

## News

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# Bible and Historiography in Transcultural Iberian Societies, Eighth to Twelfth Centuries

DOI 10.1515/jtms-2015-0028

## 1 Introduction

The Bible is the only book ever to be granted ‘World Heritage’ status by the UNESCO. Its cultural impact on the European Middle Ages has been massive, and has been studied from many perspectives by theologians, historians, literary scholars and others. Still, much remains to do, especially in fields where biblical influences may not be as immediately obvious as elsewhere. This pertains, for instance, to the role of biblical models for the formation of identity and difference, for perceptions of ethnicity and ‘otherness’. How was Christianity as a ‘universal’ religion related to particular communities and identities, and to other religions? The present project seeks to follow this line of research in important respects and from a specific perspective by studying the transcultural setting of the Iberian Peninsula in the eighth to twelfth centuries. Historical approaches to the ‘Book of books’ from a transcultural perspective have so far been rather neglected. What was the relationship of the Bible to other holy or sacred scriptures, for instance the Muslim Qur’ān and the Jewish Tanach and Talmud? How did it influence perceptions of other religious cultures, and their interaction with Christians, in terms of liturgy, historiography, and polemics?

Medieval historians have, of course, studied the Latin-Christian imaginary of God, World and Men in the Early and Central Middle Ages. Much needs to be done to compare concepts of time and space, of God’s word and sacred text, or the views of the rest of the World offered by Jewish, Christian, and Muslim scripture, and by texts building on it. These texts’ transcultural entanglement specifically in narrations of exegesis, liturgy or historiography and their medial and material representations need to be assessed. In Iberian frontier societies, the transcendentally-founded normative visions of the respective ‘sacred texts’

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competed against each other and had to confront foreign perceptions of time, space, nature and history. Even though Jews, Christians and Muslims all recognize God's plan to provide salvation to humankind as the primary driving force of history, their strategies of how to portray this history differ remarkably. This had an impact on the respective historiographies, and the consequences of different conceptions of time, space and history in Christianity, Judaism, and Islam can be detected in their exegetical, polemical and historiographical practices. However, that does not exclude mutual influences and transcultural exchanges between these modes of perceiving and transforming foreign histories. As yet, we do not adequately understand the exact role of the different religious frames in the respective systems of knowledge. These are the fundamental questions that the project will address.

The approach chosen here will access the problem from the angle of the Christian-Latin tradition. Two large areas will be studied in detail: first, the Bible manuscripts transmitted from the period, both in al-Andalus and in the Iberian regions ruled by Christians, will be studied, with special regard to their illuminations, paratexts, non-biblical additions in the codices, their marginal notes and other traces of their use and their movements. Preliminary autopsy of many of these manuscripts has already demonstrated that rich and to a large extent unstudied evidence is to be expected. Second, the use of Biblical models in Latin historiography, specifically in its treatment of intercultural conflict and contact, will be assessed. The case of the Mozarabic and Latin biblical and historiographical legacies of the Iberian Peninsula offers the unique and still unexploited opportunity to analyze the close interaction between the specific designs of biblical manuscripts and historiographical writing as two complementary modes of perceiving and transforming the 'other' in the Early and Central Middle Ages. A third, synthetic strand of the project will draw the results together and compare them with what is already known about the Jewish and the Muslim perspective.

## 2 State of Current Research

Traditional biblical studies from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries up to the present have laid the necessary foundations for this research project. We have at our disposal, on the one hand, general studies on the canonical order of the books of the so-called Old and New Testaments and a first typology of Bible manuscripts; furthermore, studies, editions and repertories of the texts of the *Vetus Latina* (Beuron), of the medieval *Vulgata* (San Girolamo, Roma) and of the

Catalan Bible (*Corpus Biblicum Catalanicum*, Barcelona) and their paratexts (prologues, prothemata etc.) and exegesis. On the other hand, there are a number of comprehensive studies on the role of the Bible in specific areas of medieval Latin culture, not only in terms of exegesis and theology, but also in hagiography, historiography and canon law. More recently, scholars have begun to study the typology of the medieval Bible manuscript tradition. In the study of the medieval biblical legacy in the Iberian Peninsula, both the international and some very specific trends can be noticed. Besides the traditional research on the quasi 'national' legacy of the Visigothic and Iberian biblical tradition, the manuscripts, their texts and illumination, we can observe a strong interest in the non-Latin biblical tradition, especially in the Arabic translations of the Latin Bible and selected Patristic writings in Mozarabic scholarly circles of al-Andalus since the ninth century, in the manuscripts and texts of the Hebrew Bible in the Iberian Peninsula, and – from a national or even regional standpoint – in the different vernacular translations of the Bible in the Iberian Peninsula (Castellano, Português and Català). Access to ongoing research is offered by several recent handbooks, repertories, monographs and articles, which present the textual traditions and exegesis of the Bible in the Iberian Peninsula and provide the first overviews of the specific regional and local profiles of its Latin biblical legacy. Most notably, this more recent work has chosen to analyze these texts from a more or less intracultural perspective, regarding solely inner-Christian (and only rarely Christian-Jewish) perspectives on the Bible. In stark contrast to this research agenda, the perspective on crossing the biblical borders between Christians and Muslims is a much less studied field of research.

### 3 Goals and Architecture

The research project intends to change the perspective on the biblical legacy of Christian communities in the transcultural societies of the Iberian Peninsula. The biblical manuscripts will not only be seen as testimonies of texts or textual traditions alone, but as bearers of canons. In other words, these biblical manuscripts will be understood as both theoretical and practical presentations of history and perception of religious alterities in the Iberian transcultural societies. The project therefore will recontextualize these perceptions of the World of the others, reconstructed most recently from edited texts, in two larger contexts: first, of the typological perspective of the preserved Iberian biblical manuscripts, their materiality and mediality, and second, in the narrative frames of the Iberian historiographical production of the period.

A clear perspective for the project emerges. We now understand better why Christian polemical religious historiography and Christian theological polemics comparing, proving and denying the Jews' and Muslims' religious laws' and law-givers' authenticity and veracity are two sides of a single coin. We can therefore rethink the intrinsic relationship between the late antique fixation of the biblical canon – seen as the Christian religious law at its best – and Christian universal historiography. And we can assess in much more detail the specific influences of the European frontier societies on this process of historiographical thinking and writing, and understand the role of the biblical legacy in the contexts of these transcultural societies. That requires closer study of the Bible manuscripts in their social, religious and cultural contexts in their own right as materialized media of perception of religious alterity in concrete historical contexts and as keystones and beacons of the new religious memory of the Crusader and Reconquest societies in the Mediterranean World. This research project therefore intends to focus on the transcultural role of the biblical legacy of and in the Iberian World, which paradoxically did not participate in the antique Mediterranean translation movements of the Hebrew and Greek Bible into Latin, but all the more played an eminent role in the dissemination of its own and of foreign Latin Bible editions in the period of the Reconquista and the Latin expansion in the “Hispania”.

### **3.1 Bible Manuscripts as Modes of Perception and Transformation of the World of the Others**

A modern history of the Bible in the Iberian World up to the Central Middle Ages is still missing. This is more than a lamentable situation of research, as the fundamental codicological and philological research on the most important Iberian Bible manuscripts, conducted especially by Samuel Berger, Donatien de Bruyne, Bonifatius Fischer, Teófilo Ayuso Marazuela, Ana Suarez González and Paolo Cherubini had begun to expose the landscape of production and reception of a renewed biblical legacy without assessing the new transreligious and transcultural setting of these activities: We know much about (but not really in detail) the production of the great Visigothic and Carolingian Bibles (preserved pandects, fragments and witnessed, but now lost manuscripts) and where it took place, as well as the role played by the Visigothic and Carolingian Bible editions by Peregrinus, Isidore of Seville, Theodulph of Orléans and Alcuin of Tours within the general history of the *Vetus Latina* and the *Vulgata*. And the aforementioned scholars also demonstrated the import of Western Frankish and Septimanian Bible texts into the Northern and North-Eastern parts of the Iberian Peninsula. This

process continued until the new type of glossed French Bible manuscripts of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries started to predominate with its characteristic multivolume sets both in the centres and on the peripheries of scholastic biblical studies alike. More detailed research has also singled out several outstanding Latin Bibles transported from Mozarabic Andalusian communities to the Christian Northern regions of the Peninsula. This phenomenon has furthermore helped us to characterize these and other top-quality specimens of Latin-Christian book production as cultural beacons in the resurgent societies of a territorial, religious, cultural and intellectual Reconquista. Samples like the *Biblia Hispalensis* of Córdoba, later given to Seville, have thus been interpreted as testimonies of Christian resistance against Muslim authority and as the central medium of Christian propaganda putting forward their specific perception of the World's place in space and time. Yet what we now lack is the reconstruction of the mental map of the Christian religious and intellectual resistance in the sphere of the whole Iberian panorama of biblical production and the rhythms of production and perception of Bible editions (in one or more volumes) and of single Bible books.

A great challenge will be here the reconstruction of the piecemeal Iberian biblical legacy very often surviving only in fragments and therefore not yet really integrated in a new master narrative of the history of the Bible in the Peninsular. Already the project's first months of research focused on Catalan manuscript collections have unearthed further unknown fragmentary items from our period up to the late twelfth century.

Against the backdrop of the parallel historiographical production (see section 3.2), this sub-project will assess the individual positioning of whole book groups and single books within the Bible canon(s), their illumination and their frequent use (revealed by marginal notes, commentaries, stains of ink etc.), with the purpose of uncovering the anthropological, social, religious and theological interests of their contemporary and later sponsors, readers and owners. Were the books of the Pentateuch construed as the history and law of a New Hispanic Israel? Were the Major and Minor Prophets and the Revelations utilized as typological models for prophetic and visionary concepts of contemporary times, and what relationship between the books of Daniel and Apocalypse can be deduced from their positioning and illumination in the Bibles? In which contexts of the Bibles do we find representations of the Holy Cross, of Christological and of Messianic topics, but also of the antagonists of God and his chosen people? And what is the practical purpose of the transmission of the so-called 'apocryphs', biblical paratexts (prologues, arguments, capitulations etc.) and extra-biblical texts such as the astonishingly rich computistic, chronological, genealogical, prophetic and sybillinic text material that can also be found in many medieval Iberian Bibles?

For a better assessment of this exclusively Latin panorama, we should also consider at least some aspects of the history of the Bible in the Iberian Peninsula in an intercultural matrix. Although we do not have multilingual Iberian Bibles like the trilingual Psalter manuscripts from twelfth-century Sicily at our disposal, the phenomenon of Latin Bible manuscripts with Arabic glosses and short commentaries, written by Mozarabic Christians, and the early production of Arabic Bible book translations from the ninth century onwards are excellent means of evaluating the transcultural and textual perspectives of the different Christian communities of the Iberian Peninsula. Studying such communities from this perspective will help us uncover facets of a Western Mediterranean World that have only been glanced at by Sidney H. Griffith in his new monograph on the Arabic Bible. Only recently has Juan Gabriel López Guix, in a comprehensive article on biblical translation activities, begun to illustrate the importance of this topic for the Iberian Peninsula. But precisely which biblical books, passages and words interested the glossators and translators? Were these examples of literal exegetical comprehension of difficult biblical passages and translations for consumption by other Christian communities? Or should we rather read these manuscripts as written testimonies of religious encounters and conflicts with the neighbouring Jews and Muslims? As we already know, the availability of Andalusian Arabic translations of Old Testament books (with the exception of the liturgical Psalter) is a function of codicological transmission, not deliberate non-translation of certain books of the Bible. We are thus compelled to wonder whether Griffith's recent statements on the role of the earliest Arabic Bible translations from the Near East may not also be used to attain a much better appreciation of the cultural and religious upheavals of the Muslim-dominated Andalusian society as well. Following this approach, the creation of the Arabic Bible would have been the Christian community's conceptual, theological and codicological response to the now written Arabic Qur'ān in the evermore Arabic and Islamic society of al-Andalus. Thus, we would have to revise our understanding of the Arabic Bible as a firm reaction to the Muslims' reproach of Jews and Christians having falsified God's only authentic book in heaven ("taḥrīf"), which is an Arabic one. The Christian Arabic Bible then served as the materialized counter-model to the Arabic Qur'ān, which could offer Muslims the possibility to become acquainted with the Judeo-Christian biblical legacy and history, which otherwise would have been inaccessible to them in its conventional Latin form. If our hypotheses prove to be correct, we would better understand why in Córdoba a tenth-century Arabic translation of Orosius' Biblical-based Christian world history was produced as well.

### 3.2 Bible Canon and Biblical Typology in the Latin Historiography

To date, the systematic analysis of the use of the Bible as the fundamental Christian model of perception of the World and as a reservoir of typological thinking and writing in the historiography and biography of the Crusades and the Reconquista has been an under-studied field. After Paul Alphandéry's seminal paper on the Bible's use in First Crusade historiography and Penny J. Cole's and Arnold Angenendt's still isolated studies on the Old Testament background of the purification of the polluted sacred places in Jerusalem and the Holy Land through Muslim blood, only now is the entire transcultural dimension of the biblical typology of the Crusader historiography in the process of being adequately recognized and studied. The same can also be said of the research on Reconquista historiography on the Iberian Peninsula. Until now, we have lacked a comprehensive study on the role of the Bible as a Christian model of canon and typology in the complex concert of transcultural exegesis, polemics and historiography. This issue presents a veritable challenge, as we have to assess how the distinctive narratives of historical and biographical writing led to a specific reading and perception of the Bible, taking account of the fact that the societal situation of the Iberian Peninsula differed greatly from the rest of medieval Europe. Recent monographs and surveys have only partly helped in pursuing this line of research. This sub-project therefore has to consult exhaustively all available text editions and studies (of varying quality). In the more recent research on biblical typological writing, apocalyptic literature has occupied a privileged position: Here, we have already at our disposal some recent studies on the medieval Hispanic literature on the Antichrist, and a panel at the International Medieval Congress in Leeds 2014 has focused again on the role of the Book of Revelation in medieval (Hispanic) apocalyptic thinking and writing. In addition, we can exploit some of the isolated studies on the role of the Old Testament Prophets Enoch, Elias, Daniel and Ezekiel. The sub-project will study central historiographical (chronicles and histories) and bio-historiographical literature (*gesta*) of the Iberian Peninsula, produced between the eighth and twelfth centuries. Against the backdrop of the corresponding societal requirements and necessities, we expect more insight into the rhythms of reception and perception of selected Bible books and passages on the one hand, and a specification of the semantic shifts in the use of (non)biblical terminology for describing the World of the others on the other hand.

Recent studies have already carved out some central typological topics, whose role shall now be studied in detail on the basis of a broader text corpus:

a) The Egyptian motive of Pharaoh and his army drowning in the Red Sea is not only used for describing the defeat of the Cordovan Emir's army at Covadonga, but is already alluded to in the context of the so-called 'martyrs of Córdoba' in order to provide a general orientation within the religious and social upheavals of al-Andalus from ca. 850 onwards. b) In describing the Christian kingdoms of Northern Spain as the New Israel, the story of the duel between David and Goliath (I Samuel 17) is the prefiguration of the contemporary Christian-Muslim struggle, not only in Pseudo-Turpin's legend of Charlemagne and Roland's (re)conquest of Spain, but also as the model for the story of the failed interaction between Isidore of Seville and Muḥammad, which attempts to provide the aetiological explanation for the irresistible spread of Islam in Spain. c) The penitential psalms used in the official Cluniac liturgy for Ferdinand I's struggle against the Muslims seem to be only one prominent aspect amongst many biblical motives for persecution, revenge and liberation in the conflicts between Christians and Muslims.

Furthermore, this sub-project should explore a broader perspective as well, if we take into account what transcultural research has already detected in other fields of interreligious encounters: d) Is Abraham really conceived in the Iberian Peninsula as the 'prime father of monotheisms' and the starting-point of more or less common genealogies? e) Which is the typological role that the Old Testament rulers and kings like Joshua, Saul, David, Solomon etc., Judith, Holofernes and Nebuchadnezzar, and finally Judas Maccabeus play for the anti-Muslim wars of the neo-Visigothic Christian kings of a New Hispanic Israel? f) Are the anthropological concepts of Job, Psalms and Canticles perceived as the appraisal of an individual and collective history of loss and recovery of social power and religious strength? g) What is the relationship between the exegesis of Daniel and the Revelations when studied against the backdrop of their transmission in contemporary Bibles (see section 3.1)? h) Are the Gospels to be read as Christ's biographies and models, when taking into account Muḥammad's biography in historiographical works, as pure anti-hagiography? i) Do the Epistles of the Apostle Paul play a central role in 'missionizing' Jews and Muslims during the reorganization of a Church that followed reconquest and "re población"? j) And is Romans 13, 2 the classical reference point of the Christians' obedience to the new Muslim rulers?

All these questions will be asked in the larger context of the individual manuscript designs and compilations, so that the authors' original concepts can be deciphered: Do the texts start with the history of the Old or the New Testament or do they continue Isidore of Seville's, Orosius' or others' world or ethnic histories? And how do they rewrite these former (biblical) models?

### 3.3 Canon and Exegesis. The Bible as a Model for the Perception and Transformation of the World of the Others in Transcultural Societies

In the third research strand, the foci and results of the two sub-projects converge to produce a synthesis for future research. It will address the discussion regarding the overarching framework of the Bible as religious law and canon competing in the transcultural Iberian societies against other religious laws and concepts of canonicity (especially the Qur'ān, the Jewish Bible and the Talmud) for the role of being the exclusive religious and cultural reference systems of time and space and of religious and cultural practices in these societies. As this reference system has been materialized in the media of biblical and historiographical manuscripts of concrete historical places, the project will also focus on their transformative power on these social, religious and cultural spaces of the Iberian transcultural societies. Complementing this scenario of entangled textual, social and religious spaces, the project should take into consideration the almost exclusively Iberian transmission of the *Beatus* manuscripts and their text collections and illuminations as an outstanding phenomenon of historiographical exegesis, which prove to be not only quasi-Apocalypse manuscripts and beacons of the earlier Visigothic book culture, but also as prevailing historical concepts of time and space. Such a characterization is supported by the early exegesis of Daniel in several *Beatus* manuscripts and the permanent alterations in the design of their world maps following the successes of the Christian Reconquista. Finally, the project intends to question the biblical and historiographical legacy as a legitimizing means of reorganizing the sacral, religious and social spaces of the frontier sees, parishes and monasteries, traditionally discussed research topics like the reconstruction of the Iberian dioceses, the Roman reform of Spanish liturgy, the reconversion of sacred spaces like mosques to cathedrals and parish churches, and the organization of pastoral care and 'mission'. Here, the project hopes to reconstruct the biblical background of the mental, spiritual and sacral dispositions in the context of the Iberian transformation process, or as Medieval Historians have long dubbed it, the 'Reconquista'.

## 4 Project Team, Work and Time Plan

Walter Pohl und Matthias M. Tischler are the Project leaders. The latter is currently directing the first sub-project on the Bible manuscripts, which will be

taken over from 2016 onwards by another Senior Postdoc. The second sub-project on the historiography is currently conducted by Patrick Marschner who will write his PhD-thesis on this topic. The whole project is carried out at the Institute for Medieval Research (IMF) of the Austrian Academy (ÖAW) in Vienna and linked to its SFB project ‘Visions of Community’ and the ERC Advanced Grant ‘Social Cohesion, Identity, and Religion in Europe, 400–1200’ (SCIRE). The Institute is one of the most important extra-university research centres in Medieval Studies worldwide, currently employing about 60 scholars between regular staff and externally-funded project members. The results of the two sub-projects will be evaluated step-by-step by presenting papers together with colleagues in several sessions of the IMC in Leeds in 2015, 2016 and 2017, on the occasion of a smaller international workshop during the project’s schedule, and finally in the context of a greater international congress at the end of the project in 2018. The funding of the workshop and the congress will be hopefully attained by external sponsorship.

## 5 International Partnerships

The project continues the established cooperation with the Institut d’Estudis Medievals (IEM) of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) and the UAB-directed ERC Consolidator Grant-Project ‘LATTAL – The Latin Talmud and its Influence on Christian-Jewish Polemic’ (Alexander Fidora, ICREA/UAB), the SDGPI-MICINN-project “La percepción del Islam en la Europa cristiana. Traducciones latinas del Corán. Literatura latina de controversia con el Islam y el judaísmo” (José Martínez Gázquez, Cándida Ferrero Hernández and Óscar de la Cruz Palma, all UAB) and the *Corpus Biblicum Catalanicum* (Armand Puig i Tàrrach and Pere Casanellas i Bassols, Barcelona, Facultat de Teologia de Catalunya), accentuating all these proved partnerships under its properly new perspectives. International cooperation partners also include Helmut Reimitz, Princeton University, a leading specialist on early medieval historiography, and Mayke de Jong, Utrecht, an expert in early medieval uses of the Bible.

## 6 Dissemination Strategies

The work undertaken will be presented to a broader academic public in numerous papers and publications. The project team will participate at conferences, which encompass not only medieval and historical topics, but also theological

and philological ones. A smaller international workshop and a greater international congress will allow discussion of the findings of the project with a qualified audience. The Senior Postdoc will publish several interdisciplinary papers dealing with the modes of biblical perception and transformation of the World of the others in the early and central medieval Iberian Peninsula, and in so doing will prepare a new monograph on the medieval biblical encounters between Iberian Christians, Jews and Muslims. The PhD candidate will present several papers at the IMC Leeds and other conferences on the role of the Bible in the Latin Historiography of the Iberian Peninsula in the same period and will thus have the opportunity to discuss central topics of his PhD-thesis in an international framework.

## 7 Methodological Consequences

The project combines very detailed textual and manuscript study with great overarching questions about the role of sacred texts (in this case, the Bible) as central cultural and religious reference systems, about the impact of books on social relations, about social memory and the codes and norms that are embedded in it, about transcultural competition and exchanges and about the social role of religion/s. It addresses the question of perception of cultural/religious 'others' in relationship with the foundational texts that inform such divisions. It opens up a theme so far mostly treated by theological studies of the Bible to cultural historical approaches. Furthermore, it attempts to redraw the intellectual topography of the Iberian Peninsula. In all these aspects, the project can offer methodological innovations that may be attractive far beyond its field and its discipline, Medieval Studies.

## 8 Significance for the National and International Academic Landscape

In the Austrian context, this project opens up a rarely-studied field with great paradigmatic potential and interesting methodological implications that will further strengthen the thematic range and international appeal of the traditionally wide-ranging and innovative Medieval Studies in Vienna. In the Spanish context, the project will contribute to a new accentuation and innovation of the previous academic landscape of research on medieval Spain. In general, the

history of the medieval ecclesiastical libraries and education systems is a rather disregarded phenomenon. Research on manuscripts, book collections and 'schools' in the broadest sense traditionally is an object of Iberian philological research, whereas Church history belongs to the Iberian theologians' field of scientific responsibility. The whole project therefore intends to enrich current national Iberian medievalism by a) strengthening less developed strands of research from an international perspective, b) disregarding established disciplinary boundaries between 'Western' and 'Oriental' philological and historical studies, and finally c) overcoming Hispanic scholarly regionalisms through a consequent comparative study of selected places of learning. As a project linking two important European centres of Medieval Studies, Vienna and Barcelona, and thus two rather different research traditions, it is also of European significance, not least because it is also strongly propositive on a paradigmatic and conceptual level.

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**Note:** A considerably enlarged version of this report with notes, pictures and bibliography is published under <https://uab.academia.edu/MatthiasMartinTISCHLER>. The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Research Council under the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007–2013) / ERC grant agreement No. 269591, from the FWF-Project 'Bible and Historiography in Transcultural Iberian Societies, Eighth to Twelfth Centuries' (P 27804) and has been realized in the framework of a Collaboration Agreement between the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and the University of Vienna.