

Anti-Muslim Portrayal of the Hagar-Ishmael Cycle in Alfonso X's *General Estoria*

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Initiated in 1274, the *General Estoria* [GE] is the most extensive historiographical work written in the vernacular at Alfonso X's scriptorium. The text was crafted on encyclopedic didactics and Christian ecumenism to create a story of humankind modeled upon the Bible.¹ It is divided into six units, or *edades* [ages], beginning with the Creation account and ending abruptly in the sixth unit with the conception of the Virgin Mary. In addition to the Vulgate, GE incorporates an ample number of classical sources and non-Christian traditions including, among others, Flavius Josephus's *Antiquitates Judaicae*; Jerome's *Quaestiones Hebraicae in Libro Geneseos*; Peter Comestor's *Historia Scholastica*; Godfrey of Viterbos's *Pantheon*; Lucas de Túy's *Chronicon Mundi*; and *Glossa Ordinaria* (Fernández Ordóñez 2010, 258). Alfonso's authorship imprint is coined under the terms *yo*, *autor* or *facedor* [maker].² The monarch may have been responsible for the source selection and supervision of the project, while responsibility for the translation and compiling process rested on his collaborators (Salvo García 2018, 141). The result is a heterogenic work completed at different stages by an extensive number of *trasladores* [translators], *glosadores* [glossators], *ayuntadores* [compilers], and *capituladores* [chapter editors] from various linguistic and religious backgrounds (Fernández-Ordóñez 2010, 273; Rubio Tovar 248, 264). This "openness" of the GE may have relied upon Jewish exegesis experts to solve textual problems of the Masoretic Text, while providing character rationale and narrative cohesion (Sánchez-Prieto 2009, lviii). The use of implicit midrashic and haggadic traditions have been identified in the episodes of the Flood, the Abraham cycle, and *Song of Songs*.³ A similar use of non-cited Hebrew traditions manifests in the story of Hagar and Ishmael (Gen. 16-25). These exegetical texts may have been employed to impose anti-Ishmaelite trends upon both characters and their offspring. This comparative analysis will permit an examination of Judeo-Christian intertextual parallels regarding Hagar and Ishmael's actions to sustain the perception of Muslims as a sectarian and geopolitical enemy, concurrent with the rhetoric of the Reconquista.

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² "Después que ove fecho ayuntar muchos escritos e muchas estorias de los fechos antiguos escogí d'ellos los mas verdaderos e los mejores que ý sope e fiz ende fazer este libro. E mandé ý poner todos los fechos señalados tan bien de las estorias de la Biblia como de las otras grandes cosas que acaecieron por el mundo desde que fue comenzado fasta'l nuestro tiempo" [After I compiled many writings and stories from past events, I selected the most accurate and truthful to my knowledge, and I commanded the making of this book. And I ordered the inclusion of all the notable events as well as stories from the Bible and other great things that occurred from the creation of the world until our current time] (I, prologue, p. 6). All quotations from GE are from Borja Sánchez-Prieto's edition (vol. 1, 2009) and are cited as follows: book, chapter, and page number. English translation to this text is mine.

³ On the origins of these non-mentioned rabbinic sources, see the works by Peña-Fernández (2013; 2020); Navarro (2019; 2020); and Wacks (2017).

The Expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael in Rabbinic Literature

Gen. 16 introduces Hagar as an Egyptian slave belonging to Sarah, who gave her to Abraham as a surrogate due to her own barrenness. Once she knew she had conceived, Hagar viewed her mistress differently, prompting Sarah's anger and eventually forcing her to flee. In the wilderness, a divine messenger instructed Hagar to return to her mistress, assuring her that God would multiply her offspring through the birth of Ishmael.⁴ The story then shifts to her son Ishmael's circumcision at the age of thirteen, followed by the birth of his half-brother Isaac, and the banishment of Hagar and Ishmael from the family, after which they wander in the desert under the guidance of God (Gen. 17:26; 21:2, 9-19). The narrator describes Ishmael's journey into adulthood, when he becomes a skillful archer and marries an Egyptian woman chosen by Hagar, with whom he engenders twelve tribal leaders (Gen. 21:20-21). The last biblical reference to Ishmael narrates his short reunion with Isaac to bury their father Abraham, a genealogical description of Ishmael's offspring, and his death at age 137 (Gen. 25:9-10, 12-17). The Masoretic Text does not elaborate in depth on Hagar and Ishmael's conduct or decision-making with regard to the challenges they faced. Rather, both mother and son are depicted as mere victims of circumstance. Hagar's role as Abraham and Sarah's slave does not reflect any sign of contempt, and despite receiving God's blessing, Ishmael is excluded "from the covenant-bound inheritance of Abraham through Isaac" (Firestone 1990, 39).

Early midrashic literature offers a favorable depiction of Hagar and Ishmael, absent of any anti-Ishmaelite sentiment found in later traditions (Bakhos 2006, 2). The book of *Jubilees* [*Jub*] (c. 170-150 BC) presents Hagar as Sarah's "Egyptian slave-girl" who is offered to Abraham so he can produce a son with her.⁵ The author omits any tension between the two women and excludes Hagar's escape to the desert (*Jub* 14:22-24). The text evokes the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael from Gen. 21:9-11, portraying Abraham's contentment at watching Isaac and Ishmael play together, and his sorrow under Sarah's command to drive both Ishmael and Hagar out.⁶ The motif of the expulsion excludes any gesture of mockery on the part of Ishmael against his half-brother as shown in later interpretations, only stating in Sarah's words that Ishmael may not inherit with Isaac. The rest of the account follows the biblical storyline, associating Abraham's new wife Keturah's offspring with Ishmael's lineage, leading later

⁴ "And when she [Sarai] saw that she [Hagar] had conceived, her mistress was lowered in her esteem. ... Then Sarai treated her harshly, and she ran away from her. An angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the road to Shur, and said, 'Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?' And she said, 'I am running away from my mistress Sarai'. And the angel of the Lord said to her, 'Go back to your mistress, and submit to her harsh treatment.' ... 'I will greatly increase your offspring, and they shall be too many to count. ... you are with child and shall bear a son; you shall call him Ishmael. ... He shall be a wild ass of a man; his hands against everyone, and everyone's hand against him. ... As for Ishmael, I have heeded you. I hereby bless him. I will make him fertile and exceedingly numerous. He shall be the father of a great nation. But My covenant I will maintain with Isaac'" (Gen. 16:4, 6-7, 9-12; 17:20-21). The names of Abram and Sarai are changed in Gen. 17 to Abraham and Sarah. I am using the latter names throughout this article. Masoretic Text quotations are from the 2014 *Jewish Study Bible* edition by Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler.

⁵ *Jub* narrates that Abraham and Sarah were expelled from Pharaoh's palace due to the Divine affliction on Pharaoh and his kingdom for taking Sarah into his court. Upon leaving Egypt, Pharaoh granted them a large amount of property that included several male and female servants (13:14). We can infer that Hagar was a part of these gifts, resulting in her becoming Sarah's handmaid.

⁶ "Abraham was very happy and blessed the Lord because he saw his own sons and had not died childless. ... When Sarah saw Ishmael playing and dancing and Abraham being extremely happy, she became jealous of Ishmael. She said to Abraham: 'Banish this girl and her son because this girl's son will not be an heir with my son Isaac.' In Abraham's opinion the command regarding his servant girl and his son—that he should banish them from himself—was saddening" (*Jub* 17:2, 4-7).

commentaries to describe their descendants as Ishmaelites and Keturah and Hagar as the same person.⁷

Flavius Josephus's *Antiquitates Judaicae* [*AJ*] (c. 93-94 CE) presents the most useful description of the Hagar-Ishmael cycle in the format of a "Hellenized version of the Jewish scripture," meant to target an eclectic audience of Jewish, Roman, and Greek backgrounds (Van der Lans 185). While Hagar's Egyptian origin is omitted, the retelling of Gen. 16 and 21 seems to twist the events in Sarah's favor—and at Hagar's expense (Bakhos 2014, 108). Josephus describes Hagar's arrogant attitude toward Sarah during her pregnancy, which made her acquire "queenly airs as though the dominion were to pass to her unborn son" (*AJ* I, 93). Her conduct seems to be the pretext for her banishment, and she only returns to her mistress under the angel's advice that "she would attain a happier lot through self-control" (*AJ* I, 93). In regard to Ishmael, Josephus inserts a significant extrapolation of the biblical text, alluding to the circumcision ritual, at eight days after the birth of Isaac as maintained by Jews, and at the age of thirteen years with Ishmael. The author proposes the latter custom is preserved among Arabs as a result of their direct bond with Ishmael, "the founder of their race, born of Abraham's concubine" (*AJ* I, 107). Josephus further reinforces this idea by locating the geographical settlements Keturah's sons took possession of in the contemporary world, stressing the idea of their relationship to Abraham and the association of nomadic populations in the region of Arabia with the Ishmaelites (Millar 361-62; Bakhos 2006, 73).⁸

Rabbinic anti-Ishmaelite sentiment began to develop around the second century CE as the result of the Jewish diaspora [*galut*, גלות] in the aftermath of the destruction of the Second Temple. Idolatry becomes a permanent trait of Hagar and Ishmael in pre-Islamic narratives, extending later to their offspring. This motif did not intend to denigrate these characters, but instead aimed to establish a sense of differing identities between the nation of Israel and the rest or "the Other" (Bakhos 2006, 48). For example, the *Tosefta* [supplement, תוספתא], a second-century CE collection of halakhic and haggadic commentaries organized according to the order of the Mishna, exemplifies these traits in the form of idolatry and aggressive conduct. *Tosefta Soṭah* 6:6, in its interpretation of Gen. 21:9, suggests that the kind of game Ishmael was playing with Isaac was typical of someone involved in idolatrous activities with tendencies to fratricide, prompting Sarah's demand to banish him from the family.⁹ And Tractate *Baḥodesh* of the *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Yishmael* (c. 135 CE), a midrashic compilation on the Book of Exodus, provides a haggadic story on the revelation at Mount Sinai (Ex. 20:2), attributing the Ishmaelites' failure over Israel to receive the Torah from God to their furtive conduct as thieves and kidnappers.¹⁰

⁷ "Ishmael, his sons, Keturah's sons, and their sons went together and settled from Parah as far as the entrance of Babylon. ... They mixed with one another and were called *Arabs* and *Ishmaelites*" (*Jub* 20:12-13).

⁸ "These occupied the whole country extending from the Euphrates to the Red Sea and called it Nabatene; and it is these who conferred their names on the Arabian nation and its tribes in honor both of their own prowess and of the fame of Abraham" (*AJ* I, 109).

⁹ "B. R. Akiva expounded, '... *Playing* here refers solely to idolatrous worship ... This teaches that the matriarch Sarah saw Ishmael building altars, hunting for locusts, and offering them up and sacrificing them for idolatry.' C.R. Eliezer b. R. Yosé the Galilean says, '*Playing* stated here only fornication ...'. E. R. Ishmael says, 'The word *playing*, refers only to bloodshed ... this teaches that the matriarch Sarah saw Ishmael taking a bow and arrows and shooting Isaac'" (I, 856-57).

¹⁰ "Then He appeared to the children of Ishmael. He said to them: 'Will you accept the Torah?' They said to Him: 'What is written in it?' He said to them: 'Thou shalt not steal' (Deut. 5:17). They then said to Him: 'The very blessing that had been pronounced upon our father was: "And he shall be as a wild ass of a man: his hand shall be

The fifth-century CE *Genesis Rabbah* [*Gen. Rab.*] presents mixed interpretations of Hagar and Ishmael as a result of a “contemporary negative attitude towards the non-Jewish world,” which included Arab tribes (Poorthuis 225). Hagar is depicted as the Pharaoh’s daughter, who is given to Sarah as a gift of forgiveness for his attempts to seduce her.¹¹ Hagar’s role as Abraham’s wife is stressed by the fact that she conceived immediately after their carnal union, whereas Sarah had to wait a long time. This insertion justifies Hagar’s petulant attitude toward Sarah. She consequently complains to Abraham, and he concedes her wish to expel Hagar.¹² Hagar’s identification with Keturah is disputed throughout various interpretations, but overall, she is portrayed in fair terms, and in the case of Hagar as Keturah, rather positively (Bakhos 2014, 113). This midrash suggests a connection of the noun Keturah with “perfumed” [*mekūteret*, מְקֻטֶרֶת], probably due to the role that spices had in daily Egyptian life and the fact that her descendants’ names were eponyms of peoples and locales connected with the ancient international trade of spices (Ben-Yehoshua et al., 6-8). The term is also associated with “sealing” [*keshurah*, קֶשׁוּרָה], prompting the argument that while Hagar wandered in the wilderness before she returned to Abraham, she remained chaste and married no other man, for which she was known as Keturah.¹³ However, in the exegesis on Keturah’s offspring from Gen. 25:6, the names of her children are etymologically connected with violence and idolatry, and they did not follow the spiritual path of Abraham. As a result, they were deprived of his blessing, sent away from Isaac’s lineage, and became a constant threat to Israel (*Gen. Rab.* 61:5-6). Ishmael’s name, birth, and adulthood are interpreted in adverse terms: the expression translated as “wild ass” [*perēh adām*, פֶּרֶא אָדָם] describes the manner in which he was born and lived: out of a slave, prone to a savage nature, a carrion-eater, and a ravenous warrior.¹⁴ As a young adult, Ishmael is engaged in immoral acts, idolatry, and mockery, as well as the attempted murder of Isaac. Rabbinic exegetes interpreted the participial form *meṣahēq* [מִצְחֵק] from Gen. 21:9 as “making sports” or “laughing” in order to level these four accusations against him:¹⁵

Now making sport refers to naught else but immorality ... this teaches that Sarah saw Ishmael ravish maidens, seduce married women and dishonor them. ... This term sport refers to idolatry ... This teaches that Sarah saw Ishmael build altars, catch locusts, and

upon everything” (Gen. 16:12). And it is written: “For, indeed, I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews” (II, V, 317).

¹¹ “R. Simeon b. Yoḥai said: ‘Hagar was Pharaoh’s daughter.’ When Pharaoh saw what was done on Sarah’s behalf in his own house, he took his daughter and gave her to Sarah, saying, ‘Better let my daughter be a handmaid in this house than a mistress in another house’” (45:1).

¹² “Hagar would tell them: ‘My mistress Sarai is not inwardly what she is outwardly: she appears to be a righteous woman, but she is not. For had she been a righteous woman, see how many years have passed without her conceiving, whereas I conceived in one night!’ Said Sarah: ‘Shall I pay heed to this woman and argue with her! No; I will argue the matter with her master’” (45:4).

¹³ “*And her name was Keturah*: Rav said, ‘She is Hagar.’ Rabbi Nechemiah said to him, ‘And is it not written, ‘he added.’ He said to him, ‘[That signifies that] he [now] married her according to the [Divine] word.’” ... ‘And her name was Keturah?’ He said to him, ‘[It is] since she was fragrant (*mekūteret*) with commandments and good deeds.’” ... ‘And her name was Keturah,’ like a type of knot (*ketur*) like this, [with which] he seals a storehouse and opens it with a seal, [that is] tied and sealed” (61:4).

¹⁴ “‘AND HE SHALL BE A PERE (E.V. ‘A WILD ASS’) OF A MAN (xvi, 12).’ R. Joḥanan and Resh Lakish debated this. R. Joḥanan said: ‘It means that while all people are bred in civilized surroundings, he would be reared in the wilderness.’ Resh Lakish said: ‘It means a savage among men in its literal sense, for whereas all others plunder wealth, he plunders lives.’ ... His hand and his dog’s (*kalbo*) are alike. Just as his dog eats carrion, so does he eat carrion.’” (45:9).

¹⁵ On the various interpretations of this term, see Bakhos (2006, 33-35); Pinker (2009, 3-6); and Schwartz (1995).

sacrifice them. ... The term sport refers to bloodshed ... Ishmael would take a bow and arrows and shoot them in Isaac's direction, whilst pretending to be playing. This term sport [mockery] refers to inheritance. For when our father Isaac was born all rejoiced, whereupon Ishmael said to them, 'You are fools, for I am the firstborn and I receive a double portion.' (53:11)

Post-Islamic rabbinic midrashim stressed Hagar and Ishmael's idolatrous traits. This motif may have served to justify the Jewish exegetes' need to identify both characters as foreigners to the Jewish world, enhancing an ambiguous or anti-Muslim component (Hayward 1989, 79).¹⁶ The eighth-century CE *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* [*Targ. Ps-J.*] portrays Hagar not only as the Pharaoh's daughter, echoing *Gen. Rab.* 45:1, but also as the granddaughter of the pagan Nimrod, who tried to kill Abraham at birth.¹⁷ The text grants Hagar status as Abraham's wife, although he sends her away after finalizing a bill of divorce [*get*, וט], a document that was not authorized nor issued to slaves or servants (*Targ. Ps-J.*, *Gen.* 21:14, p. 75; García Martínez 268). Similar to the tradition in *Gen. Rab.* 61:3, the midrash identifies Hagar with Keturah, as she was bound [*qtyrh*] to Abraham from the beginning (*Targ. Ps-J.*, *Gen.* 25:1, p. 88). Keturah's offspring receive parallel treatment as descendants who were granted with property and gifts by Abraham, but he "drove them away from his son Isaac," and they settled in "the land of the Orient" (*Targ. Ps-J.*, *Gen.* 25:6, p. 88). Ishmael's negative portrayal is amplified when he is depicted as an idol worshipper after abandoning Abraham's training. For such behavior, he will not be recorded in the genealogies after his father, and instead, his offspring will become a nation of thieves.¹⁸ After being banished, both mother and child "reverted to going astray after idolatry," resulting in Ishmael's punishment with a burning fever that causes him to drink all the water they have (*Targ. Ps-J.*, *Gen.* 21:21, p. 75). Their suffering only ends when Hagar renounces to "the god of her father" and "because of the merit of Abraham," but she is cautioned by an angel against Ishmael's future evil acts.¹⁹ Islamic influence on *Targ. Ps-J.* is noticeable in the Arabization of Ishmael through marriage included in later midrashim. The text mentions Ishmael's two wives'

¹⁶ As Bakhos has noted, "in these later texts, the referent is no longer a fabricated antipode, but rather a real entity, that is, Islam. Vituperative references to Ishmael are in large measure an internal rabbinic response to Islam's political hegemony and have less to do with its religious claim to Abraham through Ishmael" (2006, 2).

¹⁷ "[Sarah] *I set my maid free and gave her (to you) to lie in your bosom. ... let my humiliation be manifest before the Lord, and let him spread his peace between me and you, and let the earth be filled from us, so that we will not need the children of Hagar, the daughter of Pharaoh, the son of Nimrod, who threw you into the furnace of fire*" (*Targ. Ps-J.*, *Gen.* 16:5, p. 62). Quotations from *Targ. P-J.* are from M. J. Maher's translation and commentary (1992).

¹⁸ "Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she bore to Abraham, *sporting with an idol and bowing down to it*. And she said to Abraham, 'Cast out this maidservant and her son; *for it is not possible that the son of this maidservant should inherit with my son and (then) make war with Isaac.*' But the matter was distressing in Abraham's eyes on account of his son *Ishmael, who had practiced idolatry*. But the *Lord* said to Abraham, 'Do not be distressed about the boy *who has abandoned the training you have given him*, or about your maidservant whom you are *banishing*. ... because through Isaac shall your children be named; *but this son of the maidservant shall not be recorded (in the genealogies) after you*. And I will make a nation of robbers of the son of the maidservant also because he is your son'" (*Targ. Ps-J.*, *Gen.* 21:9-13, p. 75).

¹⁹ "She went and sat down to *one side, threw away the idol and withdrew from her son, about the distance of a bowshot*; for she said, 'I am not *able* to look upon the death of the child.' So she sat opposite *her son* and lifted up her voice and wept. ... And the angel of the *Lord* called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, 'What is the matter, Hagar? Fear not, for the voice of the child *has been heard before the Lord and he has not judged him according to the evil deeds he is destined to do. Because of the merit of Abraham, he has shown mercy to him in the place where he is*'" (*Targ. Ps-J.*, *Gen.* 21:16-17, p. 76).

names—Adisha, whom he first divorced, and Fatimah, “a wife from the land of Egypt” chosen by Hagar (*Targ. Ps-J.*, Gen. 21:21, p. 76). The intercalation of these characters does not increase the negative perception of Ishmael, although Fatimah was the name of the wife and daughter of Muḥammad, while Adisha was the daughter of Abu Bakr, companion of the Prophet and first caliph (Bakhos 2007, 563).

In a parallel version, the ninth-century CE *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* [*PRE*] depicts Hagar and Ishmael’s conduct in an ambiguous form that embodies both anti-Muslim polemic and an apologetic loving relationship with Abraham.²⁰ On one hand, Hagar is identified as the Pharaoh’s daughter, and in the wilderness, she goes “astray after the idolatry of her father’s house,” causing her and Ishmael to almost die of thirst (chap. 30, p. 217).²¹ On the other hand, and echoing *Gen. Rab.* 61:4, the Targum states that Hagar is Keturah since she was already married to Abraham prior to the expulsion, and describes the name Keturah with the derivative *ketoreth* [תְּרֵתָהּ], meaning “incense,” to explain that her deeds were as beautiful as spice.²² *PRE* accentuates Ishmael’s violent and fratricide tendencies as a young archer “born with the prophecy of the bow,” who one day “saw Isaac sitting by himself, and he shot an arrow at him to slay him” (chap. 30, p. 215). This murder attempt, observed by Sarah, becomes the main factor in the inheritance dispute, resulting in Ishmael and Hagar’s banishment.²³ During the wandering in the desert, it is “by the merit of our father Abraham” that Ishmael’s plea to God is heard, permitting him and Hagar to find a well to calm their thirst (chap. 30, p. 217). *PRE* also records an episode reflecting the relationship between Abraham and Ishmael after his exile. The midrash provides a distinctive image of Ishmael portrayed as a son who, although not chosen, is beloved and blessed by his father. The legend describes Abraham’s visits to Ishmael, “having sworn to Sarah that he would not descend from the camel in the place where Ishmael dwelt” (chap. 30, p. 218). The text does not explain the nature for such a request, but it may be that Sarah did not want Abraham to keep contact with Ishmael and Hagar (Bakhos 2014, 168). In his first visit, Abraham is denied bread and water by Adisha, Ishmael’s first wife. This prompts Ishmael’s decision to divorce her and take the Egyptian Fatimah, chosen by Hagar, as his new wife. During his second visit to Ishmael’s house, Abraham receives a more hospitable welcome from Fatimah, who offers him bread and water, and consequently he prays on behalf of Ishmael, filling his son’s house with all the possible blessings (chap. 30, pp. 218-19).

²⁰ On this discussion, see Schussman (1980). Quotations from *PRE* come from G. Friedlander’s translation and edition (1916).

²¹ “Rabbi Joshua ben Korchah said: ‘Because of his love for her [Sarah], (Pharaoh) wrote in her marriage document (giving her) all his wealth, whether in silver, or in gold, or in manservants, or land ... He (also) wrote (giving) her Hagar, his daughter from a concubine, as her handmaid’” (chap. 26, p. 190). *PRE* seems to state that Sarah became part of Pharaoh’s harem and married him. Most midrashim emphasize that Sarah only became Pharaoh’s concubine, and they never consummated their marital union.

²² “After the death of Sarah, Abraham again took (Hagar) his divorced (wife), as it is said, “And Abraham again took a wife, and her name was Keturah” (Gen. 25:1). Why does it say “And he *again*?” Because on the first occasion she was his wife, and he *again* betook himself to her. Her name was *Keturah* because she was perfumed with all kinds of scents. Another explanation of *Keturah* (is): because her actions were beautiful like *incense*” (chap. 30, pp. 219-20). [Emphasis mine]

²³ “Sarah saw (this), and told Abraham. She said to him: ‘Thus and thus has Ishmael done to Isaac, but (now) arise and write (a will in favor) of Isaac, (giving him) all that the Holy One has sworn to give to thee and to thy seed. The son of this handmaid shall not inherit with my son, with Isaac, as it is said, “And she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son”’ (chap. 30, p. 215).

The Expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael in Christian Exegesis

The Patristic interpretation of the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael found its origins in the philosophical world view or “allegoresis” by Philo of Alexandria (20 BCE-45/50 CE) (Bos 169). He referred to Hagar as “preliminary studies” [*egklukios paideia*, ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία] or lower education in search of knowledge. Sarah, instead, is described as the representation of “virtue” [*aretē*, ἀρετή] and “wisdom” [*sophia*, σοφία], lawfully united to a wise man [Abraham] and in the need of motherhood, whether biologically or through adoption (Rogers 64).²⁴ Philo paved the way for Paul’s allegorical approach to Hagar and Sarah in his Epistle to the Galatians. Pauline teachings allegorized both women as embodiments of two covenants: the new (Sarah/free woman) and the old (Hagar/the slave) (Gal. 4:21-31). Philonic analysis and this Pauline passage strongly influenced early Christian exegesis, although Paul’s Galatians approach became the most frequently employed in the Church Fathers’ writings. Augustine of Hippo (354-430 CE) posited that Sarah’s offspring (Isaac) symbolized the children of the promise and the Spirit, while Hagar’s lineage (Ishmael) and Keturah’s descendants embodied the old covenant of the flesh.²⁵ Christian allegorical tradition shared some parallels with rabbinic midrashim on Ishmael’s behavior and his future progeny. John Chrysostom (d. 407 CE) described Ishmael’s conduct toward Isaac as “brashness,” equating it to that of his mother Hagar (Hom. Gen. 46.2). Church Fathers, including Diodore of Tarsus (d. 390 CE), Acacius of Caesarea (d. 366 CE), and Ephraem the Syrian (d. 373 CE), took a philological approach to the term “playing” [*metsahqa*, מְצַחֵק] from Gen. 21:9, identifying the Septuagint translation of the word “play” [*paizō*, παίζω] with “aggression.” This interpretation inferred that Ishmael was not genuinely playing with Isaac, but rather attacking him (Grypeou and Spurling 267-68). The use of Hebrew material in Christian literal exegesis acquired a pivotal role with Jerome. His *Quaestiones Hebraicae in Libro Geneseos* [*QHG*] (c. 390) expresses the need to rely on Jewish sources—the Torah and Jewish exegesis—in order to comprehend the literal sense of Scripture. *QHG* includes Jewish tradition forms as a central element, with an emphasis on Hebrew etymology and figurative language (Hayward 1995, 9).²⁶ The incorporation of this Hebraic material by Jerome aimed to demonstrate the competence of Hebrew language and Jewish exegesis in understanding the deep spiritual meaning of Scripture (Hayward 1995, 19). However, one of the problems with identifying Hebrew traditions in Jerome’s *QHG* rests on the fact that many are not mentioned directly. Much of the glossa ordinaria used by Jerome to describe Hagar and Ishmael is drawn from Tannaitic midrashim, *Gen. Rab.*, and Talmudic literature. For example, he provides an alternative description of Ishmael’s naming (Gen. 16:12) by replicating the phonetic sound of the Hebrew *perēh* [פְּרָא] with *ferus* or “wild savage” as a way of reconciling the term *rusticus homo*

²⁴ For an analysis of Alexandrian philosophy and Pauline thought on Hagar and Ishmael, see Barret (1982); Bos (2010); Hogeterp (2010); Rogers (2014); and Tamez (2000).

²⁵ “Significatum est hoc etiam in duobus filiis Abrahae, quod unus de ancilla, quae dicebatur Agar, secundum carnem natus est Ismael, alter autem de Sarra libera secundum repromissionem natus Isaac.” [This was typified also by the two sons of Abraham; Ishmael, the son of the maid-servant Hagar, was born according to the flesh; Isaac, the other, who was born of the free woman Sarah, was begotten according to a promise] (*De civitate dei* 15.2, pp. 14-15). For further study on the Patristic view of the Hagar and Ishmael account, see Heard (2014); Leemans (2010); and Nikaido (2001). On Augustine’s allegorical commentary on Galatians, see Helleman (2013).

²⁶ Jerome’s *QHG* Latin commentary comes from Lagarde’s edition (1967). English translation comes from Hayward’s edition (1995).

(boorish man) from the Vulgate.²⁷ The association of Ishmael with an onager and his aggressive conduct echoes *Gen. Rab.* 45:9, and serves to extend such behavior to his descendants, whom Jerome coined as “Saracens”.²⁸ In his commentary on *Gen.* 21:9-10, he interprets Ishmael’s act of “playing” in a remarkably similar manner to *Gen. Rab.* 53:11, as a young heir involved in an idolatrous activity and whose disdainful conduct is the result of his inheritance rights as the first-born.²⁹ And in his exegesis on *Gen.* 25:1, Jerome identifies Hagar and Keturah as the same person, as debated in *Gen. Rab.* 61:4 and *Jub.* 20:13 (Hayward 1995, 189).³⁰

This early Hebraism, initiated by Jerome, was later revived by scholars during the twelfth-century Renaissance and had a long-lasting influence in later historiographical chronicles such as *Historia Scholastica (HS)* by Petrus Comestor (d. 1178). Comestor’s work also coincides with a period focused on Latin translations of Islamic traditions initiated by Petrus Alphonsi (d. 1140) and Peter of Cluny (d. 1156), the first Latin translation of the Qur’ān by Robert of Ketton in 1143, and Islamic-Christian polemic treatises by Catalan Dominican Ramon Martí (d. 1285) and Italian Riccolodo da Montecroce (d. 1320) (Tolan 2005, 79). Comestor’s *HS* completed circa 1173 combines a rich interpolator material of the biblical account drawn from the Church Fathers’ literature and “unauthoritative” writings such as midrashic *exempla*, legends, and pagan stories (Clark 170; Morey 10).³¹ The most important sources through which Comestor encountered

²⁷ “*Hic erit rusticus homo: manus eius super omnes, et manus omnium super eum: et contra faciem omnium fratrum suorum habitabit.* pro rustic scriptum habet in hebraeo *fara*, quod interpretatur *onager*. significant autem semen eius habitaturum in heremo, id Sarracenos uagos incertisque sedibus, qui uniuersas gentes, quibus desertum ex latere iungitur, incursant, et inpuantur ab omnibus” (Lagarde 26). [*And he shall be a boorish man; his hand shall be upon all, and the hands of all men shall be upon him. And he shall dwell over against the face of all his brothers.* Instead of boorish man, [*rustic*] stands written in the Hebrew *phara*, which means ‘wild ass’] (Hayward 1995, 49).

²⁸ “Now it means that his descendants would dwell in the desert, and refers to the Saracens who wander with no fixed abode and often invade all the nations who border the desert; and they are attacked by all” (Hayward 1995, 49). The connotations around the uncertain etymology of the term “Saracen” appeared with Jerome, who claimed that Arabs called themselves “Saracens” to falsely claim direct lineage to Sarah, the legitimate wife of Abraham (Heng 111). This argument was maintained by other Church Fathers, such as historian Sozomen (d. 450 CE) and in Isidore of Seville’s *Etymologiae*, where he concludes that *Saraceni* was an altered term that Ishmaelites used because “quia ex Sara se genitos gloriantur” [they boast of descending from Sarah] (IX, ii, p. 738). The term *Hagarene*, initially used to describe the tribal name *Agraioi*, from the Greek “wild” [*agrios, ἄγριος*], was also interpreted as a general “appellation for contemporary *Saracens*” (Millar 375). In contrast, the demonym “Ishmaelite” never had the intention of being used to refer to pagan groups but was eventually associated with the terms *Hagarenes* and *Saracens* as names for Arabs by Christian exegetes (Millar 371-73). For an in-depth analysis of this terminology, see Hilhorst (2010); and Kaplan (2019, 139-146). On Ishmael’s descendant tribes, see Nolan (2016, 123-133).

²⁹ “*Et uidit Sara filium Agar aegyptiae, Abrahae ludentem; quod sequitur cum Isaac habet in hebraeo.* Dupliciter itaque hoc ab hebraeis exponitur - siue quod idola ludo fecerit, iuxta illud quod alibi scriptum est *sedit populus manducare et bibere, et surrexerunt ludere* - siue quod aduersum Isaac, quasi maioris aetatis, ioco sibi et ludo primogenita uendicaret. Quod quidem Sara audiens, non tulit” (Lagarde 31) [*And Sara saw the son of Agar the Egyptian woman, whom she had borne to Abraham, playing.* In the Hebrew, it does not have what follows with Isaac her son. So this verse is explained by the Hebrews in two ways, either to mean that he made a game of idols, in line with what is written elsewhere: *the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play*; or to mean that he arrogated to himself of a jest and a game the rights of the first-born in opposition to Isaac, on the grounds that he was the elder. Indeed, when Sara heard this, she would not tolerate it] (Hayward 1995, 53).

³⁰ “Cetura hebraeo sermone copulata interpretatur, aut iuncta. Quam ob causam suspicantur Hebraei, mutato nomine, eandem esse Agar, quae, Sara mortua, de concubina transierit in uxorem” (Lagarde 39). [In the Hebrew language Cetura means ‘joined’ or ‘bound.’ For this reason, the Hebrews suppose that the same woman is Agar with her name changed, who, when Sara was dead, transferred from being concubine to wife] (Hayward 1995, 59).

³¹ Comestor’s *HS* citations are from Sylwan’s *Scholastica Historia* edition (2005). English translation is mine.

Jewish texts were Josephus's *AJ* and Jerome's *QHG*.³² It is also plausible that Comestor's partnerships with Jewish scholars and converts may have facilitated his contact with Hebraic exegetical works (Geiger 128-31).³³ Comestor acknowledges his indebtedness to Josephus by name, but he almost never does it with the material borrowed from Jerome, instead inserting expressions such as "Hebraei tradunt," "Hebraeus ait," or "alii dicunt" (Morey 13). In other instances, when quoting in the name of the Hebrews, the information is not found in extant midrashic texts. This is the case of his commentary on the term "Saracens" in reference to Ishmael's offspring, in which he omits Jerome's coinage of the word;³⁴ the interpretation of Ishmael's name as an "onager," crediting Methodius instead;³⁵ Ishmael's idol-worship conduct and his attempt to dominate his younger brother;³⁶ and the rabbinic identification of Hagar with

³² According to Feldman, Comestor cites Josephus in seventy-two instances which include disagreements between the Hebrew and Septuagint text (10); etymological entries (9); geographical identifications (16); chronological data (6); and haggadic narrative absent in the biblical account (31). In regard to Jerome's *QHG*, Feldman found ninety instances of borrowings related to etymologies of Hebrew terms (34); discrepancies on the Hebrew text and the Septuagint (10); geographical data (5); chronology (1); and haggadic references (40) (98-110). On the influence of Jerome's Hebrew traditions in Comestor's *HS*, see Daly (1957); and Lachs (1973). Karp (1978) and Smalley (1939) argue that Comestor may have also been indebted to Christian exegetes, Hugh and Andrew of St. Victor, for the Hebrew sources they utilized in their writings.

³³ Comestor's interaction with the active Jewish rabbinic community of Troyes, his native city, and his possible contact with Talmudic exegete, Rashi, may have served as a conduit for the use of Hebrew traditions in his *HS* (Geier 129; Shereshevsky 270-71). On the interactions between Comestor and the school of rabbinic studies in Troyes, see Halperin (1943; 1963).

³⁴ "Tamen de genere ipsius hoc predictum est, quia Sarraceni uagi sedibus incertis gentes quibus desertum ex latere iungitur, impugnant et ab omnibus impugnantur. ... Filii tamen Cethure a nomine libere se dixerunt Sarracenos" (Lib. Gen. 49; 62, pp. 92, 116). [However, this was as predicted, for the Saracens wander with no fixed abode and often invade all the nations who border on the desert, they attack, and are attacked by all. ... However, Keturah's free children were called Saracens].

³⁵ "Quod vero legitur in Genesi: *Hic erit ferus homo*, Hebraeus habet *phara*, quod sonat *onager*. Propter hoc, ut dicit Methodius, dictum est: *Onagri*, et capree a deserto omnem bestiarum supergredientur rabiem et mansuetorum numerus conteretur ab eis" (Lib. Gen. 49, p. 93). [On the other hand, we read in the Book of Genesis: *he will be a wild man*; Hebrew language has *phara*, which sounds like *wild ass*. For this, as Methodius has said: the donkeys and goats from the wilderness will outpace in cruelty the rest of the animals and will destroy the docile ones]. The *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* [*Ap. of Ps-M.*], written by an anonymous Syriac author (c. 692) and wrongly attributed to Christian bishop, Methodius of Olympus (d. 311), represents one of the first works on the Muslim invasion of the East in apocalyptic terms. The *Apocalypse* is thought to have been written in a turbulent period coinciding with the birth of Islam, the consolidation of Arab power under 'Abd al-Malik, the construction of the Dome of the Rock, the introduction of new coinage, and the imposition of tax reforms on Christians (Garstad vii-viii). The work, originally composed in Syriac, was later translated into Greek and Latin acquiring large popularity in the Christian world inspiring further eschatological texts and becoming part of the Church Fathers' manuscript tradition. The *Apocalypse*, divided into seven millennia which correspond to the seven days of creation, draws large portions from the Bible to build up an apocalyptic narration in which the Ishmaelites, identified as Arabs, are made responsible for all types of abominations and violence against the Christian kingdoms. Despite the anxiety expressed in the work the *Apocalypse* is profoundly positive enhancing the Christian authority and final victory over the Ishmaelites at the end of times (Garstad xiii). In one of the excerpts on the Ishmaelites' attacks the text interprets Gen. 16:12 providing its own exegetical analysis which Comestor cites and credits directly: "Et quoniam onager appellavit Deus Ismahelem patrem illorum, propter hoc onagri et capriae a deserto et omnem speciem bestiarum supergredientur rabiem et mansuetorum conterentur ab eis paucitabant sub eis et persequentur homines et bestias silvae" [And since God called their father Ishmael a wild ass, for this reason the wild asses and the wild goats from the desert and every kind of beast, both those that live in the wild and the tame, will be ground down by them and they will grow fewer under them and men will hunt [them]] (chap. 2, pp. 119-121).

³⁶ "Dumque simul luderent Ysmael et Isaac, maior ledebat minorem. Et intellexit mater in ludo persecutionem, quia scilicet patre mortuo uellet dominari maior minori. Vel ut *Hebrei tradunt*: Cogebat eum adorare imagines luteas quas fecerat. Quod cum displicuisset matri, dixit ad Abraham: Eice ancillam et filium eius" (Lib. Gen. 56, pp. 106-

Keturah.³⁷ Comestor's primary goal was to compile his *HS* as a comprehensive "seamless work" for a general public. We can infer that the difficulty of assessing the Hebrew traditions channeled in Jerome's works runs parallel to Comestor, who may have declined to acknowledge his sources to avoid distracting the reader with constant attributions (Heller 33-34).

Islamic Traditions on the Expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael

The Qur'ān [*recitation*, القرآن] assigns Ishmael a more prominent role than in the Masoretic Text. He is portrayed as a prophet who is entrusted with receiving revelations (sūras 2:136; 4:163); he is given the command to build the Ka'bah [الكعبة], a place of worship in Mecca and the most sacred site in Islam (sūra 2:125, 127); he is a pure monotheist (sūra 2:133, 140) and a being chosen by God (sūras 6:87; 38:48).³⁸ Hagar [Hājar, هاجر], on the other hand, is not mentioned by name in the Qur'ān and receives less attention (Hassan 150). However, as Judaism portrayed itself in Isaac and his mother Sarah, and Christianity interpreted Christ as the New Isaac and son of Mary, Islamic tradition embodied Hagar as the mother of Ishmael [*Umm Ismā'īl*, أم إسماعيل] (Crotty 179). She later symbolized "the progenitor of a nation," acquiring the role of a "mother patriarch in her own right" (Piggot 514). The Hagar-Ishmael cycle is capitalized in the Islamic narrative corpus. These works, collected soon after the time of the Prophet Muḥammad, constitute the four main genres of Muslim literature: 1) Qur'ānic exegesis [*tafsīr*, تفسير]; 2) traditions of the prophets [*Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, الأنبياء قصص], a selection of legends concerning the lives of the prophets in similar format to that of the midrashim; 3) tradition narrative on the life of the Prophet Muḥammad [*hadīth*, حديث]; and 4) historiographical works [*ta'rikh*, تاريخ] (Castillo Castillo 12). Several stories found in various *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* compilations provide a rich narrative on Hagar and Ishmael.³⁹ In contrast to Hebrew and Christian traditions, these Islamic sources utilized the expulsion of Hagar and her son as the "cornerstone" event that played a role "in the discovery and subsequent establishment of Mecca and the *hajj*" (Poorthuis 221-22). Among the most complete surviving *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* works is

07). [While playing together, Ishmael hurt Isaac. And the mother [Sarah] realized that as in during their pursuit of their game, once the father died, the eldest would dominate the youngest. According to *Hebrew tradition*, he [Ishmael] encouraged the worship of clay images that he made. This displeased the mother [Sarah], who said to Abraham, "Cast the handmaid and her son out"].

³⁷ "Abraham aliam duxit uxorem nomine Cethuram. Aiunt Hebrei Cethuram nomen esse appellatium quod interpretatur copulatum. Dicunt enim hanc fuisse Agar, que de concubina mortua Sara transiit in coniugem, de non copulata in copulatum, ne senex nouis nuptiis lasciuisset arguatur" (Lib. Gen. 62, p. 116). [Abraham took another wife whose name was Keturah. Hebrew interpretation says that Keturah is a common noun meaning 'joined'. For this, they say Agar was first a concubine and, after the death of Sarah, she became a wife transformed from an 'unjoined' one to a joined one, so that the old man is not reproved to have indulged in a new marriage]. Only the first part of the statement is found in the midrash (*Gen. Rab.* 61:4), but Comestor quotes the whole statement in the name of the Hebrews (Shereshevsky 282).

³⁸ Sūra 37: 100-108, 112 narrates Ishmael's birth as Abraham's first son after his father's plea to God for an offspring and contains a version of the biblical story of the Binding of Isaac [*akedah*, אֶקֶדָה], albeit omitting the name of the son to be sacrificed. The sūra seems to assume that "Ishmael *had to be* the son to be sacrificed, as Isaac's birth was only promised following this test of Abraham's faith" (De Claissé-Walford 152). On the discussion of Ishmael versus Isaac as the sacrificial lamb in Islamic exegesis, see Afsar (2007); Bashear (1990); Firestone (1989; 2000); and Mirza (2013).

³⁹ This literary genre, developed in the ninth century, includes the early works by Wahb b. Munabbih (d. 732), Ishāq b. Bishr (d. 821), al-Ṣan'ānī's (d. 827), 'Umāra b. Wathīma (d. 902), al-Bukhārī's (d. 870), and al-Ṭabarī (d. 923), later followed by the more influential texts of al-Kisā'ī (c. tenth century), al-Tha'labī (d.1035), al-Ṭarafī (d. 1062), and al-Boṣrāwī (1300-1373) (Brinner 2002, xviii-xxii; Tottoli 133-34). For a study on the chronological compilation of these traditions, see Motzki (2015).

al-Tha‘labī’s *Brides of Sessions About the Tales of the Prophets* [*Arā’is al-majālis fī Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā’*]. The text emphasizes Hagar and Ishmael’s submissive conduct in contrast with Sarah’s jealous acts. Al-Tha‘labī relies on previous Muslim authors to describe Sarah and Hagar’s pregnancies as occurring at the same time. As a result, Ishmael and Isaac were the same age and grew up together from birth (Brinner 2002 ed., p. 139). In another episode, al-Tha‘labī describes Abraham’s paternal bond with Ishmael after he beats Isaac in an archery competition, provoking Sarah, who then threatens to hurt Hagar physically by disfiguring part of her face.⁴⁰ Hagar and Ishmael’s banishment to the desert serves as an explanatory reference for the future discovery of Mecca and the dwelling place of the Ka‘bah.⁴¹ This legend, previously included in al-Ṭabarī and al-Kisā’ī’s traditions, describes Hagar’s persistent faith, for which she is rewarded by the archangel Gabriel, who provides her and Ishmael with a water spring [*zamzam*, زمزم], permitting their endurance in the desert (Brinner 2002 ed., p. 140).⁴² Through the *zamzam*, Hagar is not only responsible for their survival, but also credited for molding Ishmael into the prophet and leader of a new civilization. Another account attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās narrates Hagar and Ishmael’s encounter with a caravan of nomadic tribes [*jurhum*, جرهم] to whom they offer water from the stream and subsequently join, establishing a permanent settlement and learning their traditions.⁴³ Of all the various components of the Islamic Abraham-Ishmael cycle, the story of Abraham’s visits to Ishmael in Mecca draws the closest parallel to Biblical sources. All of these renditions portray Ishmael as a devoted husband and son who was never rejected in favor of his younger half-brother Isaac and continued receiving his father’s blessing. These legends also serve to explain the abrupt biblical ending to Abraham and Ishmael’s relationship given in Gen. 21:21, enhancing the close bond between Ishmael and his father and reassuring Ishmael’s solid position within the Abrahamic monotheistic tradition (Firestone 1990, 79).

Muslim Portrayal in Iberian Historical Chronicles

The rapid expansion of Islam through Christian lands led to a new clash of theological polemics, and these encounters were most intense in Iberia (Klepper 319). The identification of

⁴⁰ “One day while they were competing with each other in archery, and Abraham was the judge determining the winner, Ishmael won and Abraham seated him on his lap, and seated Isaac at his side, while Sarah was watching. She became angry and said: ‘You have turned to the son of the servant-girl and have seated him in your bosom, whereas you have turned to my son and seated him at your side, while you had vowed that you would not injure me or do any evil to me.’ The jealousy that overcomes women overcame her and she swore to cut off a piece of Hagar’s flesh and deface her appearance” (Brinner 2002 ed., p. 139).

⁴¹ “[Sarah] commanded Abraham to send her away, and God inspired Abraham that he should take Hagar and her son to Mecca. So he took them and arrived in Mecca, which was at that time a place of thorny shrubs, acacia, and thistles. All around, outside Mecca, lived a people called Amalek. And in the place of the Ka‘bah in those days there was a red hill” (Brinner’s 2002 ed., p.139).

⁴² Al-Ṭabarī’s earlier version narrates that, after the expulsion, Hagar’s milk ceased and she had no food to nourish Ishmael. Upon looking above, she heard the voice of an angel who “took her to the place of Zamzam [...] he stamped his foot and a spring gushed forth” (Brinner 1987 ed., II, pp. 74-75). Al-Kisā’ī’s *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā’* credits both Hagar and Ishmael’s faith in God for the discovery of the well. After Hagar asked God for help, the angel Gabriel descended to them bearing tidings of relief while Ishmael was scratching the earth with his finger and then abundant water [*zamzam*] sprang up (II, p. 152).

⁴³ The plot of the *Jurhum*, composed by Ibn ‘Abbās and found in fourteen traditions, describes the first interaction between Hagar and Ishmael with the Jurhumites and what they will become to their new family. The *Jurhum* find Hagar and ask her to allow them to live there and share the water. She agrees, but stipulates the *zamzam* will remain under her and Ishmael’s control. Ishmael grows up with the Jurhum, learning Arabic and hunting techniques and marries a *Jurhumite* woman (Firestone 1990, 73). Similar versions are found in al-Ṭabarī (Brinner 1987 ed., II, p. 75); al-Kisā’ī (II, pp. 152-53); and al-Tha‘labī (Brinner 2002 ed., p. 140).

Muslims as Hagar and Ishmael's merciful descendants appeared in early Christian chronicles after the 711 conquest of the Iberian Peninsula. Viguera Molins has identified two distinctive narratives in the various surviving Iberian historical accounts from the eighth through the fifteenth centuries. The first group, which extends to the eleventh century, takes place under Muslim hegemony, and portrays Al-Andalus as a Mozarabic land of survival (63-64). The texts include the *Chronicle of 741*; the *Chronicle of 754*; and the so-called *Asturian-Leonese Chronicles*, which comprise the *Chronicle of Albelda* (c. 881), the apocalyptic *Prophetic Chronicle* (c. 883), and the *Chronicle of Alfonso III* (c. 890). All share a similar depiction of the Muslim as a cruel, cowardly, and lustful assailant, while justifying their invasion as a divine punishment for the Goths' impious conduct, which led to the loss of Spain (Tolan 2002, 82). In the case of the *Prophetic Chronicle*, the text includes the pejorative section "Life of Muḥammad" and a genealogy of the Saracens, connecting them directly to Ishmael's offspring (Tolan 2002, 98). The second group of chronicles, stretching from the eleventh through the fifteenth centuries, reflect on a gradual Christian victory over the Muslims and the desire to recover in full the political and religious integrity of the Peninsula. However, these later works forged a dual Muslim archetype that combined pejorative attributes of a heretic sect led by a false prophet and an "equivocal" maurophilia that praised their great war tactics and refined lifestyle (Viguera Molins 66). Alfonsine historical chronicles place Islam and its followers under the first motif in order to affirm "the illegitimacy of Muslim dominion in the peninsula" (Tolan 2008, 135). Alfonso X had reasons to exploit this argument as part of his political agenda; the *Reconquista* had maximized its expansion, and his goal to be crowned Emperor of Europe would serve to reflect the role of *magister principum* in these works (Fernández-Ordóñez 1999, 115).⁴⁴ The *Estoria de España [EE]* or *Primera Crónica General [PCG]* provides a distinctly lurid account of Muḥammad's life and teachings to demonstrate the superiority of Christianity over Islam.⁴⁵ The chronicle draws material from previous historical accounts such as the *Chronicon mundi* by Lucas de Túy (c. 1230), and Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada's *De Rebus Hispaniae* (1243) and *Historia Arabum* (1245).⁴⁶ In regard to Muḥammad's childhood, the *EE* portrays him as a "ninno omne mucho esforçado et alçado" [a great young man and very hard-working] who used his knowledge to deceive and manipulate people (I, chap. 467, p. 261).⁴⁷ As an adult, he is

⁴⁴ Alfonso X's objective to unify the Christian territories still under Muslim rule rests on four principles: 1) the *Repoblación*, or Christian repopulation of Islamic-controlled territories; 2) the *castellanización* of these lands by establishing Castilian language and customs; 3) *Romanización*, or imposition of Roman law and administrative centralization; and 4) *Mudejarización*, or fusion of Islamic and Christian cultures (Salvador Martínez 2003, 103).

⁴⁵ Redaction of the chronicle began around 1269 with Alfonso X's scriptorium. After the monarch's death, *EE* was continued through several manuscripts incorporated into the original text. Two versions of *EE* survived; the first one, known as *Versión Primitiva* [Vulgar version], was compiled between 1270 and 1274 under Alfonso X's supervision. The second compilation, or *Versión crítica* [Critical version], was interrupted by the new project of *GE*, and therefore was not completed during the monarch's lifetime (Fernández Gallardo 81). In 1289 under Sancho IV's kingship, Alfonso X's son, the *Versión crítica* was continued, incorporating new Latin, legendary, and epic sources. The result of this consolidated edition became known as *Crónica amplificada* [Amplified version]. However, the work differs from the creative style and crafting patterns used by the pre-Alfonsine compilers of the Vulgar version (Fernández-Ordóñez 1999, 117-118). In 1906, philologist Ramón Menéndez Pidal published both textual corpora of *EE* under the new title of *Primera Crónica General (PCG)* (de la Campa 60-64). Citations from *EE* in this article are quoted under *PCG*. English translations are mine.

⁴⁶ On the legend of Muḥammad in Lucas de Túy's *Chronicon Mundi*, see González Muñoz (2002); and Falque Rey (2000). On the same legend in Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada's works, see Bravo López (2019); Ferrero Hernández (2008); Pick (2011); and Starczewska (2009).

⁴⁷ "E tomo despues cosas que metio en aquella mala secta que el compuso pora perdicion de las almas d'aquellos que la creen, por fazer creer a las yentes que era uerdadera aquella predigacion" [and he later included things into

presented as a Devil's adherent who engages in fornication and heretic practices.⁴⁸ The Qur'ān is explained as a book replete with false and deceitful commandments that made its followers distance themselves from the true Law.⁴⁹ These devotees are "los moros" [Moors], who "uienen del linage de Agar et de Ysmael su fijo que fue fijo de Abraham" [come from the lineage of Agar and her son Ishmael, son of Abraham], establishing a direct bond between Ishmael, his lineage, and Muḥammad (I, chap. 466, p. 261). Anti-Muslim sentiment is also observed in the episodes pertaining to Hagar and Ishmael. Most of the references employed to describe both characters and their actions are quoted directly or indirectly from the works by Josephus, Jerome, Methodius, and Comestor.⁵⁰ While the Alfonsine copyist generally credits these authors and their sources in the text, in other instances, they are omitted, or instead replaced by expressions such as "segunt cuentan algunos" [what some have narrated], "aún dizen los judios" [the Jews yet say], "segund dizen los judios" [according to what Jews say], or "los otros dizen" [others say]. The description used in these sections embodies anti-Ishmaelite traits that echo the portrayal of Hagar and Ishmael in midrashic traditions. This should not come as a surprise, considering the fact that the sizable number of Jewish collaborators involved in the scriptorium may have been familiarized with this type of exegetical material being used in a concealed manner and attributed to a Christian hand.⁵¹ The use of this haggadic content seems to serve as a *narratio* technique to craft Hagar and Ishmael in a Judeo-Christian intertextual parallel to sustain the negative perception of Muslims as a sectarian and geopolitical enemy while reinforcing the Christian authority of the text.

that bad sect he himself founded that lead to the loss of those followers' souls who believe in it, to make the people believe those sermons were true] (*PCG* I, chap. 472, p. 263).

⁴⁸ "Este Mahomat era omne fermoso et rezió et muy sabidor en las artes a que llaman magicas, e en aqueste tiempo era el ya uno de los mas sabios de Arauia et de Affrica ... et entraua el diablo en ell a las uezes et fa ziel dezir algunas cosas daquellas que auien de uenir ...; e dizie les que el parayso era logar muy sabroso et muy de delectoso de comer et de beuer ... e que auran los que y fueren mugeres escosas, non destas que son agora o en este mundo, mas dotras que uernan despues, e auran otrossi complidamiente todas las cosas que cobdiçiaeren en sus coraçones." [Muḥammad was a handsome and strong man and an expert in the craft they call magic, and in that time he was already known as one the wisest in Arabia and Africa ... and the Devil would possess him sometimes and would make him say things that had yet to occur... and he said to them that Paradise was a luscious and abundant place in food and drink ... and those who went there would have virgin women, not like those from this world, but others that would come later and would do whatever they covet in their hearts] (*PCG* I, chap. 478, pp. 264-66).

⁴⁹ "A estos mandamientos descomulgados llaman oy en día los moros por su arauigo *zoharas*, que quiere dezir "leys de Dios," e dizen et creen ellos por cierto que fue Mahomat mandadero de Dios, et que ge le enuio el pora demostrar les aquella su ley. ... e destas zoharas les fizo ell un grand libro departido por capitulos, al que ellos llaman *alcoran*, e tanta nemiga et tanta falsedad escriuio ell en aquellas zoharas, esto es mandamientos, que uerguença es a omne de decirlo nin de oyrlo, et mucho mas ya de seguirlo; e pero estas zoharas le recibieron aquellos pueblos malauenturados seyendo beldos de la ponçon del diablo et adormidos en el peccado de la luxuria, e oy en día los tienen et estan muy firmes en su porfia e non se quieren llegar nin acoger a la carrera de la uerdadera fe nin auer en si la ley de Dios nin el su ensennamiento." [Nowadays the Moors call these wicked laws *sūras*, which mean, "God's laws", and they say and believe as true that Muḥammad was sent from God to show them that this was his law. ... and from these *sūras* he made a large book divided into chapters that they call *Qur'ān*, and there is so much falsehood and enmity in those *sūras*, that shame would befall any man for speaking it or hearing it, let alone for following it; but these *sūras* were received by many unfortunate peoples, victims of the Devil's lies who remained complacent in their sin of lust; and they are very firm today in this law and refuse to embrace God's true faith and His teachings] (*PCG* I, chap. 478, pp. 265-66; chap. 493, p. 274).

⁵⁰ The *GE* differs from the *PCG* in that it frequently cites the sources the information is taken from (Eisenberg 206).

⁵¹ On Jewish collaborators under Alfonso's patronage, see Gil (1974); Romano Ventura (1971); and Roth (1985; 1990). Information on Muslim translators is scarce, with only two names mentioned in the records, Converso Bernardo *el Árabeto* [the Arab], and Muḥammad al-Riqūṭī (Samsó 171).

Anti-Muslim Portrayal of Hagar and Ishmael in *GE*

The Hagar-Ishmael cycle in *GE* spans several chapters, divided between Books V and VI. The episodes alternate in sequence with other biblical stories and references from the classical tradition dedicated to Julius Cesar:

Book V

Chapter 26: Hagar presented as Sarah's maid by Pharaoh. Hagar's banishment

Book VI

Chapter 2: Expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael

Chapter 3: A messenger of God leads Hagar and Ishmael to a well

Chapters 4-5: Ishmael's allegorical name and offspring

Chapter 16: Abraham's marriage to Keturah. Allegorical interpretation of the names Hagar, Keturah, and Sarah

Chapter 33: Death of Ishmael and retelling of his offspring. End of Book VI

Hagar is first introduced as part of Abraham and Sarah's episode in Pharaoh's court (Gen. 12:10-20). She is presented as a gift given to Sarah by Pharaoh to compensate her for the two years she spent in captivity at his palace (I, 5:6, p. 215). This extrapolation, absent from the Masoretic Text, as well as Josephus, Jerome, and Comestor's works, appears only as haggadic material in *Gen. Rab.* (45:1), *Targ. P-J.* (Gen. 16:3), and *PRE* (chap. 26):

dio el rey a Sarra por el grand amor que oviera d'ella una su sierva mancebiella, e que era muy su privada, e rogóla quel fiziesse algo por el su amor; e Sarra recibiójela de grado, e levóselo consigo. E esta sierva fue Agar, de quien fablaremos adelante. (I, 5:6, p. 215)

[The king gave Sarah, out of the great love he had for her, his young and most private slave, and he begged her [Sarah] to accept gift as a token of his love; and Sarah welcomed her with pleasure and brought her with her. And this servant was Hagar, of whom we shall speak further on]

Hagar is not explicitly identified as the Pharaoh's daughter, but her Egyptian origin and exclusive relationship with the Pharaoh can be inferred from the text. By establishing this connection, Wacks observes that,

This gesture serves to connect Hagar with the Egypt episode, as well as to deepen Pharaoh's characterization, as it humanizes the love (lust) that Pharaoh had for Sarah. Furthermore, it uses the reader's familiarity with Hagar to think ahead to her eventual expulsion and suffering in the wilderness, further deepening the characterization of both servant and mistress. (2017)

GE integrates palpable differences between both women into the story. Sarah had accepted Hagar "de buen grado" [with pleasure] (I, 5:6, p. 215), but the maid's behavior toward her changes when the slave finds out she is to conceive. The Vulgate (Gen. 16:4) only explains that Hagar became disdainful of Sarah [*despexit dominam suam*], prompting Hagar's banishment, as

commanded by Sarah. Comestor, in turn, suggests that Abraham pretended ignorance of the whole situation [*dissimulabat*] (Lib. Gen. 49, p. 107). *GE* includes Comestor's gloss without crediting him, but then elaborates Sarah's emotional outburst at Hagar's petulant actions. This new extrapolation echoes the traditions from *Gen. Rab.* (45:4) and *Targ. P-J.* (Gen. 16:1) in a manner designed to accentuate Hagar's disdainful conduct versus Sarah's distress:

E Agar cuando lo sintió que era preñada començó a seer loçana e a despreciar a su señora e desdeñar la su palabra. E Abraham parava mientes en ello, *mas faziése que lo non entendié.* E pesó d'esto mucho a Sarra, e dixo a Abraham: —Querella é de ti, ca muy grant tuerto me fazes. Yo te di la mi sierva porque ovisses tú e ella fijos, e desque se vío preñada despréciame e abíltame, e semeja que tú non tornas y cabeça. E esto júdguelo Dios entre mí e ti. (I, 5:26, p. 245) [Emphasis mine]

[And when Agar found out she had conceived she began to be unruly and despise her mistress and disdain her words. And Abraham watched it *but pretended not to know.* And this was very painful to Sarah, and she said to Abraham: —I complain against you since you are causing me much pain. I gave you my maid for you to have offspring with her, and since she conceived, she is disdainful and offensive against me, and it seems you are not even turning your head. Let God be the judge between you and I]

Hagar's arrogant tone is presented as a legitimate excuse for Sarah's harsh treatment toward her, and she begins "a ferir e a apremiar a su manceba" [hurting and insulting her maid], so that Hagar "queriése tornar para Egipto donde fuera natural, mas non sabié la carrera" [decided to flee to Egypt, but could not find the way back] (I, 5:26, p. 245). Once in the wilderness, Hagar is visited by an angel who admonishes her for her wrongful conduct, holding her responsible for her own banishment, but also promising her pregnancy with her son Ishmael:

—Tu Señora te fiziera bien e merced e tú non gelo gradeciés, e eras de mal coñocer e desmesurada en tus fechos contra ella. Mas non fagas assí, ca Dios paró mientes a la lazeria e al trabajo que tú sufriés. ... E tú eres preñada, e si te tornares sepas que avrás un fijo, e desque naciere poner le as nombre Ismael (I, 5:26, p. 246)

[Your lady treated you well and fairly and you were never grateful to her, and you were mistrustful and excessive in your deeds against her. But do not act like this, for God stopped the suffering and the work you were enduring. ... And you are pregnant, and if you were to return, be aware that you will bear a son whom you shall name Ishmael]

The copyist does not provide much detail about Ishmael's conduct, only stating that he was "el primer omne a quien Dios mandó poner nombre ante que naciesse" [the first person whom God named before his birth] (I, 5:26, p. 246). Instead, the main focus centers on Ishmael's descendants and their violent actions. The Alfonsine account depicts an apocalyptic scenario filled with violence and horror caused by Ishmael's offspring. The description resonates with the rhetoric of the Reconquista, and seems to be inspired by Methodius's prophesy, previously cited in Comestor's account. The Alfonsine version follows a similar portrayal of Ishmael's descendants as a mixed group of nomadic tribes known as Hagarenes, from whom Arabs and

Muhammad descend. Thirsty for power and conquest, the Hagarenes make their way into Christian lands, causing chaos and destruction:

E d'este Ismael salieron otrossí los bárbaros gazules e genetes, e todas las maneras de aláraves d'aquellos que moran en tiendas e non quieren morar en casas. E *segund dixieron algunos* d'allí salió el linage de Mahomat, dond vienen los moros, que an nombre *agarenos*, e an este nombre por Agar, que fue madre de Ismael. E aun d'aquel linage de Ismael profetó Metadio e dixo que saldríen una vez e conqueriríen lo más de la tierra, e serién d'ella señores un grand tiempo, e que matarién a los sacerdotes en las eglesias e en los santuarios, e yazrién allí con sus mugeres, e atarién de los cabestros las bestias a los sepulcros de los santos e serién pesebres d'ellas. ... E tenemos que esto se cumplió cuando se levantó la ley de Mahomat e los moros ganaron la tierra de los cristianos. (I, 5:26, pp. 246-47)⁵² [Emphasis mine]

[And from Ishmael descended the Gazula and Zenata Barbarians and all the types of Moors who dwell in tents and refuse to live in homes. And *according to what some said*, from there came the lineage of Muhammad, from which came the Moors who bear the name of *Hagarenes*, and have this name due to Hagar, Ishmael's mother. And yet from that Ishmael's lineage, as Methodius predicted, they would conquer most of the earth, becoming owners for a long time, and they would slay priests in churches and sanctuaries, and would rape women, and would tie animals and other beasts to the saints' tombs, using them as stables. ... And we see this came true when Muhammad's law rose up and the Moors won the land over the Christians]

The violent conduct of Ishmael's lineage seems to be a preamble to justify Ishmael's innate behavior, as narrated in the biblical episode during the playing episode with Isaac (Gen. 21:9-13). The scene draws parallels with Jerome's *QHG* and Comestor's *HS*, including Ishmael's involvement in idol-making and Isaac's injury at play, which is perceived by Sarah as a threat to Isaac's inheritance rights. However, *GE* shifts the narrative onto Ishmael, saying that he "soberviava al otro Isaac" [lorded over Isaac] and "firiél" [hurt him] (I, 6:2, p. 270). In allusion to what "aún dizen los judios" [the Jews yet say], supposedly in their writings, the text infers that Ishmael's motive for hurting his brother was due to his refusal to worship the idols Ishmael had carved (I, 6:2, p. 270). This exegetical interpretation echoes the traditions from *Gen. Rab.* (53:11), *Tosefta Soṭah* (6:6), and *PRE* (chap. 30), stressing Ishmael's mischievous act as the turning point that prompts Sarah's decision to banish him:

Isaac e Ismael amos hermanos *trebejavan*, e Ismael, que era mayor, *soberviava* al otro Isaac, que era menor, e *firiél*. E Sarra paró mientes, e entendió en los fechos del trebejo que después de días de Abraham el mayor de días soberviarié por ventura al menor e querrié seer señor sobr'él. E aún *dizen los judios* que Ismael fazié imágenes de barro, e otros que muñecas, e aun pudo seer que lo fiziesse todo, e que se trabajava de fazerlas aorar a Isaac, e Isaac porque lo non querié fazer quel firié Ismael e faziél llorar. E pesó a Sarra d'estas cosas que veyé. (I, 6:2, 270) [Emphasis mine]

⁵² The *Gazula* and *Zenata* were two of several Berber nomadic tribes who arrived during the Almoravid invasion of Iberia in 1086. (Lapidus 299-302; Rubiera Mata 11-16). They are mentioned in *GE* as a method of introducing the Muslim threat to current times.

[Both siblings, Isaac and Ishmael, were *playing*, and Ishmael, the eldest, *lorded over* Isaac the youngest, and *hurt him*. And Sarah reflected on this and understood during their actions in this game, that after Abraham's days, the eldest would rule over the youngest and would become his master. And *yet the Jews say* that Ishmael crafted clay images, and others claim he built figures, and that it is possible he made both types, and he enjoyed making them for Isaac to worship, and since Isaac refused, he hurt him and made him cry. And what Sarah saw weighed on her]

The following episode narrates Ishmael and Hagar's banishment in the wilderness. Ishmael's successful survival is due to his abilities with a bow and arrow, since he "salió muy buen arquero" [became a very good archer] (I, 6:3, p. 271). This trope, emphasized several times throughout the chapter, bonds Ishmael's hunting behavior to his name's etymological origin "perēh" [פֶּרְיָה] with the Latin "ferus" [wild savage]. The Alfonsine copyist, indebted to Jerome (cited here as "Jeremías" [Jeremiah] in error by the copyist) and Comestor for this exegetical explanation, also connects the Latin word "onager" with the Castilian "onagro" in order to create a "war machine" imagery around Ishmael's attributes. In addition, and referencing Methodius via Comestor, the account reiterates Ishmael's offspring combat techniques, as described in the previous chapter, portraying a similar apocalyptic world subjugated by Arabic tribes:

E aquello ál que cuenta de Ismael Moisés en el XVI capítulo del Génesis en que dize assí en el latín: *Hic erit ferus homo*. Fascas éste será fiero omne, o aun salvage, departe *Jeremías* que le llaman otros *rústico*, que es por aldeano o campesino fascas de campo, o salvage otrossí. E dize Jerónimo e maestro Pedro que le llaman en el ebraico *fara*, e *fara* quier dezir tanto en el nuestro latín como *onager*; e *onager* dezimos nós que es en la nuestra lengua por asno montés o por enzebro. E sobr'esto dize Metodio que es dicho esto: los asnos monteses o ezebros e las corças que vernán del desierto sobrarán con la su crueleza a la crueleza de las otras bestias todas, e esto es que la crueleza d'éstos será mayor que la de las otras yentes, e serán quebrantados d'ellos las animalias mansas. (I, 6:3, pp. 272-73) [Emphasis mine]

[And what Moises narrates about Ishmael in chapter XVI of Genesis translates in Latin as: *Hic erit ferus homo*. He will almost become a ferocious man, or yet wild; *Jerome* explains that they call him [Ishmael] *rustic*, for being boorish, a yokel and also wild. *Jerome* and *Peter* [Comestor] say that this comes from the Hebrew *phara*, and *phara* means *onager* in Latin; and *onager* in our language means wild ass or donkey. For this reason, *Methodius* says: the wild asses, and donkeys, and roe deer dwelling in the wilderness will outpace in brutality the cruelty of the rest of the beasts, and this is why their [Ishmaelites] cruelty will be worse than the rest of the peoples, and will destroy the meek beasts.]

GE introduces an additional explanatory episode on Ishmael and Hagar's relocation in Egypt that is absent in the Masoretic text. The text credits Al-Bakrī as the source for the story and starts with Ishmael's first marriage near Canaan.⁵³ Sarah found out about the wedding, and afraid that

⁵³ *GE* frequently cites two main Arabic chronicles under the same name. The first one is Abū 'Ubayd al-Bakrī's geographical guidebook *Kitāb al-masālik wal-mamālik* [Book of the Itineraries and Kingdoms] (d.1094). The text is cited in vernacular under the names *Libro de los caminos et de los regnos* [Book of the Itineraries and Kingdoms]

her son Isaac's lineage would end up at war with Ishmael's offspring, forced Abraham to cancel the ceremony, resulting in Ishmael's relocation in Egypt:

E cuando lo sopo Sarra entendió que a luengo tiempo contienda yazié y a los de so fijo con los d'aquel en aquella tierra, e dixo a Abraham que desfiziesse aquel casamiento e que mandasse que Ismael que non casasse en toda aquella tierra. E Abraham, veyendo que plazié a Dios con las razones de Sarra, desfizo el casamiento e envió d'allí el fijo. (I, 6:5, p. 274)

[And when Sarah found out, she realized that a war would arise in time between her son Isaac's people and the other's [Ishmael], and asked that Abraham annul the wedding and command Ishmael not to marry in that land. And Abraham, seeing that God was pleased with Sarah's reasons, annulled the wedding, and expelled his son from there]

While it is difficult to determine how much content is drawn directly from Al-Bakrī's account, the story draws parallels from *Targ. Ps-J.* (Gen. 21:21, p. 76) and *PRE* (chap. 30, pp. 218-19). The text reiterates Hagar's Egyptian origin, concubine role, and direct bloodline to the Pharaoh, stating that "[ella] era su natural" [she was related to him] (I, 6:5, p. 274). The similarities with these Hebrew renditions stress the idea of Hagar's desire to preserve the Egyptian blood in the family—in this case, by choosing a woman from the same land to marry Ishmael:

... e fuesse Agar llegando con él a Egipto, e diol mugier de la tierra don era natural, e casol y. E segund diz Abel Ubeyt, ovo ella nombre Caida, fija de Macac, fijo de Ornar Agar Hami, omnes buenos en Egipto, ... e coñocién otrossí a su madre Agar, que fuera manceba de Faraón e era su natural. (I, 6:5, p. 274)

[And upon arriving Hagar with him in Egypt, she gave him a wife from the land she was from, and they married. And according to Al-Bakrī, her name was Caida, daughter of Macac, the son of Ornar Agar Hami, good men from Egypt, ... and they also knew his mother Hagar, who was Pharaoh's concubine and relative.]

One last aspect of analysis is the various correlations established between Agar and Keturah. The text devotes a whole chapter to Abraham's second wife to explain "la razón de este casamiento" [the motive of this marriage] (I, 6:16, p. 293). The account presents various exegetical interpretations to determine the relationship between the two women, according to what "departen muchos de muchas guisas" [many say in many ways] (I, 6:16, p. 294). On one hand, by quoting Josephus and other unnamed authors, the text distinguishes Hagar and Keturah as two independent individuals. On the other hand, based on what "otros cuentan" [others tell], it refers

and *Estoria de Egipto* [History of Egypt]. Al-Bakrī, referenced as "Abul Ubeyt" and as "el arauigo" [the Arab], is first cited in the chapter on the birth of Abraham (*GE* I, 4:6, p. 160) and is the only Arabic source used in the first ten books of Genesis. However, the lack of a critical edition and a complete translation of the work brings into question the extent the Arabic original might have in the version offered by *GE* (Fernández Ordóñez 1992, 173-75). The other Arabic work is Ibrahīm b. Waṣīf-Sāh al-Miṣrī's *Kitāb gawāhir al-buḥūr wa waqā'i 'al-umūr wa 'agab'ib ad-duhūr wa' axbār ad-diyār al-Miṣrīya* [History of Egypt from the Most Remote and Wonderful Times] (c. 1225). Al-Miṣrī's account is cited in translation, also under the name *Estoria de Egipto*, and first mentioned at the beginning of part III of *GE* as the main source for the Kings of Egypt cycle in the Book of Exodus (Fernández Ordóñez 1992, 173-74).

to Keturah and Hagar as the same person (I, 6:16, p. 294). A third explanation, referencing Arabic authors Abul Ubeyt (Al-Bakrī) and Aben Abec infers that Abraham outlived both Agar and Sarah, and took two Canaanite women named *Cetura* and *Aura* as his new wives:⁵⁴

... los unos, assí como Josefo e otros, non dicen ende ál si non que casó Abraham con Cetura después de la muerte de Sarra. Los otros cuentan que aquella Cetura que era Agar Los arávigos como Abul Ubeyt e Albacri e Aven Abec e otros departen aun sobr'este segundo casamiento de Abraham, e dizen assí ... que después que Agar e Sarra fueron finadas que en los treinta e ocho años que fincavan de vida a Abraham que casó después con otras dos mugeres, e fueron de las cananeas. E la una que fue ésta que avié nombre Cetura, e a la otra llaman Aura. (I, 6:16, p. 294)

[Some, like Josephus and others, do not state therefore that Abraham married Keturah after Sarah's death. Others say that Keturah was Hagar Arabs such as Abul Ubeyt (Al-Bakrī), and Aben Abec and others yet explain this about Abraham's second marriage ... [they say] tell that after Hagar and Sarah died, that in the thirty eight-years left of life to Abraham he married with two other women who were Canaanites. One of them was called Keturah and the other was named Aura.]

The Alfonsine copyist also suggests the semantic explanation of the term *Cetura* as “joined” in this case, arguing its origin as a “nombre communal” [usual name] given to any married woman. The text only cites Comestor as the main source, omitting Jerome's commentary and the traditions of *Gen. Rab.* (61:4) and *Targ.-PJ.* (Gen. 25:1, p. 88) that include the same analogy and may have served as the original sources for Jerome's and Comestor's analysis. Moreover, *GE* cites the *Book of Job* to identify Keturah's name with good acts and compare those deeds to the use of “incense.” This comparison, however, is not found in *Job* but in *Gen. Rab.* (61:4) and *PRE* (chap. 26, p. 190), which describe Keturah's attributes as “perfumed” like the scent of this spice. The parallel between *GE* and these Hebrew traditions is striking:

este nombre *Cetura* non es proprio d'una muger ... es nombre que se puede llamar a toda muger casada e allegada a varón por casamiento ... e que tal fizo Abraham a Agar que la *ayuntó* a sí d'esta manera fascas por casamiento, e llamáronla *Cetura* fascas casada. ... De *Cetura* dize el libro de los morales de Job sobr'el XXV capítulo del Génesis que quiere dezir tanto como *buena obra*, assí como de *enciense* e de las otras cosas tales, e que tal casamiento como éste conviene al buen omne en su vejez, e tal le tomó Abraham. (I, 6:16, pp. 294, 296-97). [Emphasis mine]

[Keturah is not a proper name for a woman ... it is a name that can be given to all women who are married and joined to a man by marriage ... And so did Abraham to Hagar when he *bound* her to himself in this manner through marriage, and she was called Keturah once she married. ... The Book of Proverbs by Job says about Genesis 25 that *Keturah* can mean *good deed* as well as *incense* and other things, and since a marriage such as this is convenient for a good man in his old age, Abraham took her.]

⁵⁴ Aben Abec, also spelled as Abén Abec and Abén Abec is referred to as a wise sage and often appears next to Al-Bakrī's name throughout Book I (I, 4, pp. 213, 341).

In addition, the Alfonsine copyist incorporates another interpretation to distinguish Hagar, Sarah, and Keturah as three separate individuals. To do so, the account relies on allegorical commentaries from the Scriptures, midrashim, the Church Fathers, and “otros omnes buenos e sabios” [other good and wise men] (I, 6:16, p. 296). First, and attributed to Rabanus (d. 856), the text establishes the traditional Patristic comparison of Hagar and Sarah as epitomes for the two covenants: Hagar becomes “la vieja ley carnal e servilmientre” [the old mortal and servitude law] of the Old Testament, versus Sara’s “nueva ley que fizo el pueblo christiano en franqueza de fe” [the new law Christians made through honest faith] (I, 6:16, p. 296). The character of Ishmael is also brought into the analysis, which notes that he and Hagar “an nombres herejes” [have heretic names] and both symbolize “los carnales omnes del Viejo Testamento” [the mortal men of the Old Testament] (I, 6:16, p. 297). Moreover, Hagar’s and Keturah’s roles are diminished to those of mere concubines, while Sarah is the only “muger linda” [legitimate wife]. For this reason, Abraham “apartó de la heredad” [disinherited] Keturah’s and Hagar’s offspring, and after he gave them “sus dones” [their gifts], he “los envió fuera del regno” [sent them out of the land]. As a result, he “fincó en la heredad e en el regno por heredero e Señor Isaac solo, que fue el fijo solo de la linda” [gave his inheritance to his only heir Isaac, because he was the legitimate wife’s only son] (I, 6:16, p. 297). The combination of Christian allegory with these non-quoted rabbinical inferences serves to stress Hagar, Ishmael, and Keturah’s lineage as illegitimate and heathen. Despite their bloodline to Abraham, their impurity never permitted them to attain the level of Sarah, her son Isaac, and his offspring. This resulted in their banishment from Abraham’s family, delving into a tribal lifestyle, violent conduct, and constant menace to Israel, associated in this case with the Muslims and their threat to Alfonso’s Christian kingdoms.

Final remarks

The extensive universal history of the *GE* draws on Jerome, the Church Fathers, and Comestor’s *HS*, crediting them both directly and through indirect quotations to reinforce its Christian *auctoritas*. Josephus and other non-cited traditions, including some unidentifiable sources, supplement the historical range of the work. In addition, the combination of literal exegesis and Christian allegory is remarkably employed to enrich character building, narrative unity, and resolve textual gaps from the Masoretic Text. The extensive and eclectic compiling team under Alfonso’s supervision may have included Jewish editors and translators who were experts in Hebrew exegesis. Their role may have contributed to the insertion of several of these traditions in a concealed manner and under the guise of a Christian hand. The intention of these non-quoted sources would have served a double purpose: firstly, to clarify textual doubts through extrapolations and additional commentary; and secondly, to enhance Christian ideology in accordance with Alfonso’s endeavor of the Reconquista by depicting Islam as a foreign invader. In this regard, the Hagar-Ishmael cycle seems to serve this intent. Both characters are portrayed in negative terms, stressing features that denote idolatrous, self-centered, and mischievous conduct. These anti-Ishmaelite trends draw parallels to non-cited rabbinical exegetical traditions that conceived Hagar, Ishmael, and their offspring as outsiders to the Jewish world. The use of these traits in the Alfonsine chronicle is sometimes even more evident and accentuated.

The *GE* never grants Hagar a higher status than that of a concubine and slave. Moreover, she is reminded in several instances of her possible bloodline to the Pharaoh, as it appears in the traditions of *Gen. Rab.*, *Targ.-PJ.*, and *PRE*. Her petulant attitude toward Sarah causes her banishment from the family, to never achieve Sarah’s status as wife, and even when compared in positive terms to Keturah, she still represents servitude and carnal pleasures.

In regard to Ishmael, his intimidating behavior makes him prone to fratricidal tendencies, traits exemplified in the Hebrew tradition of *Tosefta Soṭah* 6:6 and later replicated in *Targ.-PJ*. Parallel to the description of Hagar, he is no more than an illegitimate son whose unruly actions caused the loss of his inheritance rights in favor of Isaac. A rich blend of exegesis and allegorical interpretation connects Ishmael's etymological name with his wild habits and war-like conduct. His success is the consequence of his violent deeds, which are passed down to his lineage, identified as Arabs by the chronicle. The apocalyptic images of Ishmael's descendants narrate the chaos and oppression inflicted upon the lands they conquer, alluding indirectly to the fight between Islam and Christian kingdoms carried out on Iberian soil.

The use of these non-cited haggadic works in the Hagar-Ishmael cycle establishes a complicit intertextual parallel technique that blends two different theological traditions. The inferences drawn from Hebrew exegesis serve a double purpose that closely aligns with Alfonso's authoritative role: to reinforce the Christian interpretation of Scripture and epitomize Muslims as merciless descendants of the Ishmaelites and a persistent menace to the monarch's reign.

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