.” “The Barcelona Disputation of 1263,” trans. Hyam Maccoby and Nina Caputo, in Constable,
Medieval Iberia 328-338.
48 Chazan, Daggers of Faith 4-5.
49 Soifer Irish, Jews and Christians in Medieval Castile 28.
increasingly in the thirteenth century, municipal town councils, Castilian Jews and Muslims paid tribute only to the king, unless he chose to grant their taxes to other lords. For the Castilian kings, the large-scale conversion of the realm’s Jews and Muslims would have meant the loss of a reliable source of income. As a result, they would have viewed mendicant missionizing not as an admirable attempt to spread the Christian faith, but as a threat to their economic privileges.

At the same time, elements of Alfonso X’s law code *The Siete Partidas* suggest a heightened level of Christian animosity and suspicion toward religious minorities. Jews were warned against “speaking ill of the faith of Our Lord Jesus Christ,” a potential pretext for censoring Jewish books, since the Dominicans and Franciscans claimed that the Talmud and other rabbinic texts contained blasphemies against Christ. The *Partidas* also forbade Jews from attempting to convert Christians to Judaism on punishment of death. The fear of Jewish proselytism, first promoted by the Inquisition early in the thirteenth century, thus gained official status in Castilian law. Additionally, the *Siete Partidas* acknowledged that rumors of Jewish ritual murder had begun to circulate in Castile:

> We have heard it said that in some places Jews celebrated, and still celebrate Good Friday, which commemorates the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ, by way of contempt; stealing children and fastening them to crosses, and making images of wax and crucifying them, if they cannot obtain children.

Alfonso X went on to decree that any such cases should be brought before himself to judge; only if he declared the perpetrator guilty would they be punished. The cautious tone of this provision suggests that Alfonso did not take ritual murder accusations very seriously, but wished to regulate them within a legal framework to prevent the outbreak of anti-Jewish violence. Nonetheless, the

---

50 Soifer Irish, *Jews in Christians in Medieval Castile* 88-89.
51 Burns, *Las Siete Partidas* 1433.
52 Burns, *Las Siete Partidas* 1433.
53 Burns, *Las Siete Partidas* 1433.
fact that he felt the need to address the issue demonstrates that northern European anti-Jewish stereotypes had begun to take root in Castile. Contemporary manuscripts such as the *Cantigas de Santa María*, produced at the court of Alfonso X, often invoked themes of Jewish violence and animosity toward Christians, with illustrations portraying Jewish figures with stereotyped hooked noses and grimacing mouths.54

It is possible that the influx of Dominican and Franciscan friars into Castile in the mid-thirteenth century played a role in this cultural shift, especially since, as already noted, their simple, straightforward preaching style let them transmit their message to a wide audience. But the mendicant friars could not have integrated themselves so successfully into the Castile’s growing urban centers unless their spiritual message resonated with the Castilian laity. In particular, the mendicants tended to interact with Christian merchants and traders, whose commercial activities brought them into direct economic competition with Jews. The Castilian middle class’s resentment toward their prosperous Jewish neighbors would have made them receptive to anti-Jewish sermons. Thus it seems that by the thirteenth century, the impetus to restrict the rights of religious minorities, or even to convert them, was present in Castilian society, as in the rest of Latin Europe. However, royal law protected Jews and Muslims, keeping these pressures at bay. Eventually, as royal protections waned, so did the status of non-Christians in Castile.

Conclusion

In 1391, widespread anti-Jewish sentiment erupted in riots that swept across Castile, leading to horrific violence against the kingdom’s Jewish population. In the wake of these riots, more than half of the Jews in Castile converted to Christianity in order to escape the continued threat of persecution. But these recent converts, or *conversos*, struggled to integrate into Christian society, with many Christians doubting the sincerity of their conversion.¹ In particular, public suspicion fell on Castile’s remaining Jews, who were accused of attempting to draw their former coreligionists back to the faith. The Catholic Monarchs Fernando and Isabel established an Inquisition to prosecute false converts, and restricted Castilian Jews to designated Jewish quarters in an attempt to limit interactions between Jews and *conversos*.² Yet these measures were apparently not enough: on March 31, 1492, Fernando and Isabel issued a charter expelling the Jews from their realm “so that there will not be any place where they further offend our holy faith, and corrupt those whom God has until now most desired to preserve.”³ In the wake of Muslim uprisings in response to forced conversion in Granada, the Catholic Monarchs issued another edict expelling Muslims from Castile and Leon.⁴ In this sense, the modern Spanish nation originated in a violent rejection of its pluralistic history, defining itself around the unifying principle of *un rey, un ley, un fe* – one king, one law, one religion.

Royal persecution of Jews and Muslims rose to a violent crescendo in the fifteenth century, but the policies of Fernando and Isabela were informed by earlier developments in Castilian society. This thesis has turned to the eleventh through thirteenth centuries, often considered the

---

¹ Rawlings, *The Spanish Inquisition* 47-50.
³ “Charter of Expulsion” 511.
height of *convivencia* in Christian Iberia, to seek the root causes of Castile’s eventual turn toward religious intolerance. Specifically, I evaluated the claim that religious institutions from extra peninsular Europe, such as the papacy, crusading armies, and monastic orders, encouraged the Castilian monarchy to adopt a harsher stance toward religious minorities. Ultimately, this thesis determined that ultra-Pyrenean Christians had a limited impact on Castilian royal policy toward Jews and Muslims, and that the influence of foreign cultural mores is not an adequate explanation for the eventual collapse of *convivencia* in Castile.

The argument that ultra-Pyrenean religious institutions promoted intolerance in Castile depends on the assumption that the papacy, crusaders, and monastic orders were dogmatic and fanatical in their approach to the Christian faith, in contrast to the more pragmatic and flexible Castilian kings. This dichotomy falls apart when we analyze the motivations of non-Iberian Christians, revealing them to hold a wide variety of personal, political, and financial motives for their involvement in the peninsula. The papacy sought to regulate Jewish and Muslim tithing in Castile in order to maintain a steady flow of income to the Church, and even apparently ideologically-motivated goals, such as the imposition of doctrinal uniformity and the territorial expansion of Christian Iberia, were tied to the papacy’s efforts to centralize its authority over the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Most foreign crusaders were driven by a desire for glory and plunder, while the Cluniac monks demonstrated more interest in obtaining royal donations and establishing monasteries in Castile than in subjugating Jews and Muslims. Even when ultra-Pyrenean Christians expressed genuine anxiety over the status of Jews and Muslims in Castilian society – such as the pope’s attempts to enforce the dress regulations of the Fourth Lateran Council, or mendicant preaching against the spiritual threat of Jews – their concerns had a limited impact on Castilian royal policy. While the Castilian kings would occasionally make rhetorical concessions
to their ultra-Pyrenean allies, they refused to implement repressive anti-Jewish or anti-Muslim measures that they thought would harm their own interests.

If the deterioration of Jewish and Muslim status in Castile during late medieval period cannot be attributed to outside influences, more likely explanations are to be found in social and economic developments internal to Castile. While a thorough analysis of the structural changes in late-medieval Castilian society is outside the scope of this thesis, I will attempt a few conclusions. Initially, the economic demands of continuous warfare against Muslim Iberia incentivized Castilian kings to adopt accommodating policies toward religious minorities. Needing settlers to populate and defend the expanding frontier with Muslim Iberia, the Castilian kings issued *fueros* to Castile’s Muslim and Jewish communities, granting them legal equality and economic privileges. As the financial costs of their military campaigns became steeper in the twelfth century, the Castilian monarchy asserted an exclusive right to Jewish and Muslim taxes through the *servi regis* doctrine. This created ties of financial obligation between Castile’s Jews and Muslims and the king, which protected them as long as the king needed them as a source of income.

But as the Reconquest came to an end, so did the unique opportunities for Jewish and Muslim land ownership and social mobility that existed on the frontier. *Fueros* were replaced by centralized royal legislation that regulated the place of religious minorities in Castilian society more strictly. At the same time, the growing middle class considered Castile’s prosperous urban Jewry a threat to their commercial interests, and lobbied the king for harsher anti-Jewish laws through the representative assemblies, or *cortes*. The position of Jews and Muslims as “serfs of the king” left them dependent on the monarchy for protection from an increasingly hostile society. Thus, somewhat ironically, warfare between Christians and Muslims in medieval Iberia created
the necessary conditions for *convivencia* in Christian Castile. When that warfare ceased, *convivencia* began to collapse.

For scholars seeking historical evidence for harmonious interfaith relations, this argument might seem disheartening. It feels more optimistic to imagine a culture of genuine tolerance in medieval Castile, even if it eventually yielded to the influence of foreign fanaticism, than to accept that Castilian kings only protected religious minorities because they found it politically and economically advantageous to do so. But rather than blame religious persecution on the nebulous concept of culture, it might be more helpful to acknowledge that in all societies, there is the potential for elite violence against marginalized minorities. Understanding the social and material conditions that lead to this violence is crucial if we wish to more effectively prevent it.
Bibliography

Primary Sources


Tanner, Norman P. “First Lateran Council 1123 A.D.” *Papal Encyclicals Online*.

Secondary Sources


Appendix