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WELTECKE, Dorothea (eds.)**

*Religious Plurality and Interreligious Contacts
in the Middle Ages*

Harrasowitz

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This volume is the proceedings of a Spanish-German conference held at the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel in 2015, and brings together the work of eleven scholars from the two countries. Nine of the ten articles are in English, and one in Spanish. Each article is preceded by a resume in English, Spanish, German, or sometimes in two languages; it would have been useful to systematically provide resumes in the three languages.

The articles cover a period ranging from the seventh to the fifteenth centuries and from Spain to Persia, dealing with Jews, Christians, Muslims and Zoroastrians. Yet there is a unifying thread running through the book, as the editors had asked each author to address common questions (as D. Weltecke explains in the introduction): first, the strategies used by different societies to organize and regulate religious plurality; second, the impact of interreligious contacts on religious doctrine and practice; third, the conditions that favor interreligious violence or that enable societies to avoid such violence. In the third section of the introduction, D. Weltecke usefully interrogates key concepts in scholarship in the field: minority, *Sondergruppen*, diversity, *convivencia*. She also highlights the fact that our tendency to label individuals or groups as Jewish, Christian or Muslim tends to essentialize those categories, causing us both to ignore wide divergence within each of those categories and the common beliefs and practices across those religious boundaries.

Curiously, she does not question the key category of religion, which has been called into question in recent scholarship, notably by anthropologists.

M. J. Albarrán Martínez examines a series of previously unexploited text from upper Egyptian monasteries in the early Islamic era. These documents show how in the wake of sixth-century invasions by Persian and then Muslim armies, monasteries functioned as sources of protection for the local Christian populace and often provided aid in the form of food, alms or loans. She also shows how the monasteries exercised legal authority (for example, in regulating disputes over land ownership) in the absence of the exercise of such authority by the Muslim rulers in Fustat. In this her work dovetails with recent research on the gradual emergence of Islamic justice and the *dhimma* system in Egypt, notably the work on Egyptian papyri by Mathieu Tillier (whom she does not cite).

Cultural and intellectual trends crossed over the porous borders between confessional communities. This is the case, for example, of the intellectual foment in Abbasid Bagdad, in particular the impact of science and philosophy on the development of theology. G. König looks at the influence of Muʿtazila on Zoroastrian philosophy and theology in the ninth and tenth centuries. The Fatimid caliphs and viziers of Cairo, a Shiite minority ruling over a population that was perhaps 40 % Christian, with large Sunni and significant Jewish populations, needed to cultivate mutually beneficial relationships with non-Shiite religious elites, as B. Beinhauer Köhler shows in her analysis of the ritual reception of the Coptic patriarch by the Fatimid vizier in 1103.

Two articles deal comparatively with issues around pilgrimage: X. Casassas compares

two fifteenth-century pilgrimage narratives: German Dominican Felix Fabri's account of his travels to Jerusalem and Avila Mudejar Omar Patún's *Ribla* narrating his *hajj* to Mecca. He shows how in both narratives a dramatic inversion takes place on arrival in Muslim territories: Felix Fabri describes a feeling of humiliation at having to submit to Muslim authorities to visit Christian holy places, while Christian in Muslim territory; while Omar Patún on the contrary feels liberated from the constraints of living as a mudéjar in Christian territory. Nikolas Jaspert shows how pilgrimage was an issue in both the interior and international politics of the fourteenth-century crown of Aragon. Aragonese Mudéjars and Muslims from elsewhere visited holy sites in Aragon, such as Atzenata, site of a tomb of a 13th-century Sufi. Rulers tried at times to prohibit or limit such visits, at times to tax them, sometimes yielding to the protests of local Muslims who claimed the right to access such sites. Law texts such as the *Llibre de la Suna e Xara* guaranteed Muslims' rights to perform the *hajj*, even though rulers worried that this could provide occasion for Muslims to emigrate.

Several of the articles could have benefitted from a clearer contextualization in light of recent research. Klaus Herbers, for example, provides a good close analysis of a letter of ninth-century author Eulogius of Córdoba. But his efforts to contextualize Eulogius fall short. He affirms that «the structures and conditions that allowed Jews and Christians to continue their religious life are well documented» (84), without referring to recent work in the field. The one

source he cites is Ibn Abdun, twelfth-century Sevillian Almoravid jurist, as if his treatise of *hisba* shed light on the very different society of ninth-century Córdoba. M.G. de Antonio Rubio analyzes restrictive measures against Jews taken in Orense (Galicia) in the fifteenth century, in particular their separation into a segregated Jewish quarter and subsequently their expulsion. The study provides a useful, concrete example of how royal orders translated into local action, and sometimes provoked resistance and compromise. She presents these measures as the end of the Church's «tolerant» attitude towards Jews (providing an English translation of the definition of *tolerancia* from the dictionary of the Real Academia Española), when she could have cited recent scholarship calling into question the relevance of the concept of «tolerance» for the period under study. She affirms that theological «tolerance» defined by Augustine and others was subsequently translated into legal measures, though recent scholarship suggests the opposite: that Roman law protected (and limited) the rights of Jews, and Augustine and other theologians subsequently provided theological justification for this.

It is impossible in this short review to do justice to this rich and varied collection of articles. I have simply emphasized a few particularly interesting examples of new research in the field. This volume makes a welcome addition to the growing field of interreligious relations in the medieval world.

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