The Morisco Hell

The Significance and Relevance of Aljamiado Texts for Muslim Eschatology and Islamic Literature

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In a recent monograph, Stephen J. Shoemaker highlights the relevance of Aljamiado literature for the historiography of early Islam. In his discussion of the different versions of a second/eighth-century letter ascribed to the caliph ‘Umar II (r. 99–101/717–20) and addressed to the Byzantine emperor Leo III (r. 717–41 CE), he mentions an Aljamiado translation, longer than those found in other versions written in different languages.¹ As such, the Aljamiado version has long been considered a Morisco enlargement or even a complete forgery. Shoemaker, who builds on the earlier work of Jean-Marie Gaudeul,² brilliantly shows that the Aljamiado text is in fact more closely related to the original Arabic than the shorter versions, which are instead abridgments of the original. This constitutes a rare occasion on which an Aljamiado text is used by a scholar of Islam to corroborate evidence found in Arabic or other Near Eastern works. Although Aljamiado literature exhibits a number of noteworthy characteristics, it is rarely taken into consideration in studies of the diffusion of Arabic and Islamic motifs and reports. In fact, the many comprehensive and rich studies related to Aljamiado writings are the products of the work of specialists in Romance philology, scholars who discuss the linguistic evidence found in these works and address other questions related to the environment in Iberia rather than to the Islamic contents of the Aljamiado corpus.

This is surprising for a number of reasons. The Aljamiado texts are neither very numerous nor do they reproduce the works of major Muslim authors, but they have the peculiarity of constituting a relatively homogeneous literary

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1 Shoemaker, *Death of a Prophet* 60–1.

2 Gaudeul, Correspondence between Leo and ‘Umar.

corpus.³ In Arabic literature, particularly late Arabic literature, this is a rarity. Traditional Arabic literature is conservative so that, for example, classical Arabic is consistently used within it. In addition, popular, late remakings of this literature are usually anonymous. These two issues usually give rise to a major problem: how to connect texts to a specific time and place, and thus how to use this literature as evidence for a particular historical, cultural or social context. In this regard, Aljamiado texts are an interesting counter-example, since the community that they refer to, as well as the conditions in which this community lived, are well known, namely being the minority Morisco community who suffered gradual erosion under Castilian and Spanish domination. In addition, the places (in Iberia) and the times of production (mid-ninth/fifteenth to early eleventh/seventeenth century) of these texts are usually well known. As such, from the point of view of the historian of Islamic literature and traditions, cross-checking Morisco texts against other Muslim literature and traditions allows one to understand the circulation of those traditions and literature in that specific place and at that time. Aljamiado literature also provides a useful way of understanding the circulation of Muslim Arabic literature in Spain, North Africa and the entire Muslim world, while throwing into relief the specificities of Aljamiado texts in relation to Islamic literature as a whole.

Aljamiado manuscripts and texts can also provide insights into a number of religious subject-matters in addition to what they tell us about *adab* literature, law and other literary genres. Pious devotion to the Prophet Muḥammad, stories of the prophets, and legendary reports about the battles fought by Muḥammad and his early companions, especially 'Alī, are favorite topics. Eschatology, too, has some relevance in the Aljamiado corpus, and among the texts devoted to this subject some offer descriptions of hell. This chapter is devoted to the analysis of this Aljamiado literature on hell. Its aim is to ascertain their specific, or non-specific, concerns or peculiarities in relation to Islamic literature as a whole. A study of these Aljamiado versions can, as we shall see, contribute to a better understanding of the relations between Arabic sources and Aljamiado

3 I am aware of the fact that Aljamiado manuscripts were written in different places and thus show specific peculiarities, and that the modes of production of manuscripts were different at the beginning of tenth/sixteenth century from those prevalent at the end of it. However, I believe that the examination of the spatio-temporal embeddedness of manuscripts produces more relevant results in respect to linguistic and historical questions. As for the properly religious content of Aljamiado texts, from the point of view of the Islamicist the Morisco experience appears as rather homogeneous.

Spanish versions, and also suggest some hypotheses for the diffusion of the manuscripts that preserve versions of them.

1 Spanish Islamic Eschatological Literature

The question as to when Islamic literary works or even non-literary documents produced in Romance and then Spanish vernaculars first emerged is debated. What is of most significance to our discussion is that, from the fifteenth to the middle of the seventeenth century, texts related to Islamic traditions and literature circulated in the Iberian peninsula and among Muslims of Iberian origin according to differing modalities. Manuscript remains and historical evidence bearing testimony to the special social conditions of Spanish communities attest to a complex situation, and there is clear evidence of the circulation amongst Muslims living in these communities of works written in Arabic, in Spanish using Roman script, and in Spanish with Arabic characters.⁴

The texts preserved in these manuscripts deal with various subjects, ranging from translations of the Quran to literary works. Notwithstanding the wide range of typologies attested and the various definitions proffered by scholars to characterize the various texts, religious ideas are a consistent part of them,⁵ and eschatology constitutes one of the main topics in these texts. Thus, Galmés de Fuentes refers to eschatology in a list of ten major topics of Morisco literature in Aljamiado,⁶ while Bernabé Pons in his more analytical listing also includes eschatological narratives (*relatos escatológicos*).⁷ There are many further examples. Concern for eschatological matters is, for instance, clearly

4 On this point see Casassas Canals, *La literatura islámica castellana* 92–5. Casassas Canals offers some important preliminary statements and rightly points out that the Spanish of Aljamiado texts is a Muslim vernacular like any other vernacular of Muslim minorities in other parts of the Islamic world. He also correctly laments how little attention Aljamiado literature has received from Arabists and Islamicists. See *ibid.* 108. See also Maria J. Viguera in her preface to Urrea de Jalón, 20. On the complex linguistic situation see also Harvey, *Muslims in Spain* 122–3.

5 See on this point Bernabé Pons, *Los manuscritos aljamiados*, and Wieggers, *Islamic Literature* 1. As these point out, one of the three major areas of production of Aljamiado literature, which is based entirely on translations, is religion, while entertainment and handbooks of practical matters are the other two. Other scholars emphasize that original works were in fact produced; these texts are mostly on religious matters. See Harvey, *Muslims in Spain* 168; Montaner Frutos, *El recontamiento* 40; Martínez de Castilla Muñoz, *Una biblioteca morisca* 41.

6 Galmés de Fuentes, *Estudios* 29, 88–9.

7 Bernabé Pons, *Los manuscritos aljamiados* 33.

attested as early as the works of Yça de Segovia (fl. c. 850/1450) who, in his work *Thirteen Articles*—which contains a Muslim creed—devotes a large section to eschatological beliefs.⁸ In other instances, scholars of Aljamiado literature have highlighted a specific concern for eschatological works.⁹ However, the Aljamiado interest in eschatological matters should not be overstated as, when compared to Islamic literature as a whole, this is not of greater concern in the Aljamiado corpus of literature than it is elsewhere. This is because eschatology constitutes one of, if not the, major topics of the Quran and early Muslim traditions (hadith), while later Islamic literature also demonstrates a special concern for eschatological questions. Muslim creeds, from early times, also showcase the relevance of eschatological themes.¹⁰ Given this, it is difficult to follow Miguel Ángel Vázquez who states in his work on the conception of death among Moriscos that their literature displays an eschatological obsession diffused in the crypto-Muslim communities.¹¹

Apart from Aljamiado translations of the Quran and of *Tanbīh al-ghāfilīn* of Abū l-Layth al-Samarqandī (d. 373/983), one encounters the majority of references to eschatology and hell in short texts usually collected in miscellaneous manuscripts. These miscellanies constitute a specific aspect of Aljamiado literature, one that has usually been connected to the peculiar conditions of the Moriscos, that is, their supposed need to have books that were easy to use and which combined various texts on a number of different topics.¹² Such small but comprehensive anthologies would have permitted the Morisco community to preserve as much as possible of as wide a range of topics as they could, while also being easier to hide in the house—a significant advantage in the tenth/sixteenth century, marked as it was by the harsh conditions imposed by the Spanish Inquisition. These miscellaneous texts, and particularly the question of their originality, have been at the core of competing and polemical evaluations of the Morisco cultural heritage and its relation to Muslim lore and

8 Wiegiers, *Islamic Literature* 92–8.

9 López-Baralt dedicates a few pages describing the eschatological contents in the work of the so-called *Refugiado de Túnez*; see López-Baralt, *La literatura secreta* 584–8.

10 See Watt, *Islamic creeds* 20–1, and the examples provided *passim*.

11 See Vázquez, *Desde la penumbra* 12. Later on, Vázquez admits that Aljamiado texts are not different from classical Muslim texts as regards themes and images. See *ibid.* 83. Cf. on this the description of his doctoral dissertation, on which the book is based, in *Aljamía*, 14 (2002), 77–9.

12 Harvey, *Muslims in Spain* 151, calls these “pious miscellanies”, which he says were primarily designed for religious education, therefore conveniently collecting various texts in one codex.

tradition. As Galmés de Fuentes clearly showed,¹³ the position that dismissed Aljamiado literature as the product of a Muslim community contaminated by its Western environment and by Christian literature, and thus as neither properly Muslim nor Christian, is no longer tenable. Morisco works are fully Islamic. As others, such as Reinhold Knotzi and Alberto Montaner Frutos, have argued, the choices made for anthologies was motivated by a wish to preserve Islamic doctrine in a way that was both convenient and all-encompassing, including, as these anthologies did, various typologies of texts.¹⁴ Nevertheless, as will emerge from the following discussion, the difficult contexts of production prompted a conservative attitude towards the textual heritage, resulting in a situation in which texts were copied faithfully through the centuries until the second half of the eleventh/seventeenth century, thereby fulfilling the need to preserve religious literary texts in easily consultable manuscripts.¹⁵

In fact, we can develop this idea further and argue that Aljamiado texts on eschatology and hell display a particularly strict adherence to Islamic tenets and literary devices, something which is further reflected in the composition of the miscellaneous texts. However, even though such anthologies gained wide circulation because of the specific conditions and sensibilities of the Morisco Muslim communities, particularly in the tenth/sixteenth century, they can hardly be considered specific to them.¹⁶ Although it is true, as suggested by Galmés de Fuentes,¹⁷ that the texts are fully and properly Spanish versions of Muslim Arabic texts and that in this kind of literature the originality and specific character of the collector are displayed not so much by the contents of the stories but by his choices and the inclusions or exclusions from the miscellany, it must be added that Arabic literature as a whole preserves many

13 Galmés de Fuentes, *Estudios* 47–8.

14 See Montaner Frutos, *El recontamiento* 39. See also the discussion of this question by Martínez de Castilla Muñoz in a commentary in *BRAH* T8, 69.

15 The notion that there was a decline in Morisco literary expression in the second half of the tenth/sixteenth century is no longer tenable: most of the attested manuscripts are from the clandestine second half of tenth/sixteenth century. On this point, see Vespertino Rodríguez, *Una aproximación a la datación*.

16 Galmés de Fuentes, *Estudios* 39–40, quoting Hawkins, *A Morisco Philosophy of suffering*.

17 Galmés de Fuentes, *Estudios* 47. Galmés de Fuentes underlined this point in order to counteract those who maintained that the Aljamiado texts were the product of communities influenced by Christians and so were not Muslim any more. According to Galmés de Fuentes, by contrast, it deserves to be emphasized that the originality of an author or collector is measured by his choices when collecting and ordering the translated texts.

examples of similar anthologies featuring more or less the same topics.¹⁸ One comes across such examples in Andalusian Arabic manuscripts, which possibly include some sources for the Aljamiado texts, but also in manuscripts from other places in the Islamic world in which we find short collections of texts, sometimes written in the same hand.¹⁹ The topics are the usual ones: the life of Muḥammad; his battles; pre-Islamic prophets, with special emphasis on episodes of the lives of Abraham, Moses and Jesus; eschatological texts; prayers; invocations; examples of Quranic exegesis; and points of legal debate. Whatever may explain the use of Spanish in Arabic script, a feature which gives this literature a peculiar character and taste, the adherence of the Aljamiado corpus to mainstream Muslim literature is, as we shall see, rather startling, denoting as it does a decidedly conservative attitude vis-à-vis the contents of the religious culture. As we hope to demonstrate, this conservative attitude, rather than other factors, was the primary motivation for the preservation and transmission of these texts in Spanish.

2 Aljamiado Versions of Islamic Eschatological Narratives

The relationship of the Aljamiado narratives to the corresponding Arabic texts is a major concern when discussing this literature. There are two ways of ascertaining the peculiarities of Aljamiado literature in relation to Islamic literature as a whole. Firstly, the translation practices and language used in these translations can be studied, as far as possible. Secondly, the contents of these works can be cross-checked against those of the Arabic and Islamic traditions (probably) circulating in Spain at the time, as well as of the Muslim eschatological literature as a whole.

As regards language and terminology, Hispanists and scholars of the Aljamiado texts have carried out numerous studies of the linguistic aspects of these texts, mainly in order to shed light on the history of Spanish languages and vernaculars of the periods in which they were written. However, from the point of view of the Islamicist, their interest lies in the relations between the Arabic works and their Spanish versions or calques. While a more

18 Barletta tries to typify the Aljamiado miscellanies as peculiar to the Morisco situation. See Barletta, Aljamiado-morisco narrative.

19 See, for instance, the Iberian manuscripts analyzed by Levi Della Vida, *Note di storia letteraria* 26–33, 36–9.

comprehensive discussion of the question is given elsewhere,²⁰ a few general remarks relating to the circulation of literature about hell are in order here. The first point to be made concerns the two main terms used to indicate hell, namely, *jahannam* and *al-nār*, the former rendered as *jahannam* in Spanish, the latter translated as *fuego* ("fire"). Problems of recognizability and identifiability most probably prompted the emergence of *jahannam*, rather than *fuego*, as the favorite term, which is also used in relation to other, less frequent Quranic names for hell. This is a clear demonstration of the conservativeness of the Aljamiado texts in relation to terminology. The use of *jahannam* also demonstrates that these texts seek to refer to the Quranic and Islamic hell in an immediate and unequivocal fashion, emphasizing their Islamic character much more than the more neutral *fuego*, or any other term, would.²¹

These linguistic features thus indicate a conservative reproduction of Islamic texts and traditions. The same impression is given by the literary contents of the texts that include descriptions of hell. A few other studies have discussed the relationship between single Arabic and Aljamiado texts, but none has attempted to compare the contents of an entire corpus of Aljamiado texts with the corresponding body of literature on the Arabic side. In my opinion this lacuna deserves to be filled, as Aljamiado literature allows us to understand what types of Islamic traditions were circulating from the ninth/fifteenth to the eleventh/seventeenth century under the particular conditions of the Morisco community, and in what kind of literary culture they were embedded.

To compare the various Aljamiado versions of single complete narratives against the corresponding genres of Islamic Arabic literature would no doubt be an exhausting task, and such a comparison would lead us well beyond our topic. My intention in the following paragraphs is to carry out such a study but on a smaller scale, limiting myself to the eschatological parts of some of the Aljamiado narratives, and particularly the descriptions of hell that occur within them. This means that the scope of this analysis is rather narrow, and consequently no general conclusions can be drawn. However, a small-scale

20 Here I shall deal with Aljamiado literary motifs and versions and their Arabic and Islamic counterparts. I shall not discuss questions connected to the translation from Arabic to Spanish, or the use of calques or translations in the names of hell. On this topic, see my article, *The Toledo Qur'an and Islamic eschatology*, to which I refer for all the questions discussed here in relation to translation and terminology.

21 Another hypothetical reason for the use of the term *jahannam*, which is less neutral given its explicit Islamic connotation, is the interest of Aljamiado texts in the topography of hell. In fact, in Arabic early traditions *jahannam* already appears as the favourite name when describing the physical features of hell. See Tottoli, *The Toledo Qur'an*.

comparative study of this type can shed some light on a number of questions. Not only will it be possible to trace the Morisco imagining of hell in its relation to Arabic Islamic literature, but also, more importantly, some first steps toward uncovering the relations between the Aljamiado texts and versions and their Arabic counterparts will be made.

2.1 *Narratives about the Day of Resurrection*

Aljamiado texts preserve a number of versions of a narrative describing the Day of Resurrection (*yawm al-qiyāma*) in which some information about hell can be found. This narrative, which ranges between twenty and forty folios, tends to appear in miscellaneous collections under the title *Recontamiento/Estoria/Alhadith del día del juicio* (“tale/story/hadith of the Day of Judgment”). Pablo Roza Candás, in his edition of a manuscript from Aitona, lists six other versions, and thus a total of seven, and indicates that two groups or families of the narrative exist.²² One family, which includes the texts of MS Aitona and MS Paris 774, links the narrative back to the Prophet by a chain of transmission that runs through the well-known Jewish convert Kaʿb al-Aḥbār (d. between 32/652 and 35/655).²³ Kaʿb’s name features regularly in the later literature devoted to cosmogony, pre-Islamic prophets and other popular stories. Along with Kaʿb, who is identified at the beginning as the main transmitter of the entire narrative, some Aljamiado versions also quote the Companion Ibn ʿAbbās (d. c. 68/687–8) in connection with some details inserted after the beginning of the text.²⁴ References to hell and things connected to it are ubiquitous across the different versions of the story. Phrases that mention paradise and hell frequently occur together, and special emphasis is placed on the question of whether people will be saved or doomed, and on the figure of Mālik, the gatekeeper of hell. There are also passages approaching a full description of hell, particularly when it talks of God putting those who deserve it into the fire/*jahannam*. Much attention is given to the question of what happens to the sinners of the Muslim community,²⁵ to the extent that it can be asserted that this is the major concern in the narrative. The answer given is that which is most common in Muslim theology and attested all over medieval Islamic

²² *Aitona*, 140–1.

²³ *Paris* 774, 186–214; *Aitona*, 284–329. The text edited by Guillén Robles, *Leyendas moriscas* iii, 351–88, which is derived from MS Madrid, BRAH T17, belongs to the same family. On Kaʿb al-Aḥbār and his role as transmitter, see Tottoli, *Biblical prophets*, 89–91, and the references quoted there.

²⁴ *Paris* 774, 188; *Aitona*, 285 has a lacuna after *ibnu*.

²⁵ See for ex. *Paris* 774, 207, 209.

literature: Muslim sinners will leave the fire because of their belief in one God and on account of the intercession of Muḥammad.²⁶

Variant details can be found in the other family of texts, and this can be seen from the very beginning of the narrative. In the version in MS Junta 57, no chain of transmitters (*isnād*) is provided. Later on, different transmitters are mentioned, such as the Companion Abū Hurayra (d. c. 58/678). The narratives of the two manuscript families in many instances overlap. One detail is particularly relevant in regard to hell: the names that the Quran gives to hell are usually understood in the literature to refer to the various doors or layers of hell. In MS Junta 57, however, they are taken as the names of valleys in *jahannam*: Lazā, Ḥuṭama, Jaḥīm, and Sa'īr.²⁷ The concluding section, after a long passage in which Mālik addresses the fire and the fire talks back to him, is again dedicated to the fate of Muslim sinners and the intercession of the Prophet.²⁸

Arabic Islamic literature concerning the Day of Resurrection spans a wide range of traditions, and includes detailed descriptions of hell. The significant length of the Aljamiado narratives and the mention of Ka'b indicate that the original Arabic versions from which the Aljamiado texts derive are late literary re-modelings. These enlargements of previous, shorter narratives constitute a massive body of Arabic popular literature, and include several narratives ascribed to figures such as Wahb b. Munabbih, Ibn 'Abbās and Ka'b al-Aḥbār. It is also interesting to note that earlier, normative literature attributes a relatively long hadith-like report describing the Day of Resurrection to Ka'b. This particular report focuses on the question of intercession, stating at the end that Muslim sinners will be brought out of hell by Gabriel and led to paradise. The narrative, which covers two pages, appears in the *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'* of Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣfahānī (d. 430/1038) and in some major later works.²⁹ Notwithstanding the common elements (the ending, the large space given to angels, and the name of Ka'b), the narrative related by Abū Nu'aym and the Aljamiado text are different, and this demonstrates that a connection was made in traditional literature between Ka'b and a (relatively) long story of the Day of Resurrection.

Other literary works and late manuscripts show the diffusion of different narratives about the Day of Resurrection. Although the sources on which this

26 Cf. *Ibid.*, 213.

27 *Junta* 57, 149v, 150v.

28 *Ibid.*, 166v–172r.

29 Abū Nu'aym, *Ḥilyat* ii, 372–4; from the *Ḥilya* then quoted in Qurṭubī, *Tadhkira* iii, 915–8. Ibn Kathīr, *Nihāya* ii, 200–2, adds that a number of other hadiths confirm parts of this long narrative, which is the reason why he feels justified in inserting it into his work.

study is based are limited and no final conclusion can be drawn from them, it appears that there were late Arabic narratives about the Day of Resurrection that were similar in dimension and content to the Aljamiado versions. However, no direct Arabic parallel to the Aljamiado versions could be found. A number of manuscripts preserve various attestations of one long report transmitted from Ibn ‘Abbās in which the Prophet, having finished his prayer, recounts to his Companions the events of the Day of Resurrection.³⁰ This is an important narrative that gained popularity and was copied and elaborated, but it is different from what one finds in the Aljamiado texts. Other manuscripts attribute reports on this subject to the same Ibn ‘Abbās, but with different *isnāds*, or to other transmitters, thus conforming to the typical pattern by which these literary remakings were spread.³¹ Other works rephrase the first chapters of the “Stories of the prophets” (*Qışaş al-anbiyā*) attributed to al-Kisā’ī (d. sixth/twelfth century?), which have sections on cosmology, angelology and eschatology, including a description of paradise and hell.³² Although this is not a specifically eschatological text, but rather a general description of the cosmos, its contents and tone are similar to the Aljamiado texts. However, the texts are again similar, but different. The same applies to some anonymous narratives in Arabic on topics such as angelology, intercession, paradise and hell, and punishments of Muslim sinners, such as one finds, for example, in the so-called *Manuscrito de Ocaña*.³³

In general, the description of hell in Aljamiado narratives about the Day of Resurrection is perfectly in line with the body of late Arabic literary

30 The manuscripts including this narrative usually give the title as *Ahwāl al-qiyāma*, *Aḥwāl al-qiyāma* or *Aḥwāl yawm al-qiyāma*. See MS Paris, Bib. Nat. ar. 2727, fols. 36v–42a; MS Paris, Bib. Nat. ar. 5728, fols. 156v–164r, and the references given in the bibliography.

31 See for instance the manuscript versions of *Aḥwāl [yawm] al-qiyāma* MS Princeton Garrett no. 2854 (no. 3018), fols. 220–5 (from Ibn ‘Abbās > ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb); MS Sarajevo, Ghazi-Husrev-Bey no. 2258/5, fols. 60–66r (with no transmitter, but with the same *incipit* as MS Princeton Garrett no. 2583, where it is ascribed to Ibn ‘Abbās). See also MS Berlin Staatsbibliothek Sprenger 461, fols. 144v–145v, from Abū Hurayra a shorter report with no title. Cf. also other narratives in *Manuscrito de Ocaña*, fols. 72v–107v; MS Vaticano Borg. 161, fols. 160v–167v; MS Paris, Bibl. Nat. ar. 5667, fols. 228r–243r.

32 See for example al-Kisā’ī, *Qışaş al-anbiyā* 10f. Cf. also MS Leiden, 14.027, fols. 2a ff. The opening chapter of the Leiden manuscript, a reworking of al-Kisā’ī’s work in Maghrebi script, is titled *faṣl dhukira fihi masā’il yawm al-qiyāma* (“a chapter dealing with aspects of the Day of Resurrection”) and is traced back to the Prophet and Ibn ‘Abbās. In the following folios (3v ff.) paragraphs are derived from the beginning of al-Kisā’ī’s work, and other authorities such as Wahb and Ka’b are quoted.

33 *Manuscrito de Ocaña*, fols. 45 ff.

re-workings of eschatological and cosmological traditions usually attributed to Ka'b al-Aḥbār, Wahb b. Munabbih and Ibn 'Abbās. Consequently, these Aljamiado texts belong squarely in this literary tradition. Some interpretations appear original, for example, that Laẓā, Ḥuṭama, Jaḥīm and Sa'ir are the names of valleys in hell,³⁴ but it is only natural that narratives in this kind of literature develop and grow in such ways. What is relevant, however, and what will become clearer after we have examined other kinds of narratives, is that in none of the Arabic versions consulted for this study can one find an apparent source or model for the Aljamiado versions. Furthermore, the existence of two families of the narrative, both of which were copied multiple times, indicates a more conservative attitude at work in the Aljamiado texts than in the body of related Arabic texts.

2.2 *The Night Journey and Ascension of Muḥammad*

The night journey (*isrā'*) and ascension (*mi'rāj*) of Muḥammad is one of the most significant episodes in the biography of the Prophet, and consequently one which gave rise to a rich literary genre ranging from early hadith reports to carefully composed longer narratives and literary works written in all the Islamic languages.³⁵ The story, as told in its various versions, includes eschatological details, in particular in the Prophet's vision of paradise and hell.³⁶ Aljamiado versions of the story have attracted some scholarly attention. Kontzi was the first to point out that the six known Aljamiado versions fall into two distinct groups or families.³⁷ Recently, William Reuter has produced the most comprehensive study on the topic, in which he also discusses the possible Arabic Islamic versions from which the Aljamiado texts are derived.³⁸

34 Hadiths and hadith-like reports usually include traditions identifying various names of *wādis* with certain Quranic terms or other names. See, for instance, Ibn Abī l-Dunyā, *Ṣifat al-nār* 37–48; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Budūr al-sāfira* 314–20; Qurtubī, *Kitāb al-tadhkira* ii, 871–6.

35 The scholarly literature on the topic is abundant. On this topic, and also in relation to Spanish versions of the *mi'rāj*, the work of Asín Palacios, *La escatología musulmana*, is still fundamental. For a comprehensive picture and for further references, see the recent work by Colby, *Narrating Muḥammad's Night Journey*. See also Colby, *Constructing an Islamic ascension narrative*. This PhD dissertation was partially published in the above monograph but its unpublished part analyzes late medieval literary works and is therefore the most relevant for our topic. For contributions about the *mi'rāj* in a variety of Islamic literatures, see Gruber/Colby, *The Prophet's ascension*.

36 On eschatology, see Tottoli, *Tours of Hell*; idem, *Muslim eschatology*.

37 Kontzi, *La ascensión* 45–54.

38 Reuter, *Aljamiado narratives*. See also Hachard, *L'ascensión*.

Reuter's work, which follows a number of studies by Islamicists on the topic, above all those of Colby, takes the latter's line of enquiry in his interpretation of the evolution of the story and the emergence of its various versions. Thus, he points to the diffusion of texts and traditions related on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās but originating, in reality, from one Abū l-Ḥasan al-Bakrī (fl. third/ninth century [?]), or at least circulating under his name. Reuter further argues that the division into two families suggested by Kontzi is basically correct but that it fails to take account of textual differences between specific manuscripts within the same family. Reuter points out that these differences are, in fact, far from minor.³⁹

I have already discussed elsewhere how, in the spread and diffusion of the medieval literature on Muḥammad's ascension, eschatological elements were gradually inserted, thereby enriching a growing narrative.⁴⁰ In general, the inclusion of a comprehensive description of paradise and hell is more usual in popular narratives than in works of theology, or in more strictly hadith-oriented collections. As for the different Aljamiado versions of the ascension, we find that they, too, include some descriptions of paradise and hell. This invites consideration about the relations between these versions and the body of Islamic literature as a whole.

In the Islamic literature on Muḥammad's ascension, the issue that absorbs most of the Prophet's vision of hell is the description of the punishments suffered therein. In one Aljamiado version, Gabriel shows *jahannam* to Muḥammad in the fifth heaven, and the Prophet sees people of his community (*alumma*) who eat fire, and over whose faces fire is poured. When he asks about the identity of particular groups of the damned, he is given the answer that they are the wine-drinkers and those who consume the property of orphans, two of the most 'classical' groups of sinners in hell.⁴¹ Other versions add to these two categories a third one, describing the punishment of women who treated their husbands badly.⁴² In other versions the vision of *jahannam* takes place in heaven right before the Prophet's return to Mecca, and the three

39 Reuter, Aljamiado narratives 85.

40 See Tottoli, *Tours of Hell*, and Tottoli, Muslim eschatology.

41 *Aitona*, 307, *Junta* 57, 87v–88r; Guillén Robles, *Leyendas moriscas* ii, 285 (from MS Madrid, BRAH T17). Two categories are also mentioned in the brief reference to the story in *Manuscrito de Ocaña*, 18–9 (transl. 28–9), that is, those wasting orphans' goods and users. See on this Reuter, Aljamiado narratives 99.

42 Reuter, Aljamiado narratives 253 (from MS Paris, BNF 1163).

groups of the damned are identified as those who consume the property of orphans, women who treated their husbands badly, and the rich (*ricos*).⁴³

A few things are remarkable about these scant details. First of all, few categories of sinners are named. Those which are include 'classical' ones such as usurpers of the property of orphans and misbehaving wives—two types that appear already in early traditions, where other categories are also named.⁴⁴ It can be stated, therefore, that there is little trace in the Aljamiado versions of further re-modellings and enlargements, such as is evident in some other Arabic narratives written around the same time. The inclusion of rich people among the damned, however, appears to be an original touch, at least in the Aljamiado wording, which is devoid of further qualifications. (Sometimes Arabic versions of Muḥammad's ascension mention among the damned those who have money but do not spend it on the way of God etc.) Such is also the case with the mention of wine-drinkers, which occurs repeatedly, and may point to the particular pressures of living in a Christian environment in which wine-drinking would have been commonplace.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, it is clear that in Aljamiado versions of the ascension the eschatological descriptions are scant and much reduced if one compares them, as Reuter does, with those in the *Liber scalae*⁴⁶ or, as one might add, with those which are found in the enlarged versions of the al-Bakrī narrative.

In conclusion, on the evidence of the Prophet's vision of hell, it can be stated that the Aljamiado versions of Muḥammad's ascension did not undergo any significant remaking or enlargement, even though there are some noteworthy differences found in them. The few details given about hell are among those most commonly found in the early hadith literature and in hadith-like

43 *Junta* 9, 242. See also from the same manuscript in López-Morillas, *Textos aljamiados* 138; Kontzi, *Aljamiado Texte* 870–1 (from MS Madrid, BNM 5053): orphans, women and *ricos*. Other categories can sometimes be found. For example, according to *Junta* 9, 425, those giving false testimony—another recurring category—will have tongues so long that they reach the depths of *jahannam*.

44 See for example, 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Tafsīr* i, 367–8; Yahyā b. Sallām, *Tafsīr* 107–8; Hūd b. Muḥakkam, *Tafsīr* ii, 402–3; Ibn Hishām, *Sīra* 272. On this hadith see Colby, *Constructing an Islamic ascension narrative* 191–6. See further references in Tottoli, *Tours of Hell* 13.

45 *Aitona*, 307; *Junta* 57, 87v–88r. See also Guillén Robles, *Leyendas moriscas* ii, 285 (from MS Madrid, BRAH T17). Other passages emphasize winedrinking; see, for example, *CSIC* XXIX, 46, and *Junta* 9, 424, where winedrinking is mentioned alongside usury (*comer logro*). See also *Junta* 9, 426: winedrinkers will be thrown in the fire of *jahannam*; Reuter, *Aljamiado narratives* 185 (from MS Madrid, BRAH T17), 209 (from MS *Junta* 57).

46 Reuter, *Aljamiado narratives* 61–2.

traditions, and contain no elaboration; one reason for this is simply that the Aljamiado versions are shorter than most Arabic ascension narratives compiled from the eighth/fourteenth century onwards. Overall, however, in regard to their eschatological contents the Aljamiado versions are another piece in the wider body of Muslim literature about the Prophet's ascension.

2.3 *The Colloquy of Moses and God (Munājāt Mūsā)*

Aljamiado literature includes a number of different versions of the story of the colloquy between Moses and God. In the Arabic versions Moses comes to know of the privilege accorded to Muḥammad's community and God provides answers to a series of questions posed by Moses, who expresses a desire to belong to that community. The story also includes a variety of topics and motifs within this basic framework, thereby considerably enlarging the story, which in some instances becomes a long and strictly patterned question-and-answer session between Moses and God. A description of hell only occurs in some of the Aljamiado versions of the story. We find mention here again of the *kulebras de jahannam* ("serpents of *jahannam*"), whose great size is described, of the *al-aqrabes* ("scorpions"), and of the *grillones del fuego* ("shackles of fire"). Then, when Moses asks what *jahannam* is like, God answers that there are seventy thousand towns in it, that each town has seventy thousand castles, and so on and so forth. This is followed by lists of serpents, scorpions and *grillones*.⁴⁷ This imagery is well attested in hadith literature and reflects traditional views. The stereotypical descriptions of this imagery usually involve huge numbers and dimensions.

Next in the Aljamiado versions of the colloquy comes a list of the sinners who enter hell. There are the *renegado[s]* ("apostates"), a category that appears specific to the Morisco context, unbelievers, disobedient wives, wine-drinkers, adulterers, those committing usury, and a number of others. They all are doomed unless they repent and act correctly.⁴⁸ Thus, in some of the Aljamiado versions of the colloquy one comes across a comprehensive description of hell and a relevant list of sinners. However, most of the extant Aljamiado versions of the colloquy simply mention hell and *jahannam* but add no details; this is reflected in the fact that of the three versions collected and transcribed by

47 *Paris* 774, 276–7; Vespertino Rodríguez, *Leyendas aljamiadas* 220–2; BRAH T8, 472–3.

48 *Paris* 774, 277; Vespertino Rodríguez, *Leyendas aljamiadas* 221. See another but later manuscript (Madrid, Bibl. Real, no. 1767), which includes a description of punishments in the dialogue between God and Moses: Castrillo, *Un manuscrito* 40.

Vespertino Rodriguez, which can be said to constitute a characteristic sample, only one of them contains a description of hell.⁴⁹

This reflects what is found in the Arabic versions. Not all of them include a description of hell, which in some cases is mentioned only briefly,⁵⁰ although in some instances we find long descriptions of the punishments awaiting sinners. These are given in God's answer to Moses's question about what the penalty for certain acts, such as consuming the property of orphans, deceiving people, eating forbidden food, wasting money, usury, adultery, and so on, will be.⁵¹ Although there is no comprehensive study of this literature, some of its peculiarities are known from articles by Joseph Sadan and Omar Alí-de-Unzaga. Sadan has shown how many variants there are, not only between Christian and Muslim versions, but also within the corpus of Arabic Islamic versions.⁵² Alí-de-Unzaga has further underlined this while also drawing attention to the fact that the various versions he studied are characterized by some variations, but also by a range of common themes, of which a "description of paradise and hell" is one.⁵³

This picture conforms to the complex mechanisms by which different narratives and their variants were diffused across the medieval Muslim world. Aljamiado narratives about Moses's colloquy with God are no different from the medieval literary reworkings and enlargements of other stories and legends. The Aljamiado texts in this case simply mirror the prevailing situation in Arabic literature as a whole. However, regarding the description of hell and the

49 Vespertino Rodriguez, *Leyendas aljamiadas* 161–234. See also the various narratives collected and analyzed by Kobrin, *Moses on the margin*.

50 *Munājāt Sayyidinā rasūl Allāh* 7; *Hadhihi munājāt kalīm Allāh* 5. No relevant eschatological details are mentioned in the versions of the related story of Moses, the hawk and the dove. See Bellino, *Mosè, il Falco e la Colomba*: Edizione; idem, *Mosè, il Falco e la Colomba*: Origine.

51 *Al-Munājāt al-kubrā* 32–4; *Qışsat munājāt kalīm Allāh* 11–2. See also MS London, British Library Or. 437, which includes fourteen answers by Moses on the destiny of various sinners (I am indebted to Omar Alí-de-Unzaga for this reference). Further manuscript versions of the *Munājāt Mūsā* are briefly discussed and listed in Sadan, *Some literary problems* 373–4 n.56, 395–6. According to J. Sadan (personal communication, 1 October 2012), hell is not a common topic in these versions.

52 Sadan, *Ants* 422–40. In a long note Sadan discusses Aljamiado versions that derive, as he says, from one of the earlier Muslim versions. In relation to a single episode of the story, he states, referring to the version in the MS Urrea de Jalón (edited by Corriente Córdoba, *Relatos píos* 84), how the different Aljamiado versions preserve or not this particular, which is attested only in some Arabic manuscripts. See Sadan, *Ants* 429 n. 76.

53 Alí-de-Unzaga, *The conversation between Moses and God* 377.

sinner destined for it, the Aljamiado texts, unlike the longer Arabic reworkings, are evidence for the diffusion of shorter versions. In the case of the colloquy of Moses and God, no direct Arabic source for the Aljamiado versions could be identified.

2.4 *Jesus and the Skull*

Another widely diffused narrative in Muslim literature that found its way into Aljamiado works is the story of Jesus and the skull. In this story Jesus revives a skull, and the skull proceeds to tell Jesus a tale about his former owner's descent into hell, of which a long description is given. Then Jesus calls the man back to life so that he can convert and become a proper Muslim. The story is attested in many languages, from Aljamiado Spanish to Indonesian, and has been the topic of various studies.⁵⁴ An examination of the Arabic versions has shown that almost all of them are original works that combine elements from a fixed set of themes and motifs. Only in rare cases can a direct textual relationship based on the copying of written versions be ascertained.

In contrast, the three Aljamiado versions of the tale belong to the same textual family, and the text circulated in the Aljamiado community in a version that includes all the themes attested in medieval Arabic remakings.⁵⁵ Only one modern edition faithfully reproduces a manuscript version; the other two available editions are in reality modernized Castilian translations of the original. However, a simple comparison between these three texts demonstrates that they are substantially the same, notwithstanding some minor variations that seem to have resulted from reading or copying errors. Furthermore, the three versions of this Aljamiado text, when compared to the body of Arabic versions, show the same variability, that is, they treat themes and motifs in the usual order but change the wording and other details in a specific and original way. Consider, for instance, one of the main topics in the tale's description of hell: the doors/layers of hell and the categories of sinners punished in them, as seen by the skull's former owner during his tour of the netherworld. In the Aljamiado text, the man raised to life by Jesus states that he saw those who

54 For the Arabic versions, see in particular Tottoli, *The story of Jesus and the skull*, where there is mention of previous studies on the topic, above all those by Michele Bernardini and Fabrizio A. Pennacchietti. To the references quoted there add, on the Indonesian versions, Brakel-Papenhuyzen, *The tale of the skull*. See also Tottoli, *What will be the fate*.

55 These are MS Madrid, BNM 5305, 16v–22v, edited by Vespertino Rodríguez, *Leyendas aljamiadas* 342–8; MS Madrid, BNM Gg 196, published by Guillén Robles, *Leyendas moriscas* i, 159–70; and MS Escuela Pías de Zaragoza 11, published in Vázquez, *Desde la penumbra* 158–64.

consumed the property of orphans in the first layer, perjurers and blasphemers in the second, wine-drinkers in the third, those who eat what is forbidden in the fourth, wives maltreating their husbands in the fifth, and adulteresses in the sixth, while the seventh layer defies description.⁵⁶ The river al-Falaq is then mentioned, as well as a deep pit in which there is a terrible fire.⁵⁷ The three versions display, as stated above, some typical textual variations, even in the terms used to describe some of the categories, but these variations point to a rewording by a copyist. In some cases, such as the MS Escuelas Pías de Zaragoza no. 11, the mention of the paradisiacal river al-Kawsar (*sic*) instead of al-Falaq seems to be due to the confusion of the copyist or to careless editing of the text.⁵⁸

The textual condition of the Aljamiado versions necessitates further consideration. As mentioned above, these versions are similar to the Arabic ones in regard to the themes, phrases and words that are used. However, they have two unique characteristics. Firstly, the Aljamiado versions are shorter than the Arabic ones, and are not enlarged or terminologically enriched as regards the standard themes that they cover. The sensitive topic of the categories of sinners and their position in the seven layers of hell can serve as a useful example of this. In the Aljamiado versions this theme is merely a summary of what the Arabic texts deal with much more extensively. While the latter indicate the categories of sinners and specify the names of the layers of hell, repeating what kinds of people are destined for them, the Aljamiado versions do not name the layers, mentioning only the categories of sinners. Secondly, the three Aljamiado versions are all basically the same text; in contrast, the Arabic versions, for the most part, are mutually independent, original reworkings.⁵⁹

56 Vespertino Rodríguez, *Leyendas aljamiadas* 346–8; see also Vespertino Rodríguez, *Las figuras de Jesús y María* 286; Guillén Robles, *Leyendas moriscas* i, 167–9; Vázquez, *Desde la penumbra* 161–3.

57 See Vespertino Rodríguez, *Leyendas aljamiadas* 348; Guillén Robles, *Leyendas moriscas* i, 169; *BNM* 4953, 124. The name *al-falaq* is not very frequent in medieval larger remakings. It appears in Saqṣīnī, *Zahrāt al-riyāḍ* 37, and MS Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Sprenger 2005, 22r, where it is identified with a castle with a thousand houses etc. Cf., however, Asín Palacios, *Logia et agrapha Domini Jesu* 427, where *al-falaq* is a river above which is the seventh layer of hell, in which the damned undergo terrible punishments. Similar is the version in Saqṣīnī, *Zahrāt al-riyāḍ* 37.

58 Vázquez, *Desde la penumbra* 163 rightly indicates in a note that it is strange to find here the paradisiacal river. One assumes this to be a misreading on the part of the copyist of the manuscript, or by the editor.

59 See Tottoli, *The story of Jesus and the skull* 247–8; idem, *What will be the fate*.

An examination of an Andalusí Arabic version found in the *Manuscrito de Ocaña* studied by Iris Hofman Vannus provides some clues about the original Arabic version on which the Aljamiado one is based.⁶⁰ This particular version of the story of Jesus and the skull is identical with the Aljamiado version in both its general scope and detail; it certainly belongs to the same family of texts. However, there are also differences. The list of sinners and layers is similar but not entirely identical, and sentences are either added or omitted in the Aljamiado version.⁶¹ Other small details suggest that the Aljamiado translator did not use this Arabic version as a direct source, but rather employed a text which was very similar.⁶²

Finally, some further remarks can be made in relation to the categories of sinners and types of punishment recounted in the story of Jesus and the skull. Most of the Arabic versions of the story and the Islamic eschatological tradition as a whole include long lists of sinners, while naming in various contexts the seven layers and the categories of people destined for each. The much-discussed question as to what people inhabit the seven layers of hell was in fact what prompted the introduction of categories of sinners. We have already discussed this issue in a previous contribution, pointing out how different sets of traditions responded to various concerns, and most probably targeted different audiences.⁶³ However, the Aljamiado versions of the story of Jesus and the skull include neither the names of the layers nor the categories of sinners that typically belong to them, that is, Jews, Christians, Mazdeans, etc.⁶⁴ This

60 Hofman Vannus, *Jesus y la calavera*.

61 According to *Manuscrito de Ocaña* 44, the first layer is inhabited by those who waste the property of orphans, the second by perjurers, the third by wine-drinkers, the fourth by those who eat what is *ḥarām*, the fifth by women who calumniate and abuse their husbands with their tongues, and the sixth by women mourners and those who do not cover themselves before men. Finally, in the seventh layer there is a valley named al-Falaq in which various punishments take place.

62 There is no use in listing additions or omissions on one or the other side. In general the similarity is striking and the wording largely identical. In some passages the Aljamiado version omits something or, more significantly, inserts something. These additions, however, cannot be considered the copyist's invention, since they are also attested in Arabic literature more widely. Thus, for instance, the Aljamiado versions add that the skull is white while the *Manuscrito de Ocaña* misses this detail. See Vespertino Rodríguez, *Leyendas aljamiadas* 342. Many other details suggest a similar situation. Note that where the *Manuscrito de Ocaña* has *abwāb al-nār* (*Manuscrito de Ocaña* 44), the Aljamiado version has *puertas de jahannam* (Vespertino Rodríguez, *Leyendas aljamiadas* 346).

63 See Tottoli, *Tours of Hell*.

64 Polemics of this kind only appear in other narratives, but not in the story of Jesus and the skull. For instance, a Morisco text in Latin characters coming from Tunis, while not

points to the fact that, while a major concern of the Arabic versions of the story of Jesus and the skull is interreligious polemic, the Aljamiado version does not share this concern. Instead, it adds a new category of sinner, namely the wine-drinkers, who are not mentioned in any Arabic version apart from that found in the *Manuscrito de Ocaña*. The Aljamiado version has a specific interest in this question, as we have already noted above, and this specific trait defines the originality of the Aljamiado version. At the same time, however, it conforms perfectly to the way the Arabic versions were diffused and spread all over the Islamic world.

2.5 *The Tale of the Donzella Carcayona and other Texts*

Ideas of Islamic eschatology and the Muslim hell are also related in the story of the *Donzella Carcayona*, which exists in a number of Aljamiado versions. Given that the text originates from within the Aljamiado community itself, the question of how it relates to the body of non-Aljamiado Islamic literature is moot. The contents of this story are significant only in as far as they help us to delineate what ideas about hell circulated in Morisco circles. The story is a fairytale about a dove teaching the tenets of Islam to the *Donzella Carcayona*, and includes a description of the “fire of *jahannam*” awaiting those who disobey God. Pino Valero Cuadra, in his *La leyenda de la Doncella Carcayona*, has recently introduced, described and edited the different versions of this story, using six manuscripts. With regard to hell, the text mentions a place made of fire, iron, stones and so on, in which angels punish the damned. This is followed by a standard description of the seven gates (*puertas*) of hell. The names of these gates are explained in terms of what the fire does to the damned, but there is no mention of the categories of sinners. The names are, from the first to the seventh gate, Jahannam, Lazā, Saqar/Safalar,⁶⁵ al-Ḥuṭama, Saʿīr, al-Jaḥīm,

naming the layers, mentions the seven *lugares* (places) of hell. In the first there are believers; in the second Jews; in the third Christians; in the fourth and fifth the Gentiles; in the sixth philosophers; and in the seventh the hypocrites (*munāfiqūn*). See *BNM* 9653, 352. It is also relevant in this regard that the *Manuscrito de Ocaña* includes something similar, but again, this does not occur in its version of the story of Jesus and the skull. After giving the names of the doors of hell (*jahannam*, *saʿīr*, *lazā*, *al-jaḥīm*, *saqar*, *al-ḥuṭama*, *al-hāwīya*), the manuscript states that in the first level (*darak*) there are the hypocrites; in the second door (*bāb*) those slandering the Prophet and adoring idols; in the third the Mazdeans; in the fourth the Sabeans; in the fifth the Jews; in the sixth the Christians; and in the seventh the Muslims who committed grave sins (*kabāʾir*). See *Manuscrito de Ocaña* 73.

65 Safalar is the variant given in *Aitona* 229–30.

and al-Hāwiya. Then there is a pit named al-Hab or al-Habhab.⁶⁶ The fire of Jahannam is depicted as pitch black. The story then describes how Jahannam speaks to God on the Day of Judgment, to the despair of young people and women. Mālik and the punishments of hell are mentioned, and finally a—fairly typical—list of the contents of Jahannam is provided.⁶⁷

The description of hell preserved in this narrative fully tallies with the Islamic tradition in that it resembles other enlarged medieval hell narratives that combine quotations from the Quran with material culled from hadith literature while also going into greater detail on aspects such as angelology and the fire, as well as stressing the punishments of hell.⁶⁸ In general, the long description of hell in the story of the *Doncella Carcayona* further underlines the fact that Aljamiado texts strictly adhere to the Islamic idea of hell as it circulated during Morisco times. This phenomenon can be observed not only in the faithful transcriptions of Islamic Arabic texts into Aljamiado, but in original Aljamiado tales such as this one.⁶⁹

Other Aljamiado stories and tales also include references to hell, such as that occurring in a story about a disputation of the Prophet with the Jews, which is found in MS Paris 774.⁷⁰ In one text narrating the life of Jesus we find a discussion of the Arabic alphabet in which it is stated that the letters *wāw* and *zayn* are the names of valleys in *jahannam*.⁷¹ It is also not uncommon to find hell and its punishments mentioned in sermons and parenetic works prompting people to pray.⁷² This attitude is mirrored in early reports in Arabic Islamic literature that detail the punishments that await those who do not perform a certain religious duty. In the texts that describe the punishments in hell we also find the Prophet describing *jahannam* as a place of fire in which there is a deep pit, serpents and so on, and how people who listen to the Quran but do

66 Al-Hab: *Aitona* 229–30; al-Habhab: *Junta* 57, 44v (cf. Ibn Kathīr, *Nihāyat* 382; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Kitāb al-mawdūʿāt* ii, 434); Guillén Robles, *Leyendas moriscas* i, 202: alhab.

67 Valero Cuadra, *La leyenda de la Doncella Carcayona* 472–7; *Aitona* 229–30, *Junta* 57, 43v–46v; Guillén Robles, *Leyendas moriscas* i, 201–6 (from MS Madrid, BNM Gg 47).

68 Cf. the discussion in Valero Cuadra, *La leyenda de la Doncella Carcayona* 201–21.

69 As regards the text and the edition by Valero Cuadra, R. Suárez García raises some questions as to the origin, diffusion and reconstruction of the text. See his review in *Aljamía*, 14 (2002), 481–9.

70 *Paris* 774, 156 ff.

71 *Aitona* 243; *Junta* 57, 63r. See also Kontzi, *Aljamiado Texte* 658 (from MS Madrid, *Junta* 3): letters *hāʾ*, *wāw*, *zayn*.

72 See for example, *BRAH Tīg*, 48–9, 295.

not follow its precepts are thrown into *jahannam*.⁷³ These references further corroborate what has already been established, namely that the Aljamiado hell is perfectly in line with the Arabic Islamic idea of hell, which is strictly derived from the Quran and the imagery developed in hadith literature. When a small detail is added here or there, it can be explained by the same processes of remaking that are typical of all of Islamic literature in medieval times.

3 Conclusion

The results emerging from the comparison between Aljamiado hell narratives, their possible Arabic sources, and the other Islamic traditions and literary works to which they are related permit us to suggest a number of things. These are not definitive conclusions, but observations confirming some recent studies and highlighting other noteworthy points.

The first observation to be made concerns the “Islamic” character of Aljamiado literature. Previous scholarly evaluations of this include the well-known statement by Nykl that Aljamiado texts reveal the decline in knowledge of the precepts of the Islamic faith within the Morisco community.⁷⁴ This statement can no longer be considered as tenable, as other scholars’ research over the last decades has also shown. Instead, it seems the reverse is true: the Moriscos were a minority strongly attached to the tenets of their faith and the preservation of their literature,⁷⁵ and the passages on hell in the Aljamiado corpus of texts clearly indicate this.

Vincent Barletta, who analyzed various Aljamiado versions of the story of Muḥammad’s birth, suggested that these texts can be seen as Aljamiado re-elaborations that acquired specificity in particular contexts, for instance, in that of the confrontation with Christians, and thus display considerable variability.⁷⁶ He further maintained that the narrative amplification of single Quranic episodes is typical of Aljamiado-Morisco texts.⁷⁷ This does not appear

73 One report states that the bodies of the people of *jahannam* will have enormous dimensions—this is described in full detail—to be able to suffer greater torment. See López-Morillas, *Textos aljamiados* 118–99 (from MS Madrid, Junta 8). López-Morillas underlines that this idea is not found in the major books of hadith.

74 Nykl, *A Compendium* 29.

75 See on this Barceló/Labarta, *Archivos moriscos* 59 ff.

76 Barletta, *Gestos clandestinos* 130–5.

77 Barletta, Aljamiado-morisco narrative 57–8. The work of Barletta has great merits but, as has been pointed out by Alberto Montaner in a long review, the situation of Morisco texts is not so easy to define. See his review in *Aljamía*, 18 (2006), 243–85, in particular at

to apply to the Aljamiado descriptions of hell or, in general, to the narratives in which they are contained. Reworkings and revisions are not absent, and some elements point to specific contextual concerns, but on the whole the extent of these remakings is completely consistent with what happened with Arabic texts throughout the medieval Islamic world. Variants in wording and in how specific phenomena (sinners, layers, names and so on) are identified do not differentiate Aljamiado versions from those found in other Islamic literature; on the contrary, they demonstrate that Aljamiado texts were subject to the same dynamics of Arabic Islamic literature at the time. The reason for this is simply that, as in other Muslim literatures, Morisco writings display differing attitudes and concerns but were always engaged with existing modes of expression within the Islamic literary traditions. Even though Moriscos were coerced into a peculiar socio-political situation, this situation did not force them to embrace a radically different take on the Muslim literary heritage. On the contrary, the specific Morisco context gave rise to strongly conservative attitudes, resulting in faithful translations from the Arabic. When new versions were produced this happened according to typical Muslim conventions such as were in use in Muslim majority societies. Variability is one of the main characteristics of the late medieval Muslim production of this kind of literature. For instance, the variability that Harvey noted when studying the reception in Aljamiado literature of Abū l-Layth al-Samarqandī's *Tanbīh al-ghāfilīn*⁷⁸ indicates that medieval Muslim texts and traditions were reworked in the Morisco milieu according to mechanisms that unfolded elsewhere as well. Thus, the variability found in Aljamiado texts cannot be considered to reflect a pronounced context-specific concern for communal identity.⁷⁹

One question of great relevance is the relation of the Aljamiado texts to the original Arabic versions. As is evident in the descriptions of hell contained in the narratives discussed in this paper, there was a clear tendency in Aljamiado literature to produce versions that were relatively short in comparison to the body of late medieval enlargements and remakings in Arabic. The problem is how to know if this was because Aljamiado translators chose short Arabic versions or because they reduced and summarized the original texts. In the case of Aljamiado copies of Aljamiado texts, one sees a tendency towards reduction:

246, 257, and 279–80, where he discusses some specific points resulting from the specific Morisco situation that are not taken into consideration by Barletta.

78 Harvey, *Muslims in Spain* 147.

79 Pace Reuter, Aljamiado narratives 135. Reuter ignores the fact that texts and traditions on Muḥammad's excellence and its increased relevance were not peculiar to the Morisco environment but were quite common in the Muslim medieval world. See *ibid.*, 140.

new versions usually abridge and summarize older ones, while enlargements never occur. This is likely to have been an economic measure meant to preserve and include more texts in one manuscript.⁸⁰ A number of studies that shed light on this question suggest that short Aljamiado texts are not the result of summarizing activity but of the choice of specific Arabic versions for translation. For example, as Iris Hofmann Vannus has observed, the Arabic version of the story of Jesus and the skull in the *Manuscrito de Ocaña*, which was probably written in the middle of ninth/fifteenth century, is closely connected to later, short Aljamiado versions.⁸¹ Other scholars have highlighted the same phenomenon, stating for instance that the reduced versions in the Aljamiado corpus are closely related to the Arabic sources from which they derive,⁸² or alternatively affirming that the absence of exactly corresponding Arabic versions should not be overinterpreted.⁸³

Finally, there is one other question prompted by the analysis of the description of hell in these texts. This concerns the textual condition of the narratives as they were first translated from the Arabic and then underwent further copying and diffusion in the tenth/sixteenth century. I would suggest that it is in this respect, rather than in regard to content, that the diffusion and use of the versions bears the mark of the particular situation of the Moriscos. This point has been touched upon by scholars demonstrating that the faithful reproduction of texts is a sign of the specific Morisco situation.⁸⁴ It is true that a feeling of anxiety and concern about the future of the community prompted the circulation of this literature in the Morisco community, as well as the production of collections of miscellanea.⁸⁵ First and foremost, however, the situation in which the Moriscos found themselves brought about a conservative attitude, more conservative than that prevailing in other Islamic environments in which texts and their various versions were transmitted. The manuscripts studied by Martínez de Castilla Muñoz provide evidence that almost all the transmitted copies follow bipartite ways of transmission; that is, at the beginning of the

80 Cf. Martínez de Castilla Muñoz, *Una biblioteca morisca* 35–40.

81 Hofman Vannus, *El Hadīṭ de El profeta Muḥammad y el niño huérfano*.

82 Kobbervig, *Un cuento aljamiado* 52.

83 See Harvey, *La leyenda morisca de Ibrahim*; Kobbervig, *Un cuento aljamiado*. It must be pointed out that the use of Aljamiado, Latin or Arabic texts sometimes corresponds to the specific usages in different Spanish regions. Manuscripts that come from a region where the use of Arabic was still alive are different in this respect from those coming from regions where Muslims already used Spanish. In consequence, Arabic and Aljamiado manuscripts with similar contents may not reflect geographical contiguity and dependence resulting from direct translations.

84 On this point see above all Barletta, *Gestos clandestinos*.

85 See Reuter, *Aljamiado narratives* 133.

transmission process there were only one or at most two texts⁸⁶ (three in a few cases).⁸⁷ Copyists relied on these texts without ever translating original Arabic texts anew.⁸⁸ This means that after a set of Arabic texts on which Aljamiado translations could be based was put into circulation, it was no longer possible to access other Arabic versions, due to the isolation and difficult condition of the Moriscos. It may also be the case that Moriscos of later times preferred to stick to the Spanish of the already translated versions,⁸⁹ sometimes reproducing them faithfully and sometimes abridging or reworking them,⁹⁰ rather than to produce new translations. There are some instances of new translations of the same text or of a previously untranslated text, but overall, to use Montaner Frutos's phrase, the Morisco copyists reproduced *en cadena* ("in chain") from one and the same source. It is important to observe that this technique of transmission is more conservative than that which one finds in the Arabic literature of other regions of the Islamic world. Medieval Arabic bodies of literature, as in the case of the story of the night journey and ascension of the Prophet, and in that of Jesus and the skull, are characterized by a great degree of variation and a proliferation of different texts. By contrast, Aljamiado texts preserve the same text or remaking in as many as three or four different copies. This is a quite unique feature and as such deserves to be highlighted, showing as it does the conservatism at work in the diffusion of Aljamiado narratives.

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- 86 On the bipartite stemma in Aljamiado *mi‘rāj* texts see Kontzi, Problemas 122–4.
 87 See Martínez de Castilla Muñoz, *Una biblioteca morisca* 361, 366.
 88 See *ibid.* 303–4. This bipartite pattern of transmission is not to be confused with the problem, raised by Joseph Bédier, of bipartite stemmata in textual editing.
 89 No doubt knowledge of Arabic decreased; see Gómez Renau, *La lengua aljamiada* 76.
 90 On reworkings of the same text in variant manuscripts bearing the signs of variation but also of textual filiation, see Valero Cuadra, *La leyenda de la Doncella Carcayona* 27–33. In some cases, this resulted in the production of new versions; see Martínez de Castilla Muñoz, *Una biblioteca morisca* 388. On the dialectics between faithful reproduction and reworking, see Montaner Frutos, *En torno a la tradicionalidad* 349.

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