

historians have traditionally recognized. The story of survival undoubtedly left deep scars.

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Mercedes García-Arenal, Gerard Wiegers, and Ryan Szpiech, eds.

Interreligious Encounters in Polemics between Christians, Jews, and Muslims in Iberia and beyond (Leiden: Brill, 2019). Pp. 343. Hb, €75.00, \$91.00.

Part of a growing body of published research on the subject of polemical exchanges between Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the medieval and early modern period, this collection of ten chapters by different experts in the field of interreligious relations and art history is the fruit of research presented at a conference held in Madrid in 2014. Its content was originally published as articles in volume 24 (issues 1–3) of Brill’s well-known journal *Medieval Encounters* in 2018 and now appears in paperback and e-book format by the same press. As Ryan Szpiech notes in a brief preface to the “new edition” (vii), the contents of the journal articles and the book chapters are identical except for some updated bibliographical information, the elimination of a few errata, and the creation of an index. Szpiech explains that the editors’ decision to republish the articles as chapters in a book format so soon after the publication of the journal was motivated by a desire to “disseminate this important research to a wider body of scholars.” Presumably, since few readers will purchase the new book in its paperback version, this means a desire to facilitate the availability of this research to university scholars and readers through library subscriptions to Brill’s e-books. In their introduction (1–13), the editors note that the chronological focus of this volume is the so-called “long fifteenth century” in the Iberian Peninsula (spanning from the attacks on Jewish communities and mass forced conversions of Jews in 1391 to the forced conversion of the Muslim population of the Crown of Aragon in 1526). The editors note that whilst interreligious polemics and disputes are often the scene of aggression and insult, they are also a forum for the transmission of ideas and dialogue. In this way, the ten contributions seek to deepen our understanding of interreligious polemics.

The book begins with a contribution by John Tolan, “*Ne de fide presumant disputare*: Legal Regulations of Interreligious Debate and Disputation in the

Middle Ages" (14–28), which examines the suspicion and hostility towards polemical disputations with Jews and Muslims that is voiced in various examples of Christian religious and secular writings and laws during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Indeed, fear that debate might backfire and lead Christians to question essential tenets of their faith was a constant concern. Yet disputations did take place and those of Paris (1240) and Barcelona (1263) are indeed (in)famous. In "The Brighter Side of Medieval Christian-Jewish Polemical Encounters: Transfer of Medical Knowledge in the Midi (Twelfth–Fourteenth Centuries)" (29–61), Gad Freudenthal examines how competition between Jewish and Christian medical practitioners led to the translation of Latin medical works into Hebrew during the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. Also provided as an appendix is a translation of Leon Joseph of Carcassonne's preface to his translation of Gerard de Solo's *Practica super nono Almansories*, which provides rare evidence of the thoughts of a Jewish medical practitioner about his Christian colleagues and competitors.

Following on, the third chapter ("Better Muslim or Jew?: The Controversy around Conversion across Minorities in Fifteenth-Century Castile" [62–78]) by Ana Echevarría brings a much more local focus to the subject of interreligious polemics. It examines a legal dispute in 1451 between the Jews and Muslims of the town of Talavera de la Reina concerning the conversion of a Muslim woman to Judaism. Likewise, Eleazar Gutwirth analyses the polemical writing of two authors, one Jewish and the other Muslim, from the town of Arévalo and highlights the parallels and how shared aspects of their works were shaped by their common local background, "The Rabbi and the Mancebo: Arévalo and the Location of Affinities in the Fifteenth Century" (197–225).

There are three fascinating contributions on the impact of religious polemic in Iberian art in "The Spirit of the Letter: The Hebrew Inscription in Bermejo's Piedat Revisited" by Yonatan Glazer-Eytan (79–115); "Forgotten Witnesses: The Illustrations of Ms Escorial, I.I.3 and the Dispute over the Biblias Romanceadas" by Rosa M. Rodríguez Porto (116–59), and "*Vox populi*: Carnal Blood, Spiritual Milk, and the Debate Surrounding the Immaculate Conception, ca. 1600" by Felipe Pereda (286–34). The first two works offer gripping evidence of how past histories and Hebrew letters were used to create new discourses. In the third, Pereda traces how the dispute opposing Dominicans and their opponents over the racially discriminatory statutes of *limpieza de sangre* (purity of blood) underlay the polemical dispute surrounding the immaculate conception at the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Finally, we have three contributions dedicated to polemical texts: "From Christian Polemic to a Jewish-Converso Dialogue: Jewish Skepticism and Rabbinic-Christian Traditions in the *Scrutinium Scripturarum*" by Yosi Yisraeli

(160–96); “The Virus in the Language: Alonso de Cartagena’s Deconstruction of the ‘Limpieza de Sangre’ in *Defensorium unitatis christianae* (1450)” by Maria Laura Giordano (226–51), and “Apologetic Glosses—Venues for Encounters: Annotations on Abraham in the Latin Translations of the Qur’ān” by Katarzyna K. Starczewska (252–85). These three chapters focus on individual texts but all point to the role of converts in Jewish-Christian-Muslim polemical cultural transfers in an Iberian world where mass conversions were redefining the borders between the three religious groups.

The Jesuit order only features in the final chapter of this book, in Pereda’s discussion of the debates about the immaculate conception. Indeed, the Spanish Jesuits were enthusiastic proponents of the immaculate conception and found themselves on the receiving end of polemical attacks penned by Dominicans. As Pereda notes, this dispute mapped onto a pre-existing controversy over racial purity, which had seen the Jesuits attacked by the Dominicans in the sixteenth century for their reluctance to embrace racially discriminatory statutes of *limpieza de sangre*.

At first sight, the ten chapters of this work might appear to present a somewhat eclectic mix of works. Yet, there is much that connects their subjects beyond the chronological focus of this work. The editors have admirably succeeded in their desire to present a body of scholarly work that demonstrates how the study of polemical exchanges cannot be limited to physical violence and textual aggression but must also involve the study of how they produce important cultural exchanges. All of the contributions are fascinating in their own merits and the book thus offers a valuable resource to students and scholars conducting research in this field.

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Miguel Venegas and the Earliest Jesuit Theater: Choruses for Tragedies in Sixteenth-Century Europe. Jesuit Studies, 23. Leiden: Brill, 2019. Pp. xv +240. Hb, €106.00; \$127.00.

Poor Miguel Venegas! When Jerónimo Nadal (1507–80) was visiting Coimbra in 1561 and conducted an *examen* (professional development review) on the thirty-two-year old Jesuit, the overworked teacher was approaching burnout.