Is Arabic a Spanish Language?
The Uses of Arabic in Early Modern Spain

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THE TENTH JAMES K. BINDER LECTURESHIP IN LITERATURE

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A cultural historian of the early modern Muslim West (Islam in the Iberian Peninsula and the Maghreb) and of early modern Spanish religious history, García-Arenal has published extensively on religious minorities: Mudejars and Moriscos in Christian Spain, Inquisition, Jews in Islamic lands, and dedicated much attention to processes of conversion, of messianism and millenarianism, and the study of saints and mysticism. She focusses on interreligious relations, cultural transmission, forced conversion and its consequences both for minorities and for mainstream society in Iberia.

Her best-known book is the one written with Gerard Wiegers, A Man of Three Worlds: Samuel Pallache, a Moroccan Jew between Catholic and Protestant Europe, first published in Spanish and translated into English by Johns Hopkins University Press in 2003, also translated into Arabic, Italian, and Dutch.
Her most recent books (in English) are:


Professor García-Arenal presented the James K. Binder lecture entitled “Is Arabic a Spanish Language?: The Uses of Arabic in Early Modern Spain” on April 16, 2015. A listing of lectures in this series may be found at https://literature.ucsd.edu/news-events/binder.html.

Abstract

Starting in the sixteenth century, a new interest in Oriental languages arose in Europe, and in particular an interest in Arabic. This interest in Arabic stemmed from the textual study of the Bible, which absorbed European scholars in the age of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. This is, then, an early “Orientalism” that has little to do with colonial enterprises, and follows different paths than those outlined by Said in his famous book Orientalism. It has traditionally been argued that Spain played no part in forming this Orientalist knowledge. In fact, from its European contemporaries of the sixteenth century down to the historiography of the twentieth century, Spain was essentially held to be an Oriental country itself, and therefore more of an object of “Orientalism” than an actual producer of Orientalist learning. This paper focuses on these two assumptions by examining the situation of the study of Arabic in Spain, and showing how in Spain Arabic scholars were immersed in a very specific context and in an ideological debate in which the role of the Arabic language was a crucial one. Throughout the sixteenth century there were significant populations of Arabic speakers living in Spanish territory. Spain’s relationship with these minorities, known as Moriscos or converted Muslims, was highly conflictive, and eventually lead to an identification of Arabic with Islam. The central aim of this paper is to examine the complexity of the relationship between early modern Spain and the Arabic language, including the language’s ambiguous standing, the need to de-Islamize it, and the different purposes for which it was employed. In particular, this talk will highlight the tension between impure origins (those of the converts from Judaism and Islam) versus sacred origins, and the efforts that were made to write an account of the sacred origins of Spain that would allow Jews and Muslims to be incorporated into the nation’s past. Language was an important part of the ideological debates. I will be dealing here with the different and complex ways in which Spanish early modern Christian society used Arabic as a tool to think about itself.

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This paper intends to deal with various aspects relating to the status of the Arabic language in Spain during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

In order to do that, and before narrowing down my focus, let me just cover briefly the intellectual, social, and political arena in sixteenth-century Spain so as to have a reference framework for the ensuing discussion.

1) In 1492, the Catholic king and queen conquered the last Islamic political entity in the peninsula, the kingdom of Granada. For over a century Granada had been the focus, for the Christians of the Iberian Peninsula, of a messianic faith in a revitalized Christendom. The Catholic monarchs had proclaimed the war on Granada a Crusade, a designation that had been essential in order to raise the large sums of money required to obtain the support of the Holy See; this also encouraged an eschatological frame of mind that gave Ferdinand and Isabella much-needed legitimacy. The conquest brought an end to the process described by official chroniclers as a “Reconquista,” a label that justified what they presented as a restoration rather than a conquest, as the end of an eight-hundred-year parenthesis during which Iberia had lived through the aftermath of an invasion. The end of the Reconquista set in motion the aim of unifying the entire territory of the Hispanic monarchy, not only under one sole pair of monarchs, but also under one sole law and one religion.

2) Jews were forced to choose between exile and conversion in the very same year of the conquest of Granada. Muslims were forcibly converted in 1502 in Castile and in 1526 in Aragon and became a very distinct minority, generally known as Moriscos, or newly converted Muslims, who were often crypto-Muslims.
3) Religious unification also entailed the imposition of unity of law, language, and customs. Anything (including music, dress, hairstyle, etc.) that might be considered as pertaining to the old religious communities was to be eliminated and was felt to be a threat to order and social harmony because it prevented true conversion to the Catholicism, which had become compulsory. In a burgeoning ideology of racial difference (this was the moment of the creation of a new institution, the Inquisition, but also of the blood purity laws, which established that persons with Jewish or Muslim ancestors could not gain access to positions of honor, power, or privilege), there was constant discussion concerning the relationship between inherited nature and acquired practices and, obviously, language was an important part of this discussion.

4) At the end of the sixteenth century, Arabic was still spoken and written by this population of Islamic origin in parts of Spain (mainly Granada, Valencia, and areas of Aragon). Inquisition files contain highly detailed information on the use of language and the writing of Arabic until the expulsion of 1609.

5) The use of Arabic was considered by Christian society indicative of Islamic beliefs and practices and as such was banned and persecuted by the Inquisition and by civil authorities. To that effect, the possession of Arabic books was forbidden in 1511. When the Cortes Valencianas prohibited the use of spoken and written Arabic in 1564, and Philip II followed suit by means of a decree in 1567 for the territories of the Crown of Castile, the Inquisition launched an effort to track down and catch all traces of written or spoken Arabic, which was strictly identified with the practice of Islam.

6) This overall negative attitude and the prohibition on speaking and writing in Arabic stood in contrast to the prevalent view in three main areas in which, for different reasons, Arabic was still highly valued in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: international politics, where Arabic was considered to be an asset in the frontier with the Maghrib; the study of language, where Arabic was held in high esteem because of its closeness to Hebrew, the Holy Tongue, and because of its influence on Spanish; and the writing of history, as historians turned to Arabic sources when writing the history of Spain.

Let me flesh out these three areas I have just mentioned. Arabic was considered a practical tool. It was instrumental for evangelizing and in missionary tasks. It was also useful in terms of Spain's relations with North Africa—that is to say, on a frontier with the Maghrib where many of the individuals who knew Arabic lived and worked. This included Moriscos who earned their livelihood in an intermediate zone and formed part of networks established in Morocco, Tunis, or Istanbul. The Arabic language (despite its prohibition) was therefore allowed to be used in Spain for purposes of translation and interpretation, especially in diplomatic, mercantile, and military relations. In short, it was used for mediation on the political frontier with the Islamic political entities in the Mediterranean—Morocco, above all.

With regard to scholarship, interest in Arabic was part of a larger European phenomenon. Early modern Europe was witnessing an unprecedented interest in learning the Arabic language. This philological interest was connected to the evidence of Arabic similarity with Hebrew and the usefulness of Arabic grammars and dictionaries for study of the Holy Tongue. It resulted in an increasing number of translations and citations of Arabic sources, in the purchase and cataloguing of Arabic manuscripts in the main libraries of Europe, and in attempts to institutionalize the teaching of Arabic at universities. In Spain, chairs of Arabic were created at the Universities of Alcalá de Henares and Salamanca. But most importantly, in the early 1580s, King Philip II created a Royal Library in his new palace at El Escorial that became one of the main repositories of Arabic manuscripts in Europe. The presence of Moriscos in the country and proximity to North Africa gave the incipient field of Oriental studies in Spain a different imprint than that of other European countries. In Spain this scholarly field was connected to an early modern Mediterranean world in which texts, artefacts, and scholars circulated in a rich contact zone with Arabic and Islam that included the remnants of the Muslim population still in Spain.

In the prologue written by Edward Said for the Spanish translation of Orientalism, the author conceded that he had said very little in the book about the "extremely complex and dense relationship between Spain and Islam, which certainly cannot be characterized as simply an imperial relationship." Not to have considered the case of Spain had prevented him from seeing that "it is a notable exception in the context of the general European model whose lines are laid out..."
in Orientalism." As Said himself admitted, such an allowance might have led him to qualify or even revise part of his own paradigm.

Said is by no means the only scholar to have ignored the case of Spain when studying early modern Orientalism, nor the only one to have declined to study the possible connection between the Spanish Empire and Orientalist knowledge, as has only very recently been pointed out by Barbara Fuchs. Ever since James Monroe published his well-known book on Arabic studies in Spain, scholars have argued that Spain played no part in the development of Oriental studies in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In fact, many scholars have also argued that Spain did not even participate in previous intellectual European movements such as Humanism and the Renaissance. In such a view it seems almost as if Spain were itself an Oriental nation rather than a producer of Humanism and Oriental scholarship.

This notion of Spain as an Oriental territory is an idea of some standing. It was the alleged reason why the distinguished founder of Renaissance studies, Jacob Burckhardt, stated in his well-known book that there had been no Renaissance in Spain. Among many passages that could be quoted, Burckhardt, when speaking of the miseries “brought upon Italy by foreign troops, and most of all by the Spaniards, in whom perhaps a touch of Oriental blood, perhaps familiarity with the spectacles of the Inquisition, had unleashed the devilish element of human nature.”

Of greater interest for the subject of this talk is the fact that in the early modern period other European nations already characterized Spain as Oriental, as part of an attempt to challenge its imperial dominion over parts of Europe. This interpretation remained the norm in Italy, France, and the Netherlands, and it caused much consternation among early modern Spaniards themselves, who acutely resented representations of their country as mixed in Judaism and Islam. Italians spoke of the “peccadiglio di Spagna” to refer, with irony and disdain, to the mixed origins of Spaniards and their ambiguous religious identity. In a famous letter to Thomas More in 1517, Erasmus of Rotterdam explained why he had turned down an invitation from Cardinal Cisneros to travel to Spain to work on the Polyglot Bible, explaining that he did not like a land that was so deeply semitized. This representation of the country affected the position of Spain in Europe and its aspirations within the Catholic world. The disdain provoked in Europe by the mixed origins of Spaniards created a game of mirrors in which Spain adopted a defensive attitude toward all beliefs within the heart of Hispanic Catholicism that might be deemed deviant. It also affected its relationship with the Arabic and Hebrew languages. How were Spaniards to create an identity that was cleansed of its mixed origins?

The contemporary European view of these events was very different from that held by modern Western historians, a couple of whom I have already cited. For example: In 1576, the well-known French thinker Jean Bodin developed his doctrine on the “marks of sovereignty,” considering one such mark to be the ability to oblige subjects to change the language they used. Bodin mentioned in support of his argument several examples of this, from the Romans to the Etruscans, and concluded by discussing the edict issued by King Francis I commanding that all ordinances and laws be drawn up in French rather than Latin. The same had occurred, according to Bodin, when the king of Spain had obliged the Moors of Granada to change their language and dress. He thought it was a most appropriate measure. We tend to forget that hybridity, and most especially religious hybridity, was considered as monstrous in early modern Europe. It created areas of ambiguity that were deeply disturbing for early modern Europeans. A shadow of uncertainty hung over the orthodoxy and loyalty of everything mixed; there was always something unnatural about mixing. Sovereignty was favored by the unity and loyalty of vassals, and Bodin thought, as many others did, that unity of language was necessary.

After the 1492 conquest of Granada and the first decrees of conversion (i.e., between 1499 and 1502), the first campaigns of evangelization of the Muslim population saw Arabic used by the missionary priests. Talavera, the first archbishop of Christian Granada, took a printing press to Granada and used it to produce catechisms in Arabic, as well as glossaries and small grammars (most famously the Arte para ligeramente saber la lengua árabe, published in 1504), and Arabic texts written in the Latin alphabet for use by priests who knew little or nothing of the language. These attempts to learn and teach Arabic for their use in missionary activities were short-lived: by the middle of the sixteenth century, Arabic was so closely identified with Islam that it had come to be considered an obstacle for the conversion of Muslims. Church and civil authorities both took the view that in order to uproot Islam as a religion, Arabic had to be erased.11

Throughout the sixteenth century, and more intensively from mid-century, the Spanish Crown, local authorities, and the Spanish
Inquisition enacted policies to confiscate Arabic books and generally bring an end to the use of the Arabic language, in line with the policy laid down by Cisneros in the proclamation mentioned above. I do not have the time here to review the different restrictive measures and the toughened stance toward Moriscos that came into place after the 1520s. An assembly met in the Royal Chapel of Granada in 1526 and banned the speaking of Arabic and its use in public documents, but this attempt clearly failed in its aims. Prohibition was only truly imposed by a royal decree of 17 November 1566, which was ratified on 10 December 1567. This law forbade all uses of spoken or written Arabic and gave Moriscos a deadline of three years to learn Castilian Spanish. It also banned Arab surnames, clothing and differentiating marks, as well as music, baths, and the possession of slaves and weapons. The ratified decree of 1567 caused consternation and anger among Granadan Moriscos (who were still mainly Arabophone) and was the main reason for the ensuing Morisco revolt known as the War of the Alpujarras (1568–70). This war, which lasted two years and was an especially ferocious conflict, led to a new Christian conquest of the Kingdom of Granada and ended with the enforced banishment of Granadan Moriscos to Castile. Relations between Moriscos and Christian society had been changed forever.

The restrictions on Arabic were intended to root out the Moriscos’ apparently persistent belief in Islam and to complete their conversion to Christianity. Despite repeated prohibitions, part of the Morisco community continued trying to learn Arabic and held onto Arabic books until their expulsion from Spain in 1609: several important hoards of books were found buried or hidden in their houses after they were forced to leave, and others were found later, some of them as late as the nineteenth century, when they sparked a new interest in Morisco literature. In sixteenth-century Spain, Arabic books were written, copied, and brought from North Africa by Moriscos. The same Moriscos also translated books from Arabic that were written in what is known as aljamiada, the Spanish vernacular in Arabic script, a sort of Islamic version of Spanish. Both Arabic and Aljamiado texts were sometimes destroyed and sometimes kept in secret by Moriscos, but after being confiscated by the Inquisition they were also held in collections that reached the royal library and the libraries of noble houses, contributing to the construction of a scholarly discipline. Scholars such as Bernardo de Aldrete, of whom I will speak later, the famous grammarian and writer of an important work on the origins of the Spanish language (1606), looked out for some of those books confiscated from the Moriscos in order to obtain them for his own use.12

Not all the Moriscos who wanted to keep Arabic alive were crypto-Muslims. Morisco elites and noblemen were keen to preserve the language, and this included their names and lineages, their memories, and the history of a glorious past, which explained and justified what they saw as their right to certain privileges. Among Christians, rejection of the language was also based on the fact that Arabic and the Moriscos themselves were living proof of the Muslim past of certain parts of Spain. As I have said, this past was extremely problematic for the new Spain created by the Catholic monarchs and legitimized to a great extent by its defeat of Islam.

Let me give a few examples of what I mean: Diego de Ordóñez, chaplain to princess Eleanor, sister of Charles V, complained that the damned "sect" would last for as long as the "Mahommedan" language continued to exist.13 Christians, wrote Ignacio de Las Casas, the well-known Jesuit of Morisco origin who wrote a small treaty in defense of Arabic, "are bothered by hearing them [speak Arabic],"14 and automatically identified knowledge of the language with being a Muslim, since it was "the Mohammedan language." In the words of the scholar Nicolás Antonio, "it cannot fail to disturb good Castilians to find themselves in Granada and see that on all sides Arabic is spoken, a language which reminds us of the errors in which it was held by the Mohammedans."15 (Please note the identification of Castilians—and specifically "good" Castilians—with Christians.)

Association of the Arabic language with the Islamic faith was unavoidable in a place like Granada where memory of the conquest was still fresh and had been exacerbated by the revolt of the Alpujarras. Christians remembered "the errors in which it was held" but above all, they remembered the errors in which we had been held: the mere sound of the Arabic language placed everyone under a cloud of suspicion and was a reminder of a non-Christian past, which there was a great desire to erase. In Iberia, Christianity had triumphed over Islam and had rooted it out completely. This ideology was a legitimizing device for a monarchy in need of sustenance and elaboration.

For this was the precise moment at which in Spain there emerged a type of historical writing we can call "proto-national," practised by the official chroniclers of Philip II such as Florian de Ocampo, Juan de Mariana, or Ambrosio de Morales. Such authors traced out the history of the new unified territory and also that of the huge leap it had taken by creating a new transatlantic empire. Nevertheless, it
was also a period that saw the proliferation of local histories and, in particular, the histories of towns and cities.

National or prenational history presented the period in which there had existed in Iberia an Arabic political power (called al-Andalus) as something profoundly alien, an open parenthesis that had not been closed. Yet this historiography, which used humanistic and antiquarian methods (i.e., it took into account inscriptions, archaeological ruins, tombs, and various other remains) and which had gathered a very complete set of materials on the medieval wars waged against the Muslims could not help but have doubts about how to deal with the political entity of al-Andalus. Was al-Andalus part of the history of Spain, given that it was part of its territory? What to do about local history, the history of towns and cities and in particular that of Andalucian towns and cities whose monumental Islamic traces were so glaringly obvious? Were they part of Hispanic culture and civilization or not? To whom did those Islamic cultural remains belong? Was it necessary to use Arabic sources to write the history of Spain? If they were Spanish, and if they were integrated into national history, did that make Spain an Oriental country? What type of Oriental nation? All of this constituted a set of pressing problems that can be summarized as that of the extent to which the Spanish sixteenth-century present could be seen in terms of rupture or continuity with its own past. The rupture–continuity dilemma could only be solved by inventing a past imbued with sacredness, an antique past.

The search for sacred origins, for the primeval sacred past of a new elect people, the new Spaniards, was urgently needed. Sixteenth-century Spaniards identified with pre-Roman Iberians and were keen to recreate a sacred origin going back to the times of the early Christians; they went to the texts of the Old Testament to trace the connection of the Iberian peoples with the descendants of Noah, the Phoenicians, or the Idumeans of the Bible. The alleged arrival of ancient Israelites in Iberia would make Spain the first territory within Europe to have received knowledge of the true God, a fact that might be taken to prove that the Spaniards had become a new Chosen People destined to spread the Gospel throughout their New World empire.16

As has been shown by various different historians, similar processes (i.e., those involved in the writing of a proto-national or local history) were also taking place in other parts of Europe, and such attempts were unfailingly linked to forgeries. Such forgeries were carried out by using the same skills as those used by philologists and antiquarians. Anthony Grafton has written very revealing passages on this type of historical fiction. In Spain, all the textual, archaeological, genealogical, and documentary forgeries produced during the period served not only to provide testimony to the greatness of an ancient past, but also to confirm the authenticity of a glorious sacred past previous to the Muslim invasion. In Spain the remains of saints and churches, the bones of martyrs, and the ruins of buildings were “discovered” in a host of villages and cities as a way of linking Spain with sacred history. One of the ways to shape Islamic evidence in towns and cities was to use the remains of martyrs (objects, relics, images), which were much sought after by antiquarians working on local history. The discovery of vestiges sought to prove the continuity of the Christian past throughout a long martyrdom imposed first by the Romans and later by the Muslims, presented as enemies and cruel persecutors of a similar nature. The idea was that the blood of Christian martyrs had irrigated the soil to which they belonged and sanctified it for all eternity. These martyrs had created a sacred geography. Another way to solve the problem was to de-Islamize such remains. One way of doing this was to claim that they had been made (as in the case of the Mosque in Cordova, in the interpretation of Pablo de Céspedes) by Phoenicians, Idumeans, or other biblical people who had arrived with Tubal, Noah’s grandson.

All of this made it possible to find a place for Spain in a sanctified history, one that went back to the Orient of the Bible and even to Babylon and Egypt, wellsprings of a wisdom and prestige surpassing those of Greece and Rome.

This was, as Fernando and I have called it, in our book The Orient in Spain,17 a Spanish Orient, a sacred and ancient Orient that was well separated from the present, actual Orient personified by the Moriscos.

These are all matters in which language and history came together. Both history and language were the origin of political ideologies and were seen as key elements in the process of homogenization.

It was, indeed, the issue of the origins of Castilian that gave rise to a heated debate in relation to this “nationalistic” approach to language. Language, and not only history, was also the origin of political choices and was seen as an important element in the process of homogenization. As was written by Juan Luis Vives (1492–1540), the great humanist and Erasmus’s close disciple, “Justice and Speech are the bonds of human society.” Different scholars (and most especially
Kathryn Woolard) have identified a significant form of linguistic nationalism in early modern Spain. The idea that there should be one unique national language and that this language was an important unifying characteristic for national identity and was endowed with historical legitimacy was very clearly expressed in this period. This language was to be Spanish, or Castilian or Romance—all three terms were used—and the idea was that this language would become the common tongue of the Spanish Empire, just as Latin had been for that of the Romans. The grammarian Bernardo de Aldrete was the author of a major study on the origins of the Spanish language published in 1605. Even if his main concern was not political but philological (he sought to establish the Latin origins of the Spanish Romance language), Aldrete was well aware of the political implications of linguistic hegemonies, past or present. He recalled how Rome had used Latin to domesticate hitherto different peoples and bring them together. More importantly, political and linguistic homogeneity across the empire was to be instrumental in the spreading of Christianity. This forced Spanish scholars of the period to take sides in two widely discussed issues: firstly, that of whether Spanish Castilian was to be the predominant language among the many spoken in the peninsula, given that it was the most widely spoken, that which enjoyed the prestige given to it by the fact that it was used at court and also that which it was easiest to teach in the new territories because it had been the subject of the oldest and most extensive grammatical and lexical studies. This hegemony was not accepted without debate by speakers of other languages in the peninsula, and such debate was in turn linked to another. The second debate was that which discussed the identity of the oldest language spoken in the peninsula. As I have pointed in the case of the Spanish writing of history, an association had come to be made between “ancient” and “sacred.” There was, in other words, a concerted attempt to legitimate and consecrate, or make sacred, the ancient. Language was part of this process, too: prestige was associated to Antiquity and specially to pre-Roman Antiquity.

I will consider first the question of whether Castilian was the ideal language for the unification of Spain and the global diffusion of Christianity. I would like to pay close attention to one striking feature that distinguished Castilian from the other Romance languages. From the moment in the late fifteenth century when Spanish was studied and historicized, and grammars and dictionaries came to be written, it became clear for a considerable number of scholars that Spanish was a language infused with Arabic forms and vocabulary, i.e., that Arabic was part of Spanish and that this made Spanish different from other Romance languages. Thus there is a rich early modern corpus on the place and role of Arabic in Spanish. Some of these texts are extremely self-conscious about evincing the role of Arabic in the Spanish culture of the time. Many of the debates about Spanish culture and its relation to the Moors and Islam after the fall of Granada took place around the issue of language. It was not a discussion that concerned only erudites or learned people. We find it in literature, in the Romancero, or in Don Quijote. Juan de Valdés in his Dialeto de la lengua (1535) recognizes the incorporation of numerous Arabic words in Spanish, as he says, “though the kingdoms were recovered there still remained many Moors as dwellers that maintain their language.” This was not just a matter of place-names and etymologies: the everyday life of the common people was laced with words that could be clearly identified as Arabic—all those words, as Don Quijote says, which started with “al” or ended with “i.”
why do the Castilians speak it so mixed with their language? Leave us our language and we will leave it little by little.22

In addition, and most importantly, there was also the question of the antiquity and origin of the Castilian language. Other languages argued that they were older, as was the case of Basque, which claimed to be the oldest language in the peninsula, preserved as it was in a region that had never been invaded by Romans or Muslims.23

It was precisely the origins of Castilian Spanish that gave rise to a heated debate in relation to this “nationalistic” approach to language. From the paradigm of the Tower of Babel in the Book of Genesis to theories on the cyclical rise and decline of languages, different strategies appear in these emergent linguistic studies. Juan de Valdés’s (1509–41) well-known Dílogo de la Lengua (1535) argued that Castilian had emerged from decadent Latin, in which he was following Antonio de Nebrija’s theory in his Gramática de la Lengua Castellana (1492) on the origins of this Romance language. But this explanation did not go unchallenged. The notion of a succession and mutation of forms, the attribution of historicity to the Spanish language, with its implications of inconstancy, corruption and human invention, was seen by those who opposed the idea that Spanish derived from Latin as an insult to the Spanish nation.24 While one side argued that Castilian was derived from Latin, the other claimed that Castilian had been created by God at Babel and brought to Iberia by Noah’s offspring after the Flood, long before the Romans ever arrived. This was a debate in which issues of national prestige were aired: the alleged birth of Castilian at Babel meant that the language was divinely created, as well as immutable.25 At the heart of this dispute lay two completely different approaches to history.26

In a moment we will return to this polemic, which was a very heated one, but first I would like to examine some of the issues with which it was related. If Castilian was influenced by Arabic, it is clear that any form of support making it easier to de-Islamize the language and thereby free that language from its corrupting nature would be enthusiastically welcomed. At the same time the Moriscos themselves, and especially the Morisco elite, were keenly interested in finding a way to de-Islamize Arabic, since that would make it possible to preserve the language and culture bound up within the language whilst separating it from the practice of Islam. I will start by referring to a famous forgery, which in itself unites some of the aspects that I have dealt with briefly: the writing of a sacred history, the presentation of the history of Andalusian towns and cities as that of a restoration, and the de-Islamization of the Arabic language. Other issues were related to this debate, such as the question of the ability of languages to keep themselves pure or become mixed with others, the extent to which languages could be permeated by political or religious circumstances, the ability of human beings to acquire a second language, or the defense of Arabic as a language that was ancient, so ancient that it could be dissociated from Islam. From the paradigm of the Tower of Babel in the Book of Genesis to theories on the cyclical rise and decline of languages, different strategies appear in these emergent linguistic studies.

To sum up, in sixteenth-century Spain Arabic provoked as much suspicion as fascination. Arabic was dangerous (and not only because of the ever-vigilant Inquisition) and at the same time useful. It bore the imprint of Spain’s overly present Islamic past and the tensions of the present embodied in the incorporation in the new Catholic society through decrees of forced conversion of minorities of Muslim and Jewish origin.

Today, I would like to bring to your attention a specific aspect of a multifaceted complex phenomenon that touches many areas of early modern Spanish society and history. Keeping in mind the general framework that I have just sketched, I will now focus on those who wanted to defend, use or study Arabic, and the efforts they made to separate Arabic from Islam, that is, the efforts made to de-Islamize the language. I will discuss why those efforts were needed in the first place, and will try to identify the intellectual and social context that made it possible for these efforts to be accepted and understood in early modern Spain.

Núñez Muley: The defense of the Arabic tongue

The first and most famous document written in defense of Arabic that I would like to bring to your attention is part of the Memorial, which the Granadan Morisco nobleman Francisco Núñez Muley wrote to the Audiencia of Granada. It is a beautiful example of a defense of the language written by a man who in all likelihood had sincerely embraced Christianity.

Núñez Muley’s Memorial was written in the aftermath of the decree of 1567, a decree that caused great consternation throughout the Granadan population of Muslim origin. In his Memorial, Núñez Muley lodged a complaint with the Audiencia of Granada and requested that the order be revoked. His was an attempt to fence off all those areas which today would be considered part of an “ethnic
culture" from those of Islamic belief and practice. Thus he pointed out how clothing and dress varied from one Spanish region to the next without the religious soundness of its wearers being called into question, and argued that the clothing of the Moriscos of Granada should also be considered an example of regional dress, appropriate to the "natives of the land" or "naturales de la tierra," as he called them. Núñez Muley repeatedly insisted on describing the Moriscos as natives of the region and belonging to it, and not alien members deserving of treatment as strangers or outsiders, part of an alien history that was now to be closed. In his document, he placed an emphasis on keeping the use of the Arabic language separate from the practice of Islam. He insisted on calling the Granadan Moriscos "naturales de la tierra" or "naturales del reino de Granada" and Arabic their "lenguaje natural." He wrote as follows: "The first and most important reason [for not banning the language, that is, for revoking the decree of 1567] is that the Arabic language has no direct relation whatsoever with the Islamic faith." To support this argument, he alluded to the existence of Eastern Christians who spoke Arabic without anyone therefore calling into question the sincerity of their Christian beliefs and he made particular mention of the Christians of Jerusalem, Syria, and even Malta. ("We see the Christians, priests and laymen come here from Syria and Egypt dressed in the Turkish manner, with wimples and kaftans down to their feet; they speak Arabic and Turkish, they know no Latin nor any Romance tongue, and despite all this they are still Christians.") He later returns to the same argument and states: "Let us consider the Arabic tongue, which is the greatest inconvenience of them all. How is one to take away from the people their natural language, the one in which they were born and bred? The Egyptians, Syrians, Maltese and other Christian peoples speak, read and write in Arabic, and they are Christians like us."

Núñez Muley's repeated use of the term "naturales de la tierra" or "naturales del Reino de Granada" is not an isolated occurrence. In 1585 a group of Morisco notables who had been expelled to Castile after the War of the Alpujarras, tried to negotiate with the Council of State the return to Granada of a group of Morisco families by means of the payment of a high tax. In the documents produced by the negotiation, the Moriscos always refer to themselves as "naturales del Reino de Granada."

Similar arguments to those of Núñez Muley can be found in the works of the Morisco Jesuit Ignacio de las Casas, the second text I would like to discuss. De las Casas was an extremely interesting figure and his thoughts on the use of Arabic were closely linked to the problem of evangelizing the Moriscos, with de las Casas going so far as to argue for the creation of special schools for Granadan Morisco children where they would be taught in Arabic. In his defense of Arabic, de las Casas stated that the Three Magi were Arabs, and that Pater John in Ethiopia, a potential Christian ally against Islam, was descended from one of those Magi and was himself therefore an Arab. In his eagerness to de-Islamize the Arabic language, de las Casas argued that its enduring use over so many centuries was not due to the rule of the Muslims, but because of its grammar, elegance and expressiveness, which was comparable to that of Greek and Latin. Arabic grammar followed a series of rules thanks to which it was possible to deduce the entire language from just three radicals, and this is where its ease comes from, in that it is consistent with that of Hebrew and there is no other language that has this except these two." This comparison with Hebrew was traced back as far as the Bible: "If the Hebrew language is so highly esteemed it is because it is thought that it was spoken not only by our forefathers the patriarchs and prophets but by Jesus Christ our Lord, the apostles and disciples, and Arabic is owed no small honor, tracing part of its ancestry back to Ruth the Moabitess who was a native of Petra [...] and for having chosen the nobility of the Magi as initiators of the Church and these were Arabs according to most and the best sources." From his comments, it is clear that de las Casas thought Arabic was not only the language of Muslims, but also that of Jews and Christians.

But let us now turn our attention to a third and most important attempt to separate Arabic from Islam. One that, as was the case with the Memorials, was made by members of the Morisco elite and was concocted in the aftermath of the 1567 edict and the War of the Alpujarras: this attempt was made by means of the so called Lead Books of Granada.

The Lead Books of Granada

In the late sixteenth century, under miraculous and providential circumstances, a number of small circular leaves of lead inscribed with strange, archaic Arabic letters like those used in epigraphic inscriptions, amulets, and magical formulas were found in Granada. They contained what purported to be ancient Christian texts, in which the Virgin Mary took a leading role as the vehicle of Revelation;
they spoke of certain Arab disciples who had come to the Iberian Peninsula in the company of Saint James the Greater and had been martyrs there at the hands of pagan natives. These texts engraved on lead complemented and explained a discovery made a few years earlier, in 1585, during the demolition of the former minaret of the great mosque of Granada, called the Turpiana Tower; a parchment written in Arabic, Latin, and Spanish that contained a prophecy attributed to Saint John, placed within a leaden box together with a handkerchief said to have belonged to the Virgin and a relic of Saint Stephen.

We call these finds “miraculous and providential” because Granada needed relics, and needed a sacred, Christian past—as a city so clearly shaped by its Islamic history, it had no such past of its own. These discoveries were immediately followed by miraculous cures, ghostly lights, and other such wonders, causing great excitement among the people. Incidentally, this year of 1585 was also the year in which Morisco noblemen were trying to negotiate their return to Granada.

The Lead Books provided alleged evidence of the presence of Saint James in Spain and of the belief—which had not yet been declared a dogma of the Church but was very dear to Spaniards—in the Immaculate Conception of Mary. The archbishop of Granada interpreted them as a sign that the city, its cathedral, and the Spanish monarchy enjoyed divine favor. The texts came to be known as that of the Sacromonte Lead Books, or as the Laminae Granatenses (Granadan leaves) when the Vatican decided to undertake a study of them. In 1682, a century after they were “found,” Pope Innocent XI finally declared them false and anathema. But both the Church in Granada, through its archbishop Pedro de Castro, and the Spanish Crown defended the Books’ authenticity with great passion; the affair of the Lead Books gave rise to a tremendous debate and a long and varied series of translations and linguistic studies, which greatly boosted the learning and study of Arabic. The matter went far beyond the confines of Granada’s local history and the Morisco problem in the region. It would engage the Spanish Church and Crown, the Vatican, the bishops in their struggles with Rome, and the scholars and humanists of half of Europe.

The forgery was carried out by Moriscos who had targeted two groups of potential readers: firstly, Christian church and civil authorities, to whom they wished to prove that Arabic was a Christian language and that there was therefore no reason to ban its use. It also sought to persuade this group of readers that the first Christians in Granada had been Arabs and that the Moriscos were their descendants and therefore fully fledged Granadans rather than aliens who were ripe for expulsion. The other group of readers to whom the texts were addressed was that of Moriscos themselves. In spite of their apparent Christian character, the Lead Books made no mention of the Holy Trinity, nor of the divine nature of Jesus, nor of other questions in which there were clashes between Islam and Christianity. The Christianity of the Books was presented as an early and authentic version, which happened to coincide with Islam. For the Moriscos, the Lead Books had a polemical function: they showed what was upheld by Islam, and that successive councils and popes had corrupted the purity of the message revealed to Jesus, which fully agreed with the spirit of Islam.

I believe, and have written elsewhere, that this forgery was concocted by Morisco noblemen linked to one of the most important Granadan Morisco families, that of the Granada Venegas.28 There is no doubt that the Sacromonte Lead Books transformed the perception of Arabic in Spain, at the same time that they caused an abrupt turn in the understanding of the peninsula’s Islamic and pre-Islamic past. In our book The Orient in Spain Fernando Rodrigues Mediano and I have emphasized that the Lead Books were a text written in Arabic and taken by many to contain an authentically Christian message. By virtue of the Lead Books, Granada acquired a sacred Christian past and ancient Christian martyrs who were Arabs and Arabophones, and the Morisco noblemen were able to uphold their argument that Arabic was not an Islamic language. To make this point very clear, I will quote from one of the most important Lead Books, the one that was translated and copied most often, the one entitled Certainty of the Gospels. In a passage of this book Peter, the Apostle, asks the Virgin Mary: “Oh, Our Lady, speak to us about the virtues of the Arabs who will defend our religion with the truth of the Gospels in times to come, and their rewards and the superiority of their tongue over other tongues.” To which the Virgin replies: “The Arabs will be the defenders of our religion in times to come. And the superiority of their language over others is like the stars in the sky and granted them victory.” In another passage of the same book the Virgin insists: “I say to you that the Arabs are one of the most excellent of peoples and their language one of the most excellent of languages.”29 Arabic was given a primordial and eschatological tinge and was presented as the most superior of all languages.
The Sacromonte Lead Books had a most significant impact on the debates I have already mentioned on the origins of Castilian. These debates were re-energized by the study and translation of the Parchment and Lead Books of Granada and by the intense and embittered discussions that took place concerning their authenticity or falsehood. The archbishop of Granada, Pedro de Castro, was one of the leading defenders of their authenticity and went to great lengths to try to prove it in the face of criticism expressed by various scholars and humanists. One of the problems that arose was that the latter had shown that the Arabic used in the Lead Books was not an ancient form but a variety employing features of the dialectal Arabic then used in Granada. Another important point was that the parchment, which was dated in times of the Emperor Nero, in the first century AD, contained a text written in perfect sixteenth-century Castilian. How was this possible when Nebrija, Aldrete, Vives, and so many others had shown in their solidly argued works that Castilian derived from Latin?

The existence of the Lead Books was useful to those who found it humiliating that Castilian was the corrupt and deteriorated version of another language, instead of something pure, primordial, and essential, which made of Spaniards a new Chosen People. It was also of use to all those who did not want Spanish civilization to be a likeness of Rome, nor inextricably linked to Islamic civilization. If one chose to believe that the foundations were authentic, one could maintain that sacred texts had appeared which showed that in the first century AD the inhabitants of the peninsula already spoke Castilian and already spoke Arabic, the language in which the first martyred disciples had preached to them. How were these disciples to preach in this language if the local populations did not understand them? This theory was put forward by some of the most ardent defenders of the truth and authenticity of the Lead Books, starting with the archbishop of Granada, Pedro de Castro, but also, among other less well known figures, by Gregorio López Madera, who engaged in particularly fierce polemic with Bernardo de Aldrete, author of a very famous book, Orígenes de la lengua castellana. López Madera (1562–1649), attorney of the Chancellery of Granada during the 1590s (that is to say, at the time when the Lead Books appeared), resolutely defended the notion that the original language of Iberia was Castilian. In his view, Castilian had originated in Babel, was spoken by Spaniards, and had always been spoken by them, throughout periods of invasion by Romans, Visigoths, and Muslims.

One has to keep in mind that this was not only a debate about the original tongue, but also a debate about the ability of languages to remain pure and the ability of human beings to learn a language other than their native tongue. In this way the debate took on essentialist overtones, whereby the native tongue acquired important qualities with a wide repercussion on pressing matters of the day, and in particular the whole issue of the minorities of converso origin and their ability to transform themselves or be transformed. In other words, it was the ability of Moriscos to become good Christians that was at stake.

There was indeed a connection between being a defender of Castilian as an ancient, natural, and original language and the expulsion of the Moriscos. Thus, López Madera, who supported the notion of Castilian as an ancient language, was also one of the most outspoken defenders of the idea of expelling the Moriscos and as mayor of the city he helped to implement their expulsion when the first edict dictating that measure was published in 1609.

Those theories about the original tongue also had a curious repercussion on how the Castilian spoken by the Moriscos was perceived, i.e., the question of whether they spoke with an accent and in a particular manner or sing-song, which betrayed them as such, or whether they were able to speak Castilian indistinguishably.

This is a very interesting issue, and in that regard I would like to bring to your attention the role played in Golden Age theatre (and especially in Lope de Vega's works) by the figure of the Morisco, who is represented as speaking a peculiar jargon and whose use of vocalic and sibilant sounds, as well as his inability to conjugate verbs, denote his laughable status. The Morisco became a commonplace, typical figure in the dramas of the period, linked to the figure of the "gracioso" and widely studied by experts. He is immediately familiar to anyone with knowledge of the Spanish Golden Age.

I am not going to consider the literary aspect here, as I am more interested in the question of how the alleged Morisco accent was made to be part of polemical literature and the debates that took place in the period before the expulsion, between those who were in favor of or against the decree. Many of those in favor of the expulsion of the Moriscos, those who argued that it was impossible to assimilate them, believed that one inseparable feature of all Moriscos was their inability to speak Castilian properly. Again we see the identity value of the language, the belief that the native language was that which was inherited, that it was a racial characteristic.
It is to be noted that in the late sixteenth century this notion was linked to the idea of "nature" and even to the idea that religion was inherited. All of this was part of a growing ideology of racial difference consubstantial to early modern Spain.

Following this line of thought, Old Christians often called themselves "cristianos de natura." "Nación" and "natura" are words derived from the same root, which point both to the group of people among whom an individual is born and, at the same time, to the religion in which that individual is born (judíos de nación) and which is transmitted by blood or even milk. It was often believed that the "naturalidad" of the blood running through an individual's veins as well as the milk suckled at the breast of one's mother contained beliefs and values. Remember Nuñez Muley and the Morisco nobleman self-representation as "naturales del Reino de Granada."

By this time in the early seventeenth century, religion had already consolidated its racial and physiological characteristics. In a Spain of blood and milk, religion was inherited or suckled at the mother's breast. And so was language. The impossibility of speaking a language well became identified with the impossibility of making a true conversion, because language was also inherited. Nature brought language and religion together. Let me just quote an example to illustrate this idea. This a passage from the famous book attributed to Diego de Hedo, Topographia e historia general de Argel, of 1612, says:

"Dejemos aparte que hay muchos turcos y moros que han estado captivos en España, Italia y Francia, y, por otra parte, una multitud infima de renegados de aquellas y otras provincias y otra gran copa de judíos que han estado acá, que hablan español, italiano y francés muy lindamente, y aun todos los hijos de renegados y renegadas que en la teta depredaron el hablar natural cristianesco de sus padres y madres, le hablan tan bien como si en España o Italia fueran nacidos."

In this example Castilian belonged to nature even beyond religion: "at the breast they learned the natural Christian talk of their fathers and mothers and they speak it as well as if they had been born in Spain or Italy." Castilian proved to be natural even in individuals who lived far from Spain and had renounced the Catholic faith. The language one inherited was intrinsic to nature. The association between language and nation becomes obvious, but also the association between language and religion, "el hablar natural cristianesco."

In contrast, those who believed that the conversion and assimilation of the Moriscos was still possible held that most Moriscos spoke Castilian in a way that was indistinguishable from the Castilian of the Old Christians. Or rather they alluded to what was probably a more realistic assessment of the situation: on the one hand, there were Moriscos such as those of Castile, whose way of speaking bore a close resemblance to that of other Castilians, and on the other hand, there were the Moriscos of those regions that had been or continued to be Arabic-speaking and who retained a slight accent.

The first expulsion decrees took into account the manner of speech of those expelled as a distinctive characterizing mark. Thus the expulsion order of February 1610 excluded those "who have been treated as Old Christians in their language, dress and religion." The corregidor of Badajoz drew up a list of those who were good Christians and should not be expelled, pointing out that "they speak no language other than our vulgar tongue" and that their speech is indistinguishable from the speech of Old Christians. By contrast, during the same years, the man entrusted with the task of organizing the expulsion of the Moriscos from Granada, Don Francisco de Irazaízabal, wrote to the Corte to describe the consternation that reigned in the city and the last-minute measures taken by some Moriscos to avoid being expelled. In this they were helped by many Old Christians. Irazaízabal was pleased that the Moriscos were to be expelled, because the city would "at last be free of the yoke of Muhammad, and would moreover become free of the sinister reputation that this highly noble city has." It seems that Granada's reputation, in spite of the Lead Books, had not been totally cleansed. Irazaízabal described the ruses to which the Moriscos were resorting in their efforts to avoid expulsion, such as becoming religious, marrying Christian women in haste, or producing proof of their Old Christian status "when in some cases their parents and grandparents were known and they still did not speak their languages clearly like us but speak in a way that denounce who they are, with all this they want us to believe they are Old Christians and not any kind of Old Christian, but descendants of the Goths."

A third attitude was that held by those who thought that the Moriscos (especially those of Granada) spoke Castilian perfectly. This was not because they separated out cultural signs of identity from physiological features, from biological inheritance. It was because of the theory that the Lead Books of Sacromonte (yet to be anathematized by Rome when the expulsion was carried out) made it
possible to defend the idea that Castilian had been the first language in Iberia, a language coming from the Tower of Babel and brought to the peninsula by the descendants of Noah. The Moriscos who spoke Castilian correctly showed that they were descendants of those first Spaniards, that centuries of belonging to Islam had not been able to alter a nature that was explicitly revealed in the correct manner in which they spoke the language. The idea was captured in these terms by one of the most ardent apologists of the Lead Books: Pedro Velarde de Ribera, canon of the church of San Salvador in Granada, in his Historia eclesiástica del Monte Santo. According to Ribera, Granada had been inhabited since ancient times by the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel. These Jewish settlers spoke Arabic; in fact, if Saint Paul went to Arabia (as is stated in a well-known passage of the Letter to the Galatians), it is because he was "inspired by the Holy Spirit to communicate the language of the Arabs which was so greatly needed for the conversion of the ten tribes that were dispersed among diverse provinces of the world and in order to be able to speak to our holy saints San Cecilio and San Tesifón, disciples of Christ and the Apostle Santiago." This explanation made a clear distinction between the Arab Jews, ancient settlers of Granada, and the "moros" or Moors, i.e., the Muslims who had arrived in the eighth century and who tried to erase all traces of their predecessors and "to usurp for themselves and attribute to their forebears the foundation of one of the noblest cities in Spain."

Pedro Velarde de Ribera wrote about the first settlers of Granada, from a period before the Muslim invasion, who (he says) were Jewish Arabs. He specifies the memory they retain of their lineages, some of them of the tribe of Levi "who apart from being of the opinion that they descended from such stock also provided clear evidence of this in the skilful manner in which they spoke our Castilian tongue, upholding it in a correctness of accent and pronunciation of words which made it clear that this was the mother tongue of their ancestors which they had preserved together with the Arabic they commonly spoke, which is no small reason for proving the antiquity of our Castilian tongue."

In other words, Velarde de Ribera and other supporters of the authenticity of the Lead Books believed that Arabic and Castilian were the original languages spoken in Spain. And that this was proved by the correct pronunciation of Castilian, the primordial language or "lengua natural" of the inhabitants (or part of the inhabitants), who were "naturales del Reino de Granada."

Velarde de Ribera was not alone in defending such an idea. I do not have time to speak about all those who thought likewise, but I would like to highlight the case of Diego de Guadix, who went a little further and claimed that Arabic was the origin of Castilian.

Diego de Guadix was a Granadan priest from Guadix who lived at the time of the discovery of the Sacromonte Lead Books and who worked as an interpreter of Arabic for the Inquisition tribunal of Granada in 1587. As Guadix himself explains in his work, he had learned Arabic as a child, as a result of living in an area populated by Moriscos. He wrote a book called Recopilación de algunos nombres árabigos que los árabes pusieron a algunas ciudades y a otras muchas cosas (Compilation of some Arabic names that the Arabs gave some cities and many other things). The Recopilación de algunos nombres is an etymological dictionary of toponyms and Spanish (and non-Spanish) words, which according to Guadix derived from Arabic. It is a huge and overwhelming catalogue, which in practice amounted to a claim that Arabic was the origin of Castilian. It was obvious to Guadix that Latin had borrowed many words from Arabic, because the latter was older, and therefore any Arabic words that had come into Romance had done so not in the Muslim period, but long before. This was, again, a new and bold attempt to de-Islamize Arabic, almost a mother tongue to Guadix, who had been raised among Moriscos.

Of course, the majority of the etymologies are mistaken, and are deduced from fortuitous phonetic resemblances. There is nothing in Guadix's work that remotely resembles what might be considered serious etymological research, even by the scholarly standards of his time. However, the massive attribution of an Arabic origin to so many Spanish words is interesting because of the cultural program it reflects, and which Guadix himself explains in the fascinating introduction to his work. Guadix wrote that although many Arabic words were introduced into Spain by the Muslims, the Arabic language should not be identified with Islam; on the contrary, it was a very ancient language, practically the same as Hebrew, the original language of mankind. The Arabic language and its antiquity had to be measured not against the time of the Muslims, "the sect of the Moors," but against that of the nation of Arabs; for example, the Hebrews who inhabited the Arabian peninsula, who spoke Arabic and were for that reason known as Arabs, "many centuries before Abraham."

In short, Guadix was defending the notion of a very ancient Arabic language, disconnected from Islam and older than Latin,
the true origin of Spanish. To reach such a conclusion, he had to project recent history into a wider framework: that of the remotest past, in which the Islamic component was dissolved into an even earlier Oriental substratum. The major claim of Guadix’s work is in essence identical to the claims made by the Sacromonte forgeries—that of a very ancient Oriental influence on Spanish history. What we have called The Orient in Spain.

To conclude

For early modern Spaniards, legitimizing the use of Arabic implied entering into a vast historical, cultural, and religious debate. As a first step, Arabic culture had to be cleanly separated from Islam as a religion, but such a separation could never be total, and became a problematic issue in debates about the value of Arabic texts. It is my claim that Morisco elites (in particular Morisco Granadan elites) were important agents in the defense and transformation, that is, Christianization of Arabic, and in an attempt to turn Arabic into a Spanish Christian language. They were partially successful inasmuch as theLead Books were successful. Those books legitimized in Spain the scholarly study of Arabic, which paved the way for a form of Orientalism. This Orientalism, connected to Italian and Dutch Orientalisms, allowed people like Diego de Guadix to vindicate Arabic not only as the ancient language of Iberia but as the origin of Castilian. Moreover, it was also successful for the Morisco elites, which had promoted the fake texts and could literally forge for themselves a place in the new mainstream society. The noble families were not generally expelled, as they were considered “Old Christians.” The Morisco masses were expelled from Spain between 1609–14 as Muslims at their core and in their natures; such natures were evident from their lack of mastery of Spanish.

It is clear that these attempts to separate Islam from Arabic, to “Christianize” Arabic, went hand-in-hand with the creation of a sacred past for Spain. In an apparent paradox, this sacred past was also linked to the Orient. But this was another Orient, that of the times and places in which human beings had been closer to their Creator.

ENDNOTES

1 Edward Said, Orientalismo (Madrid: Debate, 2002).
9 Pedro de Alcalá, Arte para ligeramente sobre la lengua arábiga (Granada: Juan de Varela, 1505). [BNE online: http://bkh-rd.bne.es/viewer.vm?id=000037465&page=1]
secta Mahometica a nuestra Sancta Fecatolica tales, que al cabo de cincuenta anos que son bautizados jamas se ha podido acabar con ellos que dexen la Algaravia, y hablen lengua Valenciana y quando los apretamos mucho responden: Porque que reyes que desmexo la lengua Aragona? Por ventura es mala? Y si es mala porque la hablan los Castellanos mezclada en su lengua? Dexen ellos nuestra habla y nosotros la dexaremos poco a poco." Viciana, Libro de las alabanzas de las lenguas, Aet.

23 Two Basques, the chronicler Esteban de Garbay and Zamalca and the antiquarian and jurist Andrés Pozas, claimed that the Basque tongue was the earliest language, in E. de Garbay, Los XL libros del compendio historial de las chronicas y universal Historia de todos los reynos de España, 4 vol. (Antwerp: Christofero Plantino, 1571); and A. de Pozas, De la antigua lengua, poblaciones, y comarcas de las Españas, en que de paso se tocan algunas cosas de la Cantabria. Compuesto por el licenciado Andres de Poza (Bilbao: Mathias Mares, 1587).

24 Woolard, "Is the Past a Foreign Country?", 58.

25 Xavier Gil Pujol, "Las lenguas en la España de los siglos XVI y XVII: Imperio, algarabía y lengua común", in Comunidad e identidad en el mundo ibérico (ed.) Francisco Chacón Jiménez and Silvia Evangelisti (Valencia: Universitats, 2013), 81–120.


29 García–Arenal and Rodríguez, The Orient in Spain, 272.

30 Barnardo de Aldrete, Del origen y principio de la lengua castellana, ó Romance que oy se usa en España (Rome: Carlo Vallier, 1606).

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———. “Bernardo de Aldrete, Humanist and Laminario.”

