

## THE *PASSIO* OF MONK GEORGE AND THE LITURGY OF MARTYRDOM IN TENTH-CENTURY CÓRDOBA \*

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### ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the *Passio* of George of Mar Sabas, contained in the *Memoriale Sanctorum* (c. 853 A. D.) by Eulogius of Córdoba. After analyzing George's rhetoric and scriptural reference, the article argues that George's life was modeled on Mozarabic liturgy, and that it reflected a charismatic flare directed not towards Muslim communities of Córdoba but against other Christian groups.

KEY WORDS: charismatic; chatecumens; Pentecost; martyrdom; Córdoba; liturgy.

## LA *PASSIO* DEL MONJE JORGE Y LA LITURGIA DEL MARTIRIO EN LA CÓRDOBA DEL SIGLO X

### RESUMEN

El presente artículo analiza el martirologio la *Passio* de Jorge de Mar Sabas, según aparece en el *Memoriale Sanctorum* (c. 853 A. D.) de Eulogio de Córdoba. Después de analizar la referencia retórica y bíblica de Jorge, el artículo sostiene que la vida de Jorge se inspiró en la liturgia mozárabe, y que reflejaba una llamarada carismática dirigida no hacia las comunidades musulmanas de Córdoba sino contra otros grupos cristianos.

PALABRAS CLAVE: carismáticos; catecúmenos; Pentecostés; martirio; Córdoba; liturgia.

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In 849 forty-eight Christians were executed in the city of Córdoba for disparaging Islam and insulting the Prophet Muhammad. The *Memoriale Sanctorum* describes in detail the executions of the martyrs for capital violations of Islamic law, namely blasphemy and apostasy. With few exceptions, the Christians appeared before Muslim authorities while

proclaiming their faith, raising questions about the conditions of non-Muslims in tenth-century Córdoba. In an important article on this episode, Pedro Monferrer Sala noted how the *Memoriale Sanctorum* (c. 849 A. D.) served as propaganda intended to strengthen Christian identity at a time when non-Muslim communities of Córdoba were being threatened by the peril of Islam.<sup>2</sup> In this sense, the *Memoriale Sanctorum* may have sought to preserve the tenets of a liturgy that was overshadowed by tensions between Christians and Muslims but that was also mired in the Christological controversies of the ninth century. For Kati Ihnat, the compilation of the different martyrologues may have been shaped by the liturgical needs of the religious communities

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<sup>2</sup> Monferrer 2004, 454.

along the Mediterranean and given rise to two different scriptural traditions: one centered on a tenth-century manuscript, once kept in the city of Oviedo and which Ambrosio de Morales used to compose his edition, and another one transmitted by a ninth-century manuscript from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (Ms. 13760), also attributed to Eulogius of Córdoba.<sup>3</sup> For Juan Carlos Lara Olmo, the tradition of the martyrs of Córdoba reflected an attempt to blend historical accounts with hagiographic truth, while offering a plausible explanation for the compilation of a third account, which was included in the *Martyrology of Usuard*, a succinct rendition of the translation of the relics of the Cordobese martyrs Aurelius, Sabighoto and George from the city of Córdoba to Saint Germain des Près in 858.<sup>4</sup>

Reflecting precisely on the *Martyrology of Usuard*, Ann Christys calls attention to the alteration of the date Eulogius of Córdoba's martyrdom from March 11 to September 20, and suggests that the author of the *Martyrologium* may have been driven by the need to distribute the lives of the saints along the liturgy.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Félix A. Ferrer García calls attention to the numerous compilations of the lives of the saints, which, starting in the seventh century, tried to incorporate these lives into Mozarabic liturgy.<sup>6</sup> Poised against the innovation of the new Christian communities such as the Acephali or the Nestorians, Eulogius may have used the text of the *Memoriale* to recapture Isidorian orthodoxy and to restore the luster and singularity of the pre-Islamic Christian church.

The idea of the *Memoriale Sanctorum* as a liturgical text rests not only on the lives of the saints themselves, but on the intimate association between life and liturgy. The idea of life as liturgy is an old trope in the New Gospel and signifies an embodiment of ritual (Jn 4,23), as God calls on his people to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This life as liturgy signals a spiritual transformation that not only vested the *Martyrologium* with a strong theological message but rendered it a physical embodiment of liturgical truth.<sup>7</sup> As they adhered to the truth of Christ, the Martyrs of Córdoba adopted a series of gestures and actions that were progressively incorporated into the ritual of martyrdom and that further enhanced their relation to the dogma of the Trinity. George's declaration signals a union with Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit whereby he becomes in contact with the holiness of Gods. As he adheres to the Lord, George receives his spirit. The words "adepto post triumphum sponsi consortio"<sup>8</sup> which the *Memoriale* pronounces in relation to Sabigotho's sacrifice is undoubtedly related to a passage in 1 Cor: "Qui autem adhæret Domino, unus spiritus est", and expresses the idea of connaturality between God and man. This relation raises the idea that the life of George and his fellow martyrs is nothing but a form of liturgy. The distinctive emphasis the dogma of the Holy Trinity lends nuance to

the ambiguity of liturgical truth, and its stated emphasis is not on the condemnation of enemies but on the declaration of religious truth.<sup>9</sup> The mere act of liturgy constitutes a reflection of the communion that exists between the persons of the Holy Trinity and a synthesis of the fundamental elements of Orthodox faith.<sup>10</sup>

One of the most notable disputes over the dogma of the Holy Trinity took place on occasion of the creed that Abbot Samson (810-890 A. D.) submitted to the bishops of Córdoba in 862 A. D. According to José Palacios Royán, the dispute unfolded over an *antiphona* that Abbot Samson considered to be especially deficient and which stated that the Verb had penetrated inside the womb of the Virgin and had stayed there with the doors closed: "Credimus, credimus, Verbum Dei omnipotentis illapsus in uterum Virginis, et juxta unionem personae fuisse, januis clausis. Et ut cedat Nestorii dogma, non ambigimus esse inclusum".<sup>11</sup> Samson's main objection was that divine nature could not be enclosed in the Virgin's womb. Considering that the verb *includere* could be understood to mean the same as *esse* (in which case the *antiphona* could be easily be interpreted to be correct), Samson chose to enumerate the numerous versions of the *antiphona* in an effort to circumvent the problem and seized the opportunity to condemn the Arrian circles in which this *antiphona* had probably been circulated.<sup>12</sup> He then engaged in mockery of the solecisms of the bishop of Málaga, Hostegensis, and attributed his poor judgement to his poor knowledge of Latin.<sup>13</sup>

From an ecclesiological point of view, the controversy of Abbot Samson was important because it took a favorable stance regarding the problem of the adoption of the Hispanic Mozarabic ritual and its euchology.<sup>14</sup> While the Western church promoted a single ritual, the Mozarabic ritual was especially lax and allowed for different formulae and interpretations that exceeded the canon and penetrated into the initial rituals or pre-mass.<sup>15</sup> As they progressed on the path of faith, the different prayers allowed believers to evoke the supper, passion and death of Christ and to navigate the distance between the *incarnatio* that occurred in Advent and the *consumatio* or completion of the Paschal mystery that culminated in the feast of Pentecost. Pentecost was the end of the liturgical cycle<sup>16</sup> and signaled also the unity of the Church in all people against all heresy and dissension.<sup>17</sup>

The controversy over Pentecost seems to have persisted inside the Iberian Peninsula as a crucial element of discrimi-

<sup>9</sup> Cf Gil 2020, 96.

<sup>10</sup> Munteanu 2011, 176.

<sup>11</sup> Arevalus, *De Operibus* 3, 88 (PL 81, 674A).

<sup>12</sup> Samson Cordubensis 1998, 14.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. the introduction to the rule of Saint Pachomius: "urbant autem missi ad me ob hanc ipsam causam Leontius presbyter, et caeteri cum eo fratres, accito notario, ut erant de Aegyptiaca in Graecam linguam versa, nostro sermone dictavi, ut et tantis viris imperantibus, ne dicam rogantibus obedirem, et bono, ut aiunt, auspicio longum silentium rumperem, reddens me pristinis studiis, et sanctae feminae refrigerans animam, quae monasteriorum semper amore flagravit, et quod visura erat in coelo, hic in terris meditata est", Hyeronimus Stroudensis, *Regula Sancti Pacomii* 53, 2 (PL 50, 275A).

<sup>14</sup> Roszak 2014, 463.

<sup>15</sup> Cabrol 1907, 1, 1909.

<sup>16</sup> Roszak 2014, 474.

<sup>17</sup> Rufinus Aquileiensis 54,11 (PL 21, 862C). Cf. Finn 2016, 137.

<sup>3</sup> Jiménez Pedraja 1960, 46.

<sup>4</sup> Ihnat 2020. For a discussion of the edition of the *Memoriale Sanctorum* by Ambrosio de Morales, see Duque 2018. Juan Gil notes the impression that Mozarabic liturgy exerted on Muslim scholars (2020, 95).

<sup>5</sup> Christys 1998, 208.

<sup>6</sup> Ferrer 2008, 38.

<sup>7</sup> Peña Blanco 2016, 211.

<sup>8</sup> Eulogius, *Memoriale* 10, 11 (PL 115, 782C).

nation between religious communities. While it is true that in the seventh century the feast of Pentecost only commemorated the arrival of the Holy Spirit, some communities sought to add another week to the seven weeks of the Pentecost cycle, in order to parallel the eight weeks of Easter. This accommodation overlooked the fact that some Eastern communities concluded the Paschal rite in the evening of the day of Pentecost.<sup>18</sup> As they vied to address this controversy, many communities in the Iberian Peninsula fell into the habit of substituting the celebration of the Pentecost with the Ascension of Christ. Some Montanist communities proposed to suppress the celebration of Pentecost altogether. This initiative elicited a direct condemnation from the Synod of Elvira of 305-6 A. D. which established “ut cuncti diem Pentecostes celebremus; quod qui non fecerit, quasi novam haeresim induxisse notetur”.<sup>19</sup>

#### LITURGY AND THE PROBLEM OF LANGUAGE

In his *Enarratio in Psalm LIV*, Saint Augustine draws a direct contrast between the confusion that took place during the construction of the tower of Babel (Gn. 11,7) and the arrival of the Holy Spirit during Pentecost, when the Apostles were immediately invested with linguistic abilities to disseminate the word of Christ. Throughout this contrast, Saint Augustine extolls the supernatural peace that comes only through Christ and which surpasses all human understanding. The experience of Pentecost is seen as a reversal of the confusion that took place in Babel, signaling also the unity of a church unmarred by the confusion of internal dissension: “Per humiles Apostolos congregatae sunt linguae. Spiritus superbiae dispersit linguam. Spiritus sanctus congregavit linguas. Qui volunt unam linguam. veniant ad Ecclesiam: quia in diversitate linguarum carnis, una est lingua in fide cordis”.<sup>20</sup>

The problem of language and the Pentecost emerges in the *Memoriale Sanctorum* through the story of George, a Syrian monk, who traveled to Córdoba in 843 with the mission of collecting alms for his monastery. According to the two different versions of the *Memoriale Sanctorum* and the *Passio* he could communicate effectively in Latin, Arabic and Greek, without showing any hint of pride.<sup>21</sup> Having initially

decided to visit the land of the Franks, George decided to seek the blessing of the monks and nuns from the monastery of Tabanos. As he entered the monastery, he was immediately drawn to their spirituality and decided to join three of the monks and nuns (Aurelius, Liliosa and Sabogotho) in disparaging Islam and invoking voluntary martyrdom.<sup>22</sup>

According to Antonio Yelo Templado, George’s decision to enter the monastery of Tabanos may have been triggered by the monastery’s doctrinal emphasis on *Cristocentrism*, a charismatic movement that saw theology as a way of explaining worldly existence and which granted an opportunity to engage in a new form of life, blending asceticism and martyrdom. A central characteristic of this movement was its stated emphasis on the divinity of Christ, even it sometimes meant assimilating the Father and the Son, a predication that the Second Council of Carthage saw as akin to heresy.<sup>23</sup> The liturgical implications were important, because they affected the way in which the liturgy was performed and because it replicated the controversies that had plagued the Christian communities of North Africa.

In his commentary on the *Sermons to the Catechumens*, William Harmless indicates how Saint Augustine presumed that the catechists could speak with equal fluency all the languages of the catechesis and also provide “evangelization and apprenticeship, spiritual direction and mystagogy”.<sup>24</sup> In the same spirit, George’s ability to communicate in different languages should be understood as a doctrinal stance against heretic communities. In framing the character of George, the author of the *Memoriale* did not hesitate to borrow from Saint Augustine’s *Letter to Hilary*, where he explained the emergence of Pelagian heresy not as a simple deviation from orthodox doctrine but as a complete misunderstanding of religious truth.<sup>25</sup> In order to illustrate this point, Saint Augustine describes the encounter that took place between Orosius and bishop John and the difficulties generated by an inadequate translator, since Orosius only spoke Latin and John only spoke Greek. In his plea, Orosius noted the incongruence of defending a doctrine in front of

communicating in Latin and Greek. Cf. the introduction to the rule of Saint Pachomius: “urbabant autem missi ad me ob hanc ipsam causam Leontius presbyter, et caeteri cum eo fratres, accito notario, ut erant de Aegyptiaca in Graecam linguam versa, nostro sermone dictavi, ut et tantis viris imperantibus, ne dicam rogantibus obedirem, et bono, ut aiunt, auspicio longum silentium rumperem, reddens me pristinis studiis, et sanctae feminae refrigerans animam, quae monasteriorum semper amore flagravat, et quod visura erat in coelo, hic in terris meditata est” Hieronymus Strodonensis, *Regula Sancti Pacomii* 53, 2 (PL 50, 275A). The fact that both Syriac and Coptic churches were opposed to the Council of Chalcedon suggests the possibility that the author may not be referring to different languages, but instead to religious denominations, in which case the names “Coptic” and “Syriac” may be interchangeable. The indoctrination of monk George would also explain the need to learn Latin, or the insistence of the author to declare that he was fluent in Latin.

<sup>22</sup> Levy-Rubin and Kedar 2001, 64. Cf. Patrich 2001, 64. For a discussion of legal procedures in the *Memoriale Sanctorum*, see Duque 2011.

<sup>23</sup> Jessica Coope (1995, 28) states that the effort of the martyrs would have been to be arrested for apostasy, but this is certainly not the case for George. Although the Third The III Council of Carthage stated the need not to assimilate the Father and the Son, the Mozarabic religious elites in Córdoba used the term “Christ” to refer to the divinity as a whole (Yelo Templado 1993, 456).

<sup>24</sup> Harmless 2015, 15.

<sup>25</sup> Augustine, *Epistularum* 157, 4 (PL 33, 674-675).

<sup>18</sup> Bergamini 1995, 406.

<sup>19</sup> *Concilium Elibertinum*, Canon 42 (PL 130, 418A). Cf. Hefele 1907, 245-246. The same point is addressed by Cassianus, who places the feast on the fortieth day after the resurrection: “Quae verba licet ante resurrectionem dixerit corporis sui, tamen proprie Quinquagesimae tempus ostendunt, in quo post resurrectionem per quadraginta dies Domino cum discipulis epulante, jejunaere illos quotidianae ejus praesentiae gaudium non sinebat” Cassianus, *Collationum* 21, 18 (PL 49, 1193B).

<sup>20</sup> *Rufinus Aquileiensis?*, *Commentarius* 54,11 (PL 21, 862C). Cf. Finn 2016, 137.

<sup>21</sup> Eulogius, *Memoriale* 2, 10 (PL 115, 787C). The story of the passion was probably composed by two monks who went to Spain in 858. Unable to find the relics of Saint Vincent, they settled for the relics of Aurelius, Nathalia and George. Aimoinus, 1785, 610-637 (PL 115, 939-60). Cf. Paris BN Lat 13760. The Pentecostal ability to communicate in different languages is not exclusive to George and has ample precedent in hagiography. One of the most telling passages comes from the story of Pachomius, an African soldier turned monk who had a strong influence in the creation of non-segregated monasteries in Spain. He is remembered most saliently for his linguistic ability. Although he most likely communicated regularly in Coptic, he nevertheless had the gift of

a panel of judges who could not speak Latin and who were evidently favorably to Pelagius and who proposed to refer the question to Pope Innocent in Rome.<sup>26</sup>

The problem of language seems to have loomed large in Christian religious controversy, not only as a vehicle of communication but also as a sign of identity.<sup>27</sup> George's ability to communicate in different languages may have been perceived as a vehicle for orthodox thinking and stands in sharp contrast to the opinion of Abbot Samson, who, in his *Apologeticum*, enumerates the numerous errors in spelling and case endings committed by Hostegesis, accusing him of certain roughness of language or *rusticitas*: "*Nam crede mihi, quia hae ignorantiae tenebrae abolebuntur quandoque, et adhuc reddetur Hispaniae notitia artis grammaticae, et tunc omnibus apparebit quantis erroribus subjaces ipse, qui hodie a brutis hominibus putaris litteris nosse*".<sup>28</sup>

The use of the term "*rusticus*" can be traced back to the treatises of Saint Isidore and Saint Augustine, to denote a certain lack of knowledge and skill.<sup>29</sup> In this particular case, George seems to have been driven by the desire to express himself in a *sermo humilis* as a means of facilitating communication but also as a recognition that the monks' main duty was not to succumb to the charms of an elevated style.<sup>30</sup> George's alleged rustic style was not a novelty and was probably used to qualify all those authors who would not decry the use of Arabic as a vehicular language.<sup>31</sup> At the same time, to see George's linguistic abilities as a primary motif for the legitimation of the martyrial movement of Cordoba would be a mistake. Neither George nor the other voluntary martyrs were responding to political pressure (indeed they were striving to create it), nor was their desire to convert the Muslims they were said to confront. As Michel Banniard writes, "nous assistons à la renaissance de l'idée selon laquelle vérité historique (ou religieuse) et correction littérale et littéraire devaient aller de pair. Or, c'est précisément cette idée que les maîtres de la pastorale latine, Augustin et Grégoire avaient combattue avec énergie".<sup>32</sup>

Here, we must be careful not to impose notions of anti-Islamic sentiments like those expressed by Albarus of Córdoba.<sup>33</sup> For Eulogius, the adoption of Latin allowed him to appropriate the prestige and doctrinal superiority of the pre-Islamic church and to claim his contribution to the preservation of Mozarabic liturgy.<sup>34</sup> In the context of theological exegesis, the use of Latin was essential for the new charismatic life Eulogius was set to initiate. Although the insistence on George's limited linguistic ability may have made

him a more sympathetic figure, it served also to distance him from those who might oppose the martyrial movement.

#### GEORGE'S EUCHOLOGY AND EASTERN DOCTRINE

George's doctrinal stance is clarified upon his encounter with Sabigotho, the wife of a zealous Christian, Aurelius, who also lived in the monastery of Tabanos. The purpose of the encounter was to seek Sabigotho's blessings. As soon as she saw him, Sabigotho declared the content of a vision foretelling he would become a companion in their plight, upon which George threw himself at her feet, causing her to reply: "Unde hoc nobis (inquit), pater, ut tu cum peccatoribus pergas?"<sup>35</sup> With this dialogue, the *Memoriale* stresses two things: that George followed personal initiative to obtain Sabigotho's blessing and also that she may have been the head of the *coenobium*. The author of the *Memoriale* chooses to dramatize Sabigotho's encounter with George through a dialogue which is in turn based on the *anaphora* of the Mozarabic liturgy.<sup>36</sup> As she pronounces the *anaphora*, Sabigotho transforms George's blessing into an opportunity for regular repetition, denoting a eucharistic intent that was directly connected with the feast of mystery being celebrated.<sup>37</sup> At the same time, Sabigotho's blessing accentuates the transformative power of George's sacrifice and highlights her own role as a mediator between God and his people.<sup>38</sup>

The mediating role of Sabigotho's *anaphora* is of particular interest because it casts George's blessing as an act of initiation. Sabigotho's *anaphora* sets George squarely in the controversy over the influence of Eastern liturgy on the Mozarabic church. Writing precisely on the possibility of an Eastern influence on the *Memoriale Sanctorum*, M. J. Aldana García signals how the structure of Eulogius' work responded to an effort to vilify the Islamic religion and to demonstrate the moral superiority of Christianity. To dramatize the opposition between Muslims and Christians, Eulogius resorted to represent a number of examples of successful conversion to Christianity, while at the same time framing martyrdom as a way of expiating Christians' sins.<sup>39</sup> Following this lead, Janna Bianchini (Wasilewski) has noted how the works of Eulogius may have been directly influenced by the writings of John of Damascus, who not only provided a methodological framework for Christian-Muslim polemics, but also had a strong influence on Eulogius' perception of Islam. Confirming this idea, Bianchini hails the work of Eulogius as a revisionist examination of Eastern ideas. Whether these ideas were transmitted by monk George or not, the evidence provided by Eulogius suggests that "that communications between Christians in the two areas were fairly dependable" and that the influence of the monastery of Mar

<sup>26</sup> Sparrow-Simpson 1919, 142.

<sup>27</sup> Aillet 2010, 182.

<sup>28</sup> Arevalus 3, 88 (PL 81, 674A).

<sup>29</sup> Lafferty 2003, 26. The idea of *latinitas* was justified by an effort to strengthen the union between Christian communities in the Mediterranean, and is echoed by a passage of Saint Augustine, where he complains about the disadvantage of having two languages: "Quando enim quae sentiunt inter se communicare non possunt, propter solam diuersitatem linguae nihil prodest ad consociandos homines tanta similitudo naturae, ita ut libentius homo sit cum cane suo quam cum homine alieno" Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 19, 7 (PL 41, 634).

<sup>30</sup> Banniard 1989, 486.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. González Muñoz 2001 and 2008.

<sup>32</sup> Banniard 1989, 488.

<sup>33</sup> Gonzalez Muñoz 1996, 241.

<sup>34</sup> Aillet 2010, 7.

<sup>35</sup> Eulogius, *Memoriale* 2, 10 (PL 115, 788B).

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Eulogius, *Memoriale*: "ibi sanctissima Sabigotho frequenter cum ancillis Dei moratur; discit ibi totius sancti timoris industriam; ibi geminum pignus sub beatarum tutela constituunt" 2, 10 (PL 115, 784A). For a discussion of female leadership in double monasteries of Spain, see, Orlandis 1960, 79 ff. Cf. Rodríguez López 1907, 203.

<sup>37</sup> Bernal 2015, 78.

<sup>38</sup> Meszaros 2015, 260.

<sup>39</sup> Aldana 1995, 22. For a discussion of Islam as heresy, see Pozo 1997.

Sabas may have effectively disseminated certain tenets of Eastern spirituality.<sup>40</sup>

One of the strongest cases for an Eastern influence comes from George's initial invocation, which is a particular form of oriental euchology that he seems to borrow from Psalm 33 and where the name of Jesus is constantly invoked: "Benedicam Domino in omni tempore, semper laus ejus in ore meo".<sup>41</sup>

George's invocation reflects how Eastern influences permeated Mozarabic liturgy.<sup>42</sup> Yelo Templado recognizes here an instance of the Prayer of Jesus (Η Προσευχή του Ιησού), a piece of devotion that was typically employed as liturgical invocation.<sup>43</sup> The constant prayer was in essence a response Paul the Apostle's challenge to "pray without ceasing"<sup>44</sup> and elicited a state of constant prayer by which the believer bore witness to the presence of God in his or her life. Considered as part of the hesychasm — a fifth-century doctrine and ascetic practice spread among Eastern Christian monks — the purpose of the prayer of Jesus was intended to allow a union with God and to provide a counterexample to Adam's pride. In this sense, George's prayer signals a relation of blessedness with God, whereby the person who prays recognizes his or her humility and obedience but becomes at the same time a mediator of blessedness.<sup>45</sup>

As he engages in a public devotion, George uses prayer not to reflect an esoteric truth, but to express the hope for an intercession on behalf of those who are living or dead. On the other hand, and being an Eastern tradition, George's prayer signals the desire to connect personal devotion with the long-standing tradition of the Christian communities of Córdoba. Just as Jesus had retired to pray in the garden of Gethsemane, George effectively transforms the monastery of Tabanos into a landmark and a passage to the Kingdom of God.

The invocation of Psalm 33 (see supra) was one of the oldest chant of communion in liturgical tradition.<sup>46</sup> It could be pronounced during the first, third and fifth Saturdays of Easter<sup>47</sup> but was also included in the liturgy after Lent, as an announcement of the arrival of the Kingdom of Heaven, signifying George's imminent sacrifice. This is made clear by Saint Isidore, who describes the ritual expression in relation to the sacrifice of the mass:<sup>48</sup>

Verumtamen apud nos secundum antiquam Hispaniarum traditionem praeter dies ieiuniorum, vel quadragesimae omni tempore cantatur Alleluia scriptum est enim: Semper laus ejus in ore meo. Quod vero post consummatam psalmorum sive lectionum Alleluia in fine cantatur: hoc in spe futura Ecclesia: significans post annuntiationem regni caelorum, quae in hac vita per utrumque testamentum mundo praedicatur.<sup>49</sup>

Considered from the point of view of Isidorian liturgy, Sabigotho's invocation should be seen as an introduction to the

communion, signaling the fixed formula by which the believer states his or her shared beliefs with the community and the core tenets of belief.<sup>50</sup> George's declaration in itself consists of a symbol of faith, a token of identification in opposition to his religious counterparts. From now on, every action must be considered as a sacerdotal monition that links the initial narrative and the institution of communion. Raúl Gómez Ruiz clarifies that the *anaphora* introduced the symbol of faith and the Fraction Rite, while at the same time preparing and purifying the faithful for communion, further reinforcing "both the credal and preparatory aspects of the Symbol".<sup>51</sup>

#### THE ANAPHORA AND THE PROBLEM OF RELIGIOUS IDENTITY

Taken as a symbol of faith, Sabigotho's *anaphora* effectively transforms the lives of the martyrs into a gospel of sorts, giving further soteriological meaning to George's voluntary martyrdom. As it inserts George into the martyriological movement, the symbol of faith raises questions as to the bearer's identity. Not surprisingly, when George decides to join the martyrs of Córdoba, he implicitly renounces his former alliances and embraces a new form of life and devotion that will ultimately lead to his sacrifice. The power of liturgy here is such that it allows for the individual's reformation, re-connecting him to his Christian heritage while striking a balance between word and sacramental celebration.

George's symbol of faith is further problematized in the letter that he directs to his brothers in the Monastery of Mar Sabas. Describing George's address to his fellow monks, Milka Levy-Rubin and Benjamin Kedar stress the narrative aspects of the letter and George's dispatch as an itinerant monk whose mission was to collect alms for the monastery in Northern Africa.<sup>52</sup> George's self-fashioning as monk and not a deacon or as a brother and colleague of the servants of the sons of God plays well with notions of monastic humility: "indigno et peccatore Georgio monacho necnon et diacono, fratre et collega servorum Dei filiorum".<sup>53</sup> This idea is further supported by the fact that the term was normally used to indicate the profession of those who decided to abandon the secular clergy, a practice which lent itself to excess and that was condemned by the First Council of Zaragoza (5th century).<sup>54</sup> Initially intended to describe the life of those who lived in isolation, the term lent itself to different interpretations. By the ninth-century the term *monachus* had acquired its modern meaning and indicated the association of the consecrated person to a particular establishment.

George's identity as a member of the new community is further stressed by Sabigothos' determination to address him as a *comes et collega* (συνέκδημος), a formula bor-

<sup>50</sup> The verse was also sung between the consecration and the communion. Consequently, the *Antifonario of León* includes the verse as the third antiphon "in ramus palmarum ad vesperum". For a discussion of hymns in the Mozarabic church, see Arocena 2012.

<sup>51</sup> Gómez Ruiz 2007, 64.

<sup>52</sup> Levy-Rubin and Kedar 2001, 65.

<sup>53</sup> Eulogius, *Memoriale* 2, 10 (PL 115, 788B). The formula "necnon et diacono" can also be found in a letter written in 869 by a monk of the monastery of Saint Gall (indignus monachus necnon et diaconus), Liuto, who wrote a letter on behalf of another monk named Cundpret. *Wirtembergisches Urkundenbuch* 1, 270.

<sup>54</sup> Andrés et al. 2010, 401.

<sup>40</sup> Bianchini (Wasilewski) 2008, 353.

<sup>41</sup> Psal. XXXIII, 2.

<sup>42</sup> Aillet 2010, 240.

<sup>43</sup> Yelo Templado 1993, 465.

<sup>44</sup> 1 Thess 5,17.

<sup>45</sup> Melo 2017, 28.

<sup>46</sup> Ferrer Grenesche 1995, 181.

<sup>47</sup> Ivorra 2009, 246.

<sup>48</sup> Bonch-Bruevich 2008, 42.

<sup>49</sup> Isidore, *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 13, 4 (PL 83, 751A).

rowed from a passage in 2 Cor 8 whereby George is identified with Titus, one of Paul's cohorts, who, like George, had been sent out to receive the collection of a gift to help the Christians in Judea:

Misimus etiam cum illo fratrem, cuius laus est in Evangelio per omnes ecclesias: non solum autem, sed et ordinatus est ab ecclesiis comes peregrinationis [συνέκδημος] nostræ in hanc gratiam, quæ ministratur a nobis ad Domini gloriam, et destinatum voluntatem nostram: devitantes hoc, ne quis nos vituperet in hac plenitudine, quæ ministratur a nobis.<sup>55</sup>

In his *Paraphrasis on the Epistle of the Corinthians*, Erasmus suggests that the term "comes et colega" refer to an equal rather than a follower.<sup>56</sup> This idea is further developed in 2 Cor where Titus's title is used not only to signal an administrative task or to indicate his share in the sufferings and tribulations Paul had endured, but also to make him Paul's partner in preaching the Gospel. In this sense, the collection of the gift not only brings "the Lord glory but also serves as a demonstration of the apostle's readiness to help".<sup>57</sup> The specific meaning of George's doctrinal mission can also be inferred from Sabigotho's final invocation where she declares that she has received a vision of George's arrival and rhetorically asks God about her lack of dignity to accompany such a reputable man: "Unde hoc nobis (inquit), pater, ut tu cum peccatoribus pergas?".<sup>58</sup>

Sabigotho's final proclamation is nothing but a repetition of Psalm 27,3-5 ("Ne simul trahas me cum peccatoribus"), an invocation that was usually employed on the feast of Palm Sunday and which signified the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem and the mystery of redemption.<sup>59</sup> As she recalls Psalm 27, Sabigotho appeals to scriptural authority and highlights the Messianic character of George's initiation. The invocation of Psalm 27 anticipates trouble from enemies, adversaries, false witnesses, and violent men, but also raises hope for God's help in face of upcoming tribulations. It communicates an efficacious sign of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which the sacrificial death of Christ is renewed and accomplished.<sup>60</sup>

Within the context of Mozarabic liturgy, Sabigotho's invocation of Psalm 23 marks a period of conversion. At the same time, it anticipates anxieties over the form of the liturgy and its mission in the social and legal context of tenth-century Córdoba. While the studies by Benjamin Kedar or M. Levy-Rubin have centered around monk George's linguistic abilities and his relation to the monastery of Mar Sabas, the *Memoriale's* main interest may have been to insert George's *passio* within the confinements of Scripture. George's Eastern origin can thus be related to a passage from Matth 8,11 (*Multi ab Oriente et Occidente venient, et recumbent cum Abraham, Isaac, et Jacob in regno coelorum*) later reprised by Saint Augustine to invoke the Final Judgement and the salvation of Saints:

Non enim contrarius sibi esset Dominus Christus, qui dixit, Pauci sunt qui intrant per angustam portam, multi per latam viam pereunt: contrarius sibi esset, qui alio loco dixit, *Multi ab oriente et occidente venient* (Matth 8,11). Multi certe pauci: et pauci, et multi. Alii ergo pauci, alii multi? Non. Sed ipsi pauci qui multi: pauci in comparatione perditorum, multi in societate Angelorum. Audite, charissimi. Apocalypsis hoc habet scriptum: *Post haec vidi ex omni lingua et gente et tribu venientes cum stolis albis et palmis, multitudinem quam nemo dinumerare potest* (Ap 7,9). Haec est massa sanctorum.<sup>61</sup>

While scholarly discussion has stressed around monk George's confession, it is worth noting how the *Memoriale Sanctorum* chooses instead to deal with the problem of female worship, to the point that George extols the determination of the women who, in an effort to contravene Islamic prohibition, decide to visit the relics of the Martyrs without a head scarf, thereby making public declaration of their Christian faith:

Nam revertentibus de ecclesia mulieribus, quidam praepositus obuius adstans, cum causam religionis agnosceret in feminis, illico viros interrogat, quid sibi vellet ille recursus feminarum ad sanctuaria Christianorum? Qui responderunt: Fidelium mos est ecclesias visitare, et atria venerabilium Martyrum pio devotionis affectu requirere. Unde quia Christiani sumus, ideo nos ipsius fidei gestare vexillum profitemur. Statimque iudici delator accedes, omnem rationem nostram coram eo dolosis linguis proponit.<sup>62</sup>

From an ecclesiological point of view, the women's unveiling echoes a passage from 1 Cor 3,16, signaling how when one turns to the Lord, the veil or scarf is removed: "Cum autem conversus fuerit ad Dominum, auferetur velamen".<sup>63</sup> From this point of view, the *Memoriale* invites the reader to judge the actions of women as an act of deliverance and puts them on the same level as that of martyrs and confessors. Given these considerations, Sabigotho and Aurelius' obscure reference to the obligation to wear a head scarf can certainly be seen as defiance of Islamic law but could also be understood as a covered criticism of Nestorian doctrine, which prescribed head scarves for women inside the church. In both cases, the devotion of the women who remove their scarfs before entering the temple offers new understandings of George's conversion as an act of defiance. Both actions magnify the meaning of George's *oblatio*:

Post haec omnes in communi coepimus cogitare quomodo ad desideratam perveniremus coronam; et ita Domino dispensante visum est nobis, ut pergerent sorores nostrae (revelatis vultibus ad ecclesiam, si forte nos alligandi daretur occasio, et ita factum est).<sup>64</sup>

In his commentary on this passage, Enrique Flórez points out the incongruence of Christian women removing their veils to enter the church and supposes that they may have been trying to conceal their identity from Muslims. Perhaps ignoring the fact the Christian women are entering a Chris-

<sup>55</sup> 2 Cor 8,18-20.

<sup>56</sup> Erasmus 2009, 250, n.º 23.

<sup>57</sup> Guthrie 2015, 418.

<sup>58</sup> Eulogius, *Memoriale* 2, 10 (PL 115, 788D).

<sup>59</sup> Sierra López 2005, 84.

<sup>60</sup> The doctrine is further developed in *Adversus Marcionem* iii,7,7. Cf. Schulte 1959.

<sup>61</sup> Augustine, *De Scripturis* 111, 1 (PL 38, 642).

<sup>62</sup> Eulogius, *Memoriale* 2, 10 (PL 115, 0789B).

<sup>63</sup> Isidore, *De Ecclesiasticis Officiis* 4, 71.

<sup>64</sup> Eulogius, *Memoriale* 2, 10 (PL 115, 979B).

tian church and not a Muslim mosque, Flórez declares how, by removing their veil, the women were contravening Islamic law and making public declaration of their faith.<sup>65</sup>

The reality is much more complex. As early as in the writings of Lucan, the removal of the veil was considered an offense against the sacredness of Roman temples and included an act of *pharresia* or truth-telling that often contradicted the tenets of law and *religio*.<sup>66</sup> The removal of the veil has a clear precedent in North African religious custom, to signal the transition of the woman into marriage. In his treatise *De Virginibus velandis*, Tertullian goes on to express outrage at the practice of young Christian females who appeared in public, and more especially at church, with their heads uncovered (*capite non velato*), and introduce several arguments of propriety, urging followers to abide by the precepts of St. Paul stipulating that all women, including virgins should cover their heads.<sup>67</sup>

By including George's summoning and the unveiled women in the same passage, Eulogius evokes the nature of both events as an act of defiance but also as an act redemption vis à vis the Christians of Córdoba.<sup>68</sup> But unlike the women who invite prosecution on account of breaking social norms, George's initiation signals an illumination of the science of knowledge of God in front of Sabigotho and adequately prepares him to become a Christian martyr. From this perspective, his initiation becomes intrinsically woven with the liturgical formula of the *sacrificium*. The formula given by Sabigotho must then be understood not on an attack on Islam but on an affirmation of Christian religious truth.

#### THE TRADITIO SYMBOLI: A CASE FOR DOCTRINE

Having signaled George's mission through the symbol of faith and the *anaphora*, the *Memoriale* reverts to the *traditio symboli*, an expression used in Mozarabic church to describe the role of the priest in communicating the faith to a catechumen. Within Mozarabic liturgy, the formula of 1 Cor 2,9 was an essential part of the deliverance of the symbol or *traditio symboli* which in turn initiated a cycle marked by the temporal sequence that went from the liturgy of Palm Sunday to the *redditio symboli* on Holy Thursday.<sup>69</sup> As with Roman rite, Mozarabic liturgy began with a procession. But while Roman rite stressed the resurrection of Christ, Mozarabic rite stressed a movement towards Baptism, revealing at the same a catechumenal tone that. As the catechumens participated in the *traditio symboli*, the giving of the Creed of the symbol of faith, those preparing for Baptism manifested their readiness to receive the sacrament. Rather than reading the Creed, the catechumens were expected to memorize it and "carve it on their heart and to say it daily to themselves".<sup>70</sup> Most usually, the *traditio symboli* took place in an elevated location, visible to all believers, and acquired the form of a *sermo ad populum*, whereby the catechumens

addressed the whole congregation.<sup>71</sup> Consequently, the participants in the ceremony were embraced by the Church and prepared for their symbolic birth.<sup>72</sup>

George's *traditio symboli* coincides with the proclamation of the Holy Trinity that the Syrian monk pronounces in front of Islamic authorities. Having been offered an opportunity to recant, George argues that the faith in Jesus is superior to all things. Furthermore, he declares that any cult that negates the essence of the Holy Trinity and that rejects Baptism is an offense against Christians and against their priests. The faith in Christ appeals to no reason and is what it is in and of itself. As he explains this idea, George contrasts his gains in heaven to those that the Islamic authorities offer him and invokes the knowledge of Christ that cannot be contemplated with the eyes, nor heard with the ears nor apprehended with the heart:

Nulla (inquiunt), o arbiter, temporis affluentia lucris comparatur aeternis, quorum gratia hanc vitam desipientes per fidem Jesu Christi, qua omnis sanctitatis operator justificatur; ejus denique in futurum benedictionis requie, quae sanctis promissa est, nos potituros confidimus. Omnem vero cultum, qui a Christi divinitate dissentit, nec profitetur sanctae Trinitatis essentiam, refutat baptismum, infamat Christicolae, sacerdotio derogat, omnino reprobum judicamus: pro nihilo rerum labentia computantes quae non diu subsistunt. Quae autem diligentibus se Christus promisit, cum sint ineffabilia, semper tamen indefessa jugitate perdurant; et nec oculis contemplantur, nec aure captantur, nec corde perpenduntur.<sup>73</sup>

The declaration of the Holy Trinity is a constant in Christian-Muslim polemics but it rests not so much on condemnation of religious doctrine as in the correct exposition of the dogma of the Trinity. Along these lines, Islamic writers like Ibn Taymiyya emphasize how these doctrines are "unwarranted by the Scripture, and that is what results in their contradiction of Reason".<sup>74</sup> In an effort to also invoke the argument of logic, George's declaration invoked a passage of 1 Cor 2,9 where the incarnational dimension of the trinity is conflated with eschatology: "Sed sicut scriptum est: Quod oculus non vidit, nec auris audivit, nec in cor hominis ascendit, quæ præparavit Deus iis qui diligunt illum".<sup>75</sup>

George's invocation of Scripture in front of a Muslim audience is not unprecedented but would hinge on the accusation that Muslims had corrupted the Scriptures, an accusation already raised by authors like Saint John of Damascus of Ibn Tamiyya.<sup>76</sup> In spite of this, the fact that this same verse occurs in the Augustinian polemic against the Donatists<sup>77</sup> allows for the possibility that George's address may not solely be directed against Muslims but also against non-orthodox Christians.

As the *Memoriale* has it, the discerning quality of the Trinity shines through a passage where a Christian tax collector fell into disfavor because of his religious identity. Willing to regain his position, he abhorred the faith in the Holy

<sup>65</sup> Flórez 1752, 10: 269.

<sup>66</sup> Lucanus, *Pharsalia* 669.

<sup>67</sup> 1 Cor 11,7-10.

<sup>68</sup> Mt 22,5

<sup>69</sup> Basurko 2006, 126.

<sup>70</sup> Gómez-Ruiz 2007, 69.

<sup>71</sup> Swainson 2018, 175.

<sup>72</sup> Voprada 2017, 359.

<sup>73</sup> Eulogius, *Memoriale* 2, 10 (PL 790D-791A).

<sup>74</sup> Grigorian 2011, 43.

<sup>75</sup> 1 Co 2,9.

<sup>76</sup> Grigorian 2011, 43.

<sup>77</sup> Neer 2017, 164.

Trinity, ceded to “the perverse sect” of Islam and no longer wanted to appear to be Christian: “quam non vivere saeculo eligens, continuo fidem sanctae Trinitatis spernens, cedit sectae perversitatis, et nequaquam se Christianum vult jam ultra videri”.<sup>78</sup> For Francisco Cintrón, the collector’s attitude “meant a tacit acquiescence to Muslim identity’s dominant social and political position”.<sup>79</sup> Yet the denomination of Islam as a “perverse sect” raises problems as to the consideration of Islam not as a religion in itself but as the result of a faulty understanding of Scripture. This is at least the tenor of the martyr Prefectus’ defiance when he declares Muhammad to be a pseudo-prophet and false dogmatic.<sup>80</sup>

Set as a discerning element between different scriptural traditions, the *traditio* and the *reditio symboli* prepare the faithful for the celebration of the sacrament of the Eucharist but also signal the initiation of a *Sermo ad populum*, a variation of the Apostle’s Creed. It is through this *sermo* that George emphasizes the demonic inspiration of those who oppose his teachings with regard to the Trinity and divinity of Christ. Instead of presenting a dualistic vision of religion, of Christian-Muslim antagonism,<sup>81</sup> George’s *traditio symboli* suggests a ritual initiation into martyrdom. At the same time, it discloses its value not as an act in itself, but as a catechumenal process that strengthens the cohesion of the Christian community. Considered as a liturgical act, the *traditio symboli* marked the declaration of the Creed of the Christian church and the initiation of a ritual that rested not solely on its practice but on its comprehension.<sup>82</sup> Along these lines, George used his intervention as a dramatization of liturgy and his declaration of belief in the Trinity to warn against the perils of heterodoxy.

#### THE EXORCISM: DECLARING DOCTRINAL SUPERIORITY

The *traditio symboli* entailed, as we have seen, a ceremonial sequence whereby the catechumens were asked to memorize the symbol of faith in the twenty days prior to the celebration of Easter.<sup>83</sup> During that time, catechumens were instructed in the mysteries of the faith and in the main precepts of the Christian religion. They also underwent a series of exorcisms intended to ward off evil.<sup>84</sup> Inasmuch as they entailed a renunciation of any old pact of allegiance, the exorcisms had the power of changing the “spiritual realm to which the candidates belonged”.<sup>85</sup> Within the context of the Mozarabic church, exorcism implied a preparation either for those who were going to be baptized or for those initiating the last stage of the catechumen.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Eulogius, *Memoriale* 3, 2 (PL 115, 801B-801C).

<sup>79</sup> Cintrón 2018, 30.

<sup>80</sup> Eulogius, *Memoriale* 1, 1 (PL 115, 767A). Juan Gil stresses George’s animosity against Muhammad and argues that George’s effort would have been to negate Muhammad’s divinity (107).

<sup>81</sup> Tieszen 2013, 58. Cf. Herrera Roldán 2005, 135.

<sup>82</sup> Harmless 2015, 327.

<sup>83</sup> The instruction period of three years for the catechumens was mainly intended to ward off spontaneous conversions and to remain within the limits of Canon law (Prado 1891, 29). For the exorcism of catechumens, see Hyppolitus, Canon X (PO 31).

<sup>84</sup> Prado 1891, 56.

<sup>85</sup> Voprada 2017, 360.

<sup>86</sup> Ferrer 2008, 62.

Considered in this context, George’s summoning in front of Muslim authorities must be understood not as an opportunity to rebuke of Islam but as an opportunity for spiritual growth within the confinement of Christian religion. George’s hermeneutical approach to Islam calls attention to his intentions when he joins the martyriological movement and invites new considerations into the questions of liturgy and ritual. By providing new catechumenal interpretations of George’s behavior, the *Memoriale* expresses the helplessness of liturgy and invokes a sense validation within the context of Christian faith. More than simply expressing personal belief, the ritual of exorcism highlights the problem of orthodoxy and the martyr’s particular power to transform his appearance before the Islamic authorities into an opportunity for spiritual cleansing and to inflict growth.

As he appears in front of his executioners, George uses the power of law to articulate a clear distinction between himself and his foes, whom he compares to the “devil of light” and to the Antichrist. In rebuking his enemies, George takes their words and applies them to himself at a time when he is caught between those who are willing to attack him for seeking voluntary martyrdom and those who will rebuke him for engaging in an public acts of civil disobedience. In his diatribe, George clearly expresses a desire to avoid eternal damnation:

Cur, ait, o principes, de professione mea, quam coram vobis non protuli, dubitatis, aut putatis me de discipulo Satanae quidquam prosperum cogitare? Ego enim, ut verius agnoscat, illum angelum, qui eidem praeceptorum vestro, transfigurando se in spiritum lucis, apparuit, daemonem credo fuisse, et hunc cunctis abjectiorem hominibus adjudico, utpote diaboli credulum Antichristi ministrum, et vitiorum omnium labyrinthum: qui non solum se voragini barathri immerserit, verum et vos sequipedas sua per inania instituta aeternis dedicavit incendiis.<sup>87</sup>

The attack against demon-possessed people is not novel and appears in apocryphal accounts of the Fall, “in which the devil tempted, disguised as an angel of light”.<sup>88</sup> The same motif can be found in Abbot Samson’s liber *Apologeticus*. Written in the context of the controversy against the Casians, Abbot Samson argues that those who are possessed by the Devil lack divine inspiration and that the Devil cannot inhabit someone’s body together with God. In condemning his enemies, Samson seems to draw inspiration from the exorcism of Saint Cyprian against those who are possessed by the devil (*energumenos*).<sup>89</sup>

George’s proclamation of orthodoxy is supported by his particular use of 1 Cor 11,14 (*ipse enim Satanas transfiguratur se in angelum lucis*), a formula usually employed in rituals of exorcism. In his explanation of this verse, Saint Augustine calls attention to the theurgy or divine intervention in worldly affairs and decries the impossibility that a man can be possessed both by good and evil at the same time.<sup>90</sup> From an ecclesiological point of view, this differentiation was important because it conformed to the ritual of bap-

<sup>87</sup> Eulogius, *Memoriale* 2, 10 (PL 115, 791C-791D).

<sup>88</sup> Wolf 1986, 19.

<sup>89</sup> Prado 1891, 59. Gros identifies Saint Cyprian with Saint Cyprian of Antioch, and not Carthage. Cf. Gros 1973, 275.

<sup>90</sup> *Confessiones* 10, 4, 5 (PL 32, 781).



tism. The invocation “recordare Sathanas” of the *Liber Ordinum* highlights the renunciation of Satan and the embracing of Christ as essential elements in the life of the catechumen and symbol of their Baptism,<sup>91</sup> and recalls a formula that was pronounced as the catechumen faced east.<sup>92</sup> George’s ritual involved two pacts: the first one was not to regress to anything previous and to break any relation to Satan. The second condition was to embrace God and the Trinity, with a special intention to continuously praise Him.<sup>93</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Given the complicated history of the transmission of the *Memoriale Sanctorum*, it can be risky to formulate generalizations about the intent and spirituality of the movement of the Martyrs of Córdoba. The different liturgies of Martyrdom around monk George reveal an explicit focus on the parallel/correspondence between life and liturgy. Fundamentally, these liturgies underscore the dominance of Mozarabic orthodoxy and, thus, the importance of Latin language not so much as a means of communication, but as a vehicle for spiritual truth. In this sense, the liturgy of the Mozarabs of Córdoba and the declaration of the dogma of Trinity could always be associated with the condemnation of Arrianism and Islam as they were perceived in tenth-century Córdoba. The addition of Gothic rituals into the Mozarabic mass was probably an early and instinctive response to the importance of the symbol of Mozarabic liturgy. But once established, the rite set out its own parameters and signaled a debt to the Mozarabic ritual that was intimately associated with the monastic rituals of the catechumens in tenth-century Córdoba.

From the perspective of ritual, the changes in the liturgy of Córdoba seem to mark the restoration of the Mozarabic church in tenth-century Córdoba. As the rite focused on the idea of monastic conversion, it structured a hierarchy of belief where monk George was valorized as a model of spirituality. The imprecise language skills applied to George further complicate his doctrinal position. Throughout the *Memoriale Sanctorum*, the language of the different monks did not involve a social but a religious distinction. As new linguistic barriers emerged, the Christians of Córdoba tried to respond to the expansion of Christianity along three doctrinal poles: Latin, Greek and Arabic. The distinction between these three languages allowed for forms of spirituality that were different from the religion practiced in Córdoba. Therefore, the language of Christianity —as applied to the martyrs of Córdoba— did not distinguish between the geographical region where George had originated and the city of Córdoba where he sought martyrdom. As they recognized the central place of Jerusalem, the rituals that explicitly identify Córdoba concretize it as a physical, obtainable space. Set as the new site of life and death, the place of George’s tomb, the city of Córdoba rises in importance and proximity to God.

<sup>91</sup> Gros 1973, 274.

<sup>92</sup> Hormaeché 1983, 111.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibidem*, 114.

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