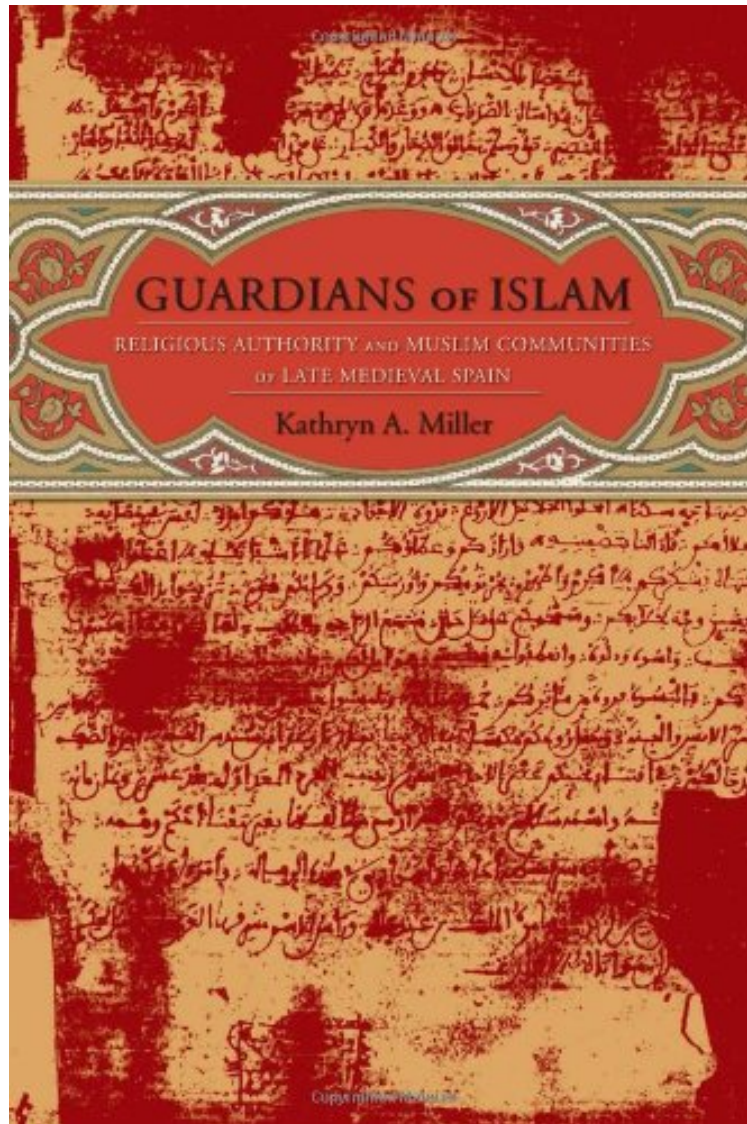


Guardians of Islam: Religious Authority and Muslim Communities of Late Medieval Spain

Kathryn Miller

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#492489 in Books 2008-10-09 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.10 x 1.00 x 6.301, 1.20 #File Name: 0231136129296 pages | File size: 53.Mb

Kathryn Miller : Guardians of Islam: Religious Authority and Muslim Communities of Late Medieval Spain before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Guardians of Islam: Religious Authority and Muslim Communities of Late Medieval Spain:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Muslim Eastern Spain fatwa development 1400-1500 By William Garrison Jr. "Guardians of Islam" by Kathryn A. Miller (2008), 276 pages: 181 pages of text; another 60 pages of

notes, with 32 pages of bibliography and index, totaling 276 pages. C. early 2013 a "Look Inside" feature became available - you can read much of the book online now. The purpose of this book is to review how Muslim religious scholars (imams) advised how Muslims could follow Islamic theological and sociological teachings while living amongst hostile Christians in the Aragon region of north-eastern Spain (sharq al-Andalus) during the 1400s. This is the era immediately before the Christian monarch ordered that Muslims had to either convert to Christianity or move outside Spain. The author wrote about tasks and procedures of scribes in developing fatawa in guiding 15th-century Spanish Muslims in how to properly act as Muslims, but this book does not list specific legal guidelines nor penalties. Not a "100 ahadith codices" guidebook. It reviews the legal conflicts between Muslims and Christian as Christians invaders took over Muslim lands (which centuries earlier had been Christian). The author reviews Islamic disputes over whether or not Christians are "najas" (impure) and therefore cannot issue legal opinions involving Muslims (p.117). Regarding this "clash of civilizations" the author noted: Ibn Miqlash "specifically said that the Muslim's jihad, or effort to come closer to God, would receive no thanks in heaven if he fraternized with Christians" (p. 129). Or the preacher Ibn Miqlash: "The Muslim who spends time with a Christian for forty days in friendship, if he dies during these forty days, he dies as a disbeliever and goes to hell" (p. 148). The author devotes an interesting and informative chapter discussing the ransom of Christians and Muslims between one another. As Muslim Spain became Christianized, the Muslims fervently objected to their fellow Muslims converting to Christianity. So much so, that "King Fernando was so certain that Mudejar families would respond with rage that he discouraged a young Muslim from turning to Christianity" (p. 174). Islamic jurists began issuing guidance on how Muslims could perform `taqiyya' (dissimulation) to hide themselves from their Christian overlords. There is no broad scope analysis of Islamic law in Spain, but more of a limited "istifta" case discussion, such as: "Two brothers were contracted to marry two sisters until one of the sisters became pregnant by her future brother-in-law, not her future husband" (p. 94). But only a handful of usually marriage-related dowry-payment issues. Not an extensive legal treatise. The author lists herself as a historian, not as an attorney. This book discusses how Muslim scribes copied Islamic legal texts, and how they were shared between jurists - and appeal to Muslim jurists in northern Africa for advice. Not an analysis as to how Islamic legal theory (fiqh) changed over time; as the author noted: "Nor do we know for certain whether the Mudejars issued fatwas in the fifteenth century" (p. 123). "Ibn `Abbad blamed the Mudejars for neglecting Maliki canonical literature" (p. 110). "Mudejar textual production has conventionally been faulted for its lack of originality" (p.111). I don't see original translations of Spanish or Islamic texts - more historical analysis than translation originality (I could be wrong; but no "I interpreted this colophon as `xxx' in contrast to B. Lewis."). Very well written, but not in my area of interest. I didn't get the feeling that any of this really matters to anything Islamic outside of Eastern Spain in the 1400-1500.

Muslim enclaves within non-Islamic polities are commonly believed to have been beleaguered communities undergoing relentless cultural and religious decline. Cut off from the Islamic world, these Muslim groups, it is assumed, passively yielded to political, social, and economic forces of assimilation and acculturation before finally accepting Christian dogma. Kathryn A. Miller radically reconceptualizes what she calls the exclave experience of medieval Muslim minorities. By focusing on the legal scholars (faqih) of fifteenth-century Aragonese Muslim communities and translating little-known and newly discovered texts, she unearths a sustained effort to connect with Muslim coreligionaries and preserve practice and belief in the face of Christian influences. Devoted to securing and disseminating Islamic knowledge, these local authorities intervened in Christian courts on behalf of Muslims, provided Arabic translations, and taught and advised other Muslims. Miller follows the activities of the faqihs, their dialogue with Islamic authorities in nearby Muslim polities, their engagement with Islamic texts, and their pursuit of traditional ideals of faith. She demonstrates that these local scholars played a critical role as cultural mediators, creating scholarly networks and communal solidarity despite living in an environment dominated by Christianity.

Miller writes lucidly and with an evident appreciation for language and the well-turned phrase. The book is not only a must but a pleasure to read. (Janina Safran *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*) Miller writes lucidly and with an evident appreciation for language and the well-turned phrase. The book is not only a "must" but a pleasure to read. (Speculum *Journal of Medieval Studies*) About the Author Kathryn A. Miller is assistant professor of history at Stanford University. Her research interests focus on medieval Iberia, Jewish-Christian-Muslim relations in the medieval Mediterranean, commerce, and comparative legal history. Her current research concerns the trade of captives across religious boundaries between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries in the Mediterranean.