MUSLIMS IN CHRISTIAN IBERIA, 1000–1526: VARIETIES OF MUDEJAR EXPERIENCE[1]

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How does one begin to adumbrate a history as long, as complex, and as marvelous as that of the Mudejars? An eminent medievalist's strategy in introducing a more famously vanished world seems appropriate. 'What is a hobbit?' asked J. R. R. Tolkien. Hobbits are short, like dwarves, but have no beards, and there is little or no magic about them. Thus by juxtaposition with the known a new identity is ushered into the imagination. A similar process is at work in the creation of Mudejars. Mudejars are, or were, a Muslim people. But they merit a specialization and a name because, unlike Muslims *tout court*, they are subject to Christian rule.

The classification of Mudejars is therefore strictly a jurisdictional matter. Mudejars are Iberian Muslims with Christian lords. The existence of such a classification highlights a novel and important phenomenon: the birth of 'diaspora' communities of Muslims. The Mudejar experience of being a Muslim minority in a non-Muslim polity, of willingly living out one's days in the 'house of war', was exceptional for the Middle Ages. Today millions of Muslims live in non-Muslim countries. Some of these, like the Mudejars of old, live in areas 'reconquered' by Christians from their ancestors (e.g. the Muslims of the former Yugoslavia or the former Soviet Union). Others (e.g. Lebanese, Turk, African, Pakistani) are emigrants to more prosperous lands. These are all very different historical contexts from that of medieval Iberia. Nevertheless, the questions of acculturation, assimilation, and the maintenance of group identity that these Muslim populations face today bear more than a passing resemblance to those confronted by the Mudejars (Carmona González 1995; Fierro 1995). From this point of view, the 'Mudejar' category of identity is one whose relevance to contemporary issues is increasingly apparent.

MUDEJAR IDENTITY: IS JURISDICTION ENOUGH?

Like any category, however, this one obscures tremendous diversity. This is true even if we confine ourselves to the question of jurisdictional status. By strict definition, the young kingdom of Granada under Muḥammad I was by treaty a dependent state of Fernando III. But how much sense does it make to treat Granadan Muslims as

Mudejar? The Muslims of Crevillente submitted to Castilian overlordship in 1243, but they were ruled by their own *ra'is*, or lord, until they passed under the direct rule of Jaume II, king of Catalonia–Aragon, in 1318. At what point should we speak of them as Mudejars? We must not forget that Mudejar identity was a contractual identity, entered into through myriad treaties between conquerors and conquered, each different from the other, and each subject to constant renegotiation, reinterpretation, and change depending on circumstance. From a strictly jurisdictional point of view, there were probably as many Mudejar identities as there were Muslim communities.

Despite these caveats (and more to come below), it remains true that, for Mudejars and their contemporaries, all aspects of Mudejar identity flowed from their legal status, which therefore deserves attention. Mudejars were Muslims *de pacis*, that is, Muslims who had agreed, or more usually whose ancestors had so agreed, to be at peace with Christians and subject to them. In this fundamental way they differed from Muslims *de guerra*, who remained at war with Christians and could therefore legally be killed or enslaved by them. In principle, the rights of Mudejars were stipulated by treaty signed at the time of conquest. Given that the reconquest spanned half a millennium and a number of realms, it is not surprising that these treaties varied. The most important concessions, however, were fairly standard across time and are easily listed. In exchange for their labor and their taxes, Mudejars were to receive: 1) safety and confirmation of property rights; 2) guarantee of the free practice of religion, including the right to pray in their mosques, to teach Islam to their children, and to go on pilgrimage; 3) the right to rule themselves according to Muslim law (*Shari'a*), to be judged under it in any case involving only Muslims, and to name their own religious and judicial officials; 4) the confirmation of existing pious endowments in perpetuity; 5) a limitation on taxes, which were to be roughly similar to those paid under Muslim rule. (See, e.g., treaty of Xivert (1234) in Febrer Romaguera 1991: 10–16; treaty of Granada (1491) summarized in Harvey 1990: 314–23.)

These privileges are the foundation stones of Mudejar existence, which is not to say that they could not be violated or ignored. The last treaty of this sort, that signed with Granada in 1491–2, was irreparably broken within a few years of its signing. Less dramatically, all of the privileges contained in the earlier treaties were subject to gradual erosion or circumscription. The public call to prayer was often proscribed (Ferrer i Mallol 1987: 87–94), royal and seigneurial officials interfered in the appointment of judges (*qāḍīs*) and officials (García-Arenal 1984: 41), old taxes were raised and new ones imposed (e.g. the *servicio* and *medio servicio* of 1388: Torres Fontes 1962: 166). Occasionally, as happened in parts of Huesca (Aragon) in the thirteenth century (Utrilla Utrilla 1986: 202) and at Quart (Valencia) in the early fourteenth, a Mudejar community might even be expelled, and its lands confiscated. Mudejars were not naive on this score. One fourteenth-century Andalusi *imām*, Ibn Rabi', warned that Christian kings were fickle, and that even when they kept their word they could not always enforce upon their violent subjects the provisions of treaties they had signed (Koningsveld and Wiegers 1996: 27–8). Nevertheless, these treaties articulated the contractual basis for the continued existence of Muslims in Christian Iberia in formal legal terms that were remarkably stable. The treaty of Granada would

have been completely intelligible to those Muslims of Toledo who had surrendered their similarly magnificent city to the Christians nearly 500 years before.

THE SOURCES FOR MUDEJAR HISTORY

Treaties and jurisdiction alone cannot put flesh on the bones of Mudejarism. Fortunately many and diverse other sources exist from which to study how Mudejarism was experienced economically, socially, and culturally. Archaeology, for example, has yielded a vast amount of data about patterns of settlement (Glick 1995). The study of surviving pottery has underpinned arguments about the Mudejars' economic importance, as well as theses about Mudejar cultural decline based on the impoverishment of their stylistic practice (López del Alamo 1995). Here, however, I will confine myself to textual sources, which can roughly be divided into two types: those produced by Christians and Christian institutions, whether in romance or in Latin; and those produced by Mudejars and Mudejar institutions, whether in romance, in Aljamiado, or in Arabic. (Aljamiado is romance written in Arabic characters, though it often includes a good deal of Arabic vocabulary as well.)

By far the most abundant of these are Christian archival sources (by which I mean court cases, records of royal, municipal, seigneurial and ecclesiastical bureaucracies, and the records of notaries). Since the 1970s, these have served as the foundation for a body of work which established our understanding of the political, legal, and institutional underpinnings of Mudejar status. Even more recently, as scholars have become concerned about viewing the Mudejars through an excessively Christian optic, attention has shifted to Aljamiado and Arabic texts produced by Mudejar communities. Unfortunately the Mudejars themselves left little direct evidence of how they perceived their own identity, which in any case they themselves did not label as 'Mudejar'. Unlike their Granadan and North African co-religionists, Mudejars wrote no chronicles, no local histories. Perhaps for this very reason, few Mudejar scholars passed into biographical dictionaries of the type that Islamists have elsewhere put to such good use. For explicit Muslim representations of Mudejar cultural identity we need to turn to writers living elsewhere in the Islamic world, although, as we shall see, their claims have to be handled with care. But the Mudejars and their Morisco successors did leave behind a considerable number of contracts (Hoenerbach 1965), tax records (Barceló Torres 1984), polemical and religious works (Wiegers 1996; López-Morillas 1995), magical recipes (Harvey 1996; Kontzi 1984) and the like, documents which can be used to reconstruct their material and cultural world.

DEMOGRAPHY, LORDSHIP, AND ECONOMY

Perhaps the most important variable in analyzing this Mudejar world is demographic: different Iberian kingdoms had dramatically different numbers of Mudejar residents. Some 1,000 Muslims lived among 100,000 Christians in long-reconquered Navarre, while the approximately 175,000 Mudejars living in the rural

villages of fourteenth-century Valencia vastly outnumbered their Christians neighbors. Within kingdoms distribution was similarly uneven. Nearly all Navarrese Muslims, for example, lived in only one of the five provinces of that kingdom. Within Catalonia, more recently reconquered south-western regions such as Tortosa or Lleida had significant Muslim populations, whereas only one Mudejar family lived in Girona, a city in the shadow of the Pyrenees and the old Frankish March. The same gradation, albeit slightly more complicated by Muslim migration, could be drawn in Castilian lands from Andalucia to Asturias (Ladero Quesada 1989).

Even within one province of a specific kingdom vast demographic differences existed. In the Aragonese region of Huesca, for example, Mudejars might live in entirely Muslim villages, in places where the population and the town government were evenly divided between Christian and Muslim, or in towns and cities where Muslims were a tiny minority (Utrilla Utrilla 1986: 199). These differences had a significant effect on how individual Mudejars experienced diaspora. We will return to this issue below, but here it is worth noting that Muslim jurists were perfectly well aware of this effect. The same Ibn Rabī' cited above went so far as to divide Mudejars into three categories: those who lived as a minority dispersed among Christians, those who lived as a minority but separated from Christians in their own quarter or village, and those who outnumbered their conquerors. Each of these groups, according to him, experienced very different conditions. The first of them, for example, was particularly at risk of violence and assimilation, while the third was the most at liberty to follow Islam and therefore, somewhat paradoxically, had the greatest obligation to end its Mudejar status by emigrating to Muslim lands (Koningsveld and Wiegers 1996: 34–5).

Another variable, almost as important as population density in understanding the varieties of Mudejar experience, is lordship. Ibn Rabī''s third category probably alluded to one singular type of lordship in which Mudejars were ruled indirectly by Christians through Muslim lords. This type of lordship, which existed in places such as Murcia until around 1300 and Crevillente until 1318, was rare and generally represented a transition stage (Guichard 1973). More common was direct Christian rule, which could take as many forms as there were types of lords: kings, secular and ecclesiastical magnates, municipalities, and even burgesses or lesser nobles owning lands with no more than seven or eight Muslim vassals, all could be lords of Mudejars. Analytically, these types of lordship are generally divided into two overlapping but significantly different categories: royal and non-royal.

These categories overlapped because legally the king was lord of all Mudejars (as of all Jews) in the sense that he reserved the right to jurisdiction over them and generally collected some tax from them. Throughout the peninsula Muslims were the 'treasure' of kings and under royal protection (Boswell 1977). In a number of these regions, however, that jurisdiction became increasingly theoretical. Aragón again provides a good example. In the immediate wake of the reconquest, Aragonese monarchs found themselves in direct control of extensive lands populated with Mudejars as well as Christians. Over the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, however, kings in need of ever greater revenues alienated more and more of their rights over these lands. By the fifteenth century the only Muslim populations still under the direct lordship of the Crown were those in the large towns (Daroca,

Calatayud, Zaragoza, etc.), while most rural Mudejars, who constituted the majority of Muslims, had slipped under the control of noble houses such as the Luna and the Urrea (García Marco 1993: 113).

This shift, coupled with the largely rural distribution of Muslim populations in Christian Iberia, gave Mudejars a proverbial importance in the seigneurial economies of regions such as Aragon, Valencia, and Murcia: 'huerta que cava un moro vale un tesoro'; 'El que tiene moro tiene oro' ('a field dug by a Muslim is worth a treasure'; 'he who has Muslims has gold'). Muslim came to represent the ideal peasant, an industrious tenant-farmer who could be relied upon to fulfill his obligations uncomplainingly. In this sense the Mudejar was not 'marginal': he was fully integrated into the seigneurial system, even to the extent of fighting alongside Christians in feuds and skirmishes with the forces of rival lords (Nirenberg 1996: 34–5). In exchange, lords tended to safeguard the religious rights of their Muslim subjects. Some even commissioned translations of Muslim law codes so as to judge Mudejars under the *Sharī'a* (e.g. Barceló Torres 1989). More effectively than kings were able to do with their urban Mudejars, lords protected their rural Muslims from ecclesiastical initiatives of segregation (such as the wearing of distinctive badges or hair styles) and of religious repression (such as bans on the call to prayer). Later, in the Morisco period, some of these lords would be so fierce in their defense of their formerly Mudejar labor force as to attract the attention of the Inquisition. The point here is simply that the Mudejars' importance in the seigneurial agrarian economy helped to ensure that their religious rights were respected, and lent them a broader base of support than that enjoyed by that other Iberian religious minority, the Jews.

Most Mudejars were farmers on a small to medium scale (Ledesma Rubio 1981). A significant number were artisans and craftsmen. As such, Mudejars tended to specialize in particular trades, though exactly what these were varied according to region. In Valencia, for example, Mudejars dominated the pottery trade (Amigues 1992), in Murcia they played a vital role in transport, while in Aragón Muslims were particularly prominent in metalwork and construction. It has often been argued that in areas where it occurred, this specialization encouraged toleration by reducing competition between members of religious groups while preserving a vital economic role for minorities. The importance of this economic basis for *convivencia* is real, though it can be overstated. There were regions, such as Castile, where Mudejars never dominated any particular niche (Molénat 1994). Where they did, their preponderance was seldom such as to preclude significant competition from Christians: witness the conflicts between Muslim and Christian potters in Valencia. When Muslims did achieve a *de facto* monopoly, as among the blacksmiths of Daroca (Aragón), that monopoly itself could become the occasion for very significant friction.

It remains true, however, that Mudejar prosperity was very much rooted in these trades, from which many of the most prominent Muslim families emerged. The history of the Bellvís clan, a Castilian Mudejar family that moved to the Crown of Aragón, provides an excellent example. Faraig, the founder of the dynasty, was a veterinarian. Medieval veterinary medicine was primarily concerned with the care of horses and was so closely related to blacksmithing that at times the two professions shared a common guild. Not surprisingly then, Mudejars achieved some prominence

within the field. Faraig was one of these, becoming veterinarian to the royal household in the fourteenth century. Through such service, Faraig and his descendants became rich and gained important offices, such as *qāḍī* general (chief judge) of all Muslims in the Crown of Aragon. But such examples tell us more about the role of the royal household in creating minority elites than they do about monopoly and the economics of *convivencia*. There were a number of important Muslim veterinarians in medieval Iberia, but they never constituted a monopoly or even a majority of the profession. Faraig's success owed as much to the king's tendency to treat minorities in his household as representatives of their communities (as occasionally he treated his Jewish physicians) as it did to a Mudejar tradition of veterinary practice (Cifuentes 1998: 12).

The Bellvís example of economic and political prominence achieved through trades points to an important characteristic of Mudejar society: its relative lack of stratification. In general, the aristocracy of surrendering Muslim kingdoms had rejected Mudejarism. Some, like Ibn Maḥfūz, the ruler of Niebla, emigrated to Marrakesh after a brief period of vassalage under Alfonso X of Castile. Others converted to Christianity, the son of the Muslim king of Mallorca, for example, adopting the name Jaime de Gotor and marrying into the Aragonese noble house of Luna. Whatever the reason, few members of the Muslim military, religious, and cultural elite remained behind in lands conquered by the Christians. The result was a society that was remarkably flat. The precipices of privilege that separated a Faraig de Bellvís from the poorest Mudejar were far less dizzying than the corresponding differences in Christian or Jewish society. This does not mean that Mudejar society was any the less conflictual than these others: the clan-based factional conflict that was endemic to Mudejar society was if anything more violent than the 'class' struggle so evident among Iberian Jews (Meyerson 1991: 247). It does mean that Mudejar society lacked the economic and political resources to generate the types of literary and artistic cultures which tend to spring up around the patronage of the powerful.

MUDEJAR CULTURE: A HISTORY OF DECLINE?

It is against this background of a largely agricultural and artisanal population, often living scattered among Christians and subjected to pressures of acculturation, dependent on Christian lords for the maintenance of the privileges necessary to follow their own religion, that we must read the judgments on mudejarism pronounced by Muslims living in Islamic lands, for whom submission to Christian jurisdiction was associated with cultural vulnerability, corruption, and decline. The most often cited of these writers is the fifteenth-century North African jurist al-Wansharīsī, whose opinion of the Mudejar was not ambivalent: 'his residence is manifest proof of his vile and base spirit'. 'To exalt Christian and diminish Muslim authority is a great and disastrous ruination . . . and he who does this is on the border of infidelity.' The late fourteenth-century mufti (and emigrant from Christian Iberia?) Ibn Miqlash illustrated this cultural vulnerability in an unusual passage which depicts the fate of Islam under Christian rule in sexual terms. The Mudejar, he claimed, mingled with worshipers of idols and lost his zeal. His wife depended upon (and was therefore

sexually vulnerable to) his Christian lord. What fate could be worse, he asked, than that of one without zeal, either for his religion or for his wife! (Buzineb 1988: 59, 63).

Most jurists were less vivid. They stressed, not the debasement of the Mudejar's wife, but that of his religious and legal culture. By demonstrating that Mudejars were deficient in legal culture as defined by the Maliki scholars, these jurists argued that they were less than full Muslims. As early as the twelfth century no less an authority than Ibn Rushd (Averroes) ruled that Mudejars were of 'suspect credibility, their testimony in court cannot be accepted and they cannot be allowed to lead prayer'. The legal authority of the Mudejar scholars was doubtful, they asserted, because Mudejar judges were appointed by infidels and because they were ignorant, an ignorance which became something of a topos in the writings of North African and Granadan jurists.

There were, of course, among Maliki jurists less extreme opinions on the Mudejar question than those I have quoted (and it is to borne in mind that the Maliki school was the most uncompromising on the issue of Muslim minorities living in non-Islamic polities) (Abou el-Fadl 1994). I have dwelt on these more rigorous expressions because they provide a clear example of how a jurisdictional classification could translate into a cultural identity. The problem of Muslims who willingly and permanently resided in the lands of Christian enemies, and who by their labors directly supported these enemies in their long and successful war against Islamic polities, forced jurists to confront the question of what constituted a Muslim, and to use the ensuing characteristics, which they presented as normative, to distinguish the particular, corrupt nature of Mudejar Islam.

These jurists approached the corrupting effects of mudejarism through two quite different logics. The first was strictly jurisdictional: the Islamic life could not be fulfilled under Christian rule. How could one follow Muslim law if the scholars, judges, and officials were appointed by Christian authorities? How, without a Muslim head of state to pay it to, could one fulfill the obligation to pay *zakāt*? The second approach was more explicitly cultural. Al-Wansharīsī again, echoing Ibn Rabī':

> One has to beware of the pervasive effect of their [the Christians'] way of life, their language, their dress, their objectionable habits, and influence on people living with them over a long period of time, as has occurred in the case of the inhabitants of 'Abulla' and other places, for they have lost their Arabic, and when the Arabic language dies out, so does devotion to it, and there is a consequential neglect of worship as expressed in words in all its richness and outstanding virtues.
>
> (Harvey 1990: 58)

According to this model, the vital Islamic nature of Mudejar culture could be evaluated by measuring it against certain cultural markers drawn from the normative Islam of more central Muslim lands: language, legal procedure, dress, ritual, and custom. Ridicule of Mudejar Arabic was one very common strategy within this framework. Criticism of Mudejar legal knowledge was another, as when a Mudejar emigrant to Oran claimed, toward the end of the fourteenth century, that among

Mudejars innovation (*al-bid'a*) has 'extinguished the light of Muslim law' (Buzineb 1988: 65, lines 1–2).

MODERN APPROACHES TO MUDEJAR CULTURE: THE CONSERVATIONISTS

Modern approaches to Mudejar culture are in some ways strikingly similar to those of these medieval Muslim commentators. Like them, historians and philologists have tended to think of mudejarism as an impoverished culture in decline (Galán Sánchez 1991: 81–8). Indeed the first generation of modern scholars interested in Mudejar culture was composed of liberals who turned to the study of Mudejars expressly to show the corrupting cultural effects of intolerance, and who therefore embraced a historiography of decline. They differed from medieval Islamic commentators in that they positively valorized Mudejar culture: scholars such as Ticknor and Gayangos pointed to Aljamiado literature like the *Poema de Yusuf* in order to stress the persistence of lyrical sensibility and literary genius among the Mudejars. But like their distant predecessors, they presented their story of the weakening of Arabic as a teleological narrative of cultural destruction in which the creation of Aljamiado was a desperate effort on the part of a community under ever-increasing assimilative pressure to maintain access, no matter how impoverished, to its religious traditions.

Most later scholars have adhered to this paradigm. On the one hand they have sought to measure Mudejar culture against what they consider to be normative Islamic practice, a methodology that almost always finds the former wanting. On the other they have stressed that, to whatever extent that Mudejar practice conforms to the normative, it represents a 'courageous and stubborn defense' of Islamic identity (Harvey 1990: xi). Replication of a normative standard is here the ideal, and the Mudejar achievement consists in preserving from cultural encroachment as much of that original practice as possible: what I term the conservationist approach.

The contributions of this approach to the study of mudejarism have been enormous. Consider the question alluded to above: just how much Arabic did Mudejars know, and to what extent can their knowledge of the language serve as an index of acculturation? Until recently there was common agreement that by the fourteenth century only Mudejars in the most densely Islamic areas such as Valencia preserved a knowledge of spoken and written Arabic. In the rest of the peninsula, it was supposed, a shrinking religious elite struggled to retain Arabic as a written language, while the rest of the community became monolingual in the local romance dialect. Finally, in the late fourteenth century according to some, in the mid-fifteenth according to most, the exhaustion of Mudejar Arabic even among the elite led to the rise of Aljamiado as a replacement, its alphabet a superficial remnant of the holy language of the *Qur'ān*.

The past two decades of scholarship suggest that such a narrative does not do justice to the complexities of Mudejar bilingualism. Increasing attention to distinctions between spoken and written language, to class difference, to local and jurisdictional variation, and to genre, has made clear that Mudejars conserved a great deal more Arabic than was previously suspected. The evidence, of course, is

haphazard. For example, an Aragonese student's letter (in Arabic) to his former teacher complaining that a Navarrese Mudejar had failed to send him copies of some Arabic sermons suggests that Navarrese Muslims still heard sermons in that language. (Whether they understood them or not is a different question.) That same student also told his teacher that he was up day and night studying the *Qanūn* of Avicenna, a devilishly difficult text to find 'highly acculturated' Muslims of Zaragoza reading in 1495 (Hoenerbach 1965: 345–8). Even in Ávila, which may be the city identified by al-Wansharīsī and Ibn Rabī' as a place where Arabic had been utterly lost, we find *faqīhs* (Tapia Sánchez 1991: 55). One fifteenth-century scholar from the town issued a *fatwa* in Arabic about the legitimacy of praying upon animal skins. The document was also signed in Arabic by the *faqīhs* of Burgos and Valladolid, both Castilian towns with Muslim communities considered highly acculturated (Harvey 1990: 62–3).

Given the conservatism of legal culture, it is perhaps not surprising that notarial practice is one of the best preserved domains of Mudejar Arabic. To draw again upon the example of long reconquered Navarre, there is continuous evidence into the sixteenth century of Mudejar scribes there producing legal documents in Arabic (García Arenal 1984: 36). This was a privilege Mudejars were willing to pay for, as when the Muslims of Fraga in the late fourteenth century bought a royal charter declaring Arabic their exclusive legal language. Notarial practice also makes it clear that when Muslim notaries turned to Aljamiado, it was not necessarily because they lacked a solid knowledge of written Arabic. Notaries might draw up a contract in Aljamiado rather than in Arabic because the local lord required it. Sometimes *faqīhs* tell us that they provided a document in Arabic, with a copy in Aljamiado at the request of and for the personal (i.e. non-legal) use of the client. And we can even see that some itinerant notaries would provide only Arabic documents in one village, and only Aljamiado ones in another (Miller, personal communication). Was this the result of the relative Arabic literacy of the communities? Of local seigneurial demands or customs? Or of rights specific to a given population?

It has become possible to ask these and many other questions only as recent scholarship has created what can justly be called a field of Mudejar Arabic. Its practitioners, moved by the pathos of what they perceive to be a nearly extinct Mudejar textual culture, have recovered precious examples of a vanishing species. Much the same is true of work in jurisprudence, and here too the result is a renewed respect for Mudejar conservation of textual competence. A considerable number of Mudejar legal documents survive, both in Arabic and in Aljamiado: inheritance stipulations, marriage arrangements, apprenticeship agreements, designations of procurators; in short, the entire formal apparatus of contract. These contracts were carefully regulated by Muslim law, and a number of influential formularies, called *wathā'iq* manuals, stipulated the form they should take if they were to comply with. that law. That same student whose letter was quoted earlier apologized to his teacher for not being able to forward him a copy of one such manual, by al-Djazīrī, because he had left the manuscript behind in his home town. Reading Mudejar documents against such formularies thus seems to offer a good diagnostic of Mudejar knowledge. To the extent that Mudejar documents differed from the norm, whether in formal structure, in the language they employed (i.e., Aljamiado rather than Arabic), or

even in handwriting quality, one could posit a loss of notarial expertise indicative of cultural decline or mixture.

This philological methodology continues to offer fascinating results. For example, discussing an Arabic document from 1451 in which an Aragonese Mudejar community designates a procurator, Alfonso Carmona shows that the redactor of the document adheres quite strictly to classical tenth- and eleventh-century manuals, and also has access to later and more detailed manuals from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. At the same time, Carmona marks the several deviations and omissions of the document, not so much as signs of cultural decline, but as adaptations to the Christian institutional and juridical systems within which Mudejar communities functioned. The scribe, for example, inserted some Aljamiado lines into the Arabic document, not because he did not know Arabic but because these were clauses drawn from and necessary within the Aragonese notarial tradition, though alien to the Andalusi one. In a more complicated case, Carmona shows how the desire of some Mudejars to follow Castilian rather than Andalusi dowry custom resulted in notarial attempts to adapt the Arabic formulaic tradition in ways which did not explicitly violate Muslim law (Carmona González 1993; Carmona González 1992).

These contributions, and others like them, provide us with a new sense of the vibrancy and creativity of Mudejar textual production. Nevertheless throughout Mudejar studies, the emphasis remains less on how or why Mudejars wrote what they wrote and more on the rudimentary, impoverished, and mimetic nature of Mudejar manuscript production. Put more abstractly, many mudejarists, and especially those dealing with the Arabic sources, measure Mudejar culture against an imagined normative Islam. Replication is here the ideal, and difference or adaptation is seen as symptomatic of acculturation and decline.

ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES:
MUDEJARISM AS A LOCAL ISLAM

The same types of sources can be exploited to quite different effect, in part by exchanging the 'normative' optic for a more 'local' one. Put crudely, scholars of Islam have tended to divide into two camps. On the one hand there were those interested in local forms of religion, primarily anthropologists, who focussed on religious practices that they believed made a particular local group distinctive, rather than on those which that group shared with other Muslims. Islamists, on the other hand, tended to focus on texts and their interpretation, not on local religious practice. With their text-critical and philological approach, the latter ask 'where does this text come from? how do its terms and ideas relate to the canonical Islamic textual tradition?' The ethnographers' questions are somewhat different: 'how do (or did, in the case of a historical ethnographer) people understand, debate, or apply the text?' Islamists generally presume a 'conceptual and normative core to Islam (containing, of course, several different schools and positions) that, adequately understood, could stand for the religion as a whole'. Ethnographers, on the other hand, while they have often been willing to grant the existence of such a normative core, tend to ignore it in their own work, preferring to focus on the distinctively local (Bowen 1993: 5–8).

Since its rise in the 1960s under the able stewardship of Clifford Geertz, the study of 'local Islams' has become tremendously influential in Islamic anthropology, but has not made much of an impact on the treatment of historical Islam. There are at least two reasons for this. First, it was not primarily concerned with questions about the social production of texts, questions which are central to historians, whose primary sources are largely textual. And second, the insistence on a 'multiplicity' of local Islams ignored the sense of many Muslims across diverse cultures and historical periods that there was indeed an 'external, normative, reference point for their ideas and practices'. In other words, fleeing from the universalism of the Islamists (who in turn are adopting the universalist claims of the texts they study), these ethnographers tended excessively toward particularism (Miller 1998: 12).

Increasingly, however, students of modern Islams have begun to focus on the tension between local practice and prescriptive textual norms as a central part of Muslim experience, and explored this tension through studies of how texts and traditions are produced, read, and debated. In particular, they focus on the role of 'culture brokers' within local institutions and on the religious discourse produced by these intermediaries. In the Mudejar field Kathryn Miller's recent work makes clear the value of such an approach. It draws heavily upon a cache of Arabic and Aljamiado documents discovered in the nineteenth century in the walls of a house in the Aragonese village of Almonacid in order to reconstruct the role of the Mudejar *faqíh* in the creation of an identity that is simultaneously resolutely Islamic and yet also aware of its deviations from the normative. In addressing this documentation, Miller invokes an admonition of the Comaroffs: 'if texts are to be more than literary topoi, scattered shards from which we preserve worlds, they have to be anchored in the processes of their production, in the orbits of connections and influences that give them life and force' (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992: 34). She focuses, first, on a reconstruction of the textual world created by the Mudejar *faqíhs*. What texts did they have available? How, in a society predating inter-library loan and far from traditional centers of Arabic manuscript production, did the *faqíhs* set about gathering the textual infrastructure necessary to their legal practice? Thus far the project is not very dissimilar to that of the 'conservationists' (cf. e.g., Carmona González 1993 or Albarracín Navarro 1994). The difference lies in Miller's goal, which is not so much the description or evaluation of the surviving corpus of Mudejar Arabic material as an understanding of the practices of the little-studied group that produced it, the Mudejar scholarly community (the phrase is not an oxymoron).

There can be no doubt that most of these Mudejar scholars felt that theirs was a culture in decline, one whose standards were failing. 'Because of the distance of our dwelling places and our separation from our coreligionists, no one is studying or writing. . . . ' Such laments were common coin among Mudejar scholars, and marked an awareness of the gap they perceived between their practice and what they took to be normative. Nevertheless, Mudejar *faqíhs* and notaries continued to produce Arabic legal materials, including collections of *fatwas*, notarial manuals, and contracts of all sorts (Konigsveld 1992). And while they frequently deferred to North African jurists and submitted legal questions to them, they were also perfectly capable of insisting on their own abilities. In one letter, for example, Miller presents us with a Mudejar *faqíh* named Aḥmad al-Zawārī, who complains that he has been slandered

as ignorant by some Muslim captives returning to the House of Islam. Al-Zawārī insists that this is a case of mistaken identity, and that he is 'a learned faqíh and a knowledgeable one, clinging to the book of God'.

Miller's point is that when we combine these traces of Mudejar bibliophilia with some of their surviving notarial production, we begin to have a sense of how the Mudejar learned classes authorized their scribal practice through constant reference to what they considered to be normative Islamic legal and textual traditions. Further, this scribal production can be contextualized within the particular structures of Christian domination experienced by Mudejars, both by studying the treatment of Arabic documents ('cartas moriscas') in Christian courts, and by following the careers of Mudejar officials through Christian archival documentation. In Calatayud (Aragón), for example, fifteenth-century notarial records can supply a wealth of information about the networks of patronage, kinship, and power within which Mudejar *faqíhs* functioned. When she has finished joining these notarial sources, recently studied by F. García Marco, to the surviving products of Mudejar scribes, Miller will have brought us a great deal closer to an understanding of how the Mudejars maintained a textual practice which they recognized as Islamic (Miller 1998).

DEFENDING ISLAM IN THE HOUSE OF WAR

Textual practice was not the only marker of Islamic identity that required defense and translation in a Mudejar world. We have already seen how the Maliki *faqíhs* insisted that Christian domination led to the degradation of a number of specific and indispensable markers of Muslim identity: Arabic, adherence to Qur'anic punishments (*ḥudūd*), inaccessibility of Muslim women to non-Muslim men. To these we might add, as North African muftis did, the inability to identify the start of *Ramaḍān*, to leave Christian lands on pilgrimage, or to fulfill the obligation of paying *zakāt*, all crucial obligations of the believer according to Muslim law. Given that many of these practices did in fact decline, how did the Mudejars mark new boundaries that they found adequate to a Muslim identity and imbue them with Islamic significance?

For some of these obligations the process is fairly straightforward. Mudejars, for example, tended to replace *zakāt* (which required a Muslim polity) with *ṣadaqa*, charity, and specifically with alms for the redemption of enslaved or captive Muslims. By the Morisco period we even find some North African muftis advocating this solution (Buzineb 1988: 60; Cantineau 1923). Other boundaries required more than reclassification to remain recognizable. Perhaps the one whose defense exacted the heaviest toll was that between Muslim women and non-Muslim men. Recall the words of Ibn Miqlash about Mudejars, whom he claimed cared neither for their religion nor for the sexual inviolability of their wives. The argument that under Christian lords Mudejars could not protect Muslim women from sexual advances by non-Muslims was often made by Granadan and North African jurists. Al-Wansharīsī even mentions the princess Zayda, who converted to Christianity and married Alfonso VI after the fall of Toledo. Without the power to enforce Islamic legal

prohibitions on intercourse between Muslim women and non-Muslim men, or to punish transgression with Koranic (*ḥudūd*) punishments, how could Mudejars maintain this essential boundary?

This was not a theoretical issue. Christian archives contain references to thousands of Mudejar women engaged in sexual relations with Christians and Jews. But these references are the result, less of cultural erosion than of new ways of maintaining boundaries deemed essential. Again and again Mudejar communities purchased privileges allowing them to put to death Muslim women accused of adultery or interfaith sex, though the *ḥudūd* punishment was necessarily commuted to the social death of enslavement to the Crown. Again and again Mudejar fathers accused their own and their neighbors' wives and daughters of transgressing these boundaries, and delivered them up for punishment. The Christian nature of the records that document the legal consequences of these actions should not obscure the fact that behind them lie Muslim communities and Muslim individuals translating Islamic legal prescriptions into Mudejar idioms (cf. Nirenberg 1996: 139).

Just as the risk to Muslim women in the House of War stimulated a heightened awareness of the boundary-marking role of women on the part of Mudejars, so the possibility of conversion prompted a heightened sensitivity to markers of religious identity. Consider the case of Juan de Granada. He was born a Mudejar, Mahoma Joffre, in Aragón in the mid-fifteenth century. An orphan at the age of twelve or thirteen, he left his village and went to Valencia, where he converted to Christianity and joined a military troop on its way to fight on the Granadan frontier. But he soon abandoned the troop and settled in Granada, where he lived for two years begging alms. In Granada he behaved as a Muslim, fasting during *Ramaḍān*, etc. (though he told inquisitors that he would break his fast secretly outside the walls, since his heart remained Christian). After some time he left Granada and tried to re-enter Christian lands, but was turned away from the frontier by Muslim guards who suspected that he was a *tornadiz*, a convert to Christianity. Finally he managed to find a Christian troop on the frontier, asked for baptism, and became a Christian once more, serving the captain of the troop for four years. After that time, he decided to return to his village in Aragón as a Muslim, where he lived for several years before a traveller recognized him and denounced him to the Inquisition. Every stage of this itinerary offers evidence of the acts of discrimination and discernment by which Muslims (and Christians) established religious identity in a society where the stability of that identity could not be taken for granted. For our purposes the most interesting example comes from Juan/Mahoma's Mudejar relatives. Because Mahoma's long absence made him suspect, his cousins repeatedly interrogated him about his religion. Over the years that followed they observed his behavior closely: dress, attendance at mosque, form of prayer, and fasting during *Ramaḍān*, in particular. And they suspected him, because he drank too much wine (Ledesma Rubio 1994: 63–103).

Here, as in the previous example about Muslim women, we see the responsibility for recognizing Islam and maintaining its boundaries devolving upon the individual Mudejar. If we cannot speak broadly of a late Mudejar shift of focus from *farḍ kifāya*, collective duties, to *farḍ 'ayn*, individual obligations, we can at least suggest a process of devolution by which the individual took increasing responsibility for patrolling

the boundaries of Islam. This process was, I believe, one of the most characteristic aspects of Mudejar Islam, and crucial to the production of an identity that simultaneously recognized its 'decline' yet resolutely insisted on its Muslim identity. From this perspective, much of what the North African jurists bemoaned as decline can instead be interpreted as dynamism. Consider as an example the rise of Aljamiado. From the point of view of 'class', it could equally well be studied as an example of the expansion of Islamic learning among Mudejars as of its contraction. The fact that the particular conditions in Iberia made it possible to justify an extensive practice of glossing and translation may have meant that knowledge which in more central Islamic lands was increasingly restricted to the 'learned class', the *ulamā*, in Iberia penetrated further into the 'popular' or 'ignorant' classes.

The unusually fertile field of Mudejar religious polemic may constitute evidence for this process. Beginning with Ibn Ḥazm (994–1064), Iberian Muslims seem more concerned with polemic against Christianity and Judaism than Muslims in more central lands, and this becomes increasingly true as the so-called reconquest continues. One may even speak of a tradition of polemical texts produced in Christian Spain by captives from Granada and North Africa, and circulated, glossed, and translated among Mudejars for hundreds of years. A particularly fascinating example by Muhammad al-Qaysī, a captive in the Crown of Aragon in the early fourteenth century, has recently been published from MS. 1557 of the National Library of Algiers (Koningsveld and Wiegers 1994). Al-Qaysī offers a moving description of the cultural effects of captivity, including the claim that his soul had betrayed him and his interior and exterior had become un-Arabic. But what is relevant to my point here is that al-Qaysī also provides the text of what he claims was his disputation with a priest in the presence of the king of Aragón. Entitled 'the Key of Religion [*Kitāb Miftāḥ al-Dīn*], or the Disputation between Christians and Muslims', the text was promptly translated in the first half of the fourteenth century into versions which survive in some four Aljamiado manuscripts. Al-Qaysī is not unique, nor is the Muslim–Christian frontier the only one polemically policed. We have, for example, a mid-fourteenth-century Arabic polemic written by a Mudejar against the Jews, the *Ta'yīd al-millah*, or Defense of the Faith, which exists in multiple Arabic manuscripts. What is more, some manuscripts of this polemic contain extensive inter-linear glosses in Aljamiado, and a number of complete translations into that language, as well as several adaptations, survive (Nirenberg 1996: 196–8).

The multiple survivals of these polemics are very unusual for so fragmentary a record, and attest to their popularity. Moreover, of all genres, these were among the first to be glossed and translated, a process that was well under way already in the early fourteenth century. These translations were not for the *faqīhs*, who did not need them at this early date. It seems more likely that they were intended for the broader audience of Mudejars, to enable each to become, in this 'land of polytheism', a defender of his own faith.

It was partly through such a devolution, I would argue, that Mudejars managed to maintain a sense of the dynamism of their faith while at the same time presenting themselves as a community falling away from ideal Islam. We are oppressed and our knowledge is declining, we can imagine the Mudejars thinking, but at the local level we are heroically Islamic, we who must strive constantly to maintain our individual

identities as Muslims. This productive tension between local and 'normative' is beautifully illustrated in a *fatwa* newly discovered by Kathryn Miller. It is written by al-Muwwāq, who was chief *qāḍī* of Granada in its final years. Responding to a question about how a Muslim should behave in the House of War, he replied by fusing, rather than opposing, the status of one learned in authoritative Islamic tradition with that of the individual struggling to make the discriminations necessary to maintain a Muslim identity among infidels. The individual Mudejar, he wrote, should 'be a faqīh of himself' (*faqīh al-nafs*). 'He teaches himself, and he should distinguish the good deed which presents itself from the bad one which befalls.' These words are a useful antidote to al-Wansharīsī's model of cultural corruption and to the modern historiography of decline, and a fitting characterization of the varieties of Mudejar experience (Miller 1998: 51, 57).

NOTE

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GLOSSARY

Aljamiado	romance written in Arabic characters
ḥudūd	Qur'anicly prescribed punishments for which there could be no mitigation
farḍ 'ayn	religious obligations incumbent upon each person individually
farḍ kifāya	religious obligations incumbent upon the community as a whole, but performable by a few on behalf of all
fatwa	a formal juridical opinion on a question of Muslim law
faqīh	a legal officer of Mudejar society, a scholar of Islamic law
imam	a leader of prayer, or more generally a respected and learned member of a Muslim community
Maliki scholars	followers of the legal school established by Imam Mālik b. Anas, whose doctrines were prevalent in Muslim Spain
Morisco	used, in later periods, to describe Muslims who had converted, or who had been converted, to Christianity
Mudejars	Iberian Muslims who by choice submitted themselves to Christian overlordship
mufti	a legal scholar who gives a fatwa
ṣadaqa	voluntary donation of alms; charity
sharī'a	Islamic law
qāḍī	judge

ulama	collective designation for Muslim scholars
zakāt	an obligatory charitable tax incumbent upon all Muslims and payable to the Muslim chief of state

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