Contents

List of figures vii
Acknowledgements viii

Introduction YANIV FOX AND YOSI YISRAELI 1

1 Conversion as a historiographical problem: 24
   The case of Zoraya/Isabel de Solis
   RYAN SZPIECH

PART I
Regulating conversion 39

2 Conversion on trial: Toleration of apostasy and 41
   the trial of three converts to Judaism in the Dutch
   Republic, 1614–1615
   ALEXANDER VAN DER HAVEN

3 Anxieties in conflict: The Ratto of Anna del Monte 61
   KENNETH STOW

4 Normative texts as sources for conversion to Christianity 77
   in Europe
   ROY FLECHNER

5 Royal policy and conversion of Jews to Christianity 96
   in thirteenth-century Europe
   JOHN TOLAN
vi Contents
PART II
Social realities of inter-religious conversion

6 The donor and the gravedigger: Converts to Judaism in the Cairo Geniza documents
MOSHE YAGUR

7 Conversion as an aspect of master-slave relationships in the medieval Egyptian Jewish community
CRAIG PERRY

8 Returning apostates and their marital partners in medieval Ashkenaz
EPHRAIM KANARFOGEL

9 Conversion and return to Judaism in high and late medieval Europe: Christian perceptions and portrayals
PAOLA TARTAKOFF

PART III
Narrating conversion

10 Conversion from the worst to the best: The relationship between medieval Judaism, Islam, and Christianity
IRVEN RESNICK

11 The role of preaching in the conversion to Islam
LINDA G. JONES

12 Between tyranny and the commonwealth: Political discourses and the framing of violence against conversos in the Gesta Hispaniensia of Alfonso de Palencia
YANAY ISRAELI

13 Converting bodies, embodying conversion: The production of religious identities in late medieval and early modern Europe
HENRIETTE-RIKA BENVENISTE AND GIORGOS PLAKOTOS

Contributors

Index

268

272

Figures

2.1 Hoorn's sheriff and prosecutor Claes Boelens, who proposed that the three proselytes be executed

5.1 Matthew Paris, drawing of Domus Conversorum

6.1 Right-hand column, line 16: “The proselyte gravedigger – Three – Doing well”

7.1 Members of the Jewish community seek to find an acceptable marital match for the freedwoman Mubarak
Conversion as a historiographical problem

The case of Zoraya/Isabel de Solís

Ryan Szpiech

One of the best-known stories concerning the end of the Nasrid kingdom of Granada is that of the captive girl Isabel de Solís. Isabel was apparently captured in the skirmishes between Muslims and Christians in the 1470s and given as a slave to the house of King Abū al-Hasan, known to posterity as “Mulay Hasan” (mašāya, Ar. “My sovereign/lord”), who ruled Granada for over two decades, split across two reigns, until 1485. Mulay Hasan’s wife Fāṭima, often called Fāṭima al-Ḥurra (“The Free Woman”) or, in other sources, ʿĀʾisha al-Ḥurra, had already given birth to a son, Muḥammad XII, better known as Boabdil, the legendary “last Moor” whose sighing retreat from Granada has been memorialized as the dying gasp of Andalusian society. But a wife and sons were not enough to keep Hasan’s fancy from turning toward Isabel, who, as Rachel Arié states, was “called Zoraya after her conversion to Islam.”1 Becoming his lover and then wife, she gave birth to two sons, Saʿad and Naṣr. According to later legend, the feud between Zoraya and Fāṭima that this love affair provoked weakened the Nasrid kingdom, for Boabdil sided with his mother and eventually ascended the throne but was soon overtaken by the Catholic kings.2

Zoraya/Isabel’s identity has become the stuff of legend. Numerous fictional and theatrical accounts have imagined her life over the last two centuries, including plays, novels, and screen renditions, but apart from this fictional afterlife, her existence can be confirmed with solid historical documentation.3 It is known that she was a Christian girl, very probably the daughter of Castilian nobleman Sancho Jiménez de Solís, mayor of La Peña de Martos, near Jáen, and it is generally thought, based on the sources, that she was captured during a Muslim raid and sold as a slave. She must have become a Muslim sometime around 1475–1480 and thus came to be called in Arabic and Castilian chronicles “rūmiyya” or “la romía” (Ar. female Rām or Christian/slave). We know that the sons she bore to King Hasan were first raised as Muslims but on 30 April 1492 were baptized by the bishop of Guadix and were known as Juan de Granada and Fernando de Granada in later years. Zoraya was known as Isabel, the former “Queen of Granada,” in a few Christian sources from the first decade of the sixteenth century, after which she disappears from the historical record.

The story of Zoraya la romía, the converted Muslim, aka Isabel the “reverted” Christian and former “Queen of Granada,” makes evident the difficulty of understanding “conversion” clearly in a historical context. For we may sift the legend from the fact, but what do we know of the conversion – or conversions or apostasies – at the heart of this story? It seems plausible that Zoraya/Isabel did become a Muslim after being taken captive and that she did end her life as a Christian in post-Conquest Spain, but the way in which we answer the question of when Isabel converted and “became” Zoraya or when she “reverted” and “became” Isabel again has much to do with how we define the term conversion. Did she convert when she professed Islam publicly? Or, if it is true that she was captured as a young child, as some sources tell us, did her coming of age in Granada make Islam the dominant faith in her own heart? In any case, can one speak of conversion in the case of a captive minor who may well have had negligible knowledge of her religion of origin and whose religious identity after abduction and marriage must be seen as imposed by circumstance? Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that such a person simply grew up as a Muslim and that her acceptance of a life in Christian Spain after 1492 was her only real “conversion” worthy of the name? Did she really return to Christianity, or did she just appear to do so as a way to keep her land and possessions? Could such a merely practical turn to Christian life be called conversion, or would it be better described as a calculated and feigned imposture? Finally, would “conversion” in this context refer more to a change in social affiliation or belief or something else entirely?

Zoraya/Isabel’s identity – which seems to be an essential element in any consideration of her role in late Nasrid history and in the history of the ruling elite in the final years of the Nasrid kingdom – is difficult to discuss, to say the least. This is not because we lack the relevant documentation. Rather, the problem lies in the fact that making sense of religious change in this – or in any – historical context requires making decisions about its meaning that are not based on objective, or even commonly shared, parameters. How can we write the history of her story without filling in the gaps underscored by these questions – indeed, without deciding which gaps need to be filled, what questions need to be answered? In this chapter, I would like to explore the sources that tell of the conversion of Zoraya/Isabel in order to assess how well such documentation actually supports current historiographical descriptions of her religious identity. My goal is not to prove that Zoraya/Isabel was or was not who historians have said she is – a Christian captive who became a Muslim and then later lived as a Christian in Seville – although some of these details might be cast into doubt upon further reflection. Rather, my purpose is to call into question how such historiographical determinations are made. I use her case to suggest that “conversion,” as a culturally determined figure of language and not a generally recognizable, universally meaningful phenomenon, presents researchers with a historiographical problem. Conversion is not simply an event like other events, but
is rather, I argue, a metaphor that historians apply, often heedlessly, across a broad and changing spectrum of extremely varied and sometimes even contradictory meanings.

The sources

The first Arabic source to mention the story of Zoraya/Isabel is an anonymous chronicle of the fall of Granada, the News of the Period about the End of the Nasrid Dynasty (Akbhār al-‘āsr fī inqiṭād dawlat Banī Nasr), seemingly written by a Granadan Muslim who witnessed the expulsion and then wrote from exile in Fez in the early sixteenth century. This text can be distinguished from a later version of it that appeared under the title Short Treatise of the Period about the History of the Nasrid Kings (Nubdhat al-‘āsr fī akhbār mulāk Banī Nasr), with which it has been regularly conflated.4 The two works might be considered two versions of the same text, for the better-known Short Treatise seems to be little more than a very slightly altered version of the earlier News, concerned more with smoothing the rough stylistic edges of the original than adding any historical information.5 In any case, the treatment of the Zoraya/Isabel legend in the two texts is virtually identical, and the version in the latter Short Treatise served as a basis for later Arabic references to the story such as that of the seventeenth-century Moroccan historian al-Maqqari.6

The earliest Christian source is that of Hernando de Baeza, The Things That Happened among the Kings of Granada (Las cosas que pasaron entre los reyes de Granada), written in 1505.7 The account by Baeza, a Christian who had been an interpreter and regular presence in the court of Boabdil, has served as a primary source for many later European and American historians, from Lucio Sículo in the sixteenth century to William Prescott in the nineteenth and even up to the present day. The Christian chronicler Alfonso de Palencia (d. 1492), in his Bellum adversus Granatenses (which stops abruptly in 1489), also references Zoraya/Isabel in describing her role in the transition from the second rule of Muley Hasan to that of the new ruler Muhammad XIII al-zaghal (“the zagal,” or “the brave”).8 In addition to these sources, we can mention the Jewish historian in Crete Elijah Capsali (d. 1535), whose Minor Tractate of Elijah (Seder Eliyahu Zutta, from 1523) contains references to the fall of Granada and the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492. Apart from these narrative sources, there are also various references to Zoraya/Isabel and her sons in archival documents from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

Zoraya/Isabel’s “conversions”: between event and narrative

One of the key elements of Zoraya/Isabel’s story is her conversion to Islam and later return to Christianity, yet the various narrative and archival sources that discuss her fail to provide a clear account of what that trajectory of religious change might have entailed. The archival documents in which she features in 1494, including a mandate from the Catholic Kings and a letter from Queen Isabel herself, refer to her as “la reyna Çoraya, mora” (“Queen Zoraya, Moor”). In documents from 1501, she is called simply “Doña Ysabel, madre de los ynfantes de Granada,” although documents survive from 1506 that still refer to her as “la dicha reyna Çoraya,” describing her unsuccessful attempts to prevent her sons from being made to be or remain Christian and allowing them to move to North Africa to live as Muslims.9

Based on these segments, we can infer that in the years after 1492, Zoraya/Isabel was seen by other Christians as a mora, yet at some point around or shortly after 1500, she began to be perceived otherwise. Does this change in public perception imply a conversion of belief from Islam, or simply a shift in manner of dress, behavior, language, or other cultural markers? The documents are silent as to what this change in name and description might connote. The shift is contemporaneous with Baeza’s account, which is the first to report Zoraya/Isabel’s abduction as a Christian girl. At some point around 1475, some of Hasan’s men wanted to make a raid on the Christians. On a Saturday near the town of Aguilar,

when some children came out there to water their animals, he captured them. Among them was a young girl about ten or twelve years old, whom, having been sold with the other children in Granada, they took as part of the fifth that pertained to the king. He then gave her to his daughter, and she had the job of cleaning the chamber.10

Shortly after the previously described incident, the king became emotionally attached to the young girl and married her. Despite providing such a rich account of Zoraya/Isabel’s abduction, Baeza makes no direct reference to her conversion, noting only that she was called La Romia because

this name romía is what Moors usually call Christian women who turn to become Muslim women, because they do not give them names of female Muslims but rather different names from them, and they are called “Romía” – which means person who was subject to Roman rule – as a last name virtually until they die.11

Baeza’s explanation is somewhat misleading. In fact, rūmiyya in Andalusí Arabic generally denoted a Christian woman, most often a Christian captive but by no means necessarily a convert to Islam.12 If Baeza says virtually nothing about Zoraya/Isabel’s alleged conversion, the other chronicles of the period – both Muslim and Christian – are less, not more, illuminating. Circumstantial details such as those provided by Baeza are totally absent in the Arabic sources. The early Arabic chronicles (the News and the Short Treatise) that tell of Zoraya/Isabel simply identify her as a “rūmiyya named Zoraya” (rūmiyya ismuhā thurayā), leaving
aside any mention of her capture and conversion. By the same token, the Christian Alfonso de Palencia and the Jewish chronicler Elijah Capsali are mute concerning both her conversion and her faith. Capsali’s account, which is a clear allusion to the biblical story of David and Bathsheba, states that

[o]ne day the king was looking out of a window and saw a young woman that his servants had carried off from Sefarad ... and the king ardently desired her beauty ... the Ishmaelite elders were turning on him, saying “Are we to serve a man like him who took a captive goy [non-Jew] in place of his most beautiful wife?"^{14}

One of the first sources—if not the very first—to remark on Zoraya/Isabel’s alleged “reversion” of faith after 1492 is the chronicle from 1530 by the Sicilian humanist Lucius Marineus Siculus, which states that

after Granada was captured ... the older [son] took the name “Fernando” and the younger “Juan” ... and the mother as well, who was called the Mora Zoraya, took back the name Isabel, having been led back to her original faith by the many prayers of her children and entreaties of Catholic leaders."^{12}

Sources from the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries that follow Siculus make direct reference to Zoraya/Isabel’s conversion. Luis de Marmol Carvajal at the end of the sixteenth century calls her not simply a captive but a “renegade” (renegada), defining her in terms of her alleged rejection of Christianity upon converting to Islam."^{16}

Conversion as a historiographical problem

As this survey of the sources shows, the early evidence attesting Zoraya/Isabel’s life says nothing directly about conversion and/or “reversion.” Most especially, we know nothing of the nature of her belief. It is clear from both Muslim and Christian sources that Isabel “became” Zoraya at some point in the 1470s or early 1480s. Yet what this transformation meant to our protagonist is left to the imagination. Returning to Baeza, when the chronicler writes of “Christian women who turn to become Muslim women,” is he speaking of movements of faith or those of social custom? The historian who suggests the former may be ascribing more modern than medieval notions to conversion. In other words, such a historian might be presuming an interior conviction that can be measured by sincerity and authenticity rather than a social characterization determined by behaviors and cultural practices other than the display of personal faith. We can track Zoraya/Isabel’s movements, her path through history, and her political and economic activities both before and after 1492, but of her conversion, we can say nothing that does not pass beyond the limits of history writing into the realm of fiction.

It is in this double identity of conversion as, on one hand, a structurally coherent detail—one that reflects and even enhances other elements of the historical narrative—and, on the other hand, a semantically vague historical “event”—one whose meaning is not absolute and is entirely dependent on cultural context—that leads me to argue that conversion presents a historiographical problem. Pivotal as conversion is to the narrative of Zoraya/Isabel’s story, it can be understood only through recourse to ideas of religious experience from later cultural contexts. This is, I would argue, the case for any discussion of premodern conversion according to written records. Everything about conversion, its facts, its nature, its very sense, hinges on its subsequent construction in words and narratives. Thus, while the treatment of conversion as part of a historical narrative seeks a single, externally recognizable reality, close attention to the sources leads us only to a nimbus of culturally determined, variable phenomena.

To attempt to interpret such varied elements within the context of religious history is particularly dangerous. This is so because “conversion” in its most stereotypical or generic form—that used as shorthand in the modern social sciences for what is understood to be a turn of belief that provokes a turn of social affiliation—is the product of a specific postmedieval Christian worldview, one that values sincerity and conviction over action and spectacle. Consider the following statement by Richard Fletcher in his valuable study _The Barbarian Conversion_: “The spectacle of early medieval conversion to Christianity—or indeed to Islam, or indeed in some circumstances (consider the Khazars) to Judaism—is generally not one of individuals acting upon conviction.”^{17} At first sight, Fletcher appears to be making a perfectly reasonable historical assessment. Yet a closer look reveals several important assumptions: that somehow becoming Christian or Muslim or Jewish are, from a general standpoint, comparable operations; that all three religious traditions might, at least in some circumstances, have privileged social ritual over conviction when defining religious change; and that the absence of conviction from these early conversions is worth remarking on because such absence does not match our historical expectations. However, religious change is far from identical across religions, and the minimization of “conversion” is not universally meaningful. As Devin DeWeese has explained in his study of conversion to Islam in Inner Asia, the centrality of a communal understanding of conversion in an Islamic context, rather than a creedal or testimonial one,

is one of the most difficult [features] to appreciate for those rooted in Christian conceptions of religious conversion, or in modernist iconoclasm and anti-ritualism, which insist upon the “heart” as more important than “the law,” emphasize “content” over “form,” and consider “religion” first and foremost as a matter of “personal belief”... [yet] the Islamic tradition regards even purely formal and “external” adoption of Islamic practices and patterns as religiously meaningful, since these patterns, _even in their formal aspects_, are conveyors of divine grace."^{18}
Yet something similar might be said about early Christian ideas of baptism or the liturgy of the mass, in which personal intention and inner conviction were not the principal determinants of ritual efficacy or divine grace. Indeed, that the term conversion denotes such strikingly different things in different periods and contexts demonstrates the breadth and semantic ambiguity of the category. To ask this single cipher to bear the weight of any historical analysis, however, is treacherous indeed.

Not surprisingly, Christian assumptions sometimes creep into considerations of conversion. One place that we can see this is in the language of motive and agency. Seemingly detached or critically balanced accounts of beliefs and motives often rely on distinctly modern conceptions of selfhood and agency, and as Webb Keane has asserted, “much of contemporary academic and political talk about agency continues to incorporate some of the assumptions about authenticity and liberation found in Christian discourse about paganism.” Such conceptions naturally lead to judging the quality of a religious conversion in light of the sincerity of the convert’s faith. Zoraya/Isabel goes from being a romía (Baeza) to being a renegada (Carvajal) to being a dishonest beauty (Pedraza). The latter adds that Muley Hasan first married “A’isha Fātima al-Hurrā, which means ‘the Honest,’ in contrast with his second wife, with whom he was in love in life and death.”

It is not hard to find contemporary references to Zoraya/Isabel as a “renegada,” reading into her Islamic identity as an adult a voluntary abandonment – despite her youth and captivity – of her allegedly original Christian faith. When it comes to conversion, it seems that the historian is forced into two difficult positions: first, that of a preacher, rehearsing hagiographical narratives as though they were factual accounts, and then that of an inquisitor, appraising such accounts in terms of the alleged sincerity and inner faith of its protagonists and then treating such appraisals as facts in subsequent reporting.

The attribution of intention and motivation are just the tip of the historiographic iceberg, however. To speak of conversion in the language of chronology and historical fact is equally problematic. Even if Zoraya/Isabel did “convert” to Islam around 1480 and then revert to Christianity after 1492, such changes cannot be situated in time without either defining conversion by a single moment or by expanding to a universal narrative what is a decidedly local representation. Conceptualizing conversion in terms of facts – dates, locations, events – imparts to religious change a specific shape, distinguishable from other possible shapes. It presumes that conversion “happens” at some discrete point in time and thus can be compared to other measurable historical events. Yet this presumption itself relies on a certain culturally constructed conception of the phenomenon of religious conversion. By placing the results of our presumption about conversion’s nature into a wider historical analysis alongside other, similar results, we effectively reify an essentially fluid metaphor. In short, I submit that conversion considered in a historiographical context – that is, conversion as engaged in the writing and academic analysis of history – is a factitious unreality. Zoraya/Isabel’s conversion cannot be located in time, even though it is bounded on all sides by concrete events and circumstances.

My characterization of conversion as an “unreality” is not meant to imply that people such as Zoraya/Isabel did not or do not change religious beliefs. There is no question that they did and that they do. Rather, I am suggesting that only a very narrow sense of the term conversion is available to the historian. Multiform circumstances cannot be reduced in a definitive way to a common ground of mere facts. The circumstances, measurable events, and outcomes of religious change are not the sole determinants of conversion’s possible meanings. As Karl Morrison argues, “it is a confusion of categories to use the word conversion as though it were an instrument of critical analysis, equally appropriate to any culture or religion . . . the word [conversion] is more properly a subject, than a tool, of analysis.” Hence, we can set aside questionable accounts and uncertain representations, but we cannot penetrate the fog of narrative to arrive at the “facts” of conversion: the meaning of conversion is part and parcel of the narratives and images that represent it.

Conversion, then, is not a fact of history but a metaphorical figure of narrative and language. Belying its treatment as a coherent subject, the ways in which “conversion” is referred to across traditions are legion. And even within the Christian faith alone, as Morrison argues, conversion has acquired multivalent descriptions: “As a metaphor taken from numerous arts and crafts, ‘conversion’ was easily made into a portmanteau word. When it is unpacked, as a historical artifact, a variety of models of conversion, some quite incompatible, is found all cobbled together in an ensemble.” In the case of Zoraya/Isabel, the problem is even more acute: while her movement between two cultural communities can be tracked, the same cannot be said of her “conversion.” Zoraya/Isabel left no record of her voice, and the contemporary records that do exist give no voice whatsoever to such conversion. In a fundamental way, the conversion of Zoraya/Isabel exists solely in the posterity of legend and the retelling of later writers. As such, Zoraya/Isabel’s conversion is best approached as a metaphor rather than as an event, a figure of language and a structural element of narrative that subsumes a wide array of semantic possibilities. Yet this insight might also be applied more broadly to the discussion of religious change in any source or historical context. Rather than purporting to write the history of “conversion” in particular historical periods and places, we ought to set out to write how different communities – as reflected in their words and images – understood faith, affiliation, creed, and ritual. Our accounts must necessarily pertain more to the realm of cultural criticism than social history.

Thus, even in the absence of a specific designation, Zoraya/Isabel’s conversion can be seen to function in subsequent retellings by later chroniclers as a symbolic figure of representation. Her trajectory from Christian girl to lover of Muley Hasan and mother of the stepsiblings of Boabdil himself...
provides ample provocation for Christian writers to project the role of a betrayer onto her. “Conversion,” in its double connotation of both turning to one religion and turning away from another, can stand as a figurative image of sexual infidelity and political treason just as easily as it can denote a change of faith or creed. For this reason, Zoraya/Isabel’s “reversion” can be seen as a figurative expression of the Christian conquest of Granada, restoring both city and girl to their rightful origins. This reading of Zoraya/Isabel’s tale draws out its similarity to the legend of Florinda “la Cava,” whose sexual encounter with the Visigothic King Rodrigo was linked in later accounts with the Muslim invasion of the peninsula in the eighth century. Of course, while such parallel stories of conversion and conquest help explain the appeal of the story at hand, they offer negligible insight into what actually took place in either historical context. As L.P. Harvey notes, reading Zoraya/Isabel’s drama as a reprise of the legend of la Cava, while provocative, still “does little to help us understand why the Granadan kingdom collapsed when it did.”

When viewed not as historical fact but in relation to its resonances with the themes of Iberian historical legends (e.g., conquest, forced conversion, capitulation, sexual violence, etc.), the narrative arc of Zoraya/Isabel’s conversion from innocent captive to enemy intimate to reformed dowager emerges as the fruit of narrative embellishment rather than as chance events, parts of a structural device of retrospective chronicles and histories that are primarily meaningful as parallel plot elements. The structure and function of her story are not unusual. Bruce Hindmarsh has pointed out the close connection between the idea of conversion and the structure of narrative, noting, “If narrative in its classical form is defined as a plot with a beginning, middle, and end . . . then all narratives are, in one sense, conversion narratives.” In medieval conversion stories based on or in dialogue with the model of Augustine’s Confessions—from Herman Judah’s Opusculum de conversione sua in the twelfth century to Alfonso de Valladolid’s Mostrador de justicia in the fourteenth, to the narrative of Pablo de Santa María in the prologue to his fifteenth-century biblical commentary—religious change can be seen to develop as a crisis and resolution plotted along a temporal trajectory, unfolding within a narrative structure in which it represents an exemplary plot climax. When the factual or logical gaps within the manifold and variable ideas of conversion must be filled in by the historian who mines such narrative texts for hard facts—what Felice Lifshitz aptly calls “hobbing for data”—then that “filling in” will inevitably reflect the historian’s expectations about the nature of conversion, informed by other familiar narrative models. As Judith Pollmann has further argued, “[b]ecause conversion narratives in the tradition of Paul and Augustine are so common in European Christian culture, they have come to determine our expectations of what a convert ought to experience.” Such expectations determined the expectations of those who wrote about conversion in the past as much as of those who read and analyze (and retell) such accounts now. Even telegraphic references to conversion with no narrative elaboration still function as a sort of shorthand for implied narratives because conversion, as a metaphor of change, implies a basic narrative of crisis and resolution. This is not to say that conversion is not “real” or “meaningful” but, rather, that it is the stuff of metaphor and symbol, not that of immutable event or unambiguous fact. History writing cannot but find itself in a prickly position when dealing with such material, conceding, on one hand, the constructedness of language but compelled, on the other, to press on toward a coherent accounting of circumstances and actions and events.

The case of Zoraya/Isabel de Solís makes it evident that the term conversion in the writing of history presumes a particular worldview and that to mistake the biased metaphors of one worldview for generally recognizable and stable categories of analysis is both misleading and potentially distorting. The consequences of such an error are serious. As Webb Keane pointedly states, “[i]f conversion has historical implications, then history has moral implications.” To believe that we as historians can proceed without considering such implications, or that it is possible to treat the subject of conversion without first taking careful stock of how we perpetuate the confusion of such culturally bound metaphors with fact, is a reckless kind of intellectual blindness. We can avoid this shortsightedness by eschewing the discussion of conversion as an a priori recognizable and meaningful phenomenon and, instead, by treating it in every instance as a locally deployed and contextually understood metaphor. Historians ought not to write about conversion per se but, rather, about the discourse of conversion, tracing the protean ways that religious change is constructed and imagined in the texts and images that depict it and refraining from proposing meaning when such representations are lacking.

Notes
2 This legend is rejected by Harvey, who states, “Granada fell because it was economically and demographically weaker ... the jealousies of Zoraya and Fatima ... were of quite secondary importance.” See Islamic Spain, 1250–1500 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 267. On the history of this rivalry, see the summary by Joseph O’Callaghan, The Last Crusade in the West: Castile and the Conquest of Granada (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 133; The history and sources of Isabel’s story are explained by José Enrique López de Coca, “Granada en el siglo XV: las postrimerías nazaries a la luz de la probanza de los infantes don Fernando y don Juan,” in Andalucía entre Oriente y Occidente (1236–1492), Actas del V Coloquio Internacional de Historia Medieval de Andalucía (Córdoba, 27–30 noviembre, 1986), (Córdoba: Diputación Provincial de Córdoba, 1988); José Enrique López de Coca, “Doña Isabel de Solís, o la imaginación historiográfica,” in Las Tomas: Antropología histórica de la cepación terrestre del Reino de Granada, ed. J. A. González Alcántara and M. Barrios Aguillera (Granada: Diputación de Granada, 2000), 533–563; and José Enrique López...
Conversion as a historiographical problem

Coca, “La conquista de Granada: el testimonio de los vencidos,” Norba. Revista de Historia 18 (2005): 33-50 (34), proposes that the Short Treatise was written around 1540.

8 Alfonso de Palencia, Alfonsi Palentini historioci ante narrationem belli adversus Granatenses, in Biblioteca Nacional de España Ms1627, fol. 67v-68s; Spanish translation in Alfonso de Palencia, Guerra de Granada (Madrid: Tij de la Revista de Arquivos, 1909).


10 “Salendo ciertos niños a dar agua á sus bestias, los capturaron, entre los quales tomaron una mocedá de diez, o doce años, la qual vendíose a algunos niños en Granada, la tomaron en el quint o que pertenecía á el rey, el qual la dió á su hija, y tenía el cargo de barrer la cámara.” See Hernando de Baeza, “Las cosas que pasaron entre los reyes de Granada desde el tiempo de el rey don Juan de Castilla. Segundo de este nombre, hasta que los católicos reyes ganaron el reino de Granada,” in Relaciones de algunos sucesos de los últimos tiempos del reino de Granada (Madrid: M. Rivadeneyra, 1868), 7.

11 “Este nombre, que suelen los moros llamar á las christianas que se tornan moras, porque no les ponen nombres de moras sino diferentes de ellos, y casi por sobrenombre hasta que mueven le dicen Romana, que quiere decir persona que fue sujeto al señor romano.” Baeza, Las cosas que pasaron, 8.

12 See the extended study of the word rum in Andalusí sources by Eva Lapiedra Gutiérrez, Como los musulmanes llamaban a los cristianos hispánicos (Alicante: Instituto de Cultura Juan Gil Albert, 1997), 114-142. As she states, this term is ambiguous and can refer both to a captive who kept her Christian religion or one who converted to Islam (122; see also 141). Reinhart Dozy, Supplement aux dictionnaires arabes, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1881), vol. 1: 573, claims that the term denotes a converted slave girl, but this meaning is clearly taken only from Baeza’s passage. Cf. Federico Corriente, A Dictionary of Andalusí Arabic (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 223, which relies on Pedro de Alcalá’s Vocabularia en Arábigo (1505). I am grateful to Eva Lapiedra and Maribel Fierro for corresponding with me on this matter.

13 Akhbar, 79 and 84; Fragmento, Arabic, 6 and 10; Nubdhat, ed. 1984, 49 and 61.


16 Luis de Mírmol Carvajal, Primera parte de la descripción general de Africa (Granada: Kene Rabut, 1573), fol. 233.

17 Richard Fletcher, The Barbarian Conversion: From Paganism to Christianity (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 514.
Conversion as a historiographical problem
Alfonso de Palencia, Alfonso Palentini historici ante narrationem belli adversus Granatenses. Biblioteca Nacional de España, Ms. 1627.
Hernando de Barza, "Las cosas que pasaron entre los reyes de Granada desde el tiempo de el rey don Juan de Castilla, Segundo de este nombre, hasta que los católicos reyes ganaron el reino de Granada," in Relaciones de algunos sucesos de los últimos tiempos del reino de Granada. Madrid: M. Rivadeneyra, 1868.

Secondary literature

20 “Casó Abi Hazen de primero matrimonio con Ayxá Φάμα η Ηρώα, que sinifica la Honesta, a diferencia de la segunda mujer de quien vivió y murió enamorado.” Francisco Bermúdez de Padraza, Historia eclesiástica, principios y progresos de la ciudad y religión católica de Granada (Granada: Andrés de Santiago, 1638), 142v and 172v, cited in López de Coca, “Doña Isabel,” 557.
23 For lists of such terminology, see Ryan Szpiech, Conversion and Narrative: Reading and Religious Authority in Medieval Polemic (Philedelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 234–235 n. 60; 247–248 n. 17; 260–261 n. 7.
25 Harvey, Islamic Spain, 266–267. On comparison between La Cava and Zoraya/Isabel, see also López de Coca, “Doña Isabel,” 543.
27 For a study of these narratives, see Szpiech, Conversion and Narrative, chapters 1, 2, and 5.
30 Keane, Christian Moderns, 115.

Bibliography

Primary sources
Part I

Regulating conversion