

## "Arabicized Christians in Iberia re-defining religious identity across the Mediterranean"

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When Arabicized Christians in al-Andalus set to translate the *Hispanic Canon Collection* in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, they found a number of issues that needed to be adapted to an environment where Islamic law was the rule. This collection of canons included a number of laws issued by the Visigothic church of Iberia in the Councils held in Toledo (seventeen, between 397-702 A.D.), and some laws from other North African and Ecumenical Church Councils. The new arrangement of the *Collection* changed a number of these canons, and even modified some of their rulings, thus diverting from the Latin versions of this same legal compilation. It shows a series of social and legal developments that prove the increasing Arabization of Christians living in Islamic territories.

But, more importantly to our purpose, throughout the collection we find a series of books devised to define the position of Arabicized Christians as regarded their Muslim lords, the Jews who were granted the *dhimmi* status like themselves, and the other Christian Churches under Muslim domain (most notoriously, the Nestorians living under the 'Abbasid caliphs in the East). Different strategies – and terms- were used to differentiate the Christian community from the other groups. Their perception of religious “otherness” reveals an especially conscientious effort to create some barriers in their intra- and interreligious dealings, to prevent the conversion of Christians, and therefore, the weakening of their community. We will be discussing some of the terms and metaphors they used, as well as the contents and orientation –or rather, re-orientation- of some of these laws.

