Mercedes García-Arenal, ed., *After Conversion: Iberia and the Emergence of Modernity*, Boston: Brill, 2016, 461 pp., ISBN 9789004324329. $228.00.

After Conversion should unnerve scholars of the history of ideas who have disregarded Spain. The volume takes seriously the long-neglected intellectual vitality of early modern Spain, brings the history of Spanish ideas into conversation with the broader literature on skepticism and nascent modernity, and it brings the work of scholars from diverse career-stages and national origins to an Anglophone audience. As a distillation of several new currents in Spanish historical scholarship, and as an argument for the place of Iberia in histories of skepticism, unbelief, and tolerance in early modern Europe, this is a very important collection.

After an erudite introduction by Mercedes García-Arenal, Part One traces the various routes by which early modern Spanish scholars reckoned with the variegated and unruly raw materials of the Iberian past to create historical narratives. Adam Beaver demonstrates that many seemingly pro-Jewish or *converso* legends were not invented by early modern Christian Hebraists, as is often asserted. Rather, they emerged from a distinctly Spanish textual tradition whereby "the textual transmission of the Hebrew text of the Bible and its rabbinical apparatus had been interwoven with the secular history of Iberia's three faith communities" (65). That is, Spain's long history of coexistence generated a uniquely Iberian biblical hermeneutic, which Beaver dubs a "Sephardic habitus." Thus Spanish biblical scholars differed from those elsewhere in Catholic and Protestant Europe—and merit a place in European intellectual history. Fernando Rodríguez Mediano points to the manifold ways in which the Bible was not completely unknown to readers of the vernacular in Counter-Reformation Spain: "in spite of the [well-known] prohibition against translating the Bible into the Romance vernacular, people continued to make these translations, at times even openly" (87). Valeria López Fadul charts the use of etymology by scholars who sought the biblical or Greco-Roman roots of Spain's peoples and places by identifying purportedly Hebrew, Arabic, Basque, and Greek elements in Iberian place-names. Cécile Vincent-Cassy describes the 1575 discovery of martyrs' relics in Cordoba, and how Cordoban notables devised scholarly, prophetic, and artistic strategies to advocate for the authenticity of the relics in the more demanding context of the Counter Reformation.

Part Two concerns the efflorescence of Spanish scholarship on eastern religions and languages. Pier Mattia Tommasino suggests that ignorance, misunderstandings, polemic, and forgeries contributed significantly to European notions of Islam. Polemical texts were not always read polemically, nor were apologetics always received sympathetically, as readers "found new meanings

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to create their own personal narratives" (172). Ryan Szpiech's engaging essay introduces Juan Andrés, the fifteenth-century author of an anti-Muslim treatise that had a long influence on European biblical scholarship, and who is also the topic of the essay by Teresa Soto and Katarzyna Starczewska, who examine Andrés in the context of the circle of don Martín García Puyazuelo, Bishop of Barcelona (d.1521). Gerard Wiegers explores the influence of Muslim anti-Christian polemics among Protestants in Northern Europe and traces interactions between various *morisco* and Dutch scholars in the seventeenth century.

Section Three concerns heresy and unbelief. Jessica Fowler reviews the current state of studies of the illuminist heresy (*alumbradismo*), which she argues was created, defined, and animated by the inquisitors prosecuting it. Stefania Pastore argues that the long history of inter-religious dialogue and polemic in Spain "caused strife and violence, but also engendered a strange system of syncretic beliefs which intermingled all three monotheisms." This led to skepticism, tolerance, and unbelief, long before more familiar avatars of modernity such as Bodin, Montaigne, or Hobbes were forced to reckon with religious otherness in their own territories: "[T]he paths of doubt and comparativism had already been trodden in a multi-confessional and multi-cultural Iberian world, which had no other choice than to come to terms with the fact of multiple faiths and revelations" (285). Disillusionment and religious doubt often resulted, not only on the level of intellectual debate but also in the utterances of *conversos* and "Old" Christians brought before the Inquisition for their professions of no-faith (295). García-Arenal adds that mass conversions also generated skepticism; the seeming impossibility of effecting real conversion among "new" Christians prompted many to conclude that belief was transmitted along genealogical lines, in "blood and milk" (307). This racialization of religion has led some to grant Spain, with its emphasis on "cleanliness of blood," the dubious distinction of helping to generate modern racialist thought. Maybe so, but for García-Arenal, it also led to a failure of faith in faith itself, as ecclesiastics and everyday people expressed doubts about the possibility of conversion at all: "[T]hey … convey a lack of belief in the grace bestowed by the sacrament of baptism and reveal skepticism not only in regard to the attainment of truth but also the transmission of the true faith to others" (328). In these ways "conversion … eroded belief" (305).

Seth Kimmel examines the once-prevalent notion that *conversos* and Jews possessed an inherent ability to serve as physicians; this racialization of medical knowledge reached such heights that, as Kimmel suggests, "to be a good doctor was to risk being perceived as a bad Christian" (345). And although "anti-Semitic polemic and debate about forced religious conversion" generated negative real-world effects, including violence, Kimmel maintains that it

also had the potential to generate "scholarly innovation" (340). Felipe Pereda urges scholars to consider the possibility of unbelief on the part of historical actors even when confronted with the seeming sincerity of religious paintings from Golden Age Spain. Pereda enjoins us to "problematize the relation of religious painting to people's beliefs: not to question them, but not to take them for granted either" (360). This closing essay raises more questions than it can answer, and in this, it is a fitting metonym for the volume as a whole, which should stimulate scholars to interrogate their assumptions about the relationship between doubt and belief.

Katrina B. Olds
University of San Francisco
kbolds@usfca.edu
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