



Visigothic Law and the Adversarial Realm in the Kingdom of Asturias: Muslims as the New Jews?

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ABSTRACT

Genealogical claims of Visigothic continuity have long been regarded as the principal legitimization strategy in two late ninth-century Asturian sources, the *Chronica Albeldensia* and the *Chronicle of Alfonso III*. Recent studies suggest that these narratives also rely heavily on the *Lex Wisigothorum* as an anchor of stability as they project sovereignty over the Asturian kingdom's subjects and leverage the political uncertainty of a frontier society. The chronicles reference several external enemies of the kingdom, such as the Basques and the Northmen, but the most detailed treatment is unquestionably afforded to Muslims. Given that the *Lex* defined both the scope of royal power and the limits of its adversarial realm, this essay ponders what the Muslim-dominated periphery may have represented to the Asturian monarchy from the legal standpoint. It further suggests that some traits describing Muslims (e.g. heresy, perversion, perfidy, fraud, astuteness, and deceit) parallel those the *Lex* attributes to the Jews. However, given the extent to which Asturian interaction with Muslims was defined by combat, this reliance on Visigothic law does not necessarily indicate that Muslims would have been thought of as representing mainly a confessional, rather than a political, threat to the Kingdom of Asturias.



ESSAY

The circulation, status, and precise use of the *Lex Wisigothorum* following the dissolution of the Visigothic Kingdom represents an intriguing and complex object of inquiry. This is particularly true with regard to the Kingdom of Asturias (ca. AD 791-910), since this northwestern Iberian center of power has been most strongly associated with Visigothic political continuity, not least because of its self-proclaimed status as the only legitimate Visigothic successor. The earliest of such claims (not to count royal diplomas) are elaborately articulated in two late-ninth-century texts that originate from the kingdom's capital Oviedo and are known as the *Chronicle of Alfonso III* (penned by the king some time before 910) and the *Chronicle of Albelda* (ca. 881-883).¹ These texts stand out boldly amid a corpus of eighth- and ninth-century Christian chronicles and historiographical texts from al-Andalus, the Iberian West, and Gothic Septimania that speak in unison of the cessation of Visigothic political power after 711.²

Recent scholarly analyses of these chronicles have made it increasingly apparent that the claims of the Asturian Kingdom as a natural and undisputed successor of the Visigothic Empire is a result of a series of elaborate narrative ploys aimed at boosting Asturian political legitimacy vis-à-vis the neighboring centers of power.³ One of these narrative

¹ Citations follow *Crónicas asturianas. Crónica de Alfonso III (Rotense y 'A Sebastián'). Crónica Albeldense (y 'Profética')*, ed. Juan Gil Fernández, José Luis Moralejo, and Juan Ignacio Ruiz de la Peña (Oviedo: Universidad de Oviedo, 1985).

² See Georges Martin, "La chute du royaume visigothique d'Espagne dans l'historiographie chrétienne des VIII^e et IX^e siècles," *Cahiers de Linguistique Hispanique Médiévale*, 9 (1984): 208-33.

³ These include Navarre, the county of Barcelona, and the realm of Banū Qāsī (r. 714-924). See, for example, Santiago Castellanos and Iñaki Martín Viso, "The Local Articulation of Central Power in the North of the Iberian Peninsula (500–1000)," *Early Medieval Europe*, 13 (2005): 1-42, esp. 42; Miguel Coll y Alentorn, "Els sucesors de Witiza en la zona nordest del domini wisigothic," *Boletín de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona* 34 (1971–72): 281-307, esp. 287.

strategies consisted in strengthening the appearance of blood ties between the last Visigothic kings and Pelagius (d. 737), a local chieftain whom the chronicles proclaim as the founder of Asturias by virtue of leading the military victory against Muslims at Covadonga in 718 or 722. This, however, would not have been a sufficient legitimization strategy, given that the northeastern Iberian periphery of Asturias was crowded with elites, both Christian and Muslim, that were able to trace their lineage to the Visigoths. The Banū Qāsī of Saragossa, a powerful dynasty that opposed both the Iberian Christian centers of power and the emirate of Cordoba, are a case in point: they were able to claim Visigothic lineage by virtue of the Visigothic origin of Casius, the dynasty's founder, and their multiple intermarriages with local Christian families.⁴

I have argued that this problematic nature of claiming genealogical continuity led to another strategy viewed as equally, if not more, effective in leveraging the uncertainty of a frontier society: proclaiming royal legitimacy as stemming from Asturian kings' exemplary lawkeeping practices conducted in the spirit, if not the letter, of the *Lex Wisigothorum*. This impression was achieved by incorporating the legal provisions of the *Lex*, adapted to the political realities of the ninth-century Iberian northwest, into the portions of the chronicles dedicated to Asturian royal biographies.⁵ Given that the *Lex*

⁴ According to the *Chronicle of Alfonso III*, in 850 Mūsa bin Mūsa, who was a great-grandson of Casius, rebelled against 'Abd-al-Rahman II and crowned his military successes in the Ebro valley by proclaiming himself the third king of Spain', referencing both the emirate of Cordoba and the kingdom of Asturias ("op tante uictorie causam tantum in superuia intumuit, ut se a suis tertium regem in Spania appellare precepit"), *Rot., Ad Seb*, pp. 146–47. On the Banū Qāsī, see Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz, "El tercer rey de España," *Cuadernos de Historia de España* 49/50 (1969): 5–49; Alberto Cañada Juste, "El posible solar originario de los Banū Qāsī," in *Homenaje a Don José María Lacarra de Miguel en su jubilación del profesorado*, 5 vols., ed. José María Lacarra (Zaragoza: Anubar, 1977): 33–47 (esp. 33–38), and Alberto Cañada Juste, "Los Banū Qasī (714–924)," *Príncipe de Viana*, 158–59 (1980): 5–95.

⁵ See Ksenia Bonch Reeves, *Visions of Unity after the Visigoths: Early Iberian Latin Chronicles and the Mediterranean World* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016): 153–94.

defined both the scope of royal power and the limits of its adversarial realm, this essay ponders what the Muslim-dominated periphery may have represented to the Asturian monarchy from the legal standpoint.

The narrative model for the Asturian chronicles can be found in the *Titulus Primus*, the portion of the *Lex* that summarizes Visigothic political law and defines the Visigothic concept of peace in its political and transcendental dimensions. Its circulation is attested singularly in Asturias, León, and Galicia by the early tenth century.⁶ As put forth by the Fourth Council of Toledo (633), peace in the *Titulus Primus* was understood as civil concord between the king and his subjects, which served as a foundation of the kingdom's eternal permanence. The *Pax Visigothica* was valued as a tool that allowed the king to suppress internal seditions and defeat enemies external to the kingdom (*externae gentes*): "And therefore [the king] destroys external enemies, in order to have his own people in peace. For just as from the moderation of the princes laws are born, victories over the enemies are born from the peace among peoples."⁷

Since the *Lex Wisigothorum* defined both the scope of royal power and the limits of the adversarial realm, the task of royal legitimation in Asturian chronicles also involved

⁶ Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz, "La *Lex Visigothorum* y sus manuscritos," *Anuario de la Historia del Derecho Español* 46 (1976): 178, 185, 218-21; Yolanda García López, *Estudios críticos y literarios de la 'Lex Visigothorum'* (Alcalá: Universidad de Alcalá, 1996): 129 and 142. See also Bonch Reeves, *Visions of Unity*, 170-84.

⁷ "Experimentum enim naturalis est rei, ut justitia illa confodiat, hostem quae tutavit principem et externam perliminet litem unde suorum internato possederit pacem." *Titulus Primus* "De electione Principum," Law III, in *Los Códigos españoles concordados y anotados*, ed. Joaquín Francisco Pacheco and Fermín de la Puente y Apezechea, 12 vols. (Madrid: Rivadeneyra, 1847-51), vol. I (1847), LXXVIII. Cf. IV Council of Toledo (AD 633, cl. LXXV); V Council of Toledo (636, cls II-VII); VI Council of Toledo (638, cls XII-XVIII), in *Concilios visigóticos e hispano-romanos*, ed. José Vives et al. (Madrid: CSIC, 1963): 219-21, 227-30, and 241-45.

defining internal and external challengers to royal power. Some of the examples of the latter include the Basques (*uasconum feritate*)⁸ and the Northmen (“gens antea nobis incognita, gens pagana et nimis crudelisima”).⁹ According to the chronicles, Asturian kings who rule in the spirit of the *Lex* respond to external threats to the kingdom with ferocity, military might, bravery, and authority, as does Alfonso I:

(1) The audacity of the enemies was always suppressed by him. With his brother Fruela, by moving his forces he captured many cities by war [...] castles with villages and hamlets, killing additionally all Arabs by sword, and leading Christians with him to his homeland.¹⁰

(2) Often the audacity of Arabs was suppressed by him. The following actions speak to the extent of his grace, virtue, and authority: together with his brother Froila, he waged a lot of wars against the Arabs and captured many cities that had previously been occupied by them [...] and all castles with their villages and hamlets, killing besides all Arabs who had occupied them and leading Christians with him to his homeland.¹¹

⁸ *Chronica Albeldensia*, 176.

⁹ *Chronicle of Alfonso III, Rot.*, 142.

¹⁰ “Inimicorum ab eo semper fuit audacia comprehensa. Qui cum Froilane sepius exercitu mobens multas ciuitates bellando cepit [...] castris cum uillis et uiculis suis, omnes quoque Arabes gladio interficiens, Xpianos autem secum ad patriam ducens.” *Chronicle of Alfonso III, Rot.*, 130 and 132.

¹¹ “Arabum sepe ab eo fuit audacia compressa. Iste quante gratie uel uirtutis atque auctoritatis fuerit, subsequencia acta declarant: simul cum fratre suo Froilane multa aduersus Sarracenos prelia gessit atque plurimas ciuitates ab eis olim oppressas cepit [...] et cunctis castris cum uillis et uiculis suis; omnes quoque Arabes occupatores supra dictarum ciuitatum interficiens Xpianos secum ad patriam duxit.” *Chronicle of Alfonso III, Ad Seb.*, 131 and 133.

Although the chronicles reference several external enemies to the kingdom, including the Basques, the Galicians, and the Northmen, the most detailed treatment is unquestionably afforded to the Muslims. The distinctive way in which Arabs are differentiated from these other external enemies of the kingdom is by their alleged duplicity. The Arabs are said to be astute and fraudulent both in military strategy and in motivations underlying their conquests, as illustrated by the chronicler's treatment of the campaign led in Covadonga by Munnuza, Muslim governor of Gijón who planned to capture Pelagius by trickery ("uolentes eum fraudulenter comprehendere").¹² Muslims act fraudulently and cunningly not only with regard to Christians, but also when dealing with their own brethren – for example, when the troops of Cordovan Muslim general Abuhalit capture one of the Banū Qāsī in Tudela in order to exchange him for the general's son, prisoner of Asturias, in 882-883.¹³

The unusually detailed portrait of Mūsa Banū Qāsī, a *mūwallad* with Arab-Visigothic ancestry and the protagonist of multiple military raids on cities in the Ebro Valley, Galicia, and Narbonensis during the reign of Ordoño I (r. 850-866), underscores how this deceitful behavior is perceived as an intrinsically Muslim trait: Mūsa is portrayed not as an individual but as a rather typical representative of a multitude of Muslims, who follow an erroneous doctrine:

A certain man named Mūsa, of Gothic extraction but **deceived** into adopting
the Mahometan rite along with all his people, which Arabs call the Banū

¹² *Rot.*, 122 and 124 (hereinafter emphasis mine).

¹³ "Furtun iben Alazela, quem in Tutela arte ceperant, ad nostrum regem Aboalit direxit, et sic rogans por multam munera filium suum receperat." *Chronica Albeldensia*, 179.

Qāsī, rebelled against the king of Cordoba and invaded many of his cities, **in part by sword, in part by fraud**; first Saragossa, later Tudela and Huesca, and finally Toledo, where he imposed his son Lup as governor. He then turned his arms against the Franks and the Gauls. There he carried out a lot of carnage and plundering. **Partly in combat and partly by fraud**, he took two important generals of the Franks captive, one by the name of Sanctius and the other Epulonius, and sent them to jail in chains.¹⁴

Why would the *Chronicle of Alfonso III* seek to delegitimize the Banū Qāsī dynasty as corruptors of the faith? Mūsa Banū Qāsī proclaimed himself to be the third king of Spain in opposition to both his Christian neighbors and the Emirate of Córdoba. Asturian royals were unable to rival the Banū Qāsī in genealogy, since Alfonso II the Chaste (r. 791-842) was half Cantabrian and half Basque: he was son of Fruela I (r. 757-768), who ascended to Cantabrian duke Pelagius, and the Basque captive Munia.¹⁵ That the *Chronicle of Alfonso III* calls the grandson of Casius Mūsa ben Fortūn “Visigoth by birth but Muhammedan by ritual” (“Musa quidam nomine natione gotus sed ritu mamentiano”) reveals the chronicler’s

¹⁴ “Muza quidam nomine natione Gotus **sed ritu Mamentiano cum omni gentis sue deceptus**, quos Caldei uocitant Benikazi contra Cordobensem regem reuellauit eique multas ciuitates **partim gladio, partim fraude inuasit**, prius quidem Cesaragustam, deinde Tutelam et Ocam, postremo uero Toletum, ubi filium suum Lupum posuit prefectum. Postea in Francos et in Gallos arma conuertit. Multas ibi strages et predas fecit. Duos uero Francorum magnos duces, unum nomine Sanctionem, alium Epulonem **partim prelio, partim fraude cepit** et eos uinctos in carcere misit.” *Chronicle of Alfonso III, Rot.*, 144-45, emphasis added.

¹⁵ Claudio Sánchez Albornoz, “Los vascos y los árabes durante los primeros años de la reconquista,” in *Miscelánea de estudios históricos*, ed. Claudio Sánchez Albornoz (León: Centro de Estudios e Investigación “San Isidoro,” Archivo Histórico Diocesano, Caja de Ahorros y Monte de Piedad de León, 1970): 195. Cf.: “Mūsa b. Mūsa ibn Qasī es sobrino de Iñigo Iñiguez de Pamplona; [...] Muṭarrif b. Mūsa está casado con Velazquita, hija de Sancho, señor de Pamplona; Muḥammad b. Lubb era cuñado de Raimundo, conde de Pallarés [...]; Fortūn b. Muḥammad es yerno de Sancho Garcés, con el que colabora frente a la campaña de Mitonia.” Pedro Chalmeta, “El concepto de *ṭagr*,” in *La Marche Supérieure d’al-Andalus et l’Occident chrétien*, ed. Philippe Sénac (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, Universidad de Zaragoza, 1991): 26.

desire to downplay the Visigothic ancestry of the Banū Qāsī by underscoring the erroneous nature of their religious doctrine.

In further considering why this particular delegitimation strategy was chosen, we may discern a likely instance of the narrative appropriation of Visigothic law. In the *Lex*, which closely follows the canons of the Visigothic Church, the term *fraude* is associated with Jews, who are believed to be the corruptors of Catholic faith. The second law of the *Titulus Primus* defines *fraude* as a manifestation of heresy typical of the Jewish people. According to this law, which has been preserved in a Castilian version, a *princeps* was to govern by defending the Catholic faith from Jewish deceit (*judaeorum perfidia*) and from wrongful corruption by heretics (“cunctarum haeresum [...] injuria”).¹⁶ At the time these laws were composed, Isidore of Seville condemned the “heresy” of the Jews in *De haeresibus judaeorum*.¹⁷ Concurrently, at the beginning of his reign, King Sisebut (r. 612-621) decreed the mandatory baptism of the Jews, of which the *Albeldensia* gives a brief notice: “he converted the Jews who were the subjects of his kingdom to the faith of Christ” (“Iudeos regni sui subditos ad Xpi fidem conuertit”).¹⁸

¹⁶ *Titulus Primus*, in *Códigos españoles*, vol. 1 (1847): LXXVII. See Alisa Meyuhás Ginio, “El concepto de ‘perfidia judaica’ de la época visigoda en la perspectiva castellana del siglo XV,” *Helmantica* 46 (1995): 299-311; *Perfidia* had an additional connotation related to the usurpation of power: see Martínez Pizarro’s discussion of *perfidia* in Visigothic political discourse in his edition of *The Story of Wamba*, 99-109.

¹⁷ Isidore of Seville, “De haeresibus judaeorum,” *Etymologiae*, in *Etimologías: edición bilingüe*, ed. and trans. José Oroz Reta and Manuel-A. Marcos-Casquero, 3rd ed., 2 vols (Madrid: Biblioteca de autores cristianos, 2000), I, book VIII, ch. XIII, 64.

¹⁸ *Chronica Albeldensia*, 165.

The conversion of Iberian Jews to Christianity was an important facet of “peace” in the Visigothic political project of peninsular unification.¹⁹ According to the vision put forth by King Recesvinth (r. 653-672), confessional homogeneity would lead to peaceful coexistence and civil concord among the different nations of the kingdom, which, in turn, would ensure the “celestial peace,” or the kingdom’s transcendental permanence. Religious homogeneity, therefore, complemented political harmony in the task of obtaining the eternal survival of the kingdom:

We will attack our enemies of the holy faith, and we shall follow the envious of the faith, and defeat our adversaries, and persevere against them: so that, with the virtue of God we shall flake them like wind does dust, and we will undo them like the dirt is undone in the field, and we will win a victory over them for the church of God and for the faith of Christians. And if we have those faithful to God [living] in peace, and turn those who are not faithful to live in concord, our praise and our value shall grow, our kingdom shall spread and grow.²⁰

Since the Jews were seen as a significant obstacle to achieving confessional uniformity, the *Lex* repeatedly defined Judaism as a false sect characterized by heresy, perversion,

¹⁹ See Raúl González-Salineró, “Catholic Anti-Judaism in Visigothic Spain,” in *The Visigoths: Studies in Culture and Society*, ed. Alberto Ferreiro (Leiden: Brill, 1999): 123-50. See also Norman Roth, *Jews, Visigoths and Muslims in Medieval Spain: Cooperation and Conflict* (Leiden: Brill, 1994); Francisco López Pozo, *Leyes antisemitas extraídas del Fori iudicum o Fuero juzgo* (Cordoba: Tipografía Católica, 1997).

²⁰ “In virtute Dei agrediar hostes eius, et insequare æmulos, persequar adversos, contendens viriliter, perseverans instanter, aut comminuere illos ad pulverem excussum, aut delere ut lutum platearum sordentium. Certe aut de illis et fidei conquirere lucrum, et glorie Dei dare triumphum, ut dum fidelis populos in religionis sacræ pace possederim, atque infideles ad concordiam religiosæ pacis adduxerim, et mihi crescat gloriæ præmium, et dilatem atque augeam regnum.” *Liber Iudiciorum*, in *Códigos españoles*, vol. I, XII, Title II, Law I, LXXIV-LXXV.

perfidy, fraud, astuteness, and deceit. In particular, the deceitful attitude of the Jews was presumed *a priori* and until any suspicion was eliminated.²¹

King Ervig brought similar allusions to the fore when he justified the renewal of the anti-Jewish legislative corpus: “The perfidy and fraud of the Jewish error becomes all the more vehemently entrenched in crime as they strive ever more often to weaken laws drawn against them.”²² The *Chronicle of Alfonso III* echoes this activity by mentioning that Ervig amended Wamba’s laws and promulgated new ones: “He convened many councils and partly corrupted and partly noted under his own name laws edited by his predecessor.”²³ With reference to Judaism, the *Lex* employs the term *ritus*, a set of external manifestations of a religious doctrine usually deemed to be erroneous. Given the visible, public nature of religious rituals, Visigothic legislators considered Jewish rituals equally or more threatening than the “errors” of the religious doctrine that informed them.²⁴

The portrait of Mūsa, then, is, perhaps, the strongest and most likely testimony to the fact that the Asturian chroniclers likely draw on the legal discourse on Judaism to assert their

²¹ Cf. *Liber Iudiciorum*, Book XII, Title II, Laws III and XVIII and title III, laws I, II, III, IV, IX, X, XIII, XIV, XX, XXIII, and XXIV.

²² “Perfidia iudaici erroris saepe calliditas eo vehementius ducescit in crimine, quo institutis contra se legibus nititur frequentius contraire.” *Liber Iudiciorum*, Book XII, Title III, Law I, *Códigos españoles*, vol. I, LXXIX. *Calliditas* equals *deceit* or *astuteness*: “Callidus, fraudulentus, quia celare novit, et male peritus. Callidum autem veteras non pro astuto, sed etiam pro astute docto ponebant.” (“*Callidus*, fraudulent, because he knows how to deceive and is an expert in malice. Nevertheless, among the ancients, *callidus* did not designate solely a person who was astute, but also a clever one who employed craft.”). Isidore, *Etymologiae*, in *Etimologías*, Oroz Reta and Marcos-Casquero, Book 1, ch. X, 41, pp. 808-89.

²³ “Multa sinoda egit legesque prodecessore suo editas ex parte corripit et alias ex nomine suo adnotare preepit.” *Chronicle of Alfonso III, Rot.*, 118. Cf. *Ad Seb.*: “Legesque Uambane conditas corripit et alias ex nomine suo edidit” (“He stole and concealed the laws instituted by Wamba and enacted other laws in his own name”), 119.

²⁴ “Resulta que lo que aparentemente definía las creencias (*error*) está de hecho subordinado a las observancias del culto, es decir que la falsa doctrina no se aísla como tal, sino que se concreta en la aberración de los ritos,” in Y. García López, *Estudios*, 256-57.

kings' leadership in the reconquest, with Islam (and the Banū Qāṣī) replacing Judaism as a challenge to political stability. In characterizing Muslims of the Iberian Northeast, the chroniclers use epithets that typically applied to heretics in Visigothic discourse, e.g. *inprouas gentes*,²⁵ *ludibriosa calamitas*.²⁶ The epithet *nefandus* (*infandus*), which in Isidore's polemic against Arianism was associated with sacrilege, is used to describe both the Visigothic bishop Oppa, who had allied himself with the Muslims and helped bring down Visigothic rule (*infandus episcopus*,²⁷ "ob cuius fraudem Goti perierunt"²⁸), and Ṭāriq, the leader of the Muslim invasion of 711 ("*nefandus Tareq*").²⁹ The term *ritus*, which in the *Lex* denotes a manifestation of Judaic faith, becomes associated with Islam, while the adverb *fraude* denotes a deceptive manner of carrying out an act motivated by perseverance in untrue faith.

That Asturians may have seen Muslims through the legal prism of Visigothic anti-Jewish legislation may be further contemplated in an episode that may be suggestive of a procedural correspondence between the treatment of Muslims in Asturias and that of Jews in the late Roman Empire. Following Isidore's *Chronicle*, the *Albeldensia* informs that during the Jerusalem campaign in AD 70, the Jews captured by Titus (r. 79-81), son of emperor Vespasian (r. 69-79), were converted to slavery: "Titus conquered Jerusalem, where a million and a hundred thousand Jews died from hunger and sword, and a hundred thousand were sold off at a public auction."³⁰ According to both versions of the *Chronicle*

²⁵ *Rot.*, 130; *Ad Seb.*, 131.

²⁶ *Rot.*, 130.

²⁷ *Ad Seb.*, 127.

²⁸ *Crónica de Alfonso III*, *Rot.*, 124.

²⁹ *Crónica de Alfonso III*, vers. *Rot.*, 122.

³⁰ "Titus Iherosolimam cepit, ubi undecies centena milia Iudeorum fame et gladio perierunt et centum milia puplice uenundati fuere." *Chronica of Albeldensia*, 160. Cf. "Titus Jerosolymam cepit atque subvertit, ubi

of *Alfonso III*, the same fate awaited Muslim captives during some of Ordoño I's campaigns in the mid-ninth century:

The said Ordoño also took many other cities during his military campaigns, that is, Coria, with its king by name Zeiti, and another similar city of theirs, Talamanca, with its king by name Mozror and his spouse. He killed all their military men, and sold the remaining folk, with their wives and children, in an auction.³¹

If this notice is true, could it mean that Asturian kings followed the norms of the *Lex* in justifying and shaping their response to the Muslims? This is a seductive possibility, for the *Lex Wisigothorum* openly professes continuity with the Roman law (“civium romanorum dignitas”) in its restriction of Jewish proselytism.³² If, however, this episode is simply an example of rhetorical invention, the chronicle's suggestion that Ordoño replicates a legal procedure used in the Roman Empire against the Jews is still revealing of the influence of the *Lex* on the authorial perspective. Since the *Lex* defined the adversarial realm of a Christian monarchy prior to the Arab invasion of Spain, it is not unlikely that the chroniclers were guided by a familiar ideology, which they adapted to the contemporary reality of a Muslim-Christian conflict. This would explain why some traits describing

undecies centena millia Judaeorum fame et gladio perierunt. Sed et praeter hos quoque centum millia publice venundata.” Isidore, *Chronica*, in *Sancti Isidori, Hispalensi episcopi, opera omnia*, ed. Faustino Arévalo, *Patrologia Latina* 83 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1807), 71, 1041.

³¹ “Multas et alias ciuitates iam sepe dictus Hordonius rex preliando cepit, id est, ciuitatem Cauriensem cum regem suum nomine Zeiti, aliam uero consimilem eius ciuitatem Talamancam cum rege suo nomine Muzeor cum uxore sua. Bellatores omnibus interfecit, relicum uero uulgus cum uxores et filiis sub corona uendidit.” *Chronicle of Alfonso III, Rot.*, 148; *Ad Seb.*, 149.

³² *Liber Iudiciorum*, Book XII, Title II, Law XI. *Códigos españoles*, vol. I, 77.

Muslims (e.g. heresy, perversion, perfidy, fraud, astuteness, and deceit) parallel those the *Lex* attributes to the Jews.

The Asturian political narrative was based on claims of uninterrupted political continuity vis-à-vis the Visigothic kingdom. In Asturian legal thinking, the political and military response to the Arabs and Muslims is shaped by both representing them as external enemies of the kingdom's stability and by describing their faith in terms reminiscent of Visigothic legal discourse on Judaism. However, given that Asturian interaction with Muslims was defined primarily by political rivalry, the reliance on anti-Judaic discourse in Visigothic law does not necessarily reveal to what extent Muslims would have been thought of as representing also a confessional threat to the Kingdom of Asturias similar to that of the Jews in the Visigothic Kingdom. In fact, I would suggest that the reliance on the *Lex* stems primarily from two interrelated factors: 1) the adoption of a model of power based on proclaiming the Asturian kings as exemplary keepers of Visigothic laws, with the consequent need to inscribe all challengers of royal power, both internal and external, within the parameters of the *Lex Wisigothorum*; and 2) lack of profound knowledge of or concern with the doctrinal aspects of Islam that had to be compensated for by drawing on a familiar doctrinal framework. I would even argue that unlike their less politically powerful contemporaries, the Andalusī Christian *dhimmīs*, who by mid-ninth century had constructed a doctrinal response to Islam, Asturians may have been too busy fighting for political survival to significantly concern themselves with Islam as a religion.

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