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Bibliographical essay
The current state of Mudejar studies

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The vineyard of Mudejar studies is a young one, though grafted on much older stock.[1] Mudejars, that is, Iberian Muslims with Christian lords, became a prominent focus of academic inquiry only in the 1970s. In the intervening quarter century, however, its growth has been so exuberant as to mock any attempt at summary description, and the flow of studies now over spills the boundaries of even the specialized bibliographies set up specifically to collect it.[2] Moreover, the vast diversity of the field suggests the vanity of ascribing any single 'state' to it. Chronologically, it stretches from the Christian conquests of the eleventh century to the forced conversions of the early sixteenth – roughly half a millennium, a period equivalent to that between Columbus' voyages and our own day. Politically the range is equally great. Each of the various Christian kingdoms of the Iberian peninsula had its own Muslim population, living under its own legal and contractual traditions, and these traditions were themselves subject to constant change depending on circumstance. Nor were Muslim populations distributed evenly across the peninsula. A majority in the Kingdom of Valencia until the late fourteenth century, Muslims constituted less than one percent of the population in Old Catalonia, Old Castile, Leon, and Navarre. Finally, these Mudejars did not all speak with one tongue. Depending on region and period, Arabic or the local romance (Castilian, Catalan, Aragonese) might be the language of everyday life and even of literary and religious culture.

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[1]Hispanic Arabism, of which Mudejar studies is something of an offshoot, has a venerable pedigree. See J. Monroe, *Islam and the Arabs in Spanish Scholarship (Sixteenth century to the present)* (Leiden, 1970).

[2]Among bibliographies see *Moros y Moriscos en el Levante Peninsular (Sharq al-Andalus)* (Alicante, 1983) ed. M. de Epalza et al., with ongoing supplements in the journal *Sharq al-Andalus*; Ma. J. Rubiera Mata, *Bibliografía de la literatura hispano-árabe* (Alicante, 1988); L.F. Bernabé Pons, *Bibliografía de la literatura aljamiado-morisca* (Alicante, 1992). One could even compile a bibliography of 'state of the question' essays in Mudejar studies, including: J.M. Lacarra de Miguel, 'Introducción al estudio de los mudéjares aragoneses', *Aragón en la Edad Media* 2 (1979), 7–22; M. García Arenal, 'Los mudéjares en el Reino de Navarra y en la Corona de Aragón. Estado actual de su estudio', and M.A. Ladera Quesada, 'Los mudéjares en los reinos de la Corona de Castilla. Estado actual de su estudio', both in *Actas del III Simposio Internacional de Mudejarismo* (Teruel, 1986), 175–186 and 5–20; D. Bramon, 'Arabismo, mudejarismo y moriscología en España: algunas publicaciones recientes', in: *Romania Arabica: Festschrift für Reinhold Kontzi zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. J. Lüdtke (Tübingen, 1996), 241–250.

Given these challenges, this essay will not attempt an exhaustive description of current research in Mudejar studies, but will focus instead on a few of the more characteristic approaches, illustrating them with recent works. I should note here that this is not a field ferociously patrolled by specialists. It is a curious phenomenon of contemporary Spain that Muslim (and to a lesser extent Jewish) history attract the attention of a large number of generalists, and even of local historians. Nor (and perhaps for this very reason) is it a field dominated by monographs: comparatively few books on the subject have been published in the past five years. The discipline has grown instead through the publication of sources, catalogues, and dictionaries, through articles in journals like *Al-Qantara* and *Sharq al-Andalus*, in the published proceedings of congresses and symposia,[3] and in a number of *Festschriften* in honour of retiring founders of the discipline.[4]

If there is a primary line of methodological demarcation in Mudejar studies it is tied to sources, and through sources, to language competence. The textual sources (I confine myself here to these, though there are others)[5] 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.[6] It is increasingly rare for one scholar to work extensively in more than one type of source. Few Arabists working on Mudejars, for example, now make extensive use of Christian archival material, as Mercedes García Arenal or María del Carmen Barceló Torres did in the 1980s. Moreover, the questions asked of these different categories of sources increasingly diverge from one another, a divergence which can itself tell us something about the field.

Christian archival sources (by which I mean court cases, records of royal, seigneurial and ecclesiastical bureaucracies, and the records of notaries) for Mudejar history are abundant, though with a few significant exceptions they were largely ignored until the 1970s.[7] The first of these sources to be widely exploited were royal records, and these served as the foundation for a body of work which established our understanding of the

[3]E.g. the fairly regular meetings of the *Simposio Internacional de Mudejarismo* in Teruel or of the *Symposium International d'Études Morisques* in Tunisia.

[4]Festschriften: *Melanges Luis Cardaillac*, 2 vols., ed. A. Temimi (Zaghouan, 1995); *Iberia and the Mediterranean World of the Middle Ages: Studies in honor of Robert I. Burns S.J.*, 2 vols. (Leiden, 1995–6); *Romania Arabica: Festschrift für Reinhold Kontzi zum 70. Geburtstag*; *Homenaje a la profesora emérita Maria Luisa Ledesma Rubio* (Zaragoza, 1993) [= *Aragon en la Edad Media* 10–11].

[5]In a choice which mirrors divisions within Mudejar studies, art historical and archaeological approaches will not be covered here, though they are of obvious relevance to many of the questions of assimilation, acculturation, and cultural resistance central to the field. These approaches have been more successfully integrated in work related to Muslim and Christian settlement patterns, on which see the recent survey in T. Glick, *From Muslim fortress to Christian castle: social and cultural change in medieval Spain* (Manchester, 1995).

[6]Aljamiado is romance written in Arabic characters, though it often includes a good deal of Arabic vocabulary as well.

[7]Among the most noteworthy exceptions were F. Fernández y González, *Estado social y político de los mudéjares de Castilla* (Madrid, 1866); F. Macho y Ortega, 'Condición social de los mudéjares aragoneses (siglo xv)', *Memorias de la Facultad de filosofía y letras de la Universidad de Zaragoza*, 1 (1923), 137–319; and 'Documentos relativos a la condición social y jurídica de los mudéjares aragoneses', *Revista de ciencias jurídicas y sociales*, 5 (1922), 143–60, 444–64.

political, legal, and institutional underpinnings of Mudejar status.[8] But as attention shifted to the internal structure of Muslim communities, increasing scepticism was voiced about the heavy reliance on Christian sources. Referring hyperbolically to a later period, F. Márquez Villanueva described the extensive use of Inquisition records by historians of the Moriscos as a 'poisoning of the sources'.[9] Less melodramatically, a number of historians have worried about the costs of reconstructing a culture through the optic of institutions set up to destroy it.

Though the Christian institutions that structure the earlier Mudejar documentation are not as notorious as the Inquisition, concern about the limitations of the sources they produce has also been justifiably expressed. Nevertheless these sources have responded well to the new questions being asked of them. An early and noteworthy example was Mark Meyerson's use of municipal and royal sources to illuminate the role of agnatic solidarity in structuring Muslim class and kin relations.[10] More recently local historians have turned to Christian notarial records to reconstruct aspects of Mudejar society central to the maintenance of Islamic identity. Asunción Blasco's study of Mudejar notaries, for example, is based entirely on sources produced by Christian institutions, yet provides precious evidence for Islamic scribal practice in Aragon.[11] Similarly data about the Aragonese Mudejar fuqahā' (religious/judicial leadership) gathered from the notarial archives of Calatayud and Zaragoza is transforming our understanding of the surviving Arabic and Aljamiado texts that group produced.[12] Such archives still have much to offer the student of Mudejars. Of course that student must remain very much on the *qui vive* for the representational strategies of these texts, but the same is true of texts in Arabic script, which provide no less mediated an access to the 'Mudejar experience', even if that mediation is of a different sort.

If I insist on what is after all a rather obvious point, it is because increasing specialization has meant that these Christian sources are frequently ignored by those working on the other side of the methodological divide, with Aljamiado and Arabic

[8] I am thinking here of the work of J. Boswell, R.I. Burns, M.T. Ferrer i Mallol, M.A. Ladero Quesada, and E. Lourie. There are, however, regional distinctions to be made. The source base for Castile, for example, is quite different than that for Aragon.

[9] 'La Criptohistoria morisca (los otros conversos)', in: *Les problèmes de l'exclusion en Espagne (XVI*[e]*–XVII*[e] *siècles*, ed. A. Redondo (Paris, 1983), 77–94, here 78.

[10] *The Muslims of Valencia in the Age of Fernando and Isabel* (Berkeley, 1991), chapter six. More recently Meyerson has used the same types of sources to describe the experiences of Muslim slaves in the lands of the Crown of Aragon. See his 'Slavery and Solidarity: Mudejars and Foreign Muslim Captives in the Kindom of Valencia', *Medieval Encounters*, 2 (1996), 286–343, and 'Slavery and the Social Order: Mudejars and Christian in the Kingdom of Valencia', *Medieval Encounters*, 1 (1995), 144–173. S. de Tapia Sánchez' *La comunidad morisca de Avila* (Salamanca, 1991), provides a Castilian example of the fruitful use of Christian sources and, despite its title, contains several excellent chapters on the mudejar period. M. del Mar Gomez Renau's *Las comunidades marginadas de Valladolid: mudéjares y moriscos s. xv–xvi* (Valladolid, 1993) is based on similar sources, though less successfully.

[11] A. Blasco Martinez, 'Notarios mudéjares de Aragon (siglos XIV–XV)', *Aragon en la Edad Media* 10–11 [= *Homenaje a la profesora emérita Maria Luisa Ledesma Rubio*] (1993), 109–133. Her earlier *La judería de Zaragoza en el siglo XIV* (Zaragoza, 1988) may serve as a model for those interested in the application of notarial records to minority history.

[12] See F.J. García Marco, *Las comunidades mudéjares de la comarca de Calatayud en el siglo XV* (Calatayud, 1993), where he documents the careers of some of the faqihs responsible for one of the most important surviving collections of Arabic and Aljamiado material.

texts, and vice-versa. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that this specialization has brought about a marvellous expansion of knowledge in a great many aspects of Hispano-Arabic and of broader Iberian culture. The current knowledge of Hispano-Arabic dialectology, toponymics, and onomastics in Iberia, for example, is incomparably richer than it was ten years ago. Guides and catalogues of Arabic and Aljamiado manuscript collections are multiplying, as are lexica compiled from these manuscripts.[13] Scores of Hispano-Arabic and Aljamiado texts have been edited and published in series like the *Fuentes Arábico-Hispanas* and the *Colección de literatura española aljamiado-morisca*.[14] In very short order Spanish Arabism has become one of the more vibrant fields of Islamic studies.

Curiously enough, this vibrancy has to a certain extent bypassed the Mudejar period. Of the work done by Arabists, the vast majority focuses either on pre-reconquest Arabic texts or on Morisco Aljamiado literature. The *Fuentes Arábico-Hispanas*, for example, are clearly of importance to mudejarists, since many of the texts edited in that series may have been inherited by Mudejars or transmitted by them, but to date the series has published virtually no Mudejar manuscripts. There are good reasons for these emphases. Mudejar Arabic production is considered in many ways unoriginal and conservative, seeking to transmit rather than add to an inherited canon of texts. As for Aljamiado manuscripts, not many can definitively be dated before 1492 (though many of those that can remain unedited), in part because the growth of the Inquisition's interest in Moriscos throughout the sixteenth century ensured the transmission of a disproportionately large number of texts in Arabic script (whether in Arabic or Aljamiado) from the later period. The Inquisition itself preserved such texts as evidence in trial records, and fear of its attention encouraged Moriscos to hide their writings where they could be rediscovered by nineteenth- and twentieth-century construction crews.[15]

This said, the relative lack of attention to specifically Mudejar Arabic and Aljamiado texts is disappointing, especially because what has been done has proven tremendously valuable. For some recent examples, consider the work of P.S. van Koningsveld and G. Wiegers, colleagues and frequent collaborators at the University of Utrecht. In the early 1990s, Van Koningsveld sketched the boundaries of Mudejar textual culture by documenting the circulation of Andalusi Arabic texts in Christian Spain.[16] Since then he

[13]See, e.g., A. Cano Ledesma, *Indización de los manuscritos árabes de El Escorial* (El Escorial, 1996); Á. Galmés de Fuentes, *Los manuscritos Aljamiado-Moriscos de la Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia (Legado Pascual de Gayangos)* (Madrid, 1998); Á. Galmés de Fuentes et al., *Glosario de voces Aljamiado-Moriscas* (Oviedo, 1994).

[14]Others have been edited in unpublished doctoral dissertations, e.g. Soha Abboud Haggar, Al-Tafric de Ibn Khāllab (Edición, estudio lingüístico y glosario del ms. aljamiado núm. XXXIII de la Biblioteca de la Junta y su confrontación con el original árabe), Madrid, Universidad Complutense, 1997.

[15]On Arabic Inquisition documents see, e.g., A. Labarta, 'Inventario de los documentos arabes contenidos en procesos inquisitoriales contra moriscos valencianos conservados en el Archivo Histórico Nacional de Madrid (legajos 548–556)', *Al-Qantara*, 1 (1980), 115–64. For the most recently discovered hoard I know of (found in 1988) see M.J. Cervera Fras, 'Descripción de los manuscritos mudéjares de Calanda (Teruel)', in: *Homenaje a M.L. Ledesma Rubio*, 165–187.

[16]See his 'Andalusian-Arabic Manuscripts from medieval Christian Spain: some supplementary notes', in: *Festgabe für Hans-Rudolf Singer: zum 65. Geburtstag am 6. April 1990 übereicht von seinen Freunden und Kollegen* (Frankfurt, 1991), vol. 1 [= FAS Publikationen des Fachbereichs Angewandte Sprachwissenschaft der Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz in Germersheim, Reihe A., Bd. 13], 811–23; and his 'Andalusian-Arabic Manuscripts from Christian Spain: a comparative intercultural approach', *Israel Oriental Studies*, 12 (1992), 75–110.

and Wiegers have been expanding these boundaries, both through the discovery of a good deal of new Arabic material from the Mudejar period, and by tracing the circulation of a number of polemical and juridical works.[17]

It is on the basis of such a reconstruction of Mudejar manuscript culture that Wiegers has been able to approach one of the central topics of the field: the rise of romance and Aljamiado as an alternative to Arabic for Mudejar literary expression.[18] Aljamiado had previously been understood as entirely a post-reconquest phenomenon, the response of a beleaguered and leaderless Muslim community whose flagging Arabic competence reached the vanishing point with the fall of Granada and the conversions and immigrations that came in its wake. There was significant disagreement about the timing of this phenomenon. Some, like the nineteenth-century pioneer Eduardo Saavedra, placed it early, in the fourteenth century, and saw the rise of Aljamiado as evidence of christianization. But most modern scholars followed the lead of L.P. Harvey's groundbreaking 1958 dissertation and placed it in the mid-to-late fifteenth century and saw it as a resolutely Islamic response to increasing acculturation.

This, however, is not Wiegers' view. He focuses instead on Mudejar Aljamiado, and particularly on the works of Yça de Segovia, a mid-fifteenth century scholar who occupied several important positions in the Castilian Muslim community. In addition to translating the Qur'ān, Yça also composed an Aljamiado compendium of Muslim law (the Breviario Sunni) and apparently engaged both in collaborations and polemics with Christian clerics.[19] These are remarkable projects, and were long thought to mark the beginnings of Aljamiado literature. For this reason alone, Wiegers' well-researched contribution to their understanding is of great interest. But equally important is his contextualization of these projects within what he reveals to be much older traditions of Romance translation and literacy among Mudejars.

Wiegers has made clear that cultural catastrophe is an insufficient explanation for the rise of Aljamiado. Further attention to some of the traditions of translation he has uncovered will undoubtedly refine our models of Mudejar cultural history. This may be especially true within the genre of Mudejar polemics. Polemical texts figure prominently among early Aljamiado works, with both anti-Jewish and anti-Christian texts convincingly datable to the mid- or even the early fourteenth century.[20] This is not a period when the Arabic competence of the Mudejar fuqahā' is in serious doubt, and in fact original Mudejar polemics written in Arabic do survive from the same period. One such is the Ta'yīd al-milla, or Defence of the faith, a Mudejar anti-Jewish polemic which was

[17] See especially their recent articles in *Al-Qantara*: 'The polemical works of Muḥammad al-Qaysī (fl. 1309) and their circulation in Arabic and Aljamiado among the Mudejars in the fourteenth century', 15 (1994), 163–199; 'The Islamic statute of the Mudejars in the light of a new source', 17 (1996), 19–58. See also their 'Islam in Spain during the early Sixteenth Century: the views of the four Chief Judges in Cairo', in: *Orientations: Poetry, Politics, and Polemics* (Leiden, 1997), 133–152.

[18] G.A. Wiegers, 'Language and Identity: Pluralism and the use of non-Arabic languages in the Muslim West', in: *Pluralism and Identity: Studies in Ritual Behavior*, ed. J. Platvoet and K. Van der Toorn (Leiden, 1995), 303–326.

[19] G. Wiegers, *Islamic Literature in Spanish and Aljamiado: Yça of Segovia (fl. 1450), his antecedents and successors* (Leiden, 1994). The translation of the Qur'ān was undertaken at the behest of Juan de Segovia, and Wiegers has made a convincing case for a polemic with Juan López de Salamanca, on which see 134–142.

[20] Wiegers, *Islamic Literature*, 63–66; Van Koningsveld and Wiegers, 'The Polemical Works', 184, 187; Galmés de Fuentes, *Los Manuscritos*, 149–151.

clearly well read, since it exists in multiple Arabic and Aljamiado versions, some heavily annotated.[21] This concentration of early Aljamiado texts within the field of polemics suggests that the Muslim religious leadership first embraced Aljamiado not so much as a crutch for its own declining competence but in order to reach a broader Mudejar audience. Their goal was to enable every Muslim living in this 'land of polytheism' to become a defender of his own faith. From this point of view the rise of Aljamiado 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 there may mean that knowledge that was increasingly restricted to the learned elites elsewhere (in North Africa, for example) penetrated further into the 'popular' or 'ignorant' classes in Iberia.

Another area of textual production that contributes to a less catastrophic vision of Mudejar cultural change is that of notarial practice. A considerable number of Mudejar legal documents survive both in Arabic and 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. Hence these documents have seemed 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.[22]

The results of this philological methodology, always valuable, are becoming even more interesting as its practitioners become less whiggish. Thus 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. At the same time, he marks the several deviations and omissions of the document, not so much as signs of cultural decline, but as adaptations to the 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

[21] See D. Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1996), 196–198; and Wiegers, *Islamic Literature*, 63–65. I understand Wiegers is preparing an edition of the Ta'yīd.

[22] On this subject the work of Wilhelm Hoenerbach remains irreplaceable. See his *Spanisch-Islamische Urkunden aus der Zeit der Naṣriden und Moriscos* (Berkeley, 1965), and his 'El notariado Islamico y el Cristiano: Estudio comparativo', *Cuadernos de Historia del Islam*, 11 (1984), 103–136. The adjective 'weak' often accompanies the phrase 'mudejar script' in manuscript catalogues. By such a paleographic index, our own culture might be said to be in the midst of catastrophic decline.

notarial attempts to adapt the Arabic formulaic tradition in ways which did not explicitly violate Muslim law.[23]

These contributions, and others like them, provide us with a new sense of the vibrancy and depth 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.[24] Put more abstractly, many mudejarists, and especially those dealing with Arabic sources, approach the topic from the point of view of a normative Islam. Positing 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', they apply a text-critical and philological approach to Mudejar texts in order to ask 'where does this text come from? how do its terms and ideas relate to the canonical Islamic textual tradition?'[25] Similarly, institutional and social historians often focus on the Mudejars' effectiveness in maintaining 'Islamic' (i.e., Andalusi) political and social structures under Christian rule. Replication is here the ideal, and difference or adaptation is seen as acculturation, a decline from Islam.

The importance of a normative approach in establishing the Islamic textual traditions within which the Mudejars moved is indisputable. Indeed, large parts of the medieval Islamic ᶜulamā' (learned elites) themselves adopted a normative approach in assessing the Mudejar situation. The fifteenth-century North African jurist Al- Wansharīsī, one of the severest critics of the Mudejars, wrote:

> 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 [Muslim] inhabitants of Ávila 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.[26]

For Al-Wansharīsī and many others, Islam could not be separated from a normative set of cultural practices (language, dress, etc.), and the Mudejars' deviation from this standard put them 'on the borders of infidelity'.

Unlike Al-Wansharīsī, modern mudejarists have tended to leaven such normative

[23]I am summarizing here from Alfonso Carmona González, 'Consideraciones sobre la pervivencia de la jurisprudencia andalusi en las épocas mudéjar y morisca', in: *Actes du Ve Symposium International d'Études morisques*, vol. 1 (Zaghouan, 1993), 209–222, and 'Textos jurídico-religiosos islámicos de las épocas mudéjar y morisca', *Areas*, 14 (1992), 15–26. The two articles overlap considerably. I have not been able to locate his 'Aportación al estudio del contrato matrimonial en el Occidente islámico', announced in 'Consideraciones', 215, as forthcoming in *Actas del XV Congreso de la Unión Europea de Arabistas e Islamólogos*.

[24]See, e.g., the opening lines of van Koningsveld and Wiegers, 'The Polemical Works of Muḥammad al-Qaysī...'. 163.

[25]J. Bowen, *Muslims through Discourse: Religion and Ritual in Gayo Society* (Princeton, 1993), 5. The questions are paraphrased.

[26]Translated in L.P. Harvey, *Islamic Spain, 1250–1500* (Chicago, 1990), 58. This important book remains the only survey of Mudejar history and literature.

models with a liberal celebration of tolerance and diversity. The resulting bifurcated narrative of cultural tragedy and decline on the one hand, and heroic cultural resistance on the other, has constituted the dominant mode of Mudejar research since the nineteenth century.[27] The product of these generations of research is summarized in L.P. Harvey's magisterial *Islamic Spain, 1250–1500*, where he demonstrated that 'Islamic devotion and Islamic virtues' flourished among the Mudejars (60–61) due to their 'courageous and stubborn defence' (p. xi) of Islamic identity. Thanks to that work it is now possible to ask a few slightly different questions. Just what did Mudejars think Islamic virtues and Islamic identity were? Was Mudejar identity derived by reference to a 'standard' which they could never quite meet but struggled to uphold? Or can it also be understood as an innovative and adaptive Islam with its own particular processes of identity-formation, its own boundaries, and its own sense of what constitutes a Muslim?[28]

These questions are similar to those being asked about contemporary 'local Islams'. Interest in local, as opposed to normative, Islam arose from the work of anthropologists who focused on religious practices that they believed made a particular group distinctive, rather than on those shared by that group with other Muslims. Instead of relating texts and practices to a canonical Islamic textual tradition, these ethnographers asked a different question: 'How did (and do) people understand, debate, and apply the text?'[29] Soon after its rise in the 1960s under the stewardship of Clifford Geertz, the study of 'local Islams' immediately became influential in Islamic anthropology. It did not, however, have such an immediate impact on treatments of historical Islam for two reasons. Firstly, its early practitioners were not primarily concerned with textual sources. Secondly – and more importantly – the insistence on a 'multiplicity' of local Islams tended to ignore historical connections between cultures and the strong sense of many Muslims across these diverse cultures that there was indeed an 'external, normative, reference point for their ideas and practices'. In other words, fleeing from the universalism of the Islamists, these ethnographers tended excessively toward nominalism.

More recent work, however, has begun to focus 'precisely on the dynamic tension between local ideas and processes on the one hand, and the transcendental prescriptions as understood by those involved on the other'. A number of anthropologists now treat the tension between local and universal as a central part of Muslim experience, and explore this tension through studies of how texts and traditions are produced, read, and debated. In particular, they focus on the role of intermediaries, or 'culture brokers', in Muslim institutions and on the ways in which these intermediaries produce religious

[27]See, e.g., G. Ticknor's *History of Spanish Literature* (London, 1849), vol. 1, 87–89, where he celebrated the 'oriental' genius of the Aljamiado *Poema de Yusuf* while at the same time treating it as a monument to the declining culture of Mudejar Islam. For a graphic illustration of this trend, and for a discussion of the influence of liberalism on Mudejar historiography, see Ángel Galán Sánchez, *Una visión de la 'decadencia española': la historiografía anglosajona sobre mudéjares y moriscos (sigos xviii–xx)* (Málaga, 1991), 81 and passim.

[28]I use the word 'innovation' here in a non-technical sense. Maliki jurists rarely accused Mudejars of the otherwise common charge of bid'a, innovation. Perhaps these scholars considered the Mudejars, a stereotypically ignorant people, as capable of error but not of hermeneutically principled innovation.

[29]Here and in the next paragraphs I am drawing on and quoting from Bowen, *Muslims through Discourse*, 5–7.

discourse by bridging the gap between authoritative claims of textual traditions and local applications.

It is this type of work, with its emphasis on the tension between normative claims and the production of local identities, that Kathryn Miller proposes as an approach to the Mudejars in her recent dissertation.[30] Drawing on a concentration of Arabic documents from Aragon (many of which were discovered in the nineteenth century, hidden in the walls of a house in Almonacid de la Sierra), she tries to take seriously 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''.[31] She turns to the recent study of Mudejar communities of Calatayud by Francisco Javier García Marco (see note 12 above) in order to describe some of the scribal activities, business practices, family relations, and official obligations of a few of those Aragonese faqihs whose Arabic writings survive.[32] Her hope is that in bringing together these notarial sources with the surviving products of Mudejar scribes we come closer an understanding of the role of the Mudejar ᶜulamā' in brokering the tension between normative and local Mudejar Islam. How, despite admitting their own acculturation, did the Mudejars produce a textual practice which they themselves recognized as Islamic? Given that many boundaries between Muslim and non-Muslim did in fact erode, how did the Mudejars mark new boundaries that they found adequate to a Muslim identity and imbue them with Islamic significance?

As yet these questions remain largely unanswered. The importance of the questions themselves, however, is increasingly apparent. 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 fairly unique in the Middle Ages. Today millions of Muslims live in non-Muslim countries. Some of these, like the Mudejars of old, live in areas conquered 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 non-Islamic lands. These are all very different historical contexts from the medieval Iberian one. 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.[33] Such similarities can be deceiving, but I suspect that these will help make the next lustrum of Mudejar studies as fruitful as the previous one.

[30] 'Guardians of Islam: Muslim Communities in Medieval Aragon', Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University (1998).

[31] John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination* (Boulder, 1992), 34, cited in Miller, 78.

[32] A number of other 'troves' of Mudejar and Morisco manuscripts exist, and some have been used to reconstruct the textual world of the fuqahā'. See, e.g., the work of J. Albarracín Navarro on the documents discovered in Ocaña (Toledo) in 1969, most recently 'Actividades de un faqih mudéjar', *VI Simposio Internacional de Mudejarismo* (Zaragoza, 1995), 437–444.

[33] For two recent studies that explore some of the juridical similarities, see A. Carmona, 'Los nuevos mudéjares: la *shari'a* y los musulmanes en sociedades no-islámicas', and M.I. Fierro, 'La emigración en el Islam: conceptos antiguos, nuevos problemas', both in *Comunidades islámicas en Europa*, ed. M. Abumalham (Madrid, 1995), 49–59 and 71–84 respectively. A fuller version of Fierro's article appears in *Awrâq*, 12 (1991), 11–41.