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Anti-Jewish Treatises in Visigothic Spain

1 Introduction

Among the Barbarian successor states to the Roman Empire in the West, Visigothic Spain stands out for scope and intensity of its anti-Jewish policies. In the second decade of the seventh century, king Sisebut ordered all Jews of his kingdom to be baptized. The king seems to have been motivated partly by personal anxiety regarding his individual salvation; on the other hand, he seems to have tried to emulate his predecessor Reccared, who had been acclaimed by pope Gregory the Great for his apostolic merits at the time of the conversion of the Visigoths from Arianism (the Homoian creed) to Catholicism. Previously, Sisebut was thought to have acted on the advice or even instigation of the leading theologian of the period, Isidore of Seville. However, a closer analysis of Isidore’s writings has shown that the bishop is quite critical of Sisebut’s actions, although this criticism is expressed in a rather indirect manner. What is more, Sisebut decreed forced baptism without consulting an ecclesiastical assembly, nor did he try to have his actions legitimized by a church council afterwards. Furthermore, it is telling that the wording of the anti-Jewish decree has not come down to us; it was not preserved among the Visigothic laws, even though Visigothic legislation, both ecclesiastical and secular, was enacted, codified and collected several times during the seventh century.¹

By his unprecedented actions, Sisebut created the problem of forcibly baptized Jews, some of whom returned to their ancestral faith afterwards. Throughout the seventh century, ecclesiastical canons and royal decrees repeatedly dealt with such “Judaizing” Christians, who were charged with violating the rules of their Christian faith.² However, it is important to note that anti-Jewish arguments and legislation were not consistent: while some kings legislated against the Jews, others did not take any action at all in this regard; the same can be said concerning church councils: some did pass anti-Jewish canons, others restricted themselves to other matters. What seems to be certain is that anti-Jewish legislation intensified in the second half of the seventh century, especially after the deposition of king Wamba in 680. Several later kings were dependent on ecclesiastical support; under their rule church councils met far more often than before, and it was at these instances that anti-Jewish legislation was enacted repeatedly. However, this very repetition begs the question whether such laws were applied in practice. Some scholars have taken the very fact of repetition as an indication of exasperation at the apparent futility of earlier

¹ See Drews (2006); González Salinero (1999 und 2000).
² See Bronisch (2005).

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measures; others have interpreted them as something like a rhetorical exercise, meant to legitimize royal authority; according to this view, anti-Jewish legislation in the second half of the seventh century was meant to be a declaration of orthodoxy.

Matters are not made easier by insecurity regarding the actual strength of the Jewish population in Spain. Previously, Jewish presence was thought to have been quite strong, continuing the late Roman situation of the Jewish diaspora around the Mediterranean basin. Recently, some scholars have claimed that Jewish immigration started anew under Islamic rule from the eighth century onwards, postulating a decline in Jewish population in previous centuries. However, we have no documentation of the emigration of Spanish Jews to other Mediterranean regions, and it is uncertain whether any majority of Spanish Jews converted to Catholicism under Visigothic rule; there is at least some evidence showing close contacts between Jewish and Christian neighbours, who helped Jewish parents to save their children from baptism.³

In this paper, I am not going to discuss anti-Jewish policies and legislation, I will focus rather on the authors of anti-Jewish treatises. Visigothic Spain does not only stand out – in a negative sense – for anti-Jewish legislation; unlike other Barbarian kingdoms, Spain also produced several authors of anti-Jewish monographic writings, continuing late Roman traditions of Adversus Iudaeos literature, the most important being Isidore of Seville, Ildefonse of Toledo and Julian of Toledo. Apparently, there was an audience for such writings in the period. Isidore composed his De fide catholica contra Iudaeos at the instigation of his sister Florentina, and Julian wrote his De comprobatione sextae aetatis at the request of king Ervig, who had ascended the throne with Julian’s support. Florentina, who lived as a consecrated virgin in some kind of family monastery, was an educated person typical of Visigothic Spain, where learned culture was not restricted to clerical circles; also laypeople, aristocrats and female religious formed part of the leading intellectual milieu of the period. It is important to note that both of these anti-Jewish works were written not at the request of ecclesiastics, but of educated laypeople, who had, however, both been consecrated in a liturgical act, either as a virgin or as an anointed monarch. Apparently, the recipients of anti-Jewish treatises were not located in clerical circles only; such writings were requested and read by a wider audience outside the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

2 Isidore of Seville and his De fide catholica contra Iudaeos

Isidore’s exposition, written around 614/15, is basically a proof of Catholic doctrine by scriptural exegesis, following patristic outlines.⁴ With one exception, he is

³ Drews (2002).
⁴ On its biblical and patristic sources, see Drews (2006) 47–82.
quite unoriginal, sticking to his sources even in the order of Biblical proof texts. The exception is his reference to a (contemporary?) Jewish “king” in the east, who is aduced by the Jews to prove that the “kingdom” has not departed from them, thereby refuting the Christian allegation that the Messiah has already come: *Iudaei autem perucacia impudicae frontis dicunt nondum esse id tempus expletum, mentientes nescio quem regem ex genere Iudae in extremis Orientis partibus regnum tenere.*\(^5\) Traditionally, the blessing of Jacob (Gen 49,10) was taken by Christian exegetes to refer to the first coming of Christ.\(^6\) This is the only passage indicating that Isidore must have had at least indirect contact with contemporary Jews, because this Jewish argument is not cited by any previous author.\(^7\) Apart from this, Isidore’s exposition follows patristic and late Roman models. The first book treats the life of Christ as well as Christology in all its relevant aspects, the second ecclesiology, focussing on the church gathered among the gentiles. Interestingly, there is no trace of specific anti-Arian arguments, apart from the extensive treatment of baptism, which may be due to past liturgical differences between Catholics and Arians.\(^8\)

Even though the structure of the work is entirely his own, Isidore closely follows earlier collections of testimonies, provided by Tertullian and Cyprian of Carthage. Extensive treatment is given to the story of Christ’s passion and to the calling of the gentiles, while other topics, traditionally treated extensively in literature written *Adversus Iudaeos*, such as the Biblical commandments and Jewish holidays, receive less attention. According to the *epistola dedicatoria*, Isidore wrote the treatise for his sister Florentina: *Haec ergo, sancta soror, te petente, ob aedificationem studii tui tibi dicau.*\(^9\) It seems safe to conclude that this is a hint to the actual purpose of the work: it was composed to be read for Christian edification and education, in order to strengthen Christians in their faith, in this connection pointing to the Jews as allegedly ignorant outsiders who did not understand scripture properly.\(^10\) Isidore’s *De fide catholica* was basically a manual of Biblical hermeneutics, written for clerics and laypeople alike.

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\(^5\) Isidorus Hispalensis, *De fide catholica contra Iudaeos* 1,8,2 (464 Migne).


\(^7\) The argument is taken up by Julian of Toledo; cf. Moreno García/Pozas Garza (2002) 265–266.

\(^8\) On the structure of the work, see Drews (2006) 33–46.

\(^9\) Isidorus Hispalensis, *De fide catholica contra Iudaeos, præef.* (450 M.), with emendation following Ziolkowski (1982) 1.

3 Ildefonse of Toledo and his *De virginitate perpetua beatae Mariae contra tres infideles*

Around the middle of the seventh century, Ildefonse\(^{11}\) wrote a treatise which is – in part – more original than Isidore’s, being the first Latin treatise on Mariology.\(^{12}\) The text on the perpetual virginity of Mary is divided into three parts, the first two being the refutation of two authors from the fourth century who had cast doubt on Mariological doctrines, Jovinianus and Helvidius; in this, they had been refuted by Saint Jerome already,\(^{13}\) and also Ambrose and Augustine had written against the two authors, which provides the basis for Ildefonse’s exposition.\(^{16}\) From his correspondence with bishop Quiricus of Barcelona it has been inferred that he wrote the text at the request of this fellow bishop.\(^{15}\) Interestingly, he gives no specific reason for writing, declaring simply to do no more than speaking the truth and glorifying God.\(^{16}\)

The third part of his treatise is the largest one, and in this Ildefonse is more original, not in his scriptural exegesis, but in his linking of mariological doctrine with anti-Jewish arguments; his third and his principal adversary is a nameless Jew.\(^{17}\) In 431 the council of Ephesus had established the title of *theotokos* for Mary, stating that she had given birth not just to Christ, but to God. This was, of course, related to the Christological discussions of the late Roman church which had their centre in the Eastern Mediterranean. To my knowledge, Christian theologians did not use the figure of invented Jewish adversaries to drive home their Christological points in the course of these discussions in the fifth century. This is different with Ildefonse: he constructs the image of a nameless Jew, blamed by him for alleged unbelief. The Jew is shown to hold heretical beliefs refuted already by Jerome. Apparently, after

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\(^{11}\) On his biography and works see Díazy Díaz (2007); Domínguez del Val (1971); Madoz (1952); Braegelmann (1942) 1–31. Contrary to some assertions, there is no contemporary evidence that Ildefonse was a student of Isidore at Seville; cf. Braegelmann (1942) 7 and Domínguez del Val (1971) 162 (the earliest reference is by Cixila, perhaps from the tenth century). On his anti-Jewish treatise, see Moreno García/Pozas Garza (2005).

\(^{12}\) Cascante Dávila (1970) 350; Rico Pavés (2007) 308. The first critical modern edition, provided by Vicente Blanco García in 1937, was reprinted with Spanish translation in 1971. For corrections on the text see Gil Fernández (1975). The text was probably written when Ildefonse was still abbot of the monastery of Agalí, before he became bishop of Toledo in 657; cf. Domínguez del Val (1971) 293; García Moreno (2007) 251.

\(^{13}\) Hieronymus Stridonensis, *Adversus Iovinianum libri duo; Adversus Helvidium de Mariae virginitate perpetua*.

\(^{14}\) On the sources, see Canal (1966).

\(^{15}\) Cf. Braegelmann (1942) 121; this is rejected by Domínguez del Val (1971) 293–294.

\(^{16}\) Braegelmann (1942) 122.

\(^{17}\) Right at the beginning of the third book the Jewish adversary is addressed as follows: *Quid dicis, Iudaee?* (Ildeponsus Toletanus, *De virginitate perpetua sanctae Mariae* 3 [62, 266 Campos Ruiz]).
the demise of Arianism in Spain the Jew is taken to be the contemporary representative of heterodox opinion.

Ildefonse is the first author to use Mariology as the battle ground against the Jews. Unlike Isidore, he does not seem to have had even indirect contact with contemporary Jews; otherwise he should have noted that the perpetual virginity of Mary is a concept so alien to Jewish thought that it would have been impossible to convert any Jew to this kind of doctrine. A reason for the intensity of his anti-Jewish polemic is hard to find; however, it seems unlikely that it should be attributed to any recent controversies with Spanish Jews of the time, let alone to postulate the existence of “un judío representativo de la animadversión racial a la virginidad perpetua de María.”

A much more nuanced position, criticizing earlier speculations, has been taken by Ursicino Domínguez del Val:

“Nosotros decimos que debería aducirse documentación histórica sobre errores judíos antimarianos en aquellos días y estos autores no nos la ofrecen.”

Domínguez del Val recalls that no Spanish church councils mention any errors of the Jews concerning the Virgin; nor do they refer to any such errors – even by Christians – at all. Therefore, it seems safe to conclude that Ildefonse wrote the treatise for pastoral reasons, aiming to instruct Christians and to strengthen their Marian devotion: “[...] el fin del tratado era mentalizar los fieles en mariología.”

Remarkably, in the prologue the author does not mention any contemporary heretics, nor the Jews, as addressees of the work. Therefore, the three persons constructed in the treatise should be read as symbols; there is no historical evidence substantiating the existence of the theological errors attributed to them in contemporary Spain.

It is interesting to note that no contemporary context can be established for Ildefonse’s Mariological focus in his anti-Jewish expositions; the Virgin does not otherwise appear to have been on the primary agenda of early medieval theologians,

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18 It is unlikely that “he merely recognized the objections brought by the Jews of his time as the old arguments of Jovinian and Helvidius.” (Braegelmann [1942] 123) Equally unfounded is Madoz (1952) 490: “Vió acaso en algunos contemporáneos judíos el error persistente de Joviniano y Elvidio.” It is totally unlikely that any contemporary Jews would have had recourse to the writings of Christian heretics to combat the Visigothic church of their time, as postulated by Rivera Recio (1985) 240: “[...] para que no se pudieran apoyar en ellas los judíos contemporáneos del santo, los cuales eran los más acérrimos impugnadores de esta verdad de nuestra fe.”

19 See Madoz (1952) 491 (“controversias recientes”). In a totally unhistorical manner, earlier scholars have postulated the persistence of earlier heresies in Toledo, with no evidence whatsoever; cf. Huidobro (1982) 202: “Los errores arrianos, prisciliaristas y judíos estaban presentes en Toledo. [...] Ver en qué medida la teología ildefonsiana responde a los errores de la época.”

20 Domínguez del Val (1971) 296.


22 Domínguez del Val (1971) 299. This may be corroborated by the statement of the Mozarabic Chronicle of 754, which does not, however, mention Marian devotion: [...] et per Iberiam discursati ut uere a magna concilia fideliae lectitantium recreate sunt mentes atque a ribulis doctrinarum eo in tempore magnopere consolati sunt pusillanimes (Continuatio Hispana a. DCCLIV 48 [349,10 – 12 Mommsen]).

23 Domínguez del Val (1971) 299.
apart from the 11th council of Toledo in 675, which emphasized the role of Mary in the redemption.²⁴ Few churches were dedicated to the Virgin in Visigothic Spain; there is one example in Toledo from 587.²⁵ In 656, the tenth council of Toledo ordered the transfer of the feast of the Annunciation from 25th March to the 18th of December;²⁶ the Lex Visigothorum urges to celebrate it throughout the kingdom, specifically ordering the Jews to observe this festival.²⁷

In many ways, the structural setting of Ildefonse’s argument is similar to high medieval legends relating to the disbelief of Jews in the dogma of the transubstantiation of the host. Also in these accounts, the Jew is no real person, but a literary fabrication, used as the embodiment of unbelief, in reality representing Christian unbelief in this recently established doctrine (following the fourth Lateran council of 1215). Ildefonse looks down on the allegedly incredulous Jew, he talks to him, but not with him,²⁸ nor would he even have listened to any Jewish arguments:

Ecce impleta est terra testibus partis meae, quia et repleta sunt caelum simul et terra uestitatem fidei meae; ecce testibus partis tuae affirmavist quae dixi: ecce testibus partis meae roboravist quae testes dixerunt partis tuae. At proinde, tam quos tu adsumperas, quam quos ego propteram, toti facti sunt mei. [...] Quid ergo restat? Esse te sine ullo, et habere te prorsus nullum.²⁹

Ildefonse does not even regard the Jew as a human being: [...] haec sentiant ut homo; tu autem aut dissentias ut animal, aut nec sentias ut lapis.³⁰ Ildefonse creates the atmosphere of a battleground, where the Jew is defeated by a barrage of testimonies; on one side, “everything” (omnia) is claimed to be in favour of the Christian position, whereas on the other the Jew stands alone (solus), said to have been defeated by every possible argument. However, the entire argument can hardly have appeared convincing to any Jewish interlocutor.³¹

²⁴ Braegelmann (1942) 125.
²⁵ Braegelmann (1942) 125, note 32; Madoz (1952) 497.
²⁶ Madoz (1952) 475.
²⁷ Leges Visigothorum. Liber Iudiciorum 12,3,6 (434,11–435,2 Zeumer).
²⁸ Cf. Ildefonsus Toletanus, De virginitate perpetua sanctae Mariae 7 (103, 926–927 C.R.): Quare non credis uniuersae Ecclesiae catholicae? The Jew is constantly addressed in imperative form: Crede or Audi, or questioned: Audisti? (e.g. De virginitate perpetua sanctae Mariae 8 [106–113 C.R.]). See also ibid. 12 (150,1689–1690 C.R.): Sed nos audite, aemuli, vos attendite, infidi, vos cognoscite, discidio pleni, uos percipite, sapientes mundi.
²⁹ Ildefonsus Toletanus, De virginitate perpetua sanctae Mariae 9 (117,1150–1157 C.R.).
³¹ See already Braegelmann (1942) 120: “The style and content of the treatise seem to indicate that it was written not so much to confute the Jews as to instruct Christians and confirm them in their devotion to Mary.” However, given the harsh polemical tone, it is unfounded to postulate that “there is always manifest on his part the desire to draw the Jew to Christ.” (Ibid. 143) See also Rivera Recio (1985) 168–169.
Ildefonse points to the later middle ages also in another way: From the twelfth century onwards, Jewish synagogues were repeatedly converted into churches dedicated to the Virgin Mary. One of the earliest examples is Estella in Navarre, where this is said to have happened already in 1145, after the Jewish quarter had been moved to other parts of the town; subsequently, the former synagogue was converted into the church of Santa María Jas del Castillo. Later examples include two synagogues in Toledo, Santa María la Blanca and the Sinagoga del tránsito (whose name derives from the transit, that is the dormition, of the Virgin). In Germany, such conversions of synagogues happened mainly in Franconia and in the Rhineland; well-known examples include the Frauenkirche in Nuremberg (erected at the site of a synagogue destroyed during the pogroms following the black death) and the synagogue close to the town hall in Cologne, converted into the church of Saint Mary in Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{32} In addition, there are numerous woodcuts associating the Virgin Mary with allegedly unbelieving Jews. In the present context, it is important to note that in the later middle ages it was quite typical to associate Jewish unbelief and the Virgin.\textsuperscript{33} Ildefonse of Toledo seems to be the earliest example of this association in the Latin West, undocumented for centuries after his demise.

4 Julian of Toledo and his De comprobatione sextae aetatis

According to the Mozarabic chronicle of 754, Julian of Toledo was of Jewish descent.\textsuperscript{34} If this is true, the fact was concealed during the Visigothic kingdom, when Jewish ancestry might have hindered ecclesiastical careers of aspiring young men. Julian became closely associated with Visigothic royalty, probably being involved in the deposition of king Wamba and in the installation of his successor Ervig.\textsuperscript{35} He presided over four councils of Toledo, being the first metropolitan of Toledo to act as the primate of the Visigothic church. He is famous for writing the first historical monograph for centuries, following models such as the republican Coniuratio Catilinae by Sallustius, namely the Historia Wambae. Equally original is his Prognosticon futuri saeculi, the very first Latin exposition of eschatological doctrine, and the Antikeimnon Libri, a juxtaposition of seemingly contradictory Biblical passages faintly reminiscent of later scholasticism.\textsuperscript{36}

\textsuperscript{32} See Röckelein (1993); Glüber (2001).
\textsuperscript{33} Cf. Spangenberg (1993); Loewe (1912).
\textsuperscript{34} Iulianus episcopus, ex traduce Iudeorum (Continuatio Hispana a. DCCLIV 50 [349,18–19 M.]). For his life and writings, see Hillgarth (= Iulianus Toletanus, De comprobatione aetatis sextae) VIII – XXI; Gonzálvez Ruiz (1996); for the controversy surrounding his possible Jewish descent ibid. 7–8.
\textsuperscript{35} Cf. Murphy (1952); Collins (1977).
\textsuperscript{36} Hillgarth, followig Díaz, suggests that this should be put into the context of controversies with the Jews; see Hillgarth (1976) XVIII. See O’Loughlin (2013).
His anti-Jewish treatise *De comprobatione sextae aetatis*, written in 686, is a refutation of the Jewish claim that in the second half of the seventh century people were still living in the fifth age of the world, which would imply that the Messiah had not yet come. Christians claimed that with the incarnation of the Word in Jesus Christ the sixth age of the world had already begun. In spite of the long time that had passed since Sisebut’s fateful decree, there were apparently still Jews, baptized or not, who continued adhering to their ancestral religion, claiming that the Messiah was still to come. It was precisely this Messianic expectation that was chosen by Julian as the main topic of his refutation of Jewish beliefs. At the beginning of his first book he claims that Jews “force” a number of Christians to become insecure in their faith: [...]*etiam quosdam e fidelium numero titubare compellunt.* On the one hand, this statement implies contacts between baptized Christians and Jews (baptized or not); on the other, it highlights the necessity of reinforcing Christian education, a primary aspect of Visigothic culture in the seventh century: “the real audience for Julian’s arguments was the Catholic population of Spain.”

### 5 Comparative analysis

There are a number of similarities, but also of differences when we compare the three treatises both with patristic and with high medieval writings. In the second century, Justin Martyr chose the literary genre of a dialogue for his refutation of Judaism, which was later also adopted in the pseudo-Augustinian *Altercatio Ecclesiae et Synagogae*. In the high middle ages, this form of dialogue became very popular, as can be seen by pointing to the examples of Gilbert Crispin Abbot of Westminster, Petrus Alfonsi and Petrus Abelard. In addition, there were actual disputations between Christians and Jews, often officially staged by Christian authorities, from the 13th century onward. In Visigothic Spain there were neither disputations, nor did authors choose the literary genre of a dialogue. To be sure, the dialogue form was a mere lit-
erary convention, but it did create at least the impression of some form of verbal exchange, pretending that the words of the Christian partner were addressed to a Jew, at least theoretically. Apparently, authors in Visigothic Spain did not feel the necessity to pretend addressing a real Jew in dialogue form;\(^4\) this is corroborated by the fact that Ildefonse, who expressly writes against a Jew, does not even invent a name for this imaginary addressee.

Nonetheless, the authors – especially Ildefonse and Julian – claim that their arguments are meant to refute Jewish arguments, even to convince Jewish readers. However, none of them is bothered by the fact that their arguments can hardly have appeared convincing to any real Jews. Historical scholarship has established that literature written \textit{Adversus Iudaeos} was in general addressed to Christian readers; it was the primary intention of authors to corroborate the Christian faith of their own communities, not to convert Jews. In addition, we do not have any evidence that Jews were ever converted after reading such writings. However, sometimes authors at least pretended to turn to actual Jews. The Visigothic authors discussed here fail to do so; they merely claim to have refuted Jewish arguments, but they do not create a Jewish spokesperson acknowledging or at least implying this. They do not presuppose a Jewish community to be converted or convinced, but a Christian one to be taught and strengthened; their aim is didactic, not missionary.\(^4^4\) A sermon would have had to be much shorter, therefore the genre of a treatise was most suitable for this purpose. Ildefonse and Julian choose a more specific topic, Mariology

\(^4\) Interestingly, in his \textit{Antikeimenon} Julian of Toledo does arrange excerpts from larger works in a question and answer form; but this is not necessarily a parallel to dialogues, since it could equally be compared to \textit{erotapokriseis}; cf. O’Loughlin (2013) 86.

\(^4^4\) The end of Julian’s preface is very telling in this respect: Whereas earlier in this text he seems to imply that Jews are meant to acknowledge and comprehend (Iulianus Toletanus, \textit{De comprobatione aetatis sextae}, praef. [147,95 – 96 H.]: \textit{in qua et sextam saeculi aetatem agnoscent, et in ea Christum natum intelligant}; [146,57–58.71 H.] even the verb \textit{conuincere} is used on two occasions), at the very end there is no more talk of conviction, but of oppression: [...] \textit{vakenter inimicorum Christi colla iugo seruitutis dominicae comprimas, et uexilla fidei Christianae potenter attollas} (148,118–120 H.). At stake is basically an issue of power and hierarchy, which is very much expressed by the final sentences of the third book: \textit{Vere multum erras, multum desipis, multum steris, grauiiter enim corruiisti, O Israel; iniquitatibus tuis collisus es, confactus es, conquassatus es. Viam perdidisti, uiam ergo sequere, ut per uiam uenias ad salutem} (Iulianus Toletanus, \textit{De comprobatione aetatis sextae} 3,35 [212,144–148 H.]). See also Hillgarth (1976) LXVI: “Nevertheless, it is clear, that Julian had little hope that his work would have much effect on the Jews of Spain. The remarks he apparently addresses to them are rhetorical in nature, [...] The aim of the work is to convince the Christian reader of the falsity of the Jewish claims.” Julian himself states clearly: \textit{Nec enim possunt nunc intellegere Saluatorem quem auduist, nisi in finem mundi, dum fuerit consummatio saeculorum} (Iulianus Toletanus, \textit{De comprobatione aetatis sextae} 1,12 [159,38 – 39 H.]). Unfounded is the statement by Cascante Dávila (1970) 351: “[Ildefonso] no quiere el mal del adversario, antes bien lo invita al arrepentimiento y a la conversión.”
and – so to speak – historical eschatology,\textsuperscript{45} whereas Isidore is more conventional and comprehensive in his exposition of Christian doctrine.

As indicated earlier, scriptural exegesis in the three authors is not very original.\textsuperscript{46} However, Ildefonse does provide a new theological and formal context – Mariology and liturgy,\textsuperscript{47} while Julian focuses on sacred history and its periodization, which is accentuated by his \textit{Prognosticon futuri saeculi}.\textsuperscript{48} Julian uses the periodization of history, more especially the succession of generations, as evidence to substantiate the truth of Christianity, explicitly and expressly relying, however, on the Septuagint version.\textsuperscript{49}

All three authors continue the ancient tradition of \textit{Adversus Iudaeos} literature;\textsuperscript{50} they also reflect orthodox Western theology following the period of the council of Chalcedon: after the rapid demise of Arianism (or Homoian Christianity) there were no Trinitarian or Christological controversies in the Latin West, more precisely in Spain (Adoptionism was only a phenomenon of the Carolingian period). Therefore, none of them continues Christological debates of the third or fourth century; Isidore argues against a supposedly heretical Syrian bishop at the second council of Seville in 619, but such debates do not surface in his own theological writings. When asked by the pope, Julian of Toledo does state Spanish opinion on the refutation of Mono-

\textsuperscript{45} Hillgarth described Julian’s treatise as “apologetic history in the interest of the Visigothic monarchy, from which the Spanish church was by now hardly separable.” (Hillgarth [1976] XVIII).

\textsuperscript{46} All of them rely exclusively on the Latin text; apparently they have no knowledge of either Greek or Hebrew; for Isidore, see Drews (2006) 50 – 58; for Ildefonse, see Moreno García/Pozas Garza (2005) 113. On use of the Bible, see Muñoz León (1990); according to the author, the argument based of the innerbiblical relationship prophecy – fulfillment justifies the characterization of Ildefonse’s treatise as a “planteamiento muy original” (ibid. 255). It is also questionable that Ildefonse would have followed methods of Jewish exegesis known as midrash or targum (ibid. 261–268); Ildefonse has no knowledge of rabbinic literature; any resemblances should be attributed to Biblical models found in the Old Testament or to traditions of ancient rhetoric used by both Christians and Jews. It seems rather fair to say that Ildefonse’s works are “‘centones’ patrísticos y bíblicos” (Huidobro [1982] 201).

\textsuperscript{47} Cf. Canal (1966) 120 – 121: “La originalidad del toledano está en haber sabido hacer otra construcción teológica, otro esquema a desarrollar.”

\textsuperscript{48} Notwithstanding his focus on the periodization of history, the structure of his treatise follows the outline of Cyprian of Carthage’s \textit{De testimoniis}; cf. Moreno García/Pozas Garza (2002) 256. On the \textit{Prognosticon}, “the most widely disseminated work of late seventh-century Spain”, see Wood (2009) 74.

\textsuperscript{49} Iulianus Toletanus, \textit{De comprobatione aetatis sextae}, praef. (147,99 – 109 H.): \textit{Quia igitur Iudaeorum infesta maliitia de amorum diversitate, quae inter nostros codices et illorum diversa est, obicit quaestionem, nos e contrario de generationum evoluitone, quae inter nostros codices et illorum una est, obicem praepararum: ut cum illi pro distinguedis aetatis annorum breuitatem ostenderint, nos plenitudine generationum ostensa, eorum contemnamus de annis quaestionem superfluam. Quid enim annis faciant, si generationes succumbant? In generationibus ergo aetatum natuinitatis Christi quaerenda est veritas, quae et per legem monstratur, et per euangelium noscitur}. Cf. Moreno García/ Pozas Garza (2002) 258.

\textsuperscript{50} Cf. Madoz (1952) 46.
theletism in two *Apologetica*, but this argument is not taken up in his anti-Jewish
treatise.

Anti-Jewish polemic in Visigothic Spain stands out for two reasons. First, Julian
is perhaps the earliest writer to compose an anti-Jewish treatise at the instigation of a
ruler, king Ervig. Julian was also the first author in the Latin west to highlight the
importance of royal unction for a concept of Christian rulership. In his *Historia
Wambae*, he stresses the role of the *princeps religiosus* for good government, in
this case in the form of successful military action against a rebel. Also in the *His-
toria Wambae*, there is some form of anti-Jewish argument: king Wamba stands out
not only because of his allegedly scrupulous observance of every detail of the eccle-
siastical inauguration ritual, after his victory over the rebels he is said to have taken
actions against the Jews. The historical Wamba never convened any “national”
church councils, and his relations with the bishops appear to have been rather
strained. Therefore, Julian cannot present him as an exemplary ruler regarding his
actual interaction with the church hierarchy. In part, this lack is supplemented by
mentioning Wamba’s allegedly negative attitude towards the Jews, which does not
correspond to historical truth at all. However, it is interesting to observe that Julian
constructs exemplary royal performance by pointing to liturgical observance, the
restitution of church property and to measures against the Jews. The *Historia Wambae*
may have been written during the reign of king Ervig, who commissioned *De compro-
batione sextae aetatis*, or even under king Egica, both of whom convened councils
that passed anti-Jewish legislation under the presidency of Julian of Toledo. In the
history of Christian anti-Judaism, Julian provides the rare example of an author writ-
ning at the request of a ruler. There is no parallel example in other Barbarian suc-
cessor states.

51 This is stated clearly in the *praefatio*: [...] religiosis uestrae gloriae iussis [...] obedientiae competen-
tem uestrae Celsitudini reddens honorum [...] imperatum mihi opus [...] obediente tamen ut potui, ex-
plicaui (Iulianus Toletanus, *De comprobatione aetatis sextae*, praef. [146,51–55 H.]). Unlike Isidore
and Ildefonse, Julian took an active part in anti-Jewish legislation passed by councils presided
over by himself. See also García Herrero (1991 and 1995).
52 Cf. Dartmann (2010).
53 De Jong (1999); Martínez Pizarro (2005).
54 Iulianus Toletanus, *Historia Wambae regis* 5 (221,75–77 Levison): [...] quod peius his omnibus est,
contra ipsum salvatorem nostrum et dominum Iudaeorum blasphemantium prostitulm habeatur? After
his victory, Wamba takes several measures, applauded by Julian; this includes actions against the
Jews: [...] statum quoque rerum mira pace componit. Lecta illic praesidia bellatorum dimittit, radices
ab ea omnis rebelliosis detersit, Iudaesos abegit [...] (Historia Wambae regis 28 [243,740–742 L.]).
The *insultatio*, perhaps reworked by Julian, starts with several anti-Jewish invectives, directed against
Gaul; cf. Iulianus Toletanus, *Historia Wambae*, *Insultatio* 1: quae Iudaeorum potius quam fidelium
Christi amicitias incubabas (245,13–14 L.) and 2: sed super haec omnia Iudaorum consortis animaris,
quorum etiam infidelitatem, si libens adtenxis, iam in tuis transisse filiis recognocisc, dum hii, qui in te
christianitatis titulo praefugebat, ad Hebraeorum probati sunt transisse perfidiam (245,23–27 L.).
55 Julian’s *De comprobatione* was known only to a very limited extent outside Spain; only three
manuscripts survive, four more appear to be lost; see Hillgarth (= Iulianus Toletanus, *De comproba-
The *princeps religiosus* of the *Historia Wambae* combines mildness (*clementia*) shown towards the aristocracy, including rebels, with harshness against the Jews. This may suggest that Julian, head of the Visigothic church after 681 and leading theological adviser to several kings, tries to promote social and ideological integration of elites by advocating rhetorical exclusion of outsiders. Visigothic aristocracy in the second half of the seventh century was rent by factionalism, which persisted until the end of the kingdom. In this context, political and ecclesiastical authorities such as king Ervig and (arch)bishop Julian chose the Jews as paradigmatic outsiders that could be used to foster internal cohesion of the Catholic monarchy, especially of its social elites. This political instrumentalization of anti-Judaism by rulers is unique in early medieval Europe. The singularity of the Spanish case is due first and foremost to Sisebut’s unprecedented actions regarding the forceful baptism of all Jews of his kingdom. Decades later, Julian highlights the religious role of the monarch, styling him as a *princeps religiosus* responsible also for the spiritual wellbeing of his people; in this context, the Goths are even styled in the form of a chosen people, elected by God and guided by the appropriate political and ecclesiastical authorities.

The second reason marking Visigothic anti-Judaism as unique is its Wirkungsgeschichte: Isidore’s treatise was diffused widely, being copied primarily in the Carolingian world as a compendium of patristic theology regarding the Jews. The text was included in collections of sermons, and it was translated into other languages, such as Old High German, probably at the beginning of the ninth century. However, Carolingian authors did not produce anti-Jewish monographs reminiscent of Visigothic authors of the seventh century. This may have been partly due to the very success of Isidore’s treatise, but also to the lack of royal support for anti-Jewish policies and expositions. Still, in exegetical commentaries on the Old Testament anti-Jewish thinking from the patristic and Visigothic periods was taken up and appropriated also in the Carolingian world.

As in many other cases, Visigothic authors transmitted patristic thinking to the medieval world. First and foremost this was true regarding scriptural exegesis, set out in detail in Isidore’s *De fide catholica contra Iudaeos*. Due to his very originality in his Mariological outline, also Ildefonse’s treatise was widely diffused. The first modern editor Blanco García knew 24 surviving manuscripts, the two oldest dating to the ninth century; Domínguez del Val indicated many more: in total he lists 18
in Spain, 24 in France, four in Italy and four in England, two in Austria, and one each in Germany, Portugal, and Luxemburg, which makes a total of 55, which may not be exhaustive yet.⁶⁰

In the 12th and 13th century, Ildefonse’s treatise was elaborated on by other authors such as Gauthier de Coincy, who reinforced the anti-Jewish aspect even further.⁶¹ In the 15th century, the text was translated into Castilian by Alfonso Martínez de Toledo, known as the Arcipreste de Talavera. However, Ildefonse was remembered precisely because of his advocacy of the pre-eminence of the Virgin, but much less as an anti-Jewish author, even though in his treatise the two aspects are closely linked. In his later biographies, Ildefonse appears primarily as the recipient of a celestial garment (the chasuble) of the Virgin,⁶² not as a theological adversary of the Jews. This was taken up also in early modern iconography, where Ildefonse is depicted principally, if not exclusively, as a champion of Marian devotion.

Julian was the first historiographer describing the ritual of royal unction; remarkably, the king so described was later credited with having made negative statements about the Jews, even though this may be contrary to historical truth. Luckily enough, royal unction, which became fairly widespread from the high Middle Ages onwards, was never specifically associated with anti-Judaism. However, the historical figure of Julian himself was later said to have had Jewish ancestry, highlighting the fact that the Jewish population had constituted a sizeable part of the Hispanic population.

6 Summary

After the conversion of the Goths to Catholicism following the third council of Toledo in 589, there were no more theological adversaries of Spanish theologians inside the Spanish church; at least they did not write any treatises addressed to such theological enemies, and there are no records of such theological debates at church councils. However, after Sisebut’s conversion attempt the Jews turned into such an adversary: After being forcefully baptized, they belonged to the church, and they appeared to be contradicting church doctrine on many decisive points. However, unlike in earlier cases this Jewish “heresy” did not have any real spokespersons; it was not represent-

⁶¹ Moreno García/Pozas Garza (2005) 114. On later influence of the work see also Muñoz León (1990) 256.
⁶² Guiance (2009). The Life, probably written by bishop Cixila of León in the first half of the tenth century, “se convertiría en la leyenda hagiográfica hispana más exitosa a lo largo de la alta Edad Media y que alcanzaría pronto el resto de la cristiandad occidental.” (ibid. 437). For the later veneration of Ildefonse as a saint, see also Corral (2010). The legendary apparitions of Saint Leocadia and the Virgin Mary are discussed in detail by Domínguez del Val (1971) 283–287. Remarkably, almost all collections of legends of the Virgin, both in Latin and in vernacular languages throughout western Europe, start with the legend of Ildefonse (ibid. 284).
ed at church councils, and there is hardly any record of any real Jewish argument in anti-Jewish literature, apart from the enigmatic Jewish king in the East and apparent Messianic expectations at the time of Julian of Toledo. Only regarding these two points is there any real contemporary context to the treatises. On the other hand, a contemporary theological context is provided mainly by the need for Christian education and catechism, also established by other theological writings by all three authors. In the case of Ildefonse, a second context for his treatise can be proposed: His style is highly repetitive; certain passages, such as the end of his treatise, appear to be doxological, resembling a prayer; this might suggest that there is some link to liturgical poetry or Visigothic liturgy in general. The wide diffusion of Isidore’s and Ildefonse’s treatise is due to the pragmatic aspect of their works: They present a compilation of patristic doctrine, useful for Christian education and devotion, centred on the figures of Christ and the Virgin. In this, they were remarkably successful, and we may regret today that this success was accompanied, if not aided, by their anti-Jewish undertones.

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63 Cf. Wood (2009) 83: “Julian was attempting to create a work that was of social and practical relevance.”

64 The style is referred to as *stylus isidorianus or more synonymorum*; it may have been partly intended to facilitate linguistic instruction, apart from devotional and mystical purposes; cf. Díaz y Díaz (2007) 236.

65 Ildefonsus Toletanus, *De virginitate perpetua sanctae Mariae* 12 (154 C.R.). Cf. Muñoz León (1990) 252. However, there is hardly any trace of dialogue as postulated there.

66 For the liturgical reading of the treatise see Braegelmann (1942) 13: for reading the text was normally divided into seven lessons, sometimes also into six (ibid. 131). On liturgical use in Spain, see also Domínguez del Val (1971) 305 and 328 – 329.
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