

# THE HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF THE TERM “MOZARAB”

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## ABSTRACT

The term Mozarab immediately conjures up the romanticized idea of Arabicized-Christians living in harmony with Christians, Muslims, and Jews in al-Andalus and in Medieval Spain. However, the term itself has been subject to a variety of different applications often depending on the purpose of its employment, the type of study in question, as well as the personal point of view of the author. The inconsistent use of the term Mozarab makes its definition rather ambiguous, necessitating clarification at each occurrence in the scholarship. In this article, I trace the history of the usage of the term Mozarab both in the scholarship and the documentary evidence in order to elucidate where these definitions appeared and how they may inform future scholarship.

## KEYWORDS

Mozarab, Arabicized-Christians, al-Andalus, Toledo, León.

## CAPITALIA VERBA

Christiani Mauris permixti, Christiani inter Mauros degentes, Baetica Arabica, Toletum, Legio.

## 1. Introduction

The concept of Mozarab, meaning Arabized-Christian, is at first deceptively simple. However defining who exactly pertains to this Arabized-Christian community, in what cities, in what centuries becomes extremely complex the moment one considers the pluri-cultural and linguistic make-up of al-Andalus, and Medieval Iberia in general. Instantly, the definition of Mozarab unravels before our very eyes.

The simplest manner in which to define Mozarab is that they were Christians living under Islamic rule in the Iberian Peninsula from the eighth to the fifteenth Centuries. No distinction is made between those Christians who accepted Muslim rule and those who resisted it nor does their origin come into play.<sup>1</sup> However, for many, especially early scholars from the nineteenth century, the perception that the Mozarabs were of Visigothic origin is of utmost importance as they used this link to construct Spanish nationalistic identities.<sup>2</sup>

As important as the perceived link of the Mozarabs with a Visigothic past is the perception that the Mozarabs, being Christians, made a conscious choice to live in al-Andalus, a Muslim territory, rather than live in the northern Christian kingdoms. *The Oxford Companion to Spanish Literature* defines the Mozarabs as: "Hispano-Roman Christians of Andalusía who preferred Islamic domination by the Arab-Berber invaders of 711-12 to the rule of the Visigoths, and so accepted Islamic customs and the Arabic language [...]."<sup>3</sup> Here, the Mozarabs are identified as "Hispano-Roman" implying that they were part of a pre-Islamic "race" living in al-Andalus. Further, they "preferred Islamic domination", implying dissatisfaction with the previous non-Islamic power structure or government. It follows, therefore, that so great was their dissatisfaction that they left aside their own cultural practices and language in favor of the Arabic ones. Is the implication here that all of this was done in a sort of protest against the Visigoths? Clearly, this definition is based on many pre-conceived notions of al-Andalus, many that have been since discarded or at least vehemently debated, but the force of the early scholarship lives on and continues to influence popular understanding of the Mozarabic community.

In stark contrast to the definition provided in *Oxford*, both Simonet and Cagigas argued the Mozarabs are those Christians in al-Andalus who specifically objected to Muslim rule.<sup>4</sup> For them, the Mozarabs represented true resistance to what they perceived to be the invasion of the Muslim religion in Iberia and perpetuation of a Catholic orthodoxy. Thus although, to a certain extent the Mozarabs do represent the continuation of culture from Visigothic to modern times the manner in which

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1. Real Academia Española. *Diccionario de la lengua española*. Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 2001: 1410-1411; Simonet, Francisco Javier. *Historia de los mozárabes de España*. Madrid: Turner, 1867; Ward, Philip, ed. *The Oxford Companion to Spanish Literature*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978.

2. Epalza, Mikel de. "Les mozarabes, état de la question", *Minorités religieuses dans l'Espagne médiévale*, Manuela Marín, Joseph Manuel Martín, eds. Aix-en-Provence: Édisud, 1992: 41.

3. Ward, Philip, ed. *The Oxford Companion*...

4. Cagigas, Isidoro de las. *Minorías étnico-religiosas de la Edad Media española. Los Mozárabes*. Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Africanos-Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1947; Simonet, Francisco Javier. *Historia de los mozárabes de España*. Madrid: Turner, 1889.



they did this according to Simonet, Cagigas, and Lévi-Provençal is diametrically opposed to the definition provided by *Oxford*.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to Visigothic Christians and Christians who resisted Islamic rule, Epalza has put forward that we also find Christians of other- non-Iberian origin, such as from beyond the Pyrenees or from across the Mediterranean.<sup>6</sup> These "neo-Mozarabs" may have come to reside in al-Andalus, in part, because of the perceived tolerance on behalf of the Muslim rulers towards Christians in this region, a tolerance that was not common in other parts of the Islamic empire. They may have been slaves, or on other occasions, they went to al-Andalus for reasons of trade.<sup>7</sup> A Mozarab may also be someone who converted from Islam to become Christian as occurred in Galicia in the ninth Century and in Toledo in the eleventh.<sup>8</sup>

Mozarabic art and architecture includes churches with elements of Arabic style, relics or liturgical objects, and illuminations of *Beato* manuscripts of Arabic artistic elements. The vast majority of Mozarabic artistic production is composed of buildings that incorporate elements of Arabic decoration. Most notably, Mozarabic art and architecture is located mainly in Christian territories. In other words their production was ex-al-Andalus and not within al-Andalus. They have been called Mozarabic because these pieces have been thought to have been produced by Christians who fled to the Northern kingdoms from al-Andalus but, to date we have no definitive evidence that they were produced exclusively by Christians.<sup>9</sup>

In the modern application of the term what remains constant is the idea that above all Mozarab should be associated with a "type" of Christian living during the Andalusí period. However, the type and origin of the Christianity may vary greatly depending on the period, the geographical area, as well as the particular Mozarab in question.

## 2. Etymology

A contributing factor to the complex state of affairs for defining the term Mozarab is the fact that its very etymology is unclear. Two very distinct etymologies that have been proposed: a strictly Arabic one that based on the lexical structure of the word; and a Latin one reflecting the fact that the word was first used in Latin documents, as well as mirroring the dichotomy of the use of Mozarab within the manuscripts.

5. Lévi-Provençal, Évariste. *L'Espagne musulmane au X<sup>e</sup> siècle. Institutions et vie sociale*. Paris: Larose, 1932.

6. Epalza, Mikel de. "Les mozarabes...": 41; Epalza, Mikel de. "Mozarabs: An Emblematic Christian Minority in Islamic Al-Andalus", *The Formation of Al-Andalus*, Manuela Marín, ed. Aldershot-Brookfield-Singapore-Sidney: Ashgate, 1998: 39.

7. Epalza, Mikel de; Llobregat, Enrique. "¿Hubo mozárabes en tierras valencianas? Proceso de islamización del Levante de la Península (Sharq Al-Andalus)". *Revista del Instituto de Estudios Alicantinos*, 36 (1982): 7-31; Arié, Rachel. "Les minorités religieuses dans le royaume de Grenade (1232-1492)", *Minorités religieuses dans l'Espagne médiévale*, Manuela Marín, Joseph Manuel Martin, eds. Aix-en-Provence: Édisud, 1992: 53.

8. Teres, Elias. "Linajes". *Al-Andalus*, 27 (1952): 83; Simonet, Francisco Javier. *Historia de los mozárabes...*: 217.

9. Barceló, Carmen. "Mozárabes de Valencia y 'Lengua mozárabes'". *Revista de filología española*, 77 (1997): 257.



It can be argued that Mozarab itself is etymologically of Arabic origin. There are no Latin or Germanic roots that could account for this particular lexicon. The lexical item Mozarab could have been derived from either an active or passive participle in Arabic. The active participle form *mustʿarib* most closely means “one who seeks to resemble Arabs”. Etymologically, this definition would imply a conscious act to resemble an Arab and therefore those people who are Christians but act and speak like Arabs do so out of their own volition. No one is forcing people to be Arab-like but rather, those who do, do so of their own volition. A passive form *mustʿarab* may also be the etymological root for Mozarab. In this case, Mozarab would most closely mean “one who is involuntarily Arabicized” or “someone who is considered or viewed to be an Arab by x.”<sup>10</sup>

On the other hand, the word Mozarab first appeared and came into use in Castilian territories (León) and did so when Northern Christians and Arabicized Christians were faced for the first time with their cultural and in some cases religious differences.<sup>11</sup> Given that the word clearly stems from an Arabic root, the term cannot squarely be said to be “Castilian”, and given the “Castilian language” did not exist at this time.

Looking to contemporary Spanish, *mozárabe* does not imply that “someone being viewed as Arab by a third person” but rather it is used to indicate someone who is Arab-like because they act and resemble in dress and customs a person of Arabic origin. Furthermore, the passive form would probably never have existed since “mustʿarib” is an intransitive verb. It is unlikely that the word we now use in Spanish could have been derived from this unusual passive form because it would require postulating the violation of grammatical laws and a very unusual evolution. As well, it would require postulating that the term Mozarab at one point implied a third person’s perception while today it does not.

Identifying its structural origin does not alone resolve the issue of what Mozarab was intended to mean when first conceived leading to the afore-described evident inconsistent use of the term nor why scholars have subsequently continued to use the term inconsistently.<sup>12</sup> As Kassis has explained: “although the term clearly appears to be of Arabic origin, *mozárabe* is Castilian, neither of the Arabic terms from which it may be derived is employed in Arabic sources.”<sup>13</sup> It is a Castilian term because it does not appear in the Arabic documentary sources but rather the Christian ones and it is an Arabic term because structurally it is so. In this sense, Mozarab is the perfect blend of the “two” cultures of a-Andalus.

10. Kassis, Hannah. “Arabic speaking Christians in Al-Andalus in an age of turmoil (Fifth/Eleventh Century until A.H. 478/A.D. 1085)”. *Al Qantara*, 15 (1994): 401, note 1; Aguilar, Victoria. “Onomástica de origen árabe en el reino de León”. *Al Qantara*, 15 (1994): 352.

11. Chalmeta, Pedro. *Invasión e Islamización, la sumisión de Hispania y la formación de al-Andalus*. Madrid: Mapfre, 1994; Chalmeta, Pedro. “Mozarabes”. *Encyclopedia of Islam*. Leiden-New York: Brill, 1993: VII, 247.

12. Hitchcock, Richard. “¿Quiénes fueron los verdaderos mozárabes? Una contribución a la historia del mozarabismo”. *Nueva revista de filología hispánica*, 30/2 (1981): 576.

13. Kassis, Hannah. “Arabic speaking Christians in Al-Andalus...”: 401.



Although today the term Mozarab is associated with Christians, etymologically it is not necessary to be a Christian to be a Mozarab as it is possible to refer to anyone who has become Arab-like while not being Arab. Hitchcock defines the Mozarabs as Arabicized peoples of al-Andalus, without any particular religious loyalty.<sup>14</sup> The Arabic lexicographer Al-Azhari simply defines the Mozarabs as a "group of non-Arabs."<sup>15</sup> In spite of the fact that in Arabic, the term is not necessarily tied or associated with one particular religion, today it is closely associated with being Christian and Arab-like. In al-Andalus, there are no cases of Jewish Mozarabs, for example.

### 3. The Historical Record, a Question of Documentation

#### 3.1 The Arabic versus the Christian Records

There is disjunction between where the term appears in the historical record and the particular community to which it refers. On the one hand, Mozarab seems to refer to those Arabized-Christians of al-Andalus and on the other, it never appears in the Arab documentation. Presumably, the Arab governors would have been aware of a native or indigenous Christian population but they make no special reference to them and to date, no Arab document has been identified which refers to this population as "Mozarab". Rather, the Arab historiographic record includes only very general terms referring to the native population such as *aḍjam*, meaning "foreigner" or "foreign group". In al-Andalus, *aḍjam* or *aḍjami* came to refer to "the Christians living outside al-Andalus as well as to Mozarabs (living under Muslim rule)."<sup>16</sup> *aḍjam* or *aḍjam* expanded to include Christians in general. We may also find: *naṣrānī* "Nazarene" and *musrik* "polytheist" —both an allusion to the perceived polytheism of Christians by Muslims. Other identifying words of note were: *dhimmī*, *mu'āhid*, *mushrik*, and *rūmī*.<sup>17</sup> *dhimmī* was used to refer to both Christian and Jews because both the Jewish and Christian communities were part of *ahl adh-dhimma*, "protected people."<sup>18</sup> *Rūm* referred to the Christians as Byzantines and was an "ethnic or political term without any pejorative connotations." Pejorative Christian expressions included *ilj*: boor; *kafir*: infidel; *musrik*: polytheist; *abid al-aṣnam*: idolater; *aduw Allah*: enemy of God; and *tāghiya*: tyrant (reserved for Christian rulers). Those Christians who were deported in the twelfth Century to the North of Africa were known as

14. Hitchcock, Richard. "¿Quiénes fueron los verdaderos mozárabes? ...": 585.

15. Kassis, Hannah. "Arabic speaking Christians in Al-Andalus ...": 401-402.

16. Kassis, Hannah. "Arabic speaking Christians in Al-Andalus ...": 40, note 15; Barceló, Carmen. "Mozárabes de Valencia...": 254.

17. Chalmeta, Pedro. "Mozarabes"...: VII, 246-249.

18. Hitchcock, Richard. *Mozarabs in Medieval and Early Modern Spain: Identities and Influences*. Cornwall: Ashgate, 2008: xii.



*farfán*.”<sup>19</sup> Conversely despite the absence of Mozarabin the Arabic record, the Latin/Romance record does include it on several separate instances, the first being in León in a document dated *ca* 1024 AD.<sup>20</sup>

In spite of the silence in the Arabic sources regarding a native Christian population in general and a Mozarabic population in particular. Early Christian sources do make allusions to this group. Early chroniclers such as Orderic Vital (1075-1142AD), chronicler and Bisop Jacques de Vitry (*ca.* 1170-1240), and finally the Archbishop of Toledo Rodrigo Ximénez de Rada all mention the Christian community of al-Andalus.<sup>21</sup> Ximénez de Rada is the one who advanced the etymology of *Mistárabes* or *Mixti árabes* by virtue of the fact that they lived mixed amongst the Arabs but they were not considered equal to the Arabs.<sup>22</sup>

Further complicating factors include the fact that the term Mozarab has been applied to a plethora of differing phenomena including: nationalistic concepts, language and linguistic data, art and architecture, and finally to particular communities bound by a common religious identity-the Christian one.<sup>23</sup> For example, with regards to Toledo, the traditional center of Mozarabic culture, the term is reserved for use with the privileged sector of society.<sup>24</sup> They enjoyed special privileges that did not extend to other religious or cultural groups. By the sixteenth Century in Toledo, the word only referenced a Christian living amongst the Arabs and did not necessarily convey aspects of privilege.<sup>25</sup>

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19. Barceló, Carme. “Mozárabes de Valencia...”: 254.

20. *Colección documental del archivo de la catedral de León*, ed. José Manuel Ruiz Asencio. León: Catedral de León, 1999: III, 399-400; Hitchcock, Richard. “¿Quiénes fueron los verdaderos mozárabes?...”: 579; García Villada, Zacarías. *Catálogo de los codexs y documentos de la Catedral de León*. Madrid: Clásica española, 1914: 128.

21. De Vitry, Jacques. *Histoire orientale*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2008; Hinnebusch, Jacques; Hinnebusch, John Frederick. *The Historia Occidentalis of Jacques de Vitry*. Fribourg: The University Press, 1972; Ximénez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de rebus Hispanie sive Historia Ghotica*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1982; Orderic Vital. *Historia ecclesiastica*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978; Aillet, Cyrille. “La question ‘mozarabe’. Bilan historiographique et nouvelles approches”, *Al-Andalus/España. Historiografías en contraste. Siglos XVII-XXI*, Manuela Marín, ed. Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2009: 296-297.

22. Olstein, Diego Adrián. *La era mozárabe: Los mozárabes de Toledo (siglos XII y XIII) en la historiografía, las fuentes y la historia*. Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 2006: 23-36.

23. Peñarroja Torrejón, Leopoldo. *El mozárabe de Valencia*. Madrid: Gredos, 1990; Galmés de Fuentes, Álvaro. *Dialectología mozárabe*. Madrid: Gredos, 1983; Cagigas, Isidoro de las. *Minorías étnico-religiosas...; Aillet, Cyrille; Penelas, Maite; Roisse, Philippe*, eds. *¿Existe una identidad mozárabe? Historia, lengua y cultura de los cristianos de al-andalus (siglos IX-XII)*. Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2008; Fanjul, Serafín. *Al-Andalus contra España: la forja del mito*. Madrid: Siglo XXI, 2000; *Arte y cultura mozárabe: ponencias y comunicaciones presentadas al I Congreso Internacional de Estudios Mozárabes, Toledo, 1975*. Toledo: Instituto de Estudios Visigótico-Mozárabes de San Eugenio, 1979; Jover Zamora, José María, dir. *Historia de España*. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1935.

24. Gómez de Castro, Alvar. *De las hazañas de Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros*, ed. José Oroz Reta. Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1984: 124.

25. Hitchcock, Richard. *Mozarabs in Medieval and Early Modern Spain...: 112*.





### 3.2 The Manifestations of Mozarab

As multifarious as the identification of who are the members of the Mozarabic community so too is the definition of a Mozarabic document. On one end of the spectrum it can be: (1) a document written in Latin by a Christian from al-Andalus; or (2) a document written in vulgar Romance using Arabic characters by a Christian from al-Andalus, such as in the *Kharjas* or *Muwaššah*; and finally (3) a document or manuscript written in Andalusí-Arabic that either makes reference to Christian resident of al-Andalus or has been written by a Christian residing within al-Andalus. Such is the case of the Mozarabic documents of the Mozarabs of Toledo which were notarized by either Christians or Arabs.<sup>26</sup> In the particular case of the documents of the Mozarabs of Toledo, their authorship of the documents, in addition to what is a Mozarab, is also in question. Very similar documents in Huesca, Tudela and Granada have been recognized as being of *Mudéjar* and even *Morisco* origin rather than Mozarabic.<sup>27</sup> Given these cases, it could be argued that the origin or the consideration that these documents be termed Mozarabic also needs revision. This collection of documents has been closely associated with a local Christian community from the very early scholarship. In particular, the early work by Francisco Pons Boigues has served as an anchor for this particular interpretation of these documents and the work of Francisco Javier de Simonet who can be attributed as single handedly bringing into memory the existence, and history of the Mozarabs.<sup>28</sup>

## 4. Mozarabic Centers

### 4.1 Valencia

The Mozarabs and the image of them have become a central theme in the construct of nationalistic or local identities in several communities in modern Spain.<sup>29</sup> This has been especially true with regards to Toledo and Valencia where the connection with a Mozarabic past has been the central theme in localized identity construction. The particular approach of applying the concept of Mozarab to generate a history for

26. Hernández, Francisco Javier. *Los cartularios de Toledo: catálogo documental*. Madrid: Fundación Ramón Areces, 1985; González Palencia, Ángel. *Los mozárabes de Toledo en los siglos XII y XIII*. Madrid: Instituto de Valencia de Don Juan, 1926; Beale-Rivaya, Yasmine. *Mozarabic: Culture Contact, Language and Diglossia in Medieval Toledo*. Los Angeles: University of California, Los Angeles (PhD. Dissertation), 2006.

27. Olstein, Diego Adrián. *La era mozárabe...*: 78; Laliena Corbera, Carlos; Utrilla Utrilla, Juan F., eds. *De Toledo a Huesca: Sociedades medievales en transición a finales del siglo XI (1080-1100)*. Saragossa: Universidad de Zaragoza, 1998.

28. Pons Boigues, Francisco. *Apuntes sobre las escrituras Mozárabes toledanas que se conservan en el Archivo Histórico Nacional*. Madrid: Viuda e hijos de Tello, 1897; Simonet, Francisco Javier. *Historia de los mozárabes...*

29. Peñarroja Torrejón, Leopoldo. *El mozárabe de Valencia ...*; Fierro, Maribel. "Al-Andalus en el pensamiento fascista español", *Al-Andalus/España. Historiografías en contraste*, Manuela Marín, ed. Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2009: 325-349.



peoples residing in defined areas of al-Andalus, such as Valencia has been severely criticized by scholars. Barceló has argued general historical tendencies occurring in the rest of the Peninsula may not have necessarily been applicable to particular regions such as Valencia and therefore, this methodology is flawed.<sup>30</sup> Specifically, she censures the use of the term Mozarab and its association with a distinct Romance language belonging to a separate Christian community in Valencia.<sup>31</sup> This approach negates the fact that languages do not exist in isolation and are also not necessarily culture or community specific. In fact, there is no evidence of any Latin writings of Valencia that can be closely or particularly associated with the local Christians. There is not a close association between Christian and Latin that has been subsequently claimed. It may be the case that the scribes were either not local Christians, meaning that they came from a different area or they may have been Jewish or Muslim. Therefore, the construct Mozarab=Latin, manuscript or document=Romance of Valencia is based on indirect evidence but there is no direct link between these. Indeed, there are a total of only 8 documents which have been identified as Mozarabic in Valencia between the years of 1167AD and 1240AD, in the Monastery and Church of Saint Vincent of the Roqueta. These documents have to do with royal donations and Papal confirmations and not with the permanence of the Romance language nor in particular with the Mozarabs.<sup>32</sup>

The Arabic sources mention the Christians of Valencia on only two occasions, between 1094AD and 1101AD. Further.<sup>33</sup> Despite the fact that the documents do not support the idea of a necessary association between Mozarab and a Romance language inherent to Valencia, some scholars continue to propagate the association of Mozarab with a purely Valencian identity. The same can be said in the case of Toledo, the historical center of Mozarabic activity, polemic, language, and identity.

Finally, the term Mozarab is only overtly used in the *Primera Crónica General* (1270 AD) in place of the term Christian. It identifies these Christians as having grown up with the “Moors” and spoke like them and know their customs and manners.

## 4.2 León

Although contemporary scholars have referred to Mozarabs from the very beginning of the Muslim conquest in 711AD, there is no record of the word appearing in any written form until the eleventh Century in León. The first record of the particular lexical item is a legal complaint dated 1024 AD from the monastery of San Cipriano de Valdesalce. There are three named plaintiffs identified as “muzáraves” named Vicente, Abiahia and Iohanes. They are identified as the king’s weavers or embroiderers. They had been recruited as “craftsmen of superior category from al-

30. Barceló, Carmen. “Mozárabes de Valencia ...”: 260, 263.

31. Epalza, Mikel. “¿Hubo mozárabes en tierras valencianas? ...”: 7-31.

32. Barceló, Carmen. “Mozárabes de Valencia ...”: 260.

33. Peñarroja Torrejón, Leopoldo. *El mozárabe de Valencia...*





Andalus to fashion garments and fine cloths at the royal command."<sup>34</sup> Silks and luxury items such as textiles were important import from al-Andalus as it was "renowned throughout [...] for its textiles."<sup>35</sup> Hitchcock states:

The three *ticareros* themselves are something of an enigma. One, Abiahia, had an Arabic name (Ab(u) Yahya), which would appear to denote his Andalusí origin. The other two, Vincente and Iohannes, it would appear, were not Arabicized. There is nothing to suggest that they were Christians from al-Andalus seeking refuge in the north, nothing, in fact, barring the denominator *muzáraves*, to indicate that they were Christians at all.<sup>36</sup>

It is not particularly striking that one of the "*muzáraves*" had an Arabic name while the others had Christian names. It is quite common to have names of either origin. What is remarkable, however, is that in the very document it is stated that two of the *mozáraves* were not Arabicized and most importantly there is nothing to suggest that "they were Christians at all." This seems to be in direct contradiction to what we understand *Mozarab* to mean today where *Mozarab* is used meaning "Arabicized Christian." According to Hitchcock, "the fact that one of them carried an Arabic name was sufficient for their being known collectively as *Mozarabs*, that is to say, Arabicized."<sup>37</sup> There is no other indication of their "Arabacization." Furthermore, Hitchcock claims that:

In all the available documentation for the Christian kingdoms of the north of the Peninsula (studied to date), there are no other examples of the word *muzárave* or its equivalent being used to define members of the community. The naming, then, of these three men as *muzáraves* is a totally isolated occurrence.<sup>38</sup>

It is not the collective feature that allows them to be grouped under the term *Mozarab* but that it must be some other feature that makes them *Mozarab*. Therefore, the use of the term *Mozarab* must denote something special, it must signify that this particular group of people, whether Arabicized or not are different from the rest of the people involved in this particular complaint and to other communities in the area. Chalmeta has argued that he use of the term in this particular document paints the *Mozarabs* in a negative light, however, there does not seem to be any negative association with the term. Rather, it appears in a matter of fact manner in the document.<sup>39</sup>

Scholars have often made the claim that the presence of the *Mozarabs* of León is a product of self-exile from al-Andalus. However, in the document of 1024 AD, the

34. Hitchcock, Richard. *Mozarabs in Medieval...*: 70-71.

35. Hitchcock, Richard. *Mozarabs in Medieval...*: 71.

36. Hitchcock, Richard. *Mozarabs in Medieval...*: 72.

37. Hitchcock, Richard. *Mozarabs in Medieval...*: 72.

38. Hitchcock, Richard. *Mozarabs in Medieval...*: 72.

39. Chalmeta, Pedro. "*Mozarabes*"...: 247.



three men identified as *muzáraves* do not appear to be in exile from al-Andalus, nor there is no mention of their exile status nor of their provenance being of al-Andalus. In addition, Vincente and Iohannes seem to have names that may be associated with being Christian or Jewish. As we analyze more closely the tradition of naming and the association of a name with a particular religion or provenance, we find that in Christian lands there are a plethora of people who have Arabic sounding names. For example, in León there are a lot of Arabic names in the documentation and in some cases we know that they were Christians. Therefore, there is not a strict association Christian/Jewish name=Christian/Jewish or Arabic name=Muslim. Consequently in León, the earliest instance of the term *muzárave* cannot automatically be associated with a particular religion, persecuted or exiled group, or, in fact, a particularly Arabicized group.

What then does the use of the term Mozarab mean in the context of this document? “[...] it may follow that the conferment of the name *muzáraves* was an indication of the prestige in which they were held [...] perhaps officials in his court [...] needed to differentiate them from others in the king’s service.”<sup>40</sup> The one binding item for all 3 men in the document of León is the fact that they were all textile workers of particular prestige, of a style known to be of al-Andalus. In the first instance of the term, Mozarab is more obviously closely associated with *ticaredo* or textile worker trained or whose skills were developed in al-Andalus —the place where this particular textile technique was esteemed to be of great quality and worth. Notably, the appearance of the term Mozarab in León coincides with a period of great importation products from al-Andalus. Oliver Pérez identifies 3 main periods of incorporation of Arabic terms into Leonese in the following manner:

*En el segundo período, el más fértil, que situaríamos a lo largo de los siglos X-XI, los préstamos de origen árabe entran por dos conductos distintos. Uno es a través de la importación de productos manufacturados, que en esa etapa no se fabricaban en la España cristiana mucho más atrasada industrialmente que la árabe. El otro es fruto del contacto con los nuevos inmigrantes procedentes del Sur, los mozárabes, aunque sin desear la posibilidad de que también contribuyeran árabes y beréberes establecidos en el Norte y ya fundidos con la población autóctona [...] unos terceros, habitantes de al-Andalus o del Norte de África, que por motivos distintos buscaron refugio en el Reino de León.*<sup>41</sup>

It is apparent that at least in its earliest uses of Mozarab in the documentation it would be imprudent to closely associate it with the idea of Arabicized Christian and

40. Hitchcock, Richard. *Mozarabs in Medieval...: 73.*

41. “In the second, more fertile, period, which we can place over the 10th-11th centuries, the Arab origin loan words entered by two different routes. One was through the importing of manufactured products, which were not produced at that time in a Christian Spain industrially much more backward than the Arab world. The other was through contact with the new immigrants from the South, the Mozarabs, but without discarding the possibility that Arabs and Berbers settled in the North and already merged with the native population also contributed [...] and thirdly, inhabitants of al-Andalus or North Africa, who, for various reasons, sought refuge in the Kingdom of Leon.” Oliver Pérez, Dolores. “Los arabismos en la documentación del reino de León (siglos IX-XII)”, *Orígenes de las lenguas romances en el reino de León siglos IX-XII*, Ángeles Libano Zumalacárregui, ed. León: Archivo Histórico Diocesano, 2003: 133.



discard other possible definitions, such as including information about profession or degree of specialization in a particular field. In fact, it seems that given these early cases the close association with religion is a more modern construct, and may have even occurred in Toledo.

The second document, in which it appears, is also in León, in an undated document from the same century. What is particularly interesting about the use of Mozarab in both of these manuscripts is that it appears without necessitating a definition, implying that it was well established and that the users of said documentation would be familiar with the term. In addition, there does not seem to be any hesitation in its use.

### 4.3 Toledo

The use of the term Mozarab becomes more frequent "after the conquest of Toledo by Alfonso VI in 1085AD."<sup>42</sup> In the whole collection known as the *documentos legales de los mozarabes de Toledo*, the term Mozarab (المستعرب) appears a total of 16 times.<sup>43</sup> In these cases, Mozarab does not seem to be closely associated with a particular profession nor does it seem to be limited to peoples of Andalusí origin since the term is applied to local or native Toledanos. The term Mozarab also appears in Toledo after the Reconquest in 1085AD as a family name and in subsequent years in municipal documents as related to rights and privileges.<sup>44</sup>

In the sixteenth century, the term Mozarab is directly associated with being a Christian in great part because Alfonso VI granted privileges to the Mozarabes and allowed for the construction of the chapel for the Mozarabic rite within the cathedral of Toledo.<sup>45</sup> However, by the sixteenth century the Mozarabic churches had fallen in disrepair and in general, a Mozarab, was not considered part of the aristocracy but rather part of the less privileged part of society. At this time, there began to be 3 classes or types of Mozarabs in Toledo: (1) those of so-called Visigothic descent, who are native to Toledo but by the eleventh Century are few in numbers; and (2) those who have emigrated North from the South of Al-Andalus; (3) Christians proceeding from the Northern kingdoms such as Castilians and Franks who also undergo a process of Arabization and become Mozarabs in Toledo. This last group adopts the Andalusí Arabic language and its members sign their names in Arabic characters as well.<sup>46</sup>

Molénat claims that a distinction between a Mozarab and other Christians in Toledo during the twelfth and thirteenth Centuries.<sup>47</sup> In particular, a Mozarab is

42. Hitchcock, Richard. *Mozarabs in Medieval...: 74.*

43. Olstein, Diego. *La era mozárabe...: 78.*

44. Hitchcock, Richard. "¿Quiénes fueron los verdaderos mozárabes? ...": 579.

45. Hitchcock, Richard. *Mozarabs in Medieval...: 112-113.*

46. Molénat, Jean-Pierre. "Mudéjars et Mozarabes à Tolède du XIIIe au XVe siècles", *Minorités religieuses dans l'Espagne médiévale*, Manuela Marín, Joseph Manuel Martin, eds. Aix-en-Provence: Édisud, 1992: 144.

47. Molénat, Jean-Pierre. "L'Arabe à Tolède, du XIIe au XVIe siècle". *Al-Qantara*, 15/2 (1994): 473-496.



defined as a Christian who belongs to one of the six officially designated Mozarabic parishes. Therefore, it is not enough to be a Christian or “Arabized” to be a Mozarab. Also as important is that a Mozarab is one who was allowed to “retain” certain rights and privileges under a treaty accorded in 1101AD called the *Fuero Juzgo*.

The final criterion has to do with the linguistic practices of the community. A Mozarab may be defined as someone who has sufficient command of the “Mozarabic language” to be able to appear before a notary and sign a contract.<sup>48</sup> Therefore, to a certain extent, having a minimal level literacy, the ability to sign a document, is a defining factor to be considered a Mozarab. All of these factors combined indicate that the Mozarabs were considered a privileged portion of society in Toledo who belonged to particular parishes, and had a minimal amount of education.

It is particularly interesting that a Mozarab, by definition, needs to be able to understand and sign a contract. The contracts of the Mozarabs of Toledo were written in Andalusí-Arabic and not in Romance, the language that the Mozarabs supposedly maintained throughout Al-Andalus.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, evidence suggests that the Mozarabs of Toledo imposed the use of the Arabic language both in speech and in writing; strongly indicating that the Mozarab community valued the Andalusí Arabic language and considered it of sufficient social import to select it in writing above the other possible writing systems.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, Molénat aptly points out that it is unclear why the Mozarabic community of Toledo would need two languages: one used in writing and in oral speech (Arabic) and the other only in oral speech (Romance) when Arabic was perfectly understood by everyone in Toledo.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, the assumption that despite the lack of direct evidence the Mozarabs must actively maintained Romance throughout the Andalusí period as well as Andalusí Arabic must be analyzed further. What purpose would there have been to maintain a language of culture if the valued culture for the Mozarabs is clearly the Arab one and not the Romance? Molénat hypothesizes that the oral and dialectal use of language in Toledo are reflected in the documents. The pergaminos contain some colloquial terms, non-standard uses of Arabic, as well as the inclusion of some Romance terms. Therefore, although one cannot claim that the written language in these documents is an exact mirror of the oral practices of this community, they are a good indication of them.

In addition to containing traces of the oral language, a good indication that the Mozarabic community understood and practiced Andalusí Arabic is the fact that in several documents one finds the statement that, once produced, they were read back to the parties in question and these indicated “the language” in which it was read and subsequently agreed to the terms. Moreover, the importance of Arabic, and the fact that it is a language that acts as a social marker is supported by the criticism sustained by one of the notary’s use of Arabic for having a “mediocre level”

48. Molénat, Jean Pierre. “L’Arabe à Tolède...”: 478.

49. Beale-Rivaya, Yasmine. “On the Relationship between Mozarabic Sibilants and Andalusian Seseo”. *e-Humanista*, 14 (2010): 40-56; Ferrando Frutos, Ignacio. *El dialecto andalusí de la marca media: Los documentos mozárabes toledanos de los siglos XII y XIII*. Saragossa: Universidad de Zaragoza, 1995.

50. Molénat, Jean Pierre. “Mudéjars et Mozarabes...”: 144.

51. Molénat, Jean Pierre. “L’Arabe à Tolède...”: 482.



due to the incorporation of Romance words and also to the dialectal nature of the writings. Although Toledo was reconquered in 1085 AD, the use of Arabic in legal documents does not fade until the end of the thirteenth and beginning of the fourteenth centuries. It is used by the Arabic community, as well as the Mozarabic and Jewish communities as the primary language for production of documents until the year 1391.<sup>52</sup> Finally, the use of Arabic does not diminish until Castilian is imposed as the written language during the period of Alfonso X.<sup>53</sup>

## 5. The Use Mozarab in the Scholarly Tradition

The fact that there is not one authoritative definition for Mozarab or Mozarabic has not only caused generalized confusion within the scholarship but also has led to contradictory conceptualizations of the term within the same bodies of work, betraying the uncertainty with which the very experts of this field handle this term. For example, describing the martyrdom movement of Córdoba Colbert asserts that the Mozarabs are Christians who lived outside of the Muslim empire and yet in the same body of work he also suggests that they were those who lived within the boundaries of Al-Andalus.<sup>54</sup> Further, Mozarab has been used to describe both the anti-Arabists such as Saint Eulogius and Alvarus as well as the clearly Arabicized members of society such as the tenth Century Bishop Rabib Zayd.<sup>55</sup> How can a Mozarab be someone who resists Arabic influence, and in another case be someone who has been so completely Arabicized that even though he is a Catholic Bishop he clearly uses an Arabic name?

In each instance in the scholarship, how the "Mozarabs" are identified and the breadth and scope of their contributions to Al-Andalus and the Iberian Peninsula in general seem to vary depending on whether the audience being addressed is popular or academic as well as the particular interests of the scholar seem to drive what aspects of the Mozarabs are highlighted. The recurrent tendency among scholars to concentrate on only one document type such as either the *libros de repartimiento*, notarial documents, or *crónicas* has contributed to perpetuate an inaccurate portrait of the Mozarabic speech community and may lead one to misleading generalizations if one does not take into account the limited scope of the data when forming the analysis.

Scholarly interest in the Mozarabs began in the nineteenth century with the very first discussion of the collection of documents of the Mozarabs contained within the Cathedral of Toledo by Francisco Pons Boigues in 1888.<sup>56</sup> For Boigues this collection are *reliquias venerables de aquella raza latino-visigótica, aunque rodeada durante los cuatro*

52. Molénat, Jean Pierre. "Mudéjars et Mozarabes...": 145.

53. Molénat, Jean Pierre. "L'Arabe à Tolède...": 485.

54. Colbert, Edward P. *The Martyrs of Córdoba (850-859): A Study of the Sources*. Washington, D.C: The Catholic University of America Press, 1962: 22-23.

55. Hitchcock, Richard. "¿Quiénes fueron los verdaderos mozárabes? ...": 575.

56. Pons Boigues, Francisco. *Apuntes...*



*siglos anteriores por los sectarios del Islam.*<sup>57</sup> For him, the Mozarabs are a heroic group that when confronted with and surrounded by Islam managed to preserve intact their belief system as well as what calls the “Latin-Visigothic race”. The fact that the documents are written in Andalusí-Arabic is not an apparent contradiction for Boigues who interprets the documents as reflecting a high level of Romance or Romance permanence. He argues that *El idioma árabe que en ellas se emplea no es instrumento de invectivas contra los discípulos de Cristo y de su Iglesia, ni escarnece y menosprecia el augusto misterio de la Trinidad cristiana.*<sup>58</sup> In the face of the overt and persistent use of Andalusí-Arabic as the language of choice by these Christians, Boigues claims that it is in fact evidence of their permanence as Disciples of Christ and his Church—thus associating Mozarabs with the Church. He uses the Arabic to bolster his claim saying that the use of Arabic is representative of the most pure Catholic Orthodoxy and is not an indication that the Mozarabs are in fact acquiring Arabic customs. For him, the use of Arabic is a confirmation, of sorts, of a crypto-Catholicism. Boigues explains:

*el idioma árabe es allí elocuente expresión de la más pura ortodoxia católica: en él se formulan explícitas y solemnes profesiones de fe “en el Padre, en el Hijo y en el Espíritu Santo, un solo Dios”; se invoca la protección de Santa María y de los Santos, y se confiesa y proclama el dogma católico en su integridad, “tal como lo anunciaron los Apóstoles y lo expusieron los Santos Padres”. Bien pudiéramos decir, por consiguiente, que el lenguaje que aquí se emplea, fiel reflejo de las más arraigadas creencias y de los más puros sentimientos cristianos, es un árabe especial, que dista toto cælo del que emplean los escritores musulmanes; es el árabe, por decirlo así, cristianizado y españolizado.*<sup>59</sup>

Here again, we find a confluence of ideas. First, for Boigues, the use of Arabic in no way should be interpreted as the Mozarabs being Arabicized in fact, it is a demonstration or a reflection of their Catholic orthodoxy. This is an obvious paradox that was not addressed or in fact overtly ignored by Pons Boigues. Secondly, he alleges that the type of Arabic is “cristianized” and “Spanishized” without any specific examples or argument as to how or why this type of Arabic contains these qualities. Given that the documents in question in this collection deal strictly with legal issues such as the purchase and sale of land, inheritance, and donations, it is difficult to see how they are representative of any religion in particular. The idea that the Arabic is “Spanishized” would need further explanation as the concept of one unified Spain had not evolved at the time of the production of this collection. Furthermore, the idea of the existence of a “Latin Visigothic race” in the Iberian Peninsula is a modern

57. Pons Boigues, Francisco. *Apuntes...*: 4-5.

58. Pons Boigues, Francisco. *Apuntes...*: 5.

59. “the Arab language is there the eloquent expression of the purest Catholic orthodoxy: explicit and solemn professions of faith are made therein “in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God”; the protection of the Virgin Mary and the Saints is invoked, and the full Catholic dogma is confessed and proclaimed, “as announced by the Apostles and expounded by the Holy Fathers”. Therefore, we could well say that the language used here, a true reflection of the most deeply rooted beliefs and the purest Christian sentiments, is a special Arab, very distant from that used by the Muslim writers; it is, in other words, a Christianised and Hispanised Arab.” Pons Boigues, Francisco. *Apuntes...*: 5.





interpretation and is diachronically anachronistic given that in the very collection of documents there is no discussion of the race of the Mozarabs. For Boigues, the Mozarabs are a homogenous group that resisted Islamic influence in culture, language and customs. The claim that they were able to maintain a complete separation for over 700 years has been refuted and discarded as it is obvious that there was intermarriage and widespread "mixing". Finally, the evidence in the documents does not support the argument that the Mozarabs actively sought to maintain a Latin Visigothic race and to construct history one must firmly look toward the evidence in the documents and not extrapolate what we would like the manuscripts to suggest.

Although Boigues' work is now only viewed as a primitive investigation into the question of the Mozarabs, his early assertions were popular and circulated to such an extent that they still are disseminated as fact in popular circles. More importantly, Boigues' original body of work laid the groundwork for both modern scholarship as well as popular culture; perpetually associating the Mozarabs with the idea of an early nationalistic group defined by its Catholicism and in part, have held their constancy because they come from an erudite source.<sup>60</sup>

Javier Simonet is arguably the most important and influential early scholar on the Mozarabs. His body of work is fundamental in understanding and knowing about the Mozarabs. As did Boigues, Simonet also analyzed the documents of the Mozarabs of Toledo and produced both: *Historia de los Mozárabes de España* (1867) and *Glosario de voces ibéricas y Latinas usadas entre los mozárabes* (1888).<sup>61</sup> Despite the wealth of information of these collections, both demonstrate bias in his interpretations. In the *Glosario*, for example, the source of the "mozárabe" words is often unclear as many of the words are not found in the manuscript collection from the Cathedral of Toledo. With regards to his interpretations of the words of Latin origin, Simonet consistently uses the option that is closest to Old Castilian even when there is evidence that may point towards more than one interpretation. Moreover, Simonet made a selection of the *voces ibéricas y Latinas*, and does not note all of the options for each lexical item, also lacking is thorough discussion of the grammar.<sup>62</sup>

Clearly, both Francisco Pons Boigues, and Francisco Javier de Simonet focused on what they interpreted to be "Christian" or evidence that could be considered to demonstrate a permanence of a pre-Islamic tradition. This tendency in their important works created in early scholarship the perception that Mozarab meant Christian and resisting to Arabic. All the while, the manuscripts from which these interpretations flourished are in a Hispano-Arabigo language and demonstrate clearly that this community was in fact Arabicized in language and customs.

60. Chalmeta, Pedro. "Mozarabes"...

61. Simonet, Francisco Javier. *Glosario de voces ibéricas y latinas usadas entre los mozárabes*. Madrid: Ediciones Atlas, 1888.

62. Urvoy notes that in documents found in Portugal, there appear similar words to those of Simonet's glossario but often with different spellings. Urvoy, Marie-Thérèse. "Note de philologie mozarabe". *Arabica*, 36/2 (1989): 235-236.



Arguably, the most important scholar on the Mozarabs following Boigues and Simonet is Galmés de Fuentes.<sup>63</sup> Galmés de Fuentes offers a more comprehensive view of the varieties of mozárabe and of the evidence available for interpretation and understanding to the Mozarabic communities but tends to focus on two types of documents only: glossaries and the *Libros de Repartimiento*.

Some scholars may want to persuade us that the methodology of early scholars simply involved highlighting different aspects of the same community. However, at times the communities in question seem to be radically different in time, space, and most importantly characteristics. Although the construct of identity is made from multiple aspects, in the case of the Mozarabs, these end up being contradictory and not complementary towards one whole.

## 6. Mozarabs and Language

### 6.1 Romance

The relative impact of the Mozarabs in León on language must be analyzed in terms of the impact of the Mozarabs on the general population of this particular community. Although there is only direct early evidence of three Mozarabs in León it may be the case that the document of 1024 AD need be considered as reflecting a larger generalized phenomenon? Is the quick mention of *mozáraves* in the complaint an indication an influx of Mozarab textile workers into León in this particular period? Was the extension of the Mozarabic population important enough to be a contributing factor to the lingua franca of León? Further, were the Mozarabs the exclusive contributors of Arabic lexicon to the language of León or were there people of other identities that also contributed?

Given what we know of trade and agreements between Arabs and Christians in Iberia, it seems likely that the Mozarabs were not the only source for the Arabic lexicon in León. We know from the chronicles that “there was emigration from other areas of the Iberian Peninsula, including al-Andalus, notably to occupy territory recently annexed by Christian monarchs.” From time to time, there seem to be immigration waves and:

There was substantial emigration from the 880s through, to and during the reign of ‘Abd ar-Rahman III (912-61 AD). “After the 950s, there is still a (great deal) of Arabic names in the documentation, not all of which can be attributed to emigration. [...] Individuals drawn from different sectors to the population, some urban and some rural, and Arabicized to different degrees, went north for a variety of reasons.”<sup>64</sup>

63. Galmés de Fuentes, Álvaro. *Dialectología Mozárabe*. Madrid: Gredos, 1983; Vespertino Rodríguez, Antonio. “Don Á. G. de F. (1926-2003)”. *Aljamía*, 15 (2003): 41-60.

64. Hitchcock, Richard. *Mozarabs in Medieval...: 62*.



In particular, one finds many Arabic names in monasteries. Christian monasteries may have been a good safe haven and provided opportunities that were particularly appealing to people coming from al-Andalus. Hitchcock explains that:

If one looks at the available documentation from particular monasteries for onomastic evidence, it is possible to offer some explanation for this Arabicization. [...] These documents contain many Arabic words which have been used as indices of so-called Mozarabic infiltration in the north of the Peninsula. [...] The [...] inescapable fact is that, throughout the tenth century, particularly after 'Abd ar-Rahman had established absolute control in al-Andalus, from the 940s onwards, and continuing during the reign of his successor, al-Hakam II (961-72 AD), one finds a plethora of unequivocally Arabic names, the greatest density of which occur in the 950s and 960s.<sup>65</sup>

Therefore, we do know there were important numbers of people that came to León from al-Andalus who spoke Arabic and established communities within churches and church boundaries. Given these facts, it seems likely that the words of Arabic origin in the documents are in fact due to people of Arabic origin- and not due to some third group, such as the Mozarabs, acting as "interpreters." However, I would also put forward that it also seems likely that given that there may have been a higher density of Arabs in the church community than in the general population- it may be that the documents show a higher proportion of Arabic words than were generally used at large.

According to Oliver Pérez, the first person to discuss the Arabic terms in León was Manuel Gómez Moreno in *Iglesias mozárabes. Arte español de los siglos IX a XI*, published in Madrid, in 1919." In this work, Gómez Moreno associates the Arabic terms in the churches with the Mozarabs. He does not consider that it may directly be the Arabs who contributed "arabismos" to the Leonese language- and thus, from the very beginning- muddled the waters for subsequent scholars. Another work that has been important for our understanding of Arabic terms in Leonese is the "*Vocabulista in arabico* of the thirteenth century." Corriente affirms that:

*libro atribuido a Raimond Martí [...] debieron intervenir dos distintos personajes. Uno, "con cierta cierta cultura islámica" y con "aceptable cultural del latín eclesiástico medieval", sería el responsable del glosario latino-árabe; el otro posiblemente un clérigo mozárabe "de no muchas letras latinas ni árabes", habría sido el autor del árabe-latino "con un registro inferior y más auditivo que visual".*<sup>66</sup>

65. Hitchcock, Richard. *Mozarabs in Medieval...*: 63-64.

66. "book attributed to Raimond Martí [...] two different characters must have been involved. One, 'with certain Islamic culture' and 'cultural acceptable of medieval ecclesiastical Latin', would be responsible for the Latin-Arab glossary; the other possibly a Mozarabic clergyman 'with few Latin nor Arab letters', would have been the author of the Arab-Latin 'with an inferior register and more auditory than visual.'" Oliver Pérez, Dolores. "Los arabismos en la documentación ...": 106, 107.



Again, words of Arabic origin or *arabismos* are closely associated with Mozarab. What is most interesting is the report that one of the people named as having contributed to the 1024 document did not have many words in Latin nor in Arabic. Therefore he performed language at a low register, that was limited to auditory or oral language and was not comfortable using “visual” or interpreting written language, meaning that he had a limited formal education and therefore wrote “what he heard” or interpreted spellings based on what he thought they must have been. This particular case is a good source for information about oral language. Moreover, what we see here is evidence that the Romance language in León should not to be treated as a distinct entity with non-porous borders, created and developed in isolation to its neighbors. Just as León was an important center for commerce and trade to and from al-Andalus, so was its language, a complex linguistic construct, developed in part due to León porous borders and where speakers who struggled to maintain one particular language over the other.

León, therefore, is a case study example of what Penny calls a “continuum dialectal” an extensive zone without internal dialectal borders.<sup>67</sup> It is impossible to identify one particular dialect or language over another by the speakers and the various languages or dialects are seen as a continuum of one another. The languages in question are not interpreted by the speakers as being two distinct languages but part of the same linguistic system. Penny maintains that this dialectal transition is not exceptional but rather normal. In border areas, where there is frequent migration across “frontiers” there is a greater mix of peoples of diverse social origins than in more centralized areas—meaning that there is more fluidity both socially and linguistically—less dialectal hardening or definition. The result of migration movements is not the transfer of one dialect or language to another place but rather a *koneization* of all the languages spoken in the particular area in question. In León, this border area, it is not necessary to rely on a complicated scheme—i.e. transfer of language through Mozarabs since natural linguistic processes can account for the presence and frequency of Arabic words.

Even a superficial analysis of the socio-political and linguistic circumstances of IX<sup>th</sup> through XII<sup>th</sup> Century León makes it difficult to argue that the Mozarabs were the group that acted as a cultural and linguistic bridge or interpreters for the Arabic culture and language into early Romance. Consider Oliver Pérez’s argument:

*Finalmente, y centrándonos en el polémico tema de la contribución mozárabe, es nuestra opinión, que se hace necesario revisar la tesis tantas veces repetida de que dicho grupo social fue el responsable de la entrada de arabismos en las lenguas del Noroeste peninsular, y sobre todo, se ha de evitar el empleo del término mozarabismo al aludir a los préstamos árabes de escrituras leonesas [...] desde luego, no responde a una realidad histórica. [...] hemos de defender la existencia de arabismos que son fruto de la convivencia entre vencedores y vencidos.*<sup>68</sup>

67. Penny, Ralph. “Continuum Dialectal y fronteras estatales: el caso del leonés medieval”, *Orígenes de las lenguas romances en el reino de León siglos IX-XII*, José María Fernández Catón, ed. León: El Archivo Histórico Diocesano de León, 2003: I, 566.

68. “Finally, and focussing on the controversial theme of the Mozarabic contribution, our opinion is that it is necessary to review the so often repeated thesis that said social group was responsible for the entry



By the time the term Mozarab appears in the documents, León was already under Christian rule and was being repopulated under the encouragement of the Asturian monarchy by Christians from both the North and the South under the idea of *reconquista*.<sup>69</sup>

## 6.2 Popular Language, Romandalusí, and Mozarabic Romance

According to Galmés de Fuentes the Mozarabs continued to communicate using an archaic Romance throughout the Andalusí period in the home and informal settings.<sup>70</sup> Despite the fact that the language used in the Kharjas and Muwaššah reflects the maintenance of a Romance language throughout the Andalusí period, one cannot presume that these examples accurately reflect the lingua franca of the common Mozarab. Especially true since they are artistic productions subject to artistic considerations above socio-linguistic considerations. The issue of whether the language found in the written records of the medieval periods can be considered to accurately reflect the oral language has been debated at length and is always a difficult issue to overcome. However, as much as written records can be an indicator of oral language, it may be that the Romance was an aspect of the linguistic repertoire of the Mozarab but this by no means indicates that it was the first choice language. Evidence, including the documents of the Mozarabs of Toledo, points to the fact that the use Romance was rather limited in al-Andalus even after the Reconquest and that the common everyday language of Toledo was an Arabic-based language.

To date, no exemplary Mozarabic text such as a great epic adventure or anything resembling *Chansons de Roland* has been identified and they created no Christian literature in the Arabic language (or at least none has survived).<sup>71</sup> A Mozarabic literary tradition, including popular songs and folk stories, would supply scholars with concrete indications of how the Mozarabic linguistic system was structured and how it functioned in society rather than forcing scholars to focus on traces of the language from short works such as the Kharjas and Muwaššah. These works are

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of Arabisms into the languages of the North-Eastern area of the Peninsula, and especially, the use of the term 'Mozarabism' when mentioning Arab loan words in Leonese writings must be avoided [...] of course, it does not respond to a historical reality. [...] we have to defend the existence of Arabisms that are the result of coexistence between winners and losers." Oliver Pérez, Dolores. "Los arabismos en la documentación...": 138-39.

69. Urvoy, Marie-Thérèse. "La culture et la littérature arabe des chrétiens d'al-Andalus". *Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique*, 92 (1991): 259.

70. Galmés de Fuentes, Álvaro. *Dialectología mozárabe*...

71. Glick, Thomas. *Islamic and Christian Spain in the Early Middle Ages*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979: 176; Menocal, Maria Rosa; Scheindlin, Raymond P.; Sells, Michael Anthony. *The literature of Al-Andalus*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000; Solà-Solà, Josep Maria; Armistead, Samuel G.; Silverman, Joseph H. *Hispania Judaica: studies on the history, language, and literature of the Jews in the Hispanic world*. Barcelona: Puvill, 1980; Monroe, James T. *Hispano-Arabic poetry: a student anthology*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974.



referred to in an effort to argue for a sustained use of a Romance language within al-Andalus. However, every day interactions seem to have been mostly in Andalusí Arabic as attested in the documents of the Mozarabs of the Cathedral of Toledo. On the other hand, just as the Kharjas and Muwaššah are a rather limited collection, the documents of the Cathedral of Toledo, although a large collection, are highly stylized or linguistically limited works due to their nature of being formal legal documents. Had Mozarabic, *Andalusí* Romance, been widespread, one would expect to find a greater written record reflecting this reality.

In turn, in what ways did the Mozarabic community impact language use and development both in al-Andalus and then throughout the Christian kingdoms? In León, for example, can one say that the textile workers were responsible for the incorporation of the Arabic words on the Romance languages of León? In order for one particular linguistic group to be able to make a measureable impact to the language of an area depends on its population, perceived social importance, and contribution in terms of technology or otherwise to the community. In terms of population, although substantial at first, the Mozarabic community was ever decreasing and not increasing. Clement XI of Aragón reported in 1311 AD that in Granada there was population of 200,000. Most of these were in fact descendants of peninsular Christians.<sup>72</sup> According to Rachel Arié, Isidro de las Cagigas (1947) claimed that the Mozarabic community, in Granada in particular, ceased to exist in the middle of the thirteenth Century.<sup>73</sup> Glick and Rucquoi confirm that the Mozarabic population was very depleted by the thirteenth Century but vestiges could still be found. In fact, it is estimated that twenty percent of the population was still non-Muslim.<sup>74</sup> Arié argues that in Granada after 1232 AD, the Christian community, in part, was maintained through the preservation of a captive population brought back from the battlefields or from excursion to enemy lands on ever-changing borders between al-Andalus and the reconquered territories. Among the captured there were farmers, gardeners, terrasseurs, and laborers. It is estimated that at one point there were seven thousand Christian captives in Granada alone. Only 1,500 survived the siege and Reconquest of Granada by the Catholic monarchs.<sup>75</sup> Based on this evidence alone, it is difficult to argue that the Mozarabs either had an important enough population to have a lasting and substantial linguistic impact, nor would they have enjoyed such social prestige so as to act like the social marker for the entire community. Most commonly, one group does not enjoy such prestige as to be able to single-handedly impact the language of a whole community but rather the different speech communities come together to form a lingua franca, a koiné, reflecting the merger the different language. Such seems to be the case in al-Andalus.

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72. Simonet, Francisco Javier. *Glosario...*: 188.

73. Arié, Rachel. "Les minorités religieuses...": 52.

74. Glick, Thomas. *Islamic and Christian Spain in the Early Middle Ages...*: 34.

75. Arié, Rachel. "Les minorités religieuses...": 53.





## 7. Conclusion

The term Mozarab has been used inconsistently and imprecisely within the scholarship, leading to over-generalizations and incorrect assumptions. In addition, scholars have tended to focus only on particular types of evidence, at times, seemingly making choices based on their own preconceived notions rather than allowing the evidence to lead them down a particular road. All in all, the early scholarship, as well as early chroniclers, have created the association of Mozarabic with the ideal of "Christian-separate from Muslim" as well as with a persistent and diffuse Romance language ever present in al-Andalus. As a result, Mozarab has been associated with a Hispano-Visigothic past, nationalistic ideas of the notion of a Visigothic Spain and a resistance to Muslim influence. The association of Mozarab, on the one hand with a continuous Visigothic past, or a Catholic-Spanish identity, and on the other with negative connotations seems to continuously weigh down our ability to objectively consider the evidence in the documents. Epalza's proposal that there were many types of Christians that may fall under the umbrella of Mozarab shatters the idea of a supposed continuum from the Visigothic era to our contemporary times.

When identifying and describing the Mozarabic language or dialect one must grapple with which types of documents should be analyzed as the most representative of the oral language. The issue of identity, theory of language use, and what we know about the history of the Mozarabs come into play here. Three main representations exist: 1) Mozarabic as representative of a Hispano-Visigothic race who maintained a true Catholic Orthodoxy; 2) Mozarabic as mainly a kind of Romance written in Arabic; 3) Mozarabic as an Iberian Christian who maintained a Romance language in the home. Recent scholarship has begun to take a more critical and fresh look at the case of the Mozarabs but it is still weighed down and tainted by the early scholarship on the Mozarabs.

What is most notable is that there is little evidence to suggest that the Mozarabs were in fact the authors of either the works of art or of the documents associated with them. Therefore, defining what is Mozarabic and what is not should play a central theme in our scholarship as we continue to conduct research and revise old standards. Recent scholarship, such as the edited work by Cyrille Aillet, Mayte Penelas and Philippe Roisse (2008), Hitchcock (2008), and Manuela Marín's edited book (2009) *Al-Andalus/España: Historiografías en contraste, siglos XVII-XXI* all provide new and refreshing approaches to the question of the Mozarabs.<sup>76</sup> Each of these works challenges scholars to return to the manuscripts with a new outlook, being careful not to bring to the table our pre-conceived notions of what they should say about the Mozarabs but rather limit our analyses to what they do say. Further, taking the fact that al-Andalus was a pluri-cultural society, into greater consideration might allow the scholarship to move forward and further clarify the definition and role of the Mozarabs within Medieval Iberian history.

76. Hitchcock, Ricard. *Mozarabs in Medieval...*; Aillet, Cyrille; Penelas, Maite; Roisse, Philippe, eds. *¿Existe una identidad mozárabe?...?*; Marín, Manuela, ed. *Al-Andalus/España. Historiografías en contraste. Siglos XVII-XXI*. Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2009.

