

Scribe A of the Seville Bible: Arabic, Latin, and Eschatology

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In the late tenth century, several Arabic-speaking Christians in al-Andalus completed a Latin Bible, one with copious Arabic notes in its margins. Latin paleographers have long known of Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS VITR 13.1, the so-called Seville Bible, but we are only beginning to understand the importance of the Mozarabs who put hundreds of Arabic notes in its margins. In this essay, I examine the Arabic notes of one of these Mozarabs, Scribe A, who also copied the Latin biblical text in two parts of the manuscript. His Arabic notes in the Book of Isaiah make clear his thoroughly eschatological and anti-Judaic thinking; indeed, they are reminiscent of the Latin biblical exegesis which Christians to his north read during the tenth century. In looking at Scribe A's annotating of the Seville Bible, we will see how Mozarabs owed much to both Latin and Arabic culture, and indeed how they shared religious vocabulary with Muslims and Eastern Christians.