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Uses and Written Practices in Aljamiado Manuscripts

Abstract: In the Aljamiado texts, we see a consistent system used for the transliteration of the Romance language in Arabic script. From the oldest copies preserved (15th century) until the last ones produced by the Moriscos at the beginning of the 17th century, a standardised graphic and orthographic system has been applied to these Spanish texts written in Arabic script.

1 Introduction

After seven centuries of Muslim presence in Spain, Boabdil had to surrender the keys of the city of Granada to Ferdinand, the Catholic King, in 1492. Despite the ‘Capitulaciones de Granada’, the agreement by which the Catholic kings showed an apparent kind understanding of the Muslim population (they could maintain their clothes, habits and rituals), in 1499, Cardinal Cisneros started to stress the necessity of religious unity.

In 1502 in Castile, and 1526 in Aragon, all the Muslims (the Mudejars) were obliged to be baptised (which is to say, they had to convert to Christianity) or to leave Spanish lands. The conditions set for exiting the country were so harsh that most of the people stayed on in the Iberian Peninsula. If they decided to be baptised and to stay in their lands, they were no longer called Mudejars, but Moriscos or ‘convertidos de moro’. But what at the beginning was a religious matter became something wider: in 1504, Morisco communities had to pay special taxes (because they were converted), and from 1511, cultural differences were no longer accepted. Then, from 1516 the typical Morisco clothes were forbidden, as well as their music and *zambras* (dances), and of course, their food: not eating pork meant that you were a Muslim; at the same time, the Muslim way to slaughter the animals was banned too.

This chapter is the developed version of the paper presented in the conference ‘Creating standards: Orthography, Script and Layout in Manuscript Traditions Based on Arabic Alphabet’, held in Hamburg in October 2013. The research was carried out within the frame of the *Corana, Production and transmission of the Qur’ān in the Western Islamic World*, a project led by Nuria de Castilla, and financed by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation (FFI2012-32294), and ERC Grant Agreement number 670628 SICLE (2016–2021).

In the second half of the 16th century, it was the turn of the books: in 1564, it was ordered to burn all the books in Arabic in Valencia. In 1564, Granadan Moriscos were enjoined by a Royal decree to learn Spanish within three years (Vincent 2006, 106). In 1567 in Castile, the use of Arabic language, written and spoken, as well as the right to own books in this language, was forbidden. Despite the interdictions, paradoxically, the greater part of the manuscripts which have remained from these Muslim communities were copied during this period, i.e., the second half of the 16th century, when the bans were more intense, and the use of the Arabic script acquired specific values of resistance (Bernabé Pons 2010, 30).

Spoken Arabic first disappears in a general way in Castile and Aragon, but these two kingdoms conversely witness the use of the *Aljamía*, a written variant of Castilian with specific linguistic features. Arabic letters are usually used, although it is sometimes in Latin letters. The manuscripts in this area, hidden in the ceilings or in the walls, were discovered in the 16th and the 17th century, but mainly from the 19th century to the present day. The most important trove took place in Almonacid de la Sierra. ‘In 1302/1884 hundreds of manuscripts came to light during building works under the floor of a house in the village of Almonacid de la Sierra, close to Saragossa, the capital city of Aragon. The volumes were probably concealed there shortly before the expulsion of the Moriscos in 1018/1609 and, when discovered, were well-arranged, standing side by side, together with some bookbinder’s tools’ (Martínez de Castilla 2014, 89). Other similar finds took place in Sevilla, Pastrana, Cútar, Ocaña, Calanda, Torrellas, Novallas, Sabiñán, Urrea de Jalón, etc.; however, the number of manuscripts discovered in these places was smaller. The whereabouts of some of them, like that of Pastrana, are unknown (Martínez de Castilla 2016); others are in private hands, as those of Ocaña and Urrea de Jalón. Most are however kept in public collections: the extant manuscripts from the Almonacid de la Sierra trove are nowadays in the Tomás Navarro Tomás Library, CCHS-CSIC in Madrid (mainly) and Escuelas Pías of Saragossa; the manuscripts from Calanda are in the Library of the Cortes de Aragón (Saragossa), and so on (Villaverde 2010). Manuscripts hidden behind a wall and discovered during repair works in a house have been the major source of these witnesses of Morisco culture. However, other codices produced in the same area of Castile and Aragon were bought by bibliophiles in the 17th century. This was the case of two *Aljamiado* manuscripts in the Bibliothèque nationale de France (Castilla, forthcoming), both having been acquired by Antoine Galland and integrated into the King’s library in Paris in 1686 according to the information collected by Morel-Fatio (1982, vii). These manuscripts produced by *Mudejars* and *Moriscos* from Aragon and Castile exhibit two graphic systems (Arabic and Latin script) and two languages (Arabic and *Aljamía*). In this chapter, I will focus on the *Aljamiado* texts (a variant of Spanish, usually in Arabic script).

The word ‘Aljamía’ is derived from the Arabic *al-‘ajamiyya* (العجمية), meaning ‘non Arabic language’. In our context, it was used among the Peninsular Muslims to designate the language used by their Christian countrymen. In the *Diccionario de Autoridades* (1726), it is said that Aljamía is ‘the language or parlance the Arabs living in Spain used to speak with the Spanish Christians in order to make themselves understood in their contracts and dealings’,¹ i.e. it refers to a *koiné* or Romance vehicular language.² In the Western texts of the 15th to 17th centuries, the word Aljamía is systematically identified with the meaning ‘Romance’, probably Castilian as can be deduced from the following example.³

Thirdly, that they should not speak *Algarabía*, but all should speak *Aljamía*, and that all the documents and contacts which used to be written in *Arabic* should be carried out in *Castilian*.⁴

Or, as shown by the following account:

He was carrying secretly with himself a certain silver coin on which were letters and characters in Arabic which read ‘ley lehe ele Ala’, i.e. they meant in *Aljamía* that there is no other Lord except God alone.⁵

The same applies to the Catalan translation of *Tirant lo Blanc*:

Upon my honour, Sir, accompanied by these Moorish ladies came a very handsome girl who spoke very well *Aljamía*, and with much gracefulness, and if your Lordship would like to make me a favour, although I do not deserve it, when you take the city, you would make her a Christian and give her to me as wife.⁶

1 ‘La lengua o idioma que para entenderse en sus tratos y comercios hablaban los árabes que estaban en España con los cristianos españoles’.

2 For more information about the contexts in which this word was used during the Spanish Golden Age, see Martínez de Castilla 2006b, 235–246.

3 The edition of the texts and the use of italics in the given examples are mine, as well as their translation.

4 ‘Lo tercero, que no hablasen *algarabía*, sino que todos hablasen en *aljamía*, y que todas las escrituras y contratos que se solían hacer en *arábigo*, se hiciesen en *castellano*’. Fray Prudencio de Sandoval, *Historia de la vida y hechos del Emperador Carlos V*, 1604–1618, ed. and study by Carlos Seco Serrano, in www.cervantesvirtual.com (accessed 2 October 2014).

5 ‘Ocultamente traía consigo una cierta moneda de plata en que había en ella letras y caracteres en lengua arábigo, que decían “ley lehe ele Alá”, que [en] *aljamía* querían decir que no hay otro señor sino Dios solo’. Diocesan archives of Cuenca (ADC), leg. 262, núm. 3573. See Martínez de Castilla 2006b, 237.

6 ‘Por mi fe, señor, en compañía de aquellas moras viene una donzella muy graciosa que habla muy bien el *aljamía* y con mucha gracia, y si vuestra señoría me quisiese hazer tanta merced que,

In some cases, the adjective *Aljamiado* is used as a designation of those speakers who were fluent in both Arabic and Castilian, or for those who were living in *aljamas*, i.e., in Muslim neighbourhoods:

In order to identify the *aljamiados* who did not learn from a child our language and its pronunciation, they had them say ‘cebolla’ [‘onion’] and the Morisco would say ‘xebolla’.⁷

Today, when speaking of Aljamía, we are referring to a variant of Castilian exhibiting a series of linguistic features which can serve as a basis for its identification:

- influence of Arabic, not only in lexicon, but also in morphology and syntax;
- influence of Aragonese, the Romance linguistic variety used in Aragon;
- strong archaism. In some cases, it seems that the language belongs to the 13th–14th century rather than to the 16th century.

These are perhaps the characteristics Pedro de Herrera was alluding to when he asserts, in 1618, that the *moro* is ridiculous for his language:

Two by two, as for a fight, they wanted to jostle when a ridiculous Moor (according to his garments, his physical appearance and the *aljamiado* language of his voice), singing, convinced them to relinquish the civil litigations since their revolt was known and that they had been ordered to be thrown out of Spain.⁸

However, in spite of the possible influences of the spoken language on this linguistic variety used by Mudejars and Moriscos, the Aljamía was foremost a written language.⁹ One of the reasons that leads us to maintain this statement

aunque yo no lo tenga servido, que como toméys la ciudad la hagáys hazer cristiana y me la deys por muger’. Joanot Martorell, *Tirant lo Blanc*, Castilian translation, 1511, ed. by Martín de Riquer, Madrid, Espasa-Calpe, 1974, p. 172, see Corde, <http://corpus.rae.es> (accessed 2 October 2014).

⁷ ‘A los *aljamiados* que no habían desde niños aprendido nuestra lengua y su pronunciación, para conocerlos los hacían decir “cebolla”, y el que era morisco dezía “xebolla”’. Bernardo de Aldrete, *Antig. de Esp.* [*Varias antigüedades de España, África y otras provincias*, Anvers, Juan Hasrey, 1614], I, 37. On the basis of this example, Cirot suggests that ‘aljamiado’ may have meant ‘parlant arabe’ (Georges Cirot, “‘Ladino’ et ‘aljamiado’”, *Bulletin Hispanique* 38.4 (1936), p. 539; this meaning is already found in the *Diccionario de la lengua castellana de la Real Academia Española de 1770*: ‘lengua árabe corrompida que hablaban los moros de España’ (s.v. ‘Aljamía’).

⁸ ‘Dos a dos, como para reñir, querían acometerse, cuando un moro ridículo (por el vestido, figura personal y lenguaje *aljamiado* de su voz), cantando, les persuadió dexassen las pendenias civiles porque ya se sabía su rebelión y los mandavan echar de España’. Pedro de Herrera, *Translación del Santísimo Sacramento a la iglesia colegial de San Pedro de la villa de Lerma*, 1618, in Ferrer Valls 1993, 273.

⁹ The Aljamía ‘was probably not a faithful mirror of the variant actually spoken by these people’

is the big linguistic difference between the texts translated from the Arabic – the most important part of the manuscripts produced by the Mudejars and Moriscos in Aljamía – and those which were a recent creation. When we speak of Aljamía, we speak thus about a written linguistic variant of Spanish, with a strong influence of Aragonese, and in a large part Arabised and Islamised as much from a linguistic point of view as for its contents.

2 The copyist and his *milieu*: time, place and society

Who produced this kind of codices? Aljamiado manuscripts were copied within the Muslim communities in Spain: Mudejars (before the forced baptism in 1502) and Moriscos (after this date), from the end of the 14th century until the beginning of the 17th century. The earliest manuscripts that have come down to us are probably from the 15th century, but the majority of the manuscripts date to the 16th and 17th centuries.

This production was localised in Aragon and Castile, not in Granada or in Valence. The various Spanish kingdoms have very different history, and the same applies to the Muslim communities living within each of them. Toledo was conquered in 1085, whereas Granada in 1492: four long centuries separate the two events. One can understand that the Castilian Muslim communities were much more assimilated in 1499 (the year when Cardinal Cisneros initiated the policy of instituting religious unity in the kingdom of Castile) than the Granadian ones. On the other hand, in the 14th century, which is probably when the Aljamiado phenomenon started, Granada was still a Muslim kingdom, and Valencia had been conquered one century before. This is the reason why Aljamía did not develop in every kingdom in Spain but only in Castile and above all in Aragon. In these kingdoms, Muslims had to struggle to preserve the knowledge of Arabic as well as their cultural identity.

These manuscripts were mainly written (copied or produced) by some unidentified scribes for the *faqih*s in order to maintain the cohesion of their communities and to control them, at a moment when they were losing their rites and cultural practices (de Castilla 2006a). Although we find familiar – or low quality copies – probably written within family circles, most of the manuscripts were produced by skilled copyists.

(‘no debía de ser un espejo fiel de la variedad hablada por aquellas poblaciones’). I am indebted to Olivier Brisville-Fertin for generously giving me access to his unpublished work-in-progress (p. 5).

3 Linguistic features

3.1 Graphic representation

Orthographic conventions are quite stable throughout the period concerned by this production, as we shall see later. However, the language itself varies according to the text typology, but it will remain in any case basically Romance: if the text is a translation of an earlier Arabic work, the text will exhibit a higher degree of Arabisation and archaism than a copy or adaptation of a European text or than a new composition produced in a Mudejar or Morisco context (Sánchez 1995, 339–348 and Montaner 2004, 99–100).

Since Spanish has a few phonemes that are not found in Arabic, Mudejars and Moriscos developed new graphemes in order to represent them:

1. Vowels: In Spanish there are five vowels (/a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, /u/), whereas in Arabic there are only 3 (/a/, /i/, /u/). For the vowel /e/, the Mudejars adopted a new orthographic combination, *fatḥa* plus *alif*, which was inherited by the Moriscos. Ex. مائش = <mesa>. For the vowel /o/, there is no innovation, the *ḡamma* being used for both /o/ and /u/.
 - *bā'* with *šadda* = /p/ <p>.
 - *jīm* with *šadda* = /č/ <ch>.
 - *rā'* with *šadda* = /rr/.
 - *šin* with *šadda* = /š/ <x>, adapted for the voiceless palato-alveolar fricative.¹⁰
 - *nūn* with *šadda* = /ñ/.
2. Consonants: The *šadda*, a diacritic used in Arabic system to geminate a consonant, is systematically used in order to provide solutions for rendering Spanish phonemes, as follows:

The various emphatic letters (ظ, ط, ض, ص and ق) are in most of the cases used for writing down Arabic words, not Spanish ones; examples like the following are common: <a^lššala>, written with ص, but <açotea>, with س. However, in the Aljamiado texts in Latin script, a <ç> is used for both cases: 'açalá' and 'açotea', as the regular way to write these words in the 16th century Spanish.

¹⁰ Although this way of writing is the most commonly found, there are other manuscripts — *Poema de Yúcuf*, the manuscript of Urrea, BNE 5267, BNE 5305, BNE 5313, BRAH T12, BRAH T13, BRAH T18, RESC/13, RESC/30, RESC/33, RESC/37, RESC/52, RESC/64, RBME 1880, BPal 3226, BnF Arabe 774 or BnF Arabe 1163— in which the letter *šin* without *tašdid* is used exclusively to indicate both the apico-alveolar and the pre palatal fricative voiceless.

3.2 Consonant clusters

There is a tendency in Aljamía to maintain some of the features found in Arabic, such as the syllabic structure. Although some Arabic dialects have initial or final consonant clusters, Andalusí Arabic did not allow a sequence of two consonants in the same syllable without an intermediary vowel. In other words, the only possible syllabic structure is CV(C) (Corriente 2002, 35). The Aljamía usually introduced an epenthetic vowel, the same as in the following syllable, between the consonants in order to eliminate the tautosyllabic consonant clusters in the original Romance words, for example, *ap^eremiar*, *ap^alaçado*, *at^erevimiento*.

According to Quilis (1981, 298–300), in Aljamía, the epenthetic vowel was a merely graphic component unlike in Classical Arabic where the epenthetic vowel is usually phonetically realised. Nevertheless, this *svarabhakti* element (automatic vowel) seems to have had a phonetic representation, a conclusion reached by Corriente (2000–2001, 117) in relation to the botanical glossary of Abulxayr:

The disjunctive vowel was not a mere graphic tool meant to avoid an aberrant orthography within the Arabic script, but a phonic reality due to the interference of the syllable taxonomical rules.¹¹

This view, if applied to Aljamía, would entail that it was ‘a tongue phonetically interfered with, in this case by Arabic’¹² (Corriente 2000–2001, 117). In the same way, Labarta (1982, 231) states in her analysis of an Aljamiado page from Tarazona that

[t]he Castilian sequences formed by occlusive + liquid + vowel produce between their first two components a vocalic element with the same quality as that of the following vowel. Such a sound, which does not have for us a phonological value and does not have any graphic representation, was perceived and noted in Aljamía either because the Arabic does not allow for a syllable to begin with two consonants, or due to the nature of Aljamía itself, that reproduces through the Arabic script the spoken Castilian in an ‘acoustic’ (not ‘phonologic’) way with assimilations, contractions, and so on.¹³

¹¹ ‘La vocal disyuntiva no era un mero recurso gráfico para evitar una ortografía aberrante en la escritura árabe, sino una realidad fónica debida a la interferencia de las reglas taxonómicas de la sílaba’.

¹² ‘una lengua interferida, fonéticamente en este caso, por el árabe’.

¹³ ‘Las secuencias castellanas formadas por oclusiva + líquida + vocal crean entre sus dos primeros componentes un elemento vocálico de timbre similar al de la vocal que lo sigue. Tal sonido, carente para nosotros de valor fonológico y de representación gráfica, era percibido y marcado en la escritura aljamiada, ya como consecuencia de que el árabe no permite que una sílaba empiece por dos consonantes, ya debido al propio carácter de la escritura aljamiada, la

3.3 Sibilant consonants

Although the graphical difference between /š/ = ش and /ʃ/ = ش̣ is indicated in some manuscripts,¹⁴ 60% of the corpus analysed does not express this distinction.¹⁵ This implies that this phonetic difference is not so pertinent in Aljamía as has been argued¹⁶ and it is not rare to find *šarabe* instead of *xarabe* ('syrup') – which could be explained by the Arabic etymology of the word *šarāb* ('beverage') –,¹⁷ or *dišo* instead of *dixo* ('he said'). The cases which exhibit this graphical distinction could be interpreted as follows: either this is the result of the realisation of a phoneme non-existent today, or the copyist was very familiar with the texts in Latin script and tried to emulate them in Arabic script, introducing the *shadda* above the *šin* for the <x>.¹⁸ As Montaner (2004, 100, n. 2) accurately indicated, 'except for the limited influence of the Andalusí substrate on the phonology and the lexicon, the Aljamía never stopped being a Romance language, even in its most Arabized texts'.¹⁹

3.4 Dental consonants

The most common letters representing the dental consonants in Aljamía are ذ \ د, including the emphatic consonants ظ / ض. This is probably the result of a plausible loss of consonantal emphasis among Mudejars and Moriscos (Bouzineb 1986, 30–31). There is a distinction between the fricative and occlusive allophones [ð] and [d], but it is not so common. This distinction is more regular in later man-

cial, mediante la grafía árabe, reproduce el castellano hablado de una forma "acústica" (no "fonológica"), con sus asimilaciones, contracciones, etc.' Nevertheless, when reading her study, one has the impression that this 'vowel' will always be found in the Tarazona folio. However, this is actually not the case in graphic representation of the word *libras* in BRAH T19, where a *sukūn* appears between the /b/ and the /r/. On the other hand, this epenthetic vocalic element occurs in the other three words that have consonantal groups (*gruesa, tres y maestro*). For more information about the distribution of the epenthetic vowel and *sukūn*, see Martínez de Castilla 2010, 182–187.

14 BRAH T13, BRAH T18, BRAH T19, BNE 4953, BNE 5223, BNE 5377, BNE RES 245, RESC/62.

15 That is to say, Poema de Yúçuf, Urrea manuscript (particular collection), BNE 5267, BNE 5305, BNE 5313, BRAH T12, BRAH T13, RESC/13, RESC/30, RESC/33, RESC/37, RESC/52, RESC/64, RBME 1880, PAL 3226, BnF Arabe 774, BnF Arabe 1163.

16 Galmés de Fuentes 1970, 220–221, and several studies since then.

17 Steiger 1991, 53, n. 3.

18 More information in Martínez de Castilla 2010, 177–178.

19 'salvo la limitada acción del sustrato andalusí en la fonología y el léxico, la aljamía sigue siendo netamente una lengua romance, incluso en sus textos más arabizados'.

uscripts, and a possible phonological interference by the Andalusí seems less likely than the cases with the sibilants as in the example of /šarabe/ above). As described by Navarro Tomás (1918, 99), ‘the occlusive articulation is produced when the dental consonant appears [...] after a “n” or “l”’. For example, in the manuscript BRAH T19, undated but copied at the beginning of the 17th century (Castilla 2019), we read on the one hand:

| | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| <i>el día</i> | ءَالِدِي | (24r, 6) |
| <i>al dueño</i> | أَلْدُوَانُ | (112v, 3) |
| <i>y-el dayuno</i> | يَالْدِينُ | (182r, 8) |
| <i>en desierto</i> | ءَأَنذَا شِيَارُتْ | (84r, 15) |
| <i>en dineros</i> | ءَأَنذِنَارُشْ | (122r, 4) |
| <i>en demandarlo</i> | ءَأَنذَامُنْدَرُلْ | (140v, 4) |

And on the other hand:

| | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| <i>a donde</i> | أَدُنْدَا | (<i>passim</i>) |
| <i>compañía del mensajero</i> | كُنْبَيِّي ذَال مَانَشَجَارُ | (1r, 2–3) |
| <i>delante de los onraços</i> | ذَالْتَنَّا ذَا لُنْشْ أُنْرُ دُنْشْ | (1r, 9) |
| <i>a doze días de la luna</i> | أَدْرَا زِيَيْشْ ذَالْلُنْ | (20r, 9–10) |

4 Contents

As far as the contents of the manuscripts are concerned, most of these codices are miscellanies – or multiple-text manuscripts –, but there are also composite and unitary copies. Notably, we can find copies of excerpts of the Qur’an, *hadith* (traditions attributed to the Prophet Muhammad), fragments of juridical texts, magic, and so on. Exceptionally, there are some documents written in Aljamía (personal letters and legal documents), but unfortunately only few items have been preserved (see, for instance, Hoenerbach 1965, Labarta and García Cárcel 1981, Viguera 1982 or Viguera 1991).

The Aljamiado texts are markedly Islamic and this applies to both Mudejar and Morisco periods. The production was carried out during an earlier stage mainly in Aragon, in Castile, and later, as far as we can establish, in Algeria, Tunisia and in the heart of the Ottoman territories, in Salonica and Constantinople, during the Morisco period and after the expulsion. It can therefore be defined as an ‘Islamic

literature made [...] by Muslims and for Muslims'²⁰ (Bernabé Pons 2010, 27). It is 'an Islamic variant of Spanish', as Ottmar Hegyi (1985) aptly defined it.

The manuscripts can be divided into three main groups: a) translations of earlier Arabic texts, the date of translation remaining unclear;²¹ b) copies and adaptations of Western-European texts; and c) new works. A taxonomic distinction has been traditionally maintained between the Aljamiado manuscripts in Arabic letters and those in Latin script, the former being called 'Aljamiados' and the latter 'Moriscos'. For this reason, several mentions of '*manuscritos aljamiado-moriscos*' appear in specialist publications dealing with this production, both in articles and catalogues; this is a descriptive phrase that allows us to jointly treat copies written in Mudejar and Morisco communities where the two scripts are used.²² However, such description seems confusing since when we find a manuscript in Arabic script and another one in Latin characters containing the same text(s), the differences between both are in most cases strictly graphic. In this way, neither the state of the language of a given Aljamiado text, nor its place of production can be defined on the basis of its script (Latin or Arabic characters).²³ For instance, 'The story of Abū Šaḥmah when his father, 'Umar, sent him to be whipped'²⁴ is found in various Aljamiado codices (Fig. 1):²⁵ they are all in Arabic script, with the exception of BNE 6016, written in Latin letters. BNE 6016 belongs to the same textual tradition as the three other witnesses of the text which have been preserved in the manuscript of Urrea de Jalón, BRAH T12 and BnF Arabe 774.

20 'Una literatura islámica, hecha [...] por musulmanes y para musulmanes'.

21 Although the knowledge of Arabic was almost completely lost in Castile and Aragon, research over the past few years have been throwing light on the possible use, albeit in a minority way, in the Aragonese area. Cf. Ferrando 1996, 177–195; Ferrando 2000, 195–200; García-Arenal 2010, 295–310.

22 As an example, it will be sufficient to mention publications like Galmés de Fuentes 1998; Galmés de Fuentes 1986; or Vespertino 2002–2004.

23 Although in initial studies of the Aljamiado literature it was assumed that there was a correlation between the use of the Arabic script and the Aljamiado texts written in the Iberian Peninsula on the one hand, and between the use of the Latin characters and the production in the exile after the expulsion, texts written in Latin script in the Iberian Peninsula and conversely others written in Arabic outside the Peninsula have been found. Cf. Suárez 2004, 20 and 21 and the bibliography cited there.

24 'El hadiz de Abu Xahma cuando lo mandó açotar su padre Omar'.

25 Taken from Martínez de Castilla 2010, 308.

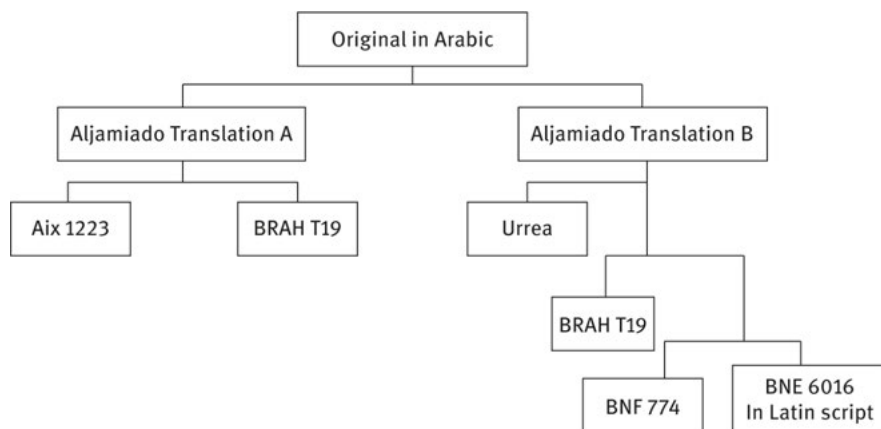


Fig. 1: Genealogical textual schema of 'The story of Abū Šaḥmah'.

In some cases, we know that an Aljamiado text in Latin script could have been transcribed from a copy in Arabic characters (Fig. 2). This is the case of the 'Prayer for the rite of the child's *fadas*' (i.e. the Muslim rite for giving a name to a newborn)²⁶ in BCM T232, in Latin letters, which was apparently copied from BRAH T19, unless both manuscripts stem from the same common exemplar (Martínez de Castilla 2010, 344).

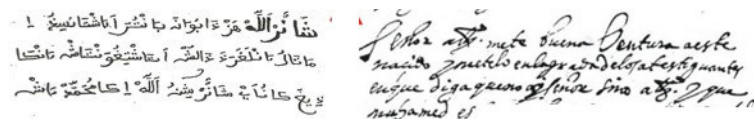


Fig. 2: Fragment of the 'Prayer for the rite of the child's *fadas*'. Left: BRAH T19, fol. 24v. Right: BCM T232, fol. 295r.

Also, in a few instances Spanish texts have been transliterated in Arabic script, either faithfully to the original or with changes. This way, a text produced in another culture and widely spread, serves as a basis either for a transliteration in Arabic script, as was done by the copyist of *The sayings of the seven wise men from Greece* (*Dichos de los siete sabios de Grecia*),²⁷ or for an adaptation to an

²⁶ 'Rogaria para las fadas de la criatura'.

²⁷ Edited by Galmés de Fuentes 1991, 47–54. See also Castro (ed.) 1990, 407–410 and Ramos 2012, 848.

Islamic cultural context: this is the case with *The Handless Maiden* (*La Doncella de las manos cortadas*), a well-known legend in Middle Ages and still circulating in the oral European tradition (Thompson (1970, T411.1)).²⁸ About the latter, Mary Elizabeth Perry (2005, 97) stated that ‘the story of Carcayona reads as a Muslim version of the *Handless Maiden tale*’.

The language of the translated texts and of the new ones is therefore different. The new texts use a language closer to the “standard” use of the Christian Spanish texts than the copies of the translations, much more influenced by the Arabic; in other words, the use of the Arabic alphabet does not induce any special differentiation in the kind of language employed in these new Morisco works. Here is an example of a text written in Arabic script, produced in the 16th century, to help the Moriscos to leave Aragon in order to arrive safely to Salónica:

[Itinerary from Spain]. [...] From there to Verona. Do not go through the city as you would pay a real per head. There you will ask for the road to Padua. There you will take a boat to Venice; from Venice to Bolonia [Bologna] or to Durazzo, or to Lesos or to Castelnuou, that of these parts you will find first. You will enter an inn; you will pay half a real per day; and do not take anything from the inn as they will charge you triple.²⁹

The language of the transliterated texts of Western European origin does not change either:

[Sayings of Bias]. These are the sayings of Bias, and they are as follows: and in order to be well understood, the reader should think that each Sage is speaking with him: Look at yourself every day of your life in a mirror, take this advice from me.³⁰

On the other hand, the texts resulting from a translation of an Arabic original exhibit a different state of the language (Fig. 3):

The hadith of Abū Ṣaḥmah when his father, ‘Umar, God may be pleased with him, sent him to be whipped. ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar said: ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb had a son called Abū Ṣaḥmah

²⁸ Valero Cuadra (ed.) 2000; Perry 2005. See also Martínez de Castilla 2006c.

²⁹ BnF Arabe 774, fols 37v–38v. My own transliteration and translation. The text has been edited by Sánchez Álvarez 1982, 153–154. ‘[Itinerario de España]. [...] De allí a la Verona. No paséis por dentro de la ciudad, que pagarés a real por cabeça. Allí demandarés el camino para Padua. Allí os embarcarés para Venecia; de Venecia para la Bolona [*sic*] o para Duracio, o para Lesos o para Castelnuou, el que antes hallés d’estos puertos. [...] entrarés en una posada [...]; pagarés medio real por día; y no toméis nada de la posada, qu[e] os arán pagar de uno tres’.

³⁰ BnF Arabe 1163, fol. 60v. Edited by Galmés de Fuentes 1970, 41. ‘[Dichos de Bías] Estos son los dichos de Bías, los cuales son los siguientes: I para ser bien entendidos, piense el le[c]tor que cada sabio habla con él: Mírate todos los días que vivieres al espejo; toma de mí esti consejo’.

who was a reciter of the Qur'an and when he was reciting it seemed that the Messenger of God was reciting. And Abū Šaḥmah fell ill, with a very bad illness, and the colleagues and friends of the Prophet Muḥammad were visiting him. One day, when he went there, they gathered in 'Umar's house and told him: 'O prince of the Faithful! If you made a promise, as did 'Alī b. Abū Talib for al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn until God restored them to health, maybe God would restore to health your son Abū Šaḥmah and he would be healthy'.³¹

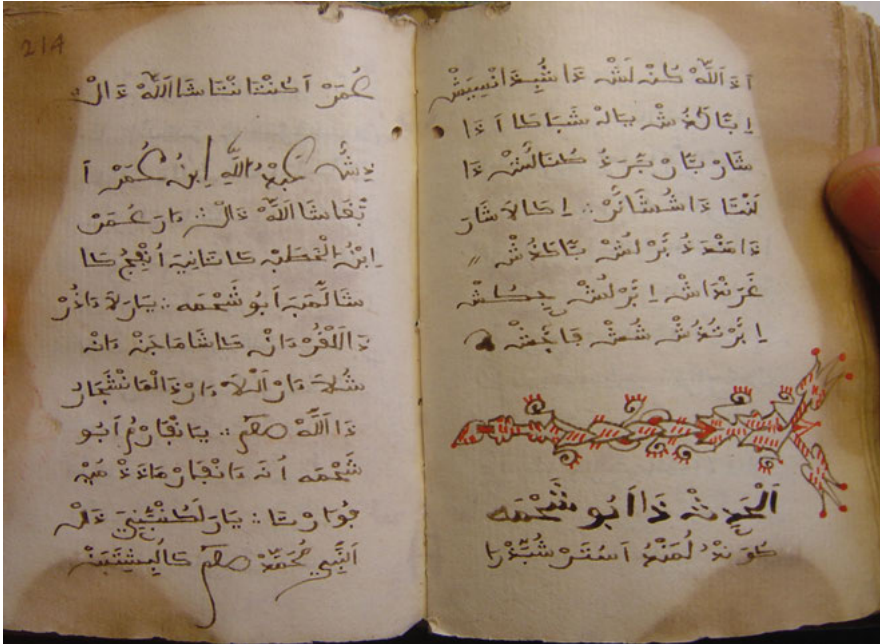


Fig 3: Bibliothèque Méjanes 1367, Aix-en-Provence, fol. 213v.

31 Aix 1367, fol. 213v. Edited by Martínez de Castilla 2005, 507. 'El hadiz de Abu Xahma cuando lo mandó aototar su padre Omar, aconténtese Allah d'él. Dixo Abullahi ibnu Omar, apáguese Allah d'él: Era Omar ibnu Elhatab que tenía un fijo que se llamaba Abu Xahma, y era lledor del Alcorán, que semejan en su leer al leer del mensajero de Allah (š'm). Y enfermó Abu Xahma una enfermedad muy fuerte; y era la compañía del anabí Muhamad (š'm) que lo visitaba. Pues cuando fue un día, ajuntáronse en la casa de Omar y dixéronle: "Ye rey de los creyentes, si prometieses una promesa, así como hizo Ali ibnu Abi Talib por Alhaçan y Alhuçayni hasta que les invistió Allah la salud, por ventura que tu fijo Abu Xahma que le daría Allah salud y estaría luego sano".

We could thus conclude that the archaic state of the last text, as well as that of the other translations from the Arabic, can be at least partly explained by the conservative nature of the translations, some of them made probably in the 13th century, and copied again and again. However, even in the translated texts — the texts of Arabo-Islamic origin — we appreciate the influence exerted by the “standard” 16th century Spanish, used by the Christians. Then:

- Some copyists were aware of the linguistic trends of their times. This explains the presence of learned and literary words as well as Latinisms, related in almost all cases to specialised botanical vocabulary: *junqueruela* ‘reed’, *sisba* ‘fruit of the jujube tree’, *pollicios* ‘sprouts’ or *ixola* ‘prickly and bitter plant’ — in some cases they come from Latin through Arabic loans. I have also found a few hapax — words for which there is no documentary evidence before in any other place, in Christian or Muslim context, as *reviða* (‘another life’) or *boticaxear* (‘put makeup on someone’).³²
- From a morphological point of view, some copyists used the synthetic superlative in *-ísimo*, in words like *noblísimo*, very common in Spain at the end of the 16th century but never found before that time. That period coincides with the last copies in Aljamía, which strongly suggests that the copyist had the knowledge of the linguistic uses of their time.

In these cases, it shows that the copyists were educated persons, attentive to the various linguistic innovations of their time and more used to Spanish texts in Latin script than in Arabic script. They probably knew Arabic quite well, without being well versed in the language since many mistakes are found in the Arabic fragments. In general, the texts in Arabic show more errors than the Aljamiado texts, and in many cases, like BnF Arabe 447, the orthography in Latin script is more accurate than in the Arabic one.

Apart from the use of a specialised vocabulary and application of the new morphological derivations found in the rest of the contemporary Spanish literature, other features, such as divisions of words and phrases, help us to detect some copyists’ knowledge and familiarity with Spanish texts in Latin script. Thus, while in the Middle Ages every kind of grouping of words is found, in the 16th and 17th centuries the graphic agglutination is more limited, and we only find phrases like *enella o d’ellos* (= preposition + article) written as a single graphic group. On the other hand, the divisions of the words at the end of a line seem to be random in the Middle Ages. However, in modern times, the 16th and 17th centuries, the divi-

³² The Arabisms found in Aljamía often play the role of the Latin loan words in the contemporary Christian prose (Montaner 2004, 99–204). See Martínez de Castilla 2010, 210–218.

sion (when it occurs) tends to be syllabic: *des-/pués* ‘afterwards’, and is not only found at the end of a line, but at the end of a folio (recto or verso) too, even if in Arabic this segmentation is not possible.

Then, we have to take with caution some conclusions advanced by Hegyi (1981, 22), and widely accepted until now, that a) the Aljamiado manuscripts were produced by isolated individuals whose only concern was to preserve the religious tradition for the next generations; and b) due to their social exclusion,³³ they kept an archaic language, far from any linguistic innovation, because they ‘do not share the linguistic ideal of the Renaissance, and they stay on the sidelines of the linguistic movement which heightens the Spanish language through the cultisms from Latin and Italian’.³⁴

5 Conclusion

In the Aljamiado texts, we see a consistent system used for the transliteration of the Romance language in Arabic script. From the oldest copies preserved (15th century) until the last ones produced by the Moriscos at the beginning of the 17th century, a standardised graphic and orthographic system has been applied to these Spanish texts written in Arabic script. However, it is impossible to assert when this system started to be used, because of the lack of evidence from more ancient manuscripts. On the other hand, with the exception of a later Aljamiado copy of the end of the 17th or beginning of the 18th century, kept in a private collection in London, no hint of the possible use of other transliteration systems has been preserved, which impedes us from suggesting any hypothesis about the period of use and the selection criteria of one or another system.

Concerning the language, the standardisation process is double in Aljamía: on the one hand, the translations of the Arabic texts show a peculiar version of the Spanish language, characterised by a higher proportion of Arabisms (in lexicon, syntax and morphology), Aragonese layer and archaisms. These three features, very consistent throughout the Aljamiado production, show a conservative stage of the Spanish language – probably artificial – in the 16th century, the period when most of the preserved manuscripts were copied. However, this con-

³³ ‘Las condiciones socioculturales no permiten la plena participación del grupo minoritario en la cultura oficial del grupo mayoritario, impidiendo que las novedades lingüísticas se filtren hasta ellos’.

³⁴ ‘No comparten el ideal lingüístico del Renacimiento [y, por extensión, de conocimientos e inquietudes], y se quedan al margen del movimiento lingüístico que enriquece la lengua española por medio de cultismos procedentes del latín y del italiano’.

servative stage does not result from a deficient knowledge of the contemporary uses of Spanish. Moriscos were aware of the standardised use of the language of their time, and it is clearly demonstrated in the faithful and correct transliterations of Christian texts in Arabic script; or even more, they do use this normalised Spanish language to produce new texts (rather than copies of translated Arabic texts). In most of the cases, it is impossible to ascertain only on the basis of the language itself whether those texts were written by a Morisco.

With the exception of the exact transliteration of some fragments of literature that were very popular in contemporary Europe, Aljamiado manuscripts show a standardised kind of content: an Islamic one. The texts are either directly related to the religion, such as prayers, Qur'anic passages, Islamic law, exegetical commentaries, polemical texts about religion, etc., or indirectly, such as edifying literature, magic, or entertaining literature. The main part of this production shows a consistent common thread: it gives an easy access to the basic knowledge of what Islam means and what is a good Muslim is required to do. The information can be provided in Arabic letters (in most of the cases) or Latin script. Even if many hypotheses about the reasons of the use of one or the other alphabet have been argued (period, place, familiarity with the Arabic language and script, cultural identity, etc.), we still lack a definitive explanation (if this is possible at all) about the selection of one or the other script system. Although they are different, both are used in a consistent and standardised way.

Abbreviations

| | |
|-------|---|
| Aix | Bibliothèque Méjanes, Aix-en-Provence |
| BCM | Biblioteca de Castilla-La Mancha, Toledo |
| BNE | Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid |
| BnF | Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris |
| BPal | Real Biblioteca. Palacio Real, Madrid |
| BRAH | Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid |
| RBME | Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Madrid |
| RESC | Biblioteca Tomás Navarro Tomás, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas/ Centro de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales, Madrid |
| T | Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid (old call number) |
| Urrea | private collection (manuscript found in Urrea de Jalón), Saragossa |

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