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La forma y suerte que esta en su sanctuario": Hybridity, Materiality, and Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe in Extremadura

By

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Master of Arts

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By

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B.A., University of Michigan, 2014

Advisor: Elizabeth Pastan, Ph.D.

An abstract of

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Abstract

La forma y suerte que esta en su sanctuario": Hybridity, Materiality, and Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe in Extremadura

By

Nicole Corrigan

In the early fourteenth century, a humble cowherd was led by a miraculous vision to uncover a small Black Madonna statue just outside the town of Cáceres in Extremadura. According to documents found with the statue, she had been buried to save her from the oncoming conquest of the Muslims in 711. Almost immediately, a shrine was set up to Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, and over the course of the next two centuries, her cult rapidly expanded as she performed countless miracles, aiding Christians in the battles of the *Reconquista*, converting Muslims, and freeing Christians held captive in Morocco. Her identity was constantly framed in relation to her interactions with Muslims; she was firmly enmeshed within the multicultural and multiconfessional landscape of medieval Iberia. Drawing on recent scholarship on hybridity, particularly as it relates to the unique case of Spain, I show how the Black Madonna of Guadalupe mediated between the Christian and Islamic populations of al-Andalus The statue's original twelfth-century appearance, its black skin, the accumulation of finery over the centuries, and Guadalupe's miraculous origins and intercessions, I argue, allowed her to fill many contradictory roles and cross between the boundaries of Christian and Muslim communities. She could simultaneously act as a warrior against Islam and work as a model for black Muslims to draw them into the fold of the true faith. She was both the Queen of Heaven and the Muslim Other enveloped in Christian finery. While Christians deployed the statue with the goal of uniting the peninsula under Christian hegemony, what resulted was a cult figure that was synthetic, subversive, and unsettled.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

In 1597, Fray Gabriel de Talavera, a Hieronymite monk from the El Real Monasterio de Guadalupe in Extremadura, published his *Historia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe*. In it, he told the story of his monastery, from the miraculous discovery of the Black Madonna statue of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe and the establishment of a lay priory endowed by King Alfonso XI (r. 1313-1350) to oversee the shrine, to the monastery's eventual transfer to the Hieronymite order. Accompanying his history of the statue and its monastery are stories of miracles performed by Guadalupe over the centuries of the cult's development. Like many miracle collections from the rest of Europe, there are tales of miraculous healings and recoveries. Unlike other miracle collections, though, Talavera's features an abundance of stories of Christians liberated from Islamic captivity.[1] Of course, nowhere else in Europe was there such intimate contact between Christians and Muslims as in medieval Iberia. Talavera's stories reveal the past of al-Andalus, a region ruled in turn by Christians and Muslims, and shaped by the interfaith negotiations of Christians, Muslims, and Jews.

One of the miracle tales in particular sheds light on the complex transconfessional exchanges taking place in al-Andalus and the role of the miraculous statue of Guadalupe in those interactions. Talavera writes of a young Muslim woman named Fatima, who lived in Tangier with her wealthy and noble family.[2] Her parents held several Christians captive and these prisoners introduced Fatima to the Christian faith. At first she demonstrated her piety by consoling the captives and helping them with their work when possible. However,

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[1] Barbara De Marco, "Marian Miracles and Moral Ambiguity: Pilgrims' Testimony at the Real Monasterio de Santa María de Guadalupe," in *"Entre mayo y sale abril": Medieval Spanish Literary and Folklore Studies in Memory of Harriet Goldberg*, ed. Manuel da Costa Fontes and Joseph T. Snow (Newark: Juan de la Cuesta, 2005), 118.

[2] See Gabriel de Talavera. *Historia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe* (Toledo: Casa de Thomas de Guzma Petrus Angelus, 1597), 231r-233r for the entire story.

when her parents wanted her to marry a Muslim man, she knew she had to take drastic action. As comfort and inspiration, an apparition of the Virgin "*en la forma y suerte que esta en su sanctuario de Guadalupe"* appeared to Fatima in the night sky.[3] Emboldened by her vision, Fatima freed all of the Christian captives and fled with them to Spain. On the way, they were saved from a storm at sea and Fatima was prevented from falling from a high wall through the "*amparo de nuestra Señora de Guadalupe*."[4] When they finally reached the safety of Christian Spain, Fatima had herself baptized. While those who heard her story urged her to take the Christian name "Maria" as "*en reconocimiento de tantos favors como avia obrado con ella nuestra Señora de Guadalupe,*" she refused, saying that she was not worthy of such a name.[5] Instead she became Isabel and undertook a pilgrimage to Guadalupe, where she remained for the rest of her life and was known as "la Buena Christiana."

In this story, the Virgin of Guadalupe was capable of not only freeing Christians from their Muslim captors, but also converting one of those Muslims to Christianity through the power of her appearance. Fatima, who had been drawn to the fringes of Christianity through the preaching of captives, truly became part of the fold when she beheld the form of the Virgin as she appears in Guadalupe. In that moment, Fatima saw not only the Queen of Heaven shining down upon her, but also a black female divine presence that she could relate to, a presence that bridged the differences between Christianity and Islam so that Fatima could become another devotee of the Virgin. As the story continued, Fatima became

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[3] "in the form and manner which she is in at her sanctuary of Guadalupe," Ibid., 231v.
[4] "protection of our Lady of Guadalupe," Ibid., 232r.
[5] "recognition of the many favors that Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe had worked for her," Ibid., 232v.

increasingly like the image of Guadalupe she saw in the sky by taking over the Virgin's task of releasing prisoners and guiding them to safety.

At the center of the story is the image of Guadalupe that Fatima modeled herself after. The form that she saw in the sky was that of a small black twelfth-century Throne of Wisdom statue that had been the focus of a cult in Guadalupe since the late thirteenth-century. The tale that Talavera relates indicates that it was the material object and its appearance that gave the statue such strength and gave rise to the cult, which makes it surprising that the object itself has been so understudied.[6] In this essay, I seek to center the discussion of Guadalupe on the material presence of the object and what this can tell us about interfaith negotiations in Iberia during the development of Guadalupe's cult (roughly the late thirteenth to late fifteenth-centuries).[7] Following Caroline Walker Bynum, I believe that the physical qualities of the statue—its materiality—reveals how viewers would have perceived and interacted with the image as a "locus of the divine."[8] Furthermore, the work of María Judith Feliciano and Leyla Rouhi is integral to this study: their analysis of the complex concept of *mudejarismo* stresses the paradoxical, multifaceted ways that specific works of art can embody and facilitate transconfessional exchange. They question the

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[6] Scholarly analysis of Guadalupe often confines itself to the role of its monastery in the Inquisition. See, for example, Marie-Theresa Hernández, *The Virgin of Guadalupe and the Conversos: Uncovering Hidden Influences from Spain to Mexico* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2014) and Gretchen D. Starr-LeBeau, *In the Shadow of the Virgin: Inquisitors, Friars, and* Conversos *in Guadalupe* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003). Jeanette Favrot Peterson examines the statue's blackness, though the Extremaduran statue is treated in only one chapter from a book otherwise about Guadalupe's Mexican counterpart. See Jeanette Favrot Peterson, *Visualizing Guadalupe: From Black Madonna to Queen of the Americas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014).
[7] My study concludes before the events of the Inquisition, which came to the *puebla* of Guadalupe in 1485, due to the enormity of the subject and because the Inquisition in Guadalupe has more to do with Christian-Jewish relations than Christian-Islamic relations.
[8] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (New York: Zone Books, 2011), 65.

traditional oppositional binary of "Christian" and "Muslim" by calling for site- and time-specific investigations of cultural interchange in the arts.[9] It will thus become apparent that manifest in the wood, paint, and accessories accumulated over the two centuries of the cult's development is an ongoing conversation between Andalusí Christianity and Islam.

As is the case with many cult statues from the Middle Ages, there were many ways in which Guadalupe's appearance could be "read," which would have allowed her audiences to perceive oppositional, and perhaps even subversive, meanings in her presence.[10] Though undoubtedly created as a Christian devotional object, Guadalupe's appearance invited multiple associations and interpretations that linked her to both Christian and Muslim concerns in the Iberian Peninsula.

Convivencia and Hybridity

This leads us to ask what these interfaith negotiations looked like and how we can understand them. The idea of *convivencia* has often been used to interpret the multi-ethnic, multi-confessional environment of al-Andalus. Richard Fletcher notes in a rather matter-of-fact manner that *convivencia* means nothing more than "living together."[11] While this is certainly correct, "living together" fails to encompass the enormous complexities and frictions that characterized Christian-Islamic relations. In the decades that have followed

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[9] María Judith Feliciano and Leyla Rouhi, "Introduction: Interrogating Iberian Frontiers," *Medieval Encounters* 12, no. 3 (2006): 317-328.

[10] Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn have similarly shown how the cult statue of Sainte Foy provoked "a diversity of responses" and was frequently a "dynamic focus for competing powers" that allowed the laity to use the statue's presence to create their own meaning in opposition to that of the clerical power at Conques. See Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn, "An Unsentimental View of Ritual in the Middle Ages or, Sainte Foy was No Snow White." *Journal of Ritual Studies* 6, no. 1 (1992): 63 and 80.

[11] Richard Fletcher, *Moorish Spain* (Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), 134.

the publication of Fletcher's book, the use of the term *convivencia* has become increasingly scrutinized and debated amongst scholars with little clear consensus as to its value. It has been criticized for its purely positive connotations that create a romanticized and even exoticized picture of the Iberian cultural landscape, though Kenneth Baxter Wolf has noted that etymologically, there is nothing that suggests merely positive interactions.[12] Though several scholars have attempted to rehabilitate the term, arguing for its use to indicate "mutual interpenetration and creative influence, even as it also embraces the phenomena of mutual friction, rivalry, and suspicion," I believe that the historiographical legacy of *convivencia* and the connotations that invariably accompany it make the concept too limiting for its productive use.[13]

Instead, I would argue that the concept of *hibridez*, or hybridity, is a much more effective tool for understanding al-Andalus and thus Guadalupe. It lacks the historiographical baggage that *convivencia* inherently brings along. Here, the work of Homi Bhabha is helpful to conceptualize the cultural interchange taking place between the various religious groups. Bhabha describes hybridity as "'in-between' spaces" that "initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of

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[12] Kenneth Baxter Wolf, "*Convivencia* and the 'Ornament of the World,'" in *Revisiting* Convivencia *in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia*, ed. Connie L. Scarborough (Newark: Juan de la Cuesta, 2014), 53.

[13] Thomas F. Glick, "Convivencia: An Introductory Note," in *Convivencia: Jews, Muslims, and Christians in Medieval Spain*, ed. Vivian B. Mann, Thomas F. Glick, and Jerrilyn D. Dodds (New York: George Braziller, 1992), 1. More recently, Connie L. Scarborough has also argued that *convivencia* refers to "cultural exchanges that occurred between Christians, Muslims and Jews without any ethno-religious group assimilating the other but rather as a result of living in an integrated fashion that allowed for reciprocal influence." Connie L. Scarborough, "Introduction," in *Revisiting* Convivencia *in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia*, ed. Connie L. Scarborough (Newark: Juan de la Cuesta, 2014), 11.

defining the idea of society itself."[14] Hybridity is the creation of a category that lies between two groups, rejecting both binary opposition and Hegelian dialecticism. When the Muslims and Christians within al-Andalus interacted, neither group was assimilated into another; instead, a "Third Space"—to use Bhabha's term—opened up, where the two cultures blended, negotiated, and produced an alternative culture.[15] Similarly, Connie L. Scarborough has described the environment of al-Andalus as "one in which people of different faith groups resembled one another in social contexts that resisted neat segregation on grounds of religious belief or ethnicity."[16] Indeed, hybridity emphasizes syncretism and blending between groups, which can take place whether the interactions between those groups are peaceful or violent.[17]

The statue of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, as a Christian object from a multiconfessional environment, can be understood through the lens of hybridity. Over the course of the cult's development, Guadalupe was in constant contact with the forces of Islam. She could—on one hand—inspire Christians in the *Reconquista* that slowly took back the peninsula for the Christian kingdoms, or—on the other hand—create a model for those outside of the faith to emulate. The ultimate goal of these interfaith interactions—for

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[14] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 2.
[15] Bhabha, 53-54.
[16] Connie L. Scarborough, "The Moors in Thirteenth-Century Spain: 'They are Us!'" in *East Meets West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Transcultural Experiences in the Premodern World*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2013), 506.
[17] María del Mar Rosa-Rodríguez has argued for a differentiation between hybridity and syncretism: "While syncretism is the process of combining, or blending, two different or contrary doctrines, hybridity is the intermediate product of a process of fusion that continues to reproduce." I do not put as much emphasis on the differences, but in general see syncretism as the process and hybridity as the end result. María del Mar Rosa-Rodríguez, "Towards a '*Convivencia*' of Religiosities in Sixteenth-Century Aljamiado Literature," in *Revisiting* Convivencia *in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia*, ed. Connie L. Scarborough (Newark: Juan de la Cuesta, 2014), 410.

Christians at least—was Christian hegemony across the Iberian Peninsula. Yet oftentimes they fostered the process of cultural syncretism, embedding Islamic influence deep into the fabric of Christian society. As Małgorzata Oleszkiewicz-Peralba has argued, the figure of the Virgin is frequently the site of syncretism and cultural blending because she is so often framed in Christianity as a welcoming and redeeming presence, one that is open to absorbing "a gamut of preexistent beliefs and practices, incorporating them into its sybmols."[18] Indeed, Mary seems to often function as an empty template that invites contradictory qualities to be projected upon her.[19] In a similar vein, Amy G. Remensnyder notes that Castilian and Aragonese Christians often realized that the Virgin "straddled the frontier between their own faith and that of their Muslim neighbors."[20] Thus I will show that the object that is Guadalupe functioned as a bridge between the two faiths, blurring the boundaries between the two, but never fully extinguishing the differences.

The Legend

Part of Guadalupe's broad appeal power stemmed from the legend of her miraculous origins. One of the earliest complete versions of this story comes from Fray Diego de Écija, who resided in the Hieronymite monastery from 1467-1534 and began chronicling the monastery's history in 1514 in *Libro de la invención de esta Santa Imagen de Guadalupe; y de la erección y fundación de este Monasterio; y de algunas cosas particulares y vidas de*

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[18] Małgorzata Oleszkiewicz-Peralba, *The Black Madonna in Latin America and Europe: Tradition and Transformation* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007), 17-18.
[19] Ibid., 17-18.
[20] Amy G. Remensnyder, "Beyond Muslim and Christian: The Moriscos' Marian Scriptures," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 41, no. 3 (2011): 554.

algunos religiosos de él.[21] According to the legend, the statue's beginnings lay not in Spain, but in the Middle East, where Saint Luke himself carved and painted the image.[22] The statue made its way into the possession of Gregory the Great, who sent "*la imagen de la Santísma Virgen María Nuestra Señora* [the image of the most sacred Virgin Mary, Our Lady]" to San Leandro as a sign of gratitude for converting the Visigothic kings of Spain from Arianism to Catholicism.[23] When the Umayyads invaded Spain and it became clear that the Visigothic king could not hold them off, several clerics took the beloved statue from its Sevillan church and hid it in a cave in the mountains near the Río Guadalupejo.[24] Here the Virgin was entombed for more than six hundred years, waiting for her land to be freed from the rule of Muslims. Finally, in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century, she appeared as an apparition to a cowherd named Gil Cordero and ordered him to bring the clerics of nearby Cáceres to the spot where he stood, excavate her statue, and establish a shrine there. Cordero did as he was told and the shrine of Guadalupe began.[25]

Though its first shrine was humble and tended to by lay priors, Guadalupe's fame slowly began to grow as word of her miracles spread. By 1326, the cult was firmly

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[21] Earlier versions of the story exist in manuscript form, but they lack all of the details that Écija includes. His text represents the earliest edition of the full story that was to remain largely unchanged for the following centuries. Sebastián García Rodríguez, "Guadalupe: Santuario, monasterio, y convento," in *Guadalupe: Siete siglos de fe y de cultura*, ed. Sebastián García Rodríguez (Madrid: ediciones Guadalupe, 1993), 25.
[22] By the time Écija began writing his chronicle, the tradition of Luke painting the Virgin had been well established for centuries. See Jean Owens Schaeffer, "Saint Luke as painter: from saint to artisan to artist," in *Artistes, artisans et production artistique au Moyen Age*, ed. Xavier Boarral i Altet, 2nd vol (Paris: Picard, 1986), 414.
[23] Diego de Écija, *Libro de la invención de esta Santa Imagen de Guadalupe; y de la erección y fundación de este Monasterio; y de algunas cosas particulares y vidas de algunos religiosos de él* (Cácares: Departamento Provincial de Seminarios de F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., 1953), 38-39.
[24] Ibid., 41.
[25] Ibid., 48.

established, as evidenced by a papal indulgence awarded to the lay priors.[26] Guadalupe's fortunes were greatly augmented—with both wealth and fame—in 1340. King Alfonso XI led Castilian forces against Marinid and Granadan armies at Río Salado in what was ultimately a decisive battle of the *Reconquista*. Before the battle, Alfonso promised to visit Guadalupe and offer gifts to the shrine if the Virgin "*le ayuda y socorría y daba victoria de aquellos enemigos de nuestra fe y del nombre santísimo de su precioso Hijo* ["…helped him and would aid him and give him victory over those enemies of our faith and of the most sacred name of her precious Son]."[27] Alfonso defeated the Islamic armies and visited Guadalupe, endowing the monastery with lands and spoils from the battle to help rebuild the decrepit sanctuary.[28] In 1389, his son, Pedro el Cruel, installed the newly formed Hieronymite order at the monastery when the lay priors could no longer keep up with the demands of a major pilgrimage site.[29] Under the Hieronymites, the last major phase of construction on the monasterial complex was completed, and its importance in the sacred landscape of Europe was established.[30] In about two centuries, the cult of Guadalupe grew from a little-known shrine made of sticks to a well-endowed Hieronymite powerhouse.

I would like to call attention to two aspects of this tale that Écija relates. First, Guadalupe was forced into hibernation during the Umayyad reign, a time when Islamic

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[26] Peter Linehan, "The Beginnings of Santa María de Guadalupe and the Direction of Fourteenth-Century Castile," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 36, no. 2 (1985): 287-288.
[27] Écija, 56.
[28] By the thirteenth century, the Virgin was well-established as a warrior in the ongoing battle against Muslims, particularly in medieval Iberia. Amy G. Remensnyder, "Warrior and Diplomat: Mary Between Islam and Christianity," in *Picturing Mary: Woman, Mother, Idea*, ed. Timothy Verdon, Melissa R. Katz, Amy G. Remensnyder, and Miri Rubin (New York: Scala Arts Publishers, 2014), 42.
[29] The Mercedarian order briefly controlled the monastery after the lay priors and before the Hieronymite order.
[30] Ibid., 123.

power began to rise in the Iberian Penninsula, and was only unearthed by Gil Cordero once al-Andalus was securely on its way to Christian control. As we shall see, Guadalupe is linked to the fortunes of Iberian Christianity and to the crusade-like efforts of the *Reconquista* that sought to reintegrate the peninsula as a Christian whole.[31] Second, the success of Guadalupe's cult was very much dependent on her interactions with Islam. Only by successfully beating back "*aquellos enemigos de nuestra fe*" did she garner the royal patronage of Alfonso XI. Although this particular interaction was one of opposition, the story of Guadalupe includes different kinds of negotiations with Islam, all of which necessarily changed the way she was perceived and operated in her Andalusí context.

The Statue

With only a cursory glance, three characteristics of the statue's material appearance are readily apparent, and we shall explore each in turn. First is the simple and rough carving and polychromy, which perfectly suits the frontier environment of late medieval Extremadura. It is this trait that allowed the statue to become a material symbol of the *Reconquista* that could link its Christian viewers to a pre-Islamic past. Next is the statue's regal and imposing air, brought about by the imperious appearance of the image itself, as well as its costume. While Guadalupe may appear to be a triumphant queen of a newly re-conquered Christian land, I will suggest that her royal qualities are also indicative of Islamic devotion seeping into Christian practice. Finally, we will turn to Guadalupe's black skin, thickly painted on the wood with dark brown paint. It is through her skin that Christianity's intimate involvement with Islam is most obvious, and I will argue that it

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[31] María Isabel Pérez de Tudela y Velasco, "Alfonso XI y el Santuario de Santa María de Guadalupe," in *Estudios de memoria del profesor D. Salvador de Moxó*, ed. Miguel Angel Ladero Quesada (Madrid: Universidad Complutense, 1982), 285.

functioned as a marker of race that served to blur the lines between the two faiths. Each of these three characteristics reveals a different form of transconfessional negotiation that rejected clear categories of differentiation.

"Un arte sencillo, bastante tosco"

To understand the image at the center of these legends from al-Andalus, we must begin by stripping away the modifications and additions of the centuries, returning to how the statue of Guadalupe would have appeared as it emerged from the ground after six hundred years of imprisonment. Without the golden cloak, towering crown, and scepter, the statue alone is surprisingly simple, a little crudely carved and painted, and rather underwhelming. She is just less than two feet tall, carved of cedar—which not only has biblical connotations but also is resistant to decay—and colorfully polychromed.[32] Her facial features are scarcely modeled in a smooth, bulbous head and the Christ Child's face is almost illegible. One of her overlarge hands is gently wrapped around her son, while the other is lifted.[33] Overall, the statue lacks the more detailed and careful modeling of other Spanish *sedes sapientiae*, such as her fellow Black Madonna at Montserrat.

Her rough and simple appearance was in many ways a reflection of the geography and inhabitants of her home in Extremadura. She, as Joaquin Montes Bardo has argued, "*correspondía a la mentalidad de sus devotos*," who were intrepid and tough settlers of the Extremaduran frontier.[34] When the Umayyads slowly conquered Iberia, Christians

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[32] Arturo Álvarez Álvarez, *La Virgen de Guadalupe en el Mundo: Culto e Imágenes Antiguas* (Madrid: Viña Extremeña, 2000), 16.
[33] The lifted right hand was modified in the 15th century in order to accommodate a scepter, but it was always meant to be raised. Peterson, 28.
[34] Joaquin Montes Bardo, "La imagen de Santa María de Guadalupe," in *Guadalupe: Historia, devoción y arte*, ed. Sebastián García and Felipe Trenado (Sevilla: Editorial Católica Española, 1978), 304.

abandoned the area and fled north, leaving the land an unpopulated no-man's zone. After several battles over the territory, notably with the Almoravids and Almohads in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Extremadura permanently fell into Christian hands in 1212 and began to be slowly repopulated.[35] The statue's land, nestled in between the two faiths and cultures, was caught up in the back and forth of conquest and re-conquest. She was a material mark of the slowly reemerging "Marian geography of the reconquest" and of the rough soldiers and farmers who resettled Extremadura.[36]

As the Christian population increased in Extremadura, fortifications were built and maintained in order to protect the land from the Muslim threat and to physically claim the frontier space as Christian.[37] We can thus think of the Virgin of Guadalupe as one of those fortresses, her presence anchoring the Christian claim to the land. Furthermore, as Alfonso XI continued the *repoblación* project that his great-grandfather, Alfonso X, began, another, more divine, repopulation took place. Through the statue, a land that had for so long been void of inhabitants, let alone her holy grace, was filled once more. With an appearance that would have appealed to the new settlers, the statue worked to "promote a new geography of divine agency" that occupied an area that had so recently been under the control of the enemies of Christianity.[38]

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[35] Starr-LeBeau, *Shadow of the Virgin*, 15-16.
[36] Amy G. Remensnyder, *La Conquistadora: The Virgin Mary at War and Peace in the Old and New Worlds* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 60.
[37] Juan Luis de la Montaña Conchiña, *La Extremadura cristiana (1142-1350): Poblamiento, poder y sociedad* (Cáceres: Universidad de Extremadura 2003), 35.
[38] Francisco Prado-Vilar, "The Gothic Anamorphic Gaze: Regarding the Worth of Others," in *Under the Influence: Questioning the Comparative in Medieval Castile*, ed. Cynthia Robinson and Leyla Rouhi (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2005), 79. In his essay, Prado-Vilar examines the ways in which an image of the Virgin could act as a "mediating image" that both Muslims and Christian can find resonance with and thus "penetrate religious barriers." His

The statue's presence created a link between the sacred geography that Guadalupe had newly formed and the idealized geography of the Visigothic kingdom from the pre-Islamic past. Gretchen Starr-LeBeau argues, "The history of the Virgin of Guadalupe gave Iberians, particularly those from her native land of Castile, a Christian past for their land. Through her miracles, she redeemed eight centuries of Muslim domination of Iberia…"[39] Because her devotees believed that she originated in Antiquity and survived unscathed through centuries of Islamic occupation, Guadalupe could evoke the Christian and Visigothic past of Castile in the present, which made it possible to envision a future without the threat of Islam. But I would take this argument even further. The statue became a tangible, physical connection to that Visigothic past. To touch the statue was to retrace to the path of San Leandro's fingers upon the wood; to look upon the statue was to mimic the gaze of the Visigoths from so many centuries earlier. Seeing Guadalupe was like seeing into the past, a past that the Christians wished to bring to life once again in al-Andalus. Guadalupe's material presence—which had been forced underground for so long—reemerged to grace Extremadura with redemption from centuries of Islamic domination.

The statue of Guadalupe was not the only anchor to the Visigothic past. The Virgin of Montserrat was a twelfth-century image with a similar mythography: after the Islamic invasion of the Iberian Penninsula, Montserrat was hidden away in a grotto near the site of current-day shrine and was only uncovered in the tenth century after shepherds were

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comments on Muslim viewers finding a resemblance between themselves and the Virgin have been crucial to this paper.

[39] Gretchen D. Starr-Lebeau, "'The Joyous History of Devotion and Memory of the Grandeur of Spain': The Spanish Virgin of Guadalupe and Religious and Political Memory," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 93 (2002): 206.

guided to the cave by the Virgin.[40] Like Guadalupe, her cult grew with the successes of the *Reconquista*, her power integrally linked to Christian dominance and the Visigothic memory of a Muslim-free Iberia.

Yet it is worth noting that despite Guadalupe's newly emergent presence in Extremadura, she reigned over a multiconfessional land. Many Muslims who had lived in the area before the *Reconquista* remained there. They were largely integrated into the agrarian economy, facing little discrimination other than the payment of tribute to the Castilian crown.[41] In fact, it was only in the late fifteenth century that the *mudejar* population of Extremadura began to face serious prejudice from their Christian rulers.[42] Thus the presence of Guadalupe may have shone down as a beacon of Christian grace upon Extremadura, but it was upon an Extremadura made up of a hybrid population of Christians and Muslims.

Queen of Heaven, Queen of al-Andalus

Hundreds of years of contact with Islam inevitably impacted all facets of Christian life, including the way they worshipped. In her analysis of the devotional texts common in late medieval Spain (primarily those of Ramon Llull and Francesc Eiximenis), Cynthia

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[40] Elisa A. Foster, "The Black Madonna of Montserrat: An Exception to Concepts of Dark Skin in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia?" in *Envisioning Others: Race, Color, and the Visual in Iberia and Latin America*, ed. Pamela A. Patton (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2016),

[41] Serafin de Tapia, "Los Mudéjares de la Extremadura castellano-leonesa: Notas sobre una minoría dócil (1085-1502)," *Historia Medieval* 7 (1989): 100, 103.

[42] Ibid., 119.

Robinson has shown that at a time when most of Europe's devotional practice was structured by the meditative texts of St. Bonaventure or by the *Meditationes Vitae Christi* of Pseudo-Bonaventure, Spain was engaging in a very different form of devotion.[43] Whereas late medieval European devotion to the Virgin generally emphasized an imaginative recreation of scenes from her life and an empathetic recognition of her human and maternal traits, Castilian devotion involved a more exegetical, intellectual contemplation of the virtues of a distant and divine queen. The Virgin "offers to her devotees, not a path toward a deeper comprehension of her son's humanity, but rather an exemplum that, if followed, will lead them to union with the divine and to the understanding of hidden secrets."[44] This difference in devotional approaches, Robinson asserts, is in large part the result of Spain's uniquely multiconfessional environment and is apparent in the sacred images of Castile. As in the devotional texts that Robinson examines, the queenly traits of Guadalupe are foregrounded, particularly after the statue was altered in the fourteenth- and early fifteenth-centuries. These alterations reconstructed the image of Guadalupe, transforming her into the Queen of Heaven, reigning triumphant over an ever-growing Christian kingdom. While this might seem to have been an entirely Christian project, even this manipulation of Guadalupe's identity involved constant conversation with the Islamic influences of al-Andalus.

The Guadalupe we have seen so far—rough, provincial, and suited to the unsettled land of Extremadura—perhaps does not strike one as regal. Furthermore, the presentation of Christ on her lap, a gesture that was meant to highlight his simultaneous humanity and

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[43] Cynthia Robinson, *Imagining the Passion in a Multiconfessional Castile: The Virgin, Christ, Devotions, and Images in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013), 184.
[44] Ibid., 159.

divinity, seems distinctly human and motherly. This maternal gesture, though, is at odds with the Virgin's facial expression. This is, instead, the typical hieratic *sedes sapientiae* described by Ilene Forsyth.[45] Her face could scarcely be called warm or welcoming as she stares out with a solemn expression. She instead seems grim and untouchable in her otherworldly power. Under the intensity of her gaze, the viewer could completely forget about the Christ Child. She gives the impression to the viewer that they are in the presence of a divine being, and despite their proximity, they are still distanced by her austerity. "Hierarchy" is emphasized over humanity, and we are shown a queen ruling over her newly re-conquered Christian lands.[46]

Moreover, for most of Guadalupe's existence, she was not displayed in her natural state. Instead, for many centuries she has been covered in luxurious cloth, crowned and bejeweled, and placed in ornate golden *retablos*. Despite the exhaustive detail with which Écija describes the story of Guadalupe, the construction of the church, and the lives of its lay and Hieronymite priors, he never once describes the statue. Instead, he mentions the *retablo*, its sanctuary, now a "*monasterio enriquecido,*" and the mantles and jewelry meant for the statue. Even Talavera's chapter dedicated to describing the statue does little more than say that the statue is black and beautiful before moving on to comment on how beautiful the statue is under the rays of the equinox sun:

> *Aunque el color es algo tostado, el rostro es hermoso. Especialmente campea y sale el primor auotajado en esta santisima imagen, quando el sol se pone al tiempo delos equinocios…sus rayos…esclarace desuerce su hermosura y perfection…*[Although the color is somewhat dark, the face is beautiful. This comes out most in this most

[45] Ilene Forsyth, *The Throne of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 4.
[46] Robinson, 235.

sacred image when the sun is in the place of the equinoxes…its rays illuminate clearly her beauty and perfection.][47]

From there his text quickly skims over the existence of the Christ Child and then settles into marveling over the Virgin's "*ceptro de oro…sus vestidos innumerables, y de valor in meso: las joyas tantas, tales, tan ricas y preciosas…*[scepter of gold, her innumerable clothes, and of value in mass: so many jewels, so rich and precious.]"[48] What this suggests is that it was not the original appearance of the statue alone that was powerful and effective, but rather what was done with it. And this involves not only the costume, jewelry, and setting, but alterations to the wooden core itself. For example, in the early fifteenth-century, the right hand of the Virgin was altered so that it could hold a scepter.[49] Jeanette Favrot Peterson has conjectured that she originally held either an orb or a fruit as so many other statues of the Virgin and Child do, which means that the typical accessory of the mother-child relationship was exchanged for a symbol of royal authority.[50]

Few things have changed the original appearance of the statue more than the addition of clothing. Some have argued that the priors began dressing the Virgin in the luxurious golden mantles in the late thirteenth-century, although others have said it began after Alfonso XI's victory at Salado in 1340.[51] Regardless, the statue had been covered in mantles for at least several decades by the time the Hieronymite order took over the monastery, following the tradition of many other churches that dressed their statues of the

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[47] Talavera, 159r.
[48] Ibid., 160v.
[49] Rodríguez, 15.
[50] Peterson, 28.
[51] Rodríguez has argued for the earlier date; see Rodríguez, 12. See Álvarez Álvarez, 17 for the later date.

Virgin in clothes befitting royalty.[52] Although the clothing the statue now wears is clearly not from the fourteenth century, it is safe to assume that its medieval clothing would have been similarly luxurious.[53] At the most basic level, the fabric billowing out on either side of the statue and extending downward creates the impression that the Virgin is standing—rather than being seated—and this increases its size and impressiveness. The luxuriousness of the clothing, which is similar to that worn by Spanish nobility, confers connotations of royalty and wealth upon Guadalupe.[54] But more than just adding qualities to the Virgin, the fabric hides features of the statue. The cloth shields the form of the Virgin, containing the object that holds so much power.[55] It also erases any further hints of maternal affection: the Christ Child becomes lost in the folds of the fabric, his face scarcely noticeable against the dazzling richness of the cloth that he and his mother wear, and all attention is redirected away from him in favor of the much larger Virgin. The Mother of God is replaced by the Queen of Heaven. With her shining scepter and glittering mantle, Guadalupe becomes a source of light.

The conception of the Virgin as a source of light is not unique to Christianity; in the Islamic tradition, Maryam is also a source of divine and spiritual light.[56] According to Islamic doctrine, the Virgin did not give birth to the Son of God, but instead to an important prophet. As a result, Muslims still accord a great deal of respect to the Virgin as a female

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[52] Susan Verdi Webster, "Shameless Beauty and Worldly Splendor: On the Spanish Practice of Adorning the Virgin," in *The Miraculous Image in the Late Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Erik Thunø and Gerhard Wolf (Rome: "L'Erma" Di Bretschneider, 2004), 251.
[53] Ibid., 251.
[54] Ibid., 261.
[55] Peterson, 30.
[56] Robinson, 163.

divine presence.[57] The history of Islam is intertwined with the history of the Virgin. She is the only woman identified by name in the Quran and only three other figures—Moses, Abraham, and Noah—are mentioned more frequently than she is.[58] In later exegetical traditions, she became associated with Amina, the mother of Muhammad, and Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet.[59] When Muhammad destroyed the pre-Islamic images in the Ka'ba, he preserved the icon of Mary and Jesus, granting them—and their likenesses—his protection.[60]

Muslims further developed metaphors to describe her that in many instances were shared across the faiths in al-Andalus. The tenth-century Hadith narrator Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Wasiti wrote:

> Al-Walid ibn Muslim related: 'Some of our respected elders narrated that when the Messenger of God appeared at the Noble Sanctuary of Bayt al-Maqdis on the night of the *Isra*, two radiant lights were shining to the right of the mosque and to the left, so he asked, "O Gabriel! What are those two lights?" And he replied, "The one on your right is the *mihrab* or your brother David, and the one on your left is the grave of your sister Mary."'[61]

In this text, the Virgin has become a shining light that illuminates the sky, much as Talavera describes the Virgin illuminating the sanctuary when the rays of the equinox sun fall upon her in Guadalupe.[62]

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[57] Gordon Darnell Newby, *The Making of the Last Prophet: A Reconstruction of the Earliest Biography of Muhammed* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1989), 205-206.
[58] Jane I. Smith and Yvonne Y. Haddad, "The Virgin Mary in Islamic Tradition and Commentary," *The Muslim World* 79 (1989): 162.
[59] Ibid., 179. This comparison to Fatima makes the name of the heroine in Talavera's miracle story all the more striking.
[60] Rosa-Rodríguez, 417. G. R. D. King "The Paintings of the Pre-Islamic Ka'ba," *Muqarnas* 21 (2004): 220, 222-223.
[61] As cited in Aliah Schleifer, *Mary, the Blessed Virgin of Islam* (Louisville: Fons Vitae, 1997), 73.
[62] Talavera, 159r.

The interfaith metaphor of light allows Guadalupe to welcome more than just Christians into her fold. As the statue glimmers in the sanctuary, the divine grace of the Virgin shines out over the *puebla* of Guadalupe and, indeed, all of Spain. With her heavenly light, she embraces all of those within the peninsula, providing access to a Christian divinity to all of those inside and outside of the faith. Female divine presence structured in these queenly, light-bearing terms would allow Christian doctrine to "penetrate religious barriers" and make bridges with the Islamic faith, with the ultimate goal of converting them so that the peninsula could become reintegrated into a single faith once again.[63] Even if those who altered the statue of Guadalupe did not explicitly conceive of their additions in terms of converting Muslims, the shared appeal of metaphors of light as female divine presence reveals the ways in which Islamic thought, devotion, and practices co-mingled with Christianity in an object that was entirely Andalusí.

"Nigra sum, sed formosa"

As much as Guadalupe was conceived of as a source of light, there was no escaping the fact that her skin is and always has been black.[64] Whether the statue is clothed or bare, it is apparent that her face, hands, and the skin of the Christ Child have all been painted in dark brown, as if to represent black skin. Black Madonnas were not uncommon throughout

[63] Prado-Vilar, 72.
[64] Conservation work has shown that though the statue has been repainted multiple times over the centuries, the original layer of paint was black. Peterson, 28.

the Middle Ages, and there are quite a number of them in Spain, such as Nuestra Señora de Atocha or Nuestra Señora de Montserrat. It must be said, however, that such statues are a minority amongst images of the Virgin made during the Middle Ages; by far the largest number of Marian images have white skin. As a result, Guadalupe's blackness raises some interesting questions. Why exactly does a statue that was so instrumental in vanquishing the Islamic threat have black skin? Was there any way her blackness would not have been connected to the Islamic Berbers who populated the peninsula for centuries? It might be tempting to dismiss any questions relating to race in the Middle Ages, claiming that the premodern understanding of race is entirely dissimilar to our modern one. I would argue, however, that a critical engagement with race—properly contextualized in al-Andalus—leads to a richer and deeper understanding of how the statue of Guadalupe functioned in her interfaith environment.

One traditional view of Black Madonnas is that they were never meant to be black, but became that way as the result of chemical reactions in pigments or a build-up of soot, or that they were re-painted at a later time.[65] This is the case for some statues, but not all, and certainly not Guadalupe. On the other end of the spectrum, some scholars associate Black Madonnas with pre-Christian female deities. They have interpreted her as "Christian borrowings" of Ceres, Demeter, Diana, Isis, Artemis, Rea, the Queen of Sheba, and Lilith. They argue that her blackness is a marker of her pagan associations with the fertile earth, a sign of her exotic origins, or an indication of her "subaltern" pagan origins that can only be read by those who remember the pre-Christian ways.[66] Ian Begg, whose work on Black

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[65] Forsyth, 20.

[66] Leonard W. Moss and Stephen C. Cappannari especially argue for Black Madonnas' associations with pagan earth goddesses. See Leonard W. Moss and Stephen C. Cappannari,

Madonnas is frequently cited by later cultural historians, writes, "They [Black Madonnas] would thus be a survival, and continuation under a new name and new religion, of goddesses from the classical world."[67] Recently, Marie-Theresa Hernández has argued, "This Virgin [Guadalupe], with a non-Christian past that is tied to the Druids, Greco-Roman deities, and to the Egyptians has not been reified as purely Christian…She herself is Other, allowing non-Christians to venerate her powers."[68] The overwhelming impulse, it seems, is to explain all Black Madonnas as pagan goddesses whose cults managed to survive into the Middle Ages only under the cover of the name of the Virgin.

This explanation, however, fails to explain the appearance of Guadalupe and preexisting scholarship does little to illuminate the ways in which Guadalupe functioned in the multicultural and multiconfessional environment of medieval Iberia. First, there is no evidence directly linking specifically black representations of the Virgin to pagan deities. Those who have argued in favor of this interpretation have done so solely on the basis of the existence of images of black female deities before Christianity. Second, if we were to accept that Black Madonnas represented the survival of pre-Christian goddess worship in visual form, who among their medieval viewers would have been cognizant of this fact? It

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"In Quest of the Black Virgin: She is Black Because She Is Black," in *Mother Worship: Theme and Variations*, ed. James J. Preston (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 65. Oleszkiewicz-Peralba, though she does thoughtfully argue for the Virgin as an example of cultural syncretism, ultimately links black *sedes sapientiae* to images of Isis with the child Horus or black images of Diana/Artemis. See Oleszkiewicz-Peralba, 14, 35. Lucia Chiavola Birnbaum reads the blackness of the Virgin as "a metaphor for vernacular religious and political beliefs of subaltern peoples of the earth" rooted in pre-Christian mother earth goddess worship. She is correct, however, to point to a correlation between the location of cults of Black Madonnas and sites of "archaeological evidence of the prechristian woman divinity." See Lucia Chiavola Birnbaum, *Black Madonnas: Feminism, religion, and politics in Italy* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993), 12, 3.

[67] Ian Begg, *The Cult of the Black Virgin* (London: Arkana, 1985), 49.

[68] Ibid., 30.

seems highly unlikely that a pilgrim praying before Guadalupe would have made connections between the small and glittering statue before them to Isis, Diana, or Cybele. Finally, each of these scholars has sought a "universal" explanation for Black Madonnas: they attempted to rationalize the blackness of the skin of images stretched across all of Europe and across many centuries. This could only lead to an oversimplification of a complex visual and devotional tradition.

Instead, we must seek an explanation for Guadalupe's blackness in the specific geographical and chronological context of al-Andalus. In her insightful study on the blackness of the Virgin of Montserrat, Elisa A. Foster writes, "Given the many meanings of blackness, race and visual difference in medieval art, it is impossible to make generalizations about the meaning of all Black Madonnas," and she argues for the importance of site-specific investigation. While Foster does make some broad conclusions about race and medieval representation that seem more applicable to Montserrat rather than Iberian Black Madonnas as a whole, her essay is a model of the kind of rigorous art historical analysis needed to better understand Black Madonnas.[69] Guadalupe shares her blackness with many other images of the Virgin spread across Europe, but the reasons for it must be sought within medieval Extremadura. This is of particular import because the multifaith environment of Iberia created different understandings and representations of race and religion than what took place anywhere else in Europe.[70] Furthermore, while I must question the relation of Guadalupe to pagan gods and druids, I think there is

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[69] Foster, 30.
[70] Pamela A. Patton, *Art of Estrangement: Redefining Jews in Reconquest Spain* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012), 62.

something to be said about Hernández's conclusion: the appearance of racial difference is important to communicating transconfessionally.[71]

Those who wrote about Guadalupe during the Middle Ages or Early Modern era never discussed the effects that her black skin might have had on transconfessional communication. In fact, Peterson has noted that Talavera's history of the monastery, as well as the account of Guadalupe in José de Sigüenza's *Historia de la orden de San Jerónimo* of 1605, are marked with discomfort and apology over Guadalupe's blackness.[72] Both Talavera and Sigüenza seek to explain the blackness away. Although both of these accounts were written later than the time period with which I am concerned, they reveal a legacy of uneasiness with the notion of blackness. Écija's account—dating to a century before Talavera or Sigüenza's texts—is entirely silent on the subject of the statue's blackness, which also betrays discomfort and a desire to obscure the blackness.

Quite frequently the black skin was explained away as a marker of its antiquity and its origins at the hands of St. Luke.[73] Talavera writes,

> *El color es moreno, a causa de su mucha antiguedad, el rostro es muy hermoso, tan grave y perfecto, que muestra bien la magestad desta Señora: y quadrale muy bien a la letra lo que dize la Esposa: Aunque el color es algo tostado, el rostro es hermoso*. [The color is black because of its antiquity, the face is very beautiful, serious and perfect,

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[71] There are some cultic sites with connections to pre-Christian Druid sanctuaries. Chartres Cathedral, for example, was believed by several seventeenth-century historians to be built atop the site of Druid settlements and places of worship. See Sebastian Roulliard, selection of *Parthénie*, *ou Histoire de la très auguste église de Chartres*, in *Chartres Cathedral*, ed. Robert Branner (London: Thames and Hudson, 1969), 104-105. This history, originally published in 1609, briefly notes that settlements of Druids lived in the woods that formerly occupied the site of Chartres. See also Vincent Sablon, selection from *Histoire de l'auguste et vénérable église de Chartres*, in *Chartres Cathedral*, ed. Robert Branner (London: Thames and Hudson, 1969), 107-108. Originally published in 1671, this history describes the construction of an altar dedicated to a virgin mother by the Druids, who had been given a premonition by God of the coming of God amongst men.

[72] Peterson, 37.

[73] Álvarez Álvarez, 20.

> which shows well the majesty of this Lady: and it corresponds very well to the letter of what the Spouse says: Although the color is somewhat dark, the face is beautiful.][74]

This suggests that he believed (or wanted to believe) that the statue was not originally this color, but instead that age had caused it to darken. The black skin was turned into a marker of age, which, rather than forging connections to the Muslim inhabitants of al-Andalus, reinforced the founding legend and was proof of its long past that led back to the venerable evangelist. Furthermore, Talavera brings up a rather common exegetical explanation for the blackness: the Song of Songs. Beginning in the twelfth century, it became common to interpret the erotic imagery of the Song of Songs as metaphors for the Virgin.[75] Talavera's explanation of Guadalupe's blackness was meant to remind his readers of particular lines from this biblical text: "*Nigra sum, sed formosa, filiae Jerusalem/sicut tabernacula Cedar, sicut pelles Salomonis./Nolite me considerare quod fusca sim,/quia decoloravit me sol.*"[76] Linking Guadalupe to the Song of Songs created a biblical precedent for her blackness, one that had nothing to do with questions of race and worked to contain the threat of blackness. The ellipses in Écija's text and the rationalizations of Talavera's suggests that there was something perceived as subversive in the coloring of her skin.

Peterson further notes, "Throughout his history of Guadalupe, Talavera offsets the references to the Virgin's darkness by associating Guadalupe with brilliant light, the sun, or the color white," such as when he argues the image appears at its best when the sun's rays

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[74] Talavera, 159r.
[75] Miri Rubin, *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary* (London and New York: Allen Lane, 2009), 151.
[76] "I am black, but I am beautiful, daughters of Jerusalem/just like the tents of Kadar, just like the curtains of Solomon./Do not look at me because I am dark,/Because the sun discolored me." Song of Songs, Book 1, 4-5.

are the brightest and strongest so as to better emphasize her beauty.[77] Her black skin was to be sublimated under the light of the sun and the glittering light of her clothing and *retablo*. However, the question of light—as we have seen—is infiltrated by the Islamic "Other," through the matrix of associations between light, the Virgin, and Maryam. Visually, the strong rays of the sun only further illuminate the darkness of the brown paint on her skin, while the mantle creates a stark contrast between the shining gold of the cloth and the dark skin, ultimately calling more attention to the blackness. Although Arturo Álvarez Álvarez has suggested that Guadalupe's clothing was meant in part to cover the black skin and the imperfections of the statue (which, we may perhaps assume, are linked), the mantle covers everything *except* the blackness.[78] Her face and hands alone emerge from under the tent-like clothing. The clothing actually calls attention to Guadalupe's black skin, showcasing her difference from Christians and her similarity to Muslims.

Of course, it must be asked whether medieval viewers would have made the same associations between black skin and Muslims that seem so obvious in modern times. In the simplest terms: can we frame this as an issue of race? Many would resoundingly say "no." Thomas F. Glick claims that during the Middle Ages, ethnicity (a word many choose to use over "race") was a matter of "religious affiliation."[79] John Beusterien similarly argues, "Admittedly, Black skin color was a mark of human inferiority before Iberia began colonizing America, but the discourse of skin color as it pertains to race prior to the Iberian imperial era was insignificant compared to the logic of blood heredity that dominated

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[77] Peterson, 36. See passage quoted above from Talavera.
[78] Álvarez Álvarez, 18.
[79] Thomas F. Glick, *Islamic and Christian Spain in the Early Middle Ages*, 2nd ed. (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), 185.

Christian Spain's medieval religio-feudal politico-economic structure."[80] In essence, many argue, difference or "ethnicity" was not a question of skin color, but rather of Christian *hidalguía* (Gothic descent) or *casticista* (pure Gothic blood) standing in opposition to the "unclean" blood of Jews and Muslims.[81] There is a reluctance to refer to this in any racial terms because racial categories were not conceived of exactly as they are in modern times. It is perceived as a term with baggage, comparable to *convivencia.* Yet both race and ethnicity can be rooted in the body, in the appearance of the skin.

Rather than excise race from the conversation, relegating it to post-medieval concerns only, a more precise definition of the term and how it applies to the Middle Ages can help explore the issues of skin color circulating around Guadalupe. Pamela A. Patton has defined race as "a systematic, collective drive to classify and distinguish between discrete groups of human beings in a society" with an inherent quality of flexibility that allows classification to be predicated upon "cultural affiliation (voluntary or involuntary), on lineage and blood purity, on skin color, or on genetics…"[82] Race is not an inherent category that one is born with, but rather a projection onto another; in this case, it has to do with the way Christians perceived and classified both themselves and the Muslim "Other" in their midst and sought to anchor it in the body.[83]

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[80] John Beusterien, *An Eye on Race: Perspectives from Theater in Imperial Spain*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2006), 38.
[81] David Nirenberg, *Neighboring Faiths: Chrstianity, Islam, and Judaism in the Middle Ages and Today* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2014); Beusterien, 40. Foster also prefers the concept of ethnicity to explain blackness in the Middle Ages. Foster, 27.
[82] Pamela A. Patton, "Introduction: Race, Color, and the Visual in Iberia and Latin America," in *Race, Color, and the Visual in Iberia and Latin America*, ed. Pamela A. Patton (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2016), 6-7.
[83] As Madeline Caviness has noted, the construction of an "Other" inherently depends on the existence of the "Self," which is just as socially constructed. The idea of the black

David Nirenberg has pointed out that over the course of the *Reconquista*, traditional categories of religious difference were destabilized because of mass-conversions of Jews and Muslims. In order to reestablish categories, everyone—Christians, Jews, and Muslims—turned to lineage and genealogy (biology, in other words) to draw distinctions between groups of people.[84] This move to genealogy involved mapping cultural characteristics onto biological lineage and discriminating on the basis of this culturally constructed epigenetics. The difference between this form of discrimination and modern-day racism seems nonexistent. Differences were determined on the basis of biology, and part of that biology is skin color. Even if skin color was not the only facet of "ethnicity" or "race" in the pre-modern era, a person's skin color pointed towards their biological lineage, their "blood," and thus who they were as a person. In the Middle Ages, religious discourse could not be separated out from "pseudobiological" or racial discourse; religion dictated all other discourses.[85]

Looking at Guadalupe's black face, black hands, and black child, it seems impossible that her devotees would not be prompted to remember the faces of their Muslim co-inhabitants. Patton has shown how images are key to understanding how the Christian inhabitants of medieval Iberia understood differences between themselves and everyone else, whether that was Jews or Muslims.[86] It only follows that the image of Guadalupe would be instrumental in this negotiation of racial and religious difference and that her

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Muslim Other depended on the complementary idea of the white Christian Self. See Madeline Caviness, "From Self-Invention of the Whiteman in the Thirteenth Century to *The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly*, *Different Visions* 1 (2008): 9, 13.

[84] Nirenberg, 152.

[85] George Mariscal, "The Role of Spain in Contemporary Race Theory," *Arizona Journal of Hispanic Cultural Studies* 2 (1998): 11.

[86] Patton, *Art of Estrangement*, 7.

blackness would be a key marker of that difference. For in the visual arts, blackness was traditionally associated with Muslims, often carrying additional connotations of spiritual darkness and demonic overtones.[87] And yet this blackness was also associated with the Virgin Mary, a figure who could function both as a warrior in the ongoing battle against Islam or as a beacon that called the Muslim "Other" into the fold of Christianity. Though the monks at Guadalupe's monastery championed her as a warrior against Islam, the Virgin's place in Andalusí geography—especially one that straddled the divide between Christian and Muslim for so long—could not be suppressed. The face of the supposed enemy of Christianity was the face of their savior and of the Virgin. This paradox brings us back to where we began, to hybridity.

As this discussion establishes, religious or ethnic categories were not either/or situations; they were negotiated. The reality of a peninsula shaped by the interactions of three faiths was that no category was pure and simple, but rather synthetic and overlapped with others.[88] This is the essence of Andalusí *hibridez*. Regardless of whether the interaction was tolerant, violent, or friendly, transconfessional exchanges in medieval Iberia inevitably blurred the lines between the various groups. As Scarborough has said, "The Moor is 'Other' but he/she is also 'Us' and the differentiation between Christian and

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[87] Deborah Higgs Strickland, *Saracens, Demons, & Jews: Making Monsters in Medieval Art* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003), 84, 173. Dwayne E. Carpenter notes that despite some positive representations throughout his manuscripts, Alfonso X also had Muslims frequently depicted as "dark-skinned unbelievers" in *Las Cantigas de Santa María*. Dwayne E. Carpenter, "Social Perception and Literary Portrayal: Jews and Muslims in Medieval Spanish Literature," in *Convivencia: Jews, Muslims, and Christians in Medieval Spain*, ed. Vivian B. Mann, Thomas F. Glick, and Jerrilynn D. Dodds (New York: George Brazillier, 1992), 73.

[88] Starr-LeBeau, *Shadow of the Virgin*, 2. Sharon Faye Koren's discussion of female *judaizantes* in Spain brilliantly points to the existence of synthetic and blended identities amongst *converso* populations. See Sharon Faye Koren, "A Christian Means to a Conversa End," *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies & Gender Issues* 9 (Spring 2005): 27-61.

Moors cannot be explained by simple, essentialist, and binary arguments."[89] Muslims were part of the daily reality of al-Andalus, an inherent part of its social identity, and thus existence in Iberia required a constant mediation with "them."

Scarborough concludes that cultural hybridity played out at the same time as many Christians struggled to emphasize differences between the categories in order to keep the threat of Islam at bay.[90] The statue of Guadalupe is at the center of this process. Pamela Sheingorn has written, "…rather than simply mirroring the society of which it is a part, art functions to shape that society, it plays an active role."[91] While the statue certainly is a reflection of the syncretism of medieval Iberia, it also facilitated the processes of hybridity. Her blackness and the physical traits that link her to Islamic modes of devotion are sublimated under the cover of luxurious fabrics and the text of official histories in the hopes that this will smooth out the differences between the statue and the (Christian) viewer. But as we have seen, time and time again, the attempts to cover the differences only serve to frame them, and the Islamic influences that seeped into all facets of Christian life are put on display. Inevitably, the Guadalupe statue reveals her Andalusí origins. Just as a Muslim African girl named Fatima could be transformed into the likeness of Guadalupe through the grace of the Virgin, so the Virgin was transformed into the likeness of a Muslim African girl under the guise of Guadalupe. The "Other" is part of "us," part of the beloved Queen of Heaven whose rein was so powerful in al-Andalus.

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[89]Scarborough, 517.
[90] Ibid., 516.
[91] Pamela Sheingorn, "'The Wise Mother': The Image of St. Anne Teaching the Virgin Mary," *Gesta* 32, no. 1 (1993): 75.

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