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The Granada Lead Books Translator Miguel de Luna as a Model for Both the Toledan Morisco Translator and the Arab Historian Cidi Hamete Benengeli in Cervantes' *Don Quixote*

Gerard Wiegers

Introduction

Quite a number of researchers have noted connections between the famous novel of Cervantes and the Granadan Lead Books affair, and have discussed possible references in the Quixote to the involvement of the Granadan Morisco translator Miguel de Luna (c. 1550–1615) in this famous affair. In 1974, L.P. Harvey devoted his inaugural lecture in the Cervantes chair at King's College London to arguing that such a connection existed. Harvey argued that it is probable that in making use of the narrative device of Cidi Hamete Benengeli, the famous alleged Arab author of the Quixote, Cervantes was “holding up to the ridicule of his readers the absurdities being passed off as historical scriptural fact by Luna and others in the city of Granada.”¹ The frame story of *Don Quixote*, he argues, “assumes the form which it possesses because of the Morisco impostures perpetrated in Granada in the 1590's and for no other reason.”² Harvey showed that Cervantes visited Granada in 1594, and would have known about the events.³ García-Arenal and Rodríguez Mediano conclude in their recent

* Revised text of an invited lecture given at the University of Colorado at Boulder, Department of Spanish and Portuguese on 17 November 2011. I am grateful to students and staff, especially Professor Julio Baena, for their valuable comments, and to Dr. Brian Catlos (Department of Religious Studies) for inviting me to Boulder. I also wish to thank Professor Pat Harvey and Dr. Kevin Ingram for their valuable comments on a draft version of this essay. The present contribution could not have been written without the generous help of Juan Sánchez Ocaña, keeper of the Archive of the Sacromonte Abbey (Granada) and my colleagues María Luisa García Valverde, Antonio López Carmona of the University of Granada.

1 Leonard Patrick Harvey, *The Moriscos and Don Quixote*. Inaugural Lecture in the Chair of Spanish delivered at University of London King's College, London 1974, p. 15.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid., p. 14.

valuable study on the Moriscos and the Sacromonte forgeries that “it is as if Cervantes is speaking about Miguel de Luna.”⁴ Below I will argue that new evidence and a re-reading of the sources (including one of the original lead tablets—for the first time since the seventeenth century) make it highly probable that Miguel de Luna indeed was the historical model Cervantes had in mind when writing about the unnamed Romance-speaking Morisco, whom the first-person narrator meets at the Alcaná in Toledo and—indirectly—of the Noble Arab Moor Cidi Hamete.⁵ I will start with the results of recent research into the Lead Books on the basis of the original texts, then discuss Luna, and finally present my arguments for this identification.

The Parchment of the Torre Turpiana and the Lead Books in Light of Recent Studies

The public story of the Lead Books began in the year 1588 with an old tower that was being demolished in the city of Granada. The tower, once probably the minaret of the Friday mosque, had to make way for the building of the new cathedral, which still stands there today. During the demolition, workmen stumbled on a small chest in the rubble. Inside the chest were some bones, part of a veil, and a parchment containing a prophecy. The authorship of the prophecy, written in Spanish, was attributed in the subscript to St John. This subscript was written in Latin with Gothic letters. The accompanying texts in Arabic and Latin could be traced to a group of Christians who, the claim was made, had lived in Granada in the first century. Among the group was a bishop called Cecilius, whose name was mentioned on the parchment in Arabic script. The veil was purported to have belonged to the Blessed Virgin.⁶

4 Mercedes García-Arenal and Fernando Rodríguez Mediano, *Un Oriente español. Los moriscos y el Sacromonte en Tiempo de Contrarreforma*, Madrid, 2010, p. 196.

5 See, for example, Julio Baena, “Modos del hacedor de nombres cervantino: El significado de ‘Cide Hamete Benengeli,’” *Indiana Journal of Hispanic Studies* 2 (1994), pp. 49–61; Tomas Case, “Cide Hamete Benengeli y los *Libros plúmbeos*,” *Cervantes. Bulletin of the Cervantes Society of America*, 22.2, (2002), pp. 9–24; Luce López Baralt, “The Supreme pen (al-Qalam al-a’lā) of Cide Hamete Benengeli in *Don Quixote*,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 30.3, (2000), pp. 505–518; Devin Stewart, “Cide Hamete Benengeli, Narrator of *Don Quixote*,” *Medieval Encounters*, 3 (1997), pp. 111–127.

6 See, among other studies, Pieter Sjoerd van Koningsveld and Gerard Albert Wiegers, “The Parchment of the ‘Torre Turpiana.’ The Original Document and its Early Interpreters,” *Al-Qantara* xxiv, 2 (2003), pp. 327–358; García-Arenal and Rodríguez Mediano, *Un Oriente español*, pp. 24–31; Isabel Boyano Guerra: “En busca del original a través de la traducción:

The Turpiana parchment created enormous excitement in Granada. To understand the scope of this joy, it must be recalled that the city did not possess any relics.⁷ This discovery would amply compensate for this absence. But soon this enthusiasm was tempered by skepticism and repudiation. Critics, who included the famous Spanish scholar Benito Arias Montano (1527–1598), pointed out that it was impossible for the parchment to be genuine, for, among other reasons, in the first century Spanish had not yet evolved as a literary and spoken language.⁸

From the year 1595 onwards, seven years after the discovery in the ancient tower, a series of lead plaques with Arabic and Latin texts were found in caves in a hillock just outside Granada. These plaques were also accompanied by ashes and bones which were purported to be the remains of Christians who had been burned there as martyrs under the Roman emperor Nero. The texts, which contained prayers, acts of Jesus and the Apostles, and prophecies were all said to be written by two brothers from Arabia, Sā'is al-Āya ibn al-Radī (whose Latin name was Cecilius) and Tis'un b. 'Attār, (Thesifon).⁹ One of the Lead Books mentions that Jesus had cured both brothers in a miraculous way.¹⁰ The brothers journeyed to Spain in the company of the Apostle James,

De nuevo sobre el pergamino," in María Julieta Vega Garcia-Ferrer, María Luisa Garcia Valverde, Antonio Lopez Carmona, Granada eds., *Nuevas aportaciones al conocimiento y estudio del Sacro Monte. IV Centenario Fundacional (1610–2010)*, Granada 2011, pp. 121–141; Pieter Sjoerd van Koningsveld, "Le parchemin et les livres de plomb de Grenade: Ecriture, langue et origine d'une falsification," in María Julieta Vega Garcia-Ferrer, María Luisa Garcia Valverde, Antonio Lopez Carmona eds., *Nuevas aportaciones al conocimiento y estudio del Sacro Monte. IV Centenario Fundacional (1610–2010)*, Granada 2011, pp. 173–196; Pieter Sjoerd van Koningsveld and Gerard Albert Wiegiers, "Five documents illustrating the early activities of Miguel de Luna and Alonso del Castillo in deciphering and translating the Arabic passages of the Parchment found in the Torre Turpiana in Granada," in *ibid.*, pp. 215–258.

7 There existed an ancient tradition about seven men, the so-called *Siete varones*, who had allegedly been sent by Saint Peter to the Iberian Peninsula to spread the Gospel, and included in their number a certain Cecilius, see Francisco Javier Martínez Medina, *Los libros plúmbeos del Sacromonte de Granada*, in Francisco Javier Martínez Medina ed., *Jesucristo y el emperador Cristiano*, Córdoba, 2000, pp. 619–643, (p. 631).

8 See García-Arenal and Rodríguez Mediano, *Un Oriente español*, pp. 32–33.

9 They are described as the sons of the Arab Sālih, who was a descendant of the prophet of the same name who is mentioned in the Qur'an, e.g. Sura 7:73–79, 11:61–68, 26:141–159, and 27:45–53, and see Miguel José Hagerty, *Los Libros Plúmbeos del Sacromonte*, Granada, 1998 (original edition 1980), p. 95. According to the Qur'an, Sālih was sent to the people called Thamūd.

10 See Hagerty, *Los libros*, pp. 95–123.

and there they settled with their company in the vicinity of a holy mountain. The books were hidden here, and, as they prophesied, would only come to light at the End of Time, when the one true message of the gospel would be in the gravest of danger. At that time a priest would come forward with the books and present them at a great gathering, at which Arabs would also be present.¹¹ Here a decision would be made and woe to those who would not accept these Arabic books. One of the books was called *The Essence of the Gospel* (Arabic: *haqīqat al-indjīl*). This book was said to have been revealed to the Virgin Mary by the Archangel Gabriel. During the great gathering a humble person of Arab origin would explain the meaning of this book. After he had done so, the whole world would convert to the true belief, and the End of Time would be nigh. *The Essence of the Gospel* is a Lead Book of sixteen leaves, which, apart from one leaf, nobody has been able to decipher and has therefore been referred to as the mute book ("libro mudo").¹²

With regard to the contents of the Lead Books, there are three theories: the first is that the books were Christian documents, the second that they were Islamic, and the third that they present some sort of syncretic ideas, and attempt to find a middle way between Christianity and Islam. I believe, however, that an analysis of the Arabic texts shows that the Lead Books present us with an Islamic polemic against Christianity and Judaism. The Parchment and the Books tell a story about Jesus' teachings and life, but do not refer to him as

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- 11 A king who was himself not an Arab but who ruled over Arabs would act as the great protector of the books. This prophetic utterance was generally assumed to be a reference to the Ottoman Sultan, who might validly be said to be a non-Arab who ruled over large areas of the Middle East. These data can be found in the Lead Books entitled *Kitāb mawāhib al thawāb li 'ibād allāh al-mu'minīn fi haqīqat al-indjīl*, which al-Hadjari quoted on the basis of a transcription of the translator, al-Ukayhil (probably Alonso del Castillo), which he found in Tunis when he arrived there in 1637; see Ahmad b. Qāsim al-Hadjari, *Kitāb nāsir al-dīn 'alā l-qawm al-kāfirīn (The Supporter of Religion against the Infidels). Historical study, critical edition and annotated translation by Qasim al-Samarrai, Pieter Sjoerd van Koningsveld and Gerard Wiegers*, Madrid, 1997 [Fuentes Árabe-Hispanas, 21], translation, pp. 248–261; Arabic text, pp. 193–206. In L.P. Harvey, *The Literary Culture of the Moriscos 1492–1609. A Study based on the extant Manuscripts in Arabic and Aljamía*, D. Phil. Dissertation Oxford, n.p., 1959, I, 245–61, and II, pp. 161–83, one finds a translation of the same book and an edition based on the British Museum manuscript Harley 3507. This manuscript contains a transcription which was made by Bartolemeo de Pettorano at the behest of the Vatican.
- 12 That leaf was read and understood by the Morisco al-Hadjari in his *Nāsir al-dīn*, see translation, p. 85, Arabic text, p. 29.

Saviour. Instead, they present us with a Mun'am, the Blessed One, the Saviour,¹³ to be disclosed at the end of time, during a great gathering to be held in Cyprus. A study by Pieter Sjoerd van Koningsveld and myself, the first to have been undertaken since the seventeenth century on the basis of the original documents, has shown that the books are deeply colored by Qur'anic lore, making it clear that the promised savior is no other than Muhammad.¹⁴ Our recent research also shows that the Parchment discovered in 1588 and the Lead Books were written by one and the same author. The same notions appear in both works, and the same historical notions about eschatological events underlie them. Moreover, our studies of the Parchment and the subsequent interpretations of these documents indicate that the Granadan doctor Miguel de Luna was one of the main forgers. Our studies show that the parchment is written in an Arabic script that can be characterized as "fantastic," i.e. written with letter forms without diacritics that, moreover, seem to be designed to give the writing an ancient impression. For this reason these parts could only be interpreted by someone with prior knowledge of the contents.¹⁵ On the basis of his early extant interpretations, we were able to show that Luna, unlike the other Moriscos involved in the early stages of the interpretation process, such as Alonso del Castillo, must have had intimate knowledge of the fraud.

Miguel de Luna (c. 1550–1615)

Miguel de Luna was born in a Morisco family in Granada in about 1550. His family originated in the city Baeza and was of noble lineage, maybe because their forefathers had converted to Christianity before the general forced con-

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- 13 See Pieter Sjoerd van Koningsveld and Gerard Albert Wiegiers, "The Book of the Enormous Mysteries that James the Apostle Saw on the Sacred Mountain for the Great Gathering, Written at his Order by Cecilio, his Disciple—Lead Book Number 22 in the Sacromonte Archive, Granada, Arabic text and English translation with notes," in Maria Julieta Vega Garcia-Ferrer, Maria Luisa Garcia Valverde, Antonio Lopez Carmona eds., *Nuevas aportaciones*, op. cit., pp. 259–272, p. 263.
- 14 See especially, Gerard Albert Wiegiers, "El contenido de los textos árabes de los Plomos: *El Libro de los misterios enormes (Kitāb al-asrār al-'azīma)* como polémica islámica anticristiana y antijudía," in *ibid.*, pp. 197–214, and Van Koningsveld and Wiegiers, "The Book of the Enormous Mysteries," in the same volume.
- 15 See Van Koningsveld, "Le parchemin"; Van Koningsveld and Wiegiers, "Five Documents"; Wiegiers, "El Contenido" and Van Koningsveld and Wiegiers, "The Book of Enormous Mysteries."

versions.¹⁶ This means that the family was seen as belonging to the category of so-called “Old Moriscos” (*moriscos antiguos*). For that reason, they were probably exempted from being expelled from Granada after the Granadan Morisco uprising between 1568 and 1571. Luna studied medicine at the University of Granada, and lived in that city as a practicing doctor. He married an Old Christian woman, whose name was Maria de Veraztegui, and had at least two sons, Alonso and Juanico. He often presented himself as an Arabic Christian (“*cristiano árabigo*”), but we know very little about him before the discovery of the Parchment and the Lead Books.¹⁷ In March 1588 we find him occupied with the translation of the Parchment of the Torre Turpiana. In the oldest extant transcriptions and translations of that document, Luna is mentioned as a doctor and an interpreter of the Arabic language.¹⁸ In 1595 he still signs documents as an Arabic interpreter. In 1596 he seems to have been promoted and signs as interpreter of His Majesty the King (“*interprete de su magestad*”).¹⁹ It seems very likely that he earned this prestigious appointment as a result of his efforts to translate the Parchment and the Lead Books.

In 1592 Luna wrote a medical treatise called the *Tratado de los baños* (*Treatise on baths*), and in the same year published the first part of *Historia Verdadera del Rey don Rodrigo* (*The True History of King Don Rodrigo*). He had completed the writing in 1589, one year after the parchment had been found. A second part would follow. The book appeared to be very successful. Luna allegedly translated the work from an Arabic manuscript in the library of El Escorial, written in the first person by the wise (*sabio*) alcaýde Abulcasim Tarif Abentarique, of the Arab nation [de nacion árabe]. Luna presented this figure as an eye-witness to the conquest by the Arabs of Spain and the establishment of Muslim rule. Unlike the received historical accounts of these events known in Spain at the time, the Arab rulers are presented in this work as evenhanded and mild towards all their subjects, Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Modern historians have rightly argued that the goal of this work was to show that,

16 Mercedes García-Arenal and Fernando Rodríguez Mediano, “Médico, traductor, inventor: Miguel de Luna, Cristiano Árabigo de Granada,” *Chronica Nova* 32 (2006), pp. 187–231; García-Arenal and Rodríguez Mediano, *Un Oriente*, p. 165ff; Luis Fernando Bernabé Pons, “Estudio preliminar,” in Miguel de Luna, *Historia Verdadera del Rey Don Rodrigo*, edición facsimile, Granada, 2001, pp. vii–lxx.

17 García-Arenal and Rodríguez Mediano, *Un Oriente*, p. 166.

18 Van Koningsveld and Wiegers, “Five Documents,” p. 219 (Archive of the Sacromonte, Granada, Leg VIII, f. 405r).

19 Van Koningsveld and Wiegers, “Five documents,” p. 247 (Archive of the Sacromonte, Granada, leg. v, f. 142r., dated 28 July 1596).

since Muslim rule had presented no threat to Christian subjects, and rulers had respected the Christians minorities, Moriscos, who had always been good and loyal subjects of the Spanish King, even though they had different cultural habits and sometimes spoke the Arabic language, deserved to be treated well by the Spanish authorities.²⁰ Luna presents himself as the interpreter of this eye-witness report, but was unmasked as a forger in the nineteenth century. We may suspect, however, that earlier critical minds would have had their doubts also.

From 1595, the year in which the apocrypha were discovered, until his death in 1615, Luna seems to have been involved in the translation and interpretation process of the Parchment and Lead Books. Around 1611, Luna attempted to secure recognition as a nobleman (*hidalgo*).²¹ He died in Granada in 1615, and was buried in that city as a good and faithful Christian.²²

The Quixote

There are several references to the Lead Book affair in the Quixote. The first appears at the beginning. In chapter 9 of part I, where the narrator (“Cervantes”) tells us the following:

One day, as I was in the Alcaná of Toledo, a boy came up to sell some pamphlets and old papers to a silk mercer, and, as I am fond of reading even the very scraps of paper in the streets, led by this natural bent of mine I took up one of the pamphlets the boy had for sale, and saw that it was in characters which I recognized as Arabic, and as I was unable to read them, though I could recognize them, I looked about to see if there were any Spanish-speaking Moriscos at hand to read them for me; nor was there any great difficulty in finding such an interpreter, for even had

20 See Bernabé Pons, “Estudio preliminary,” p. XLV ff, and the sources referred to by him.

21 Dario Cabanelas Rodríguez, “Cartas del morisco Miguel de Luna,” *Miscelánea de Estudios Árabes y Hebraicos*, XIV–XV (1965–1966), pp. 31–47. The Parchment and Lead Books continued to be examined in Spain and in the Vatican for many more years, until finally the Holy See anathematized them in 1682. They were returned to Granada in 2000.

22 Archive of the Sacromonte, Leg. v, f. 737, a letter discussing the ‘Christian’ death of Miguel de Luna by Alonso Nuñez de Valdivia y Mendoza to archbishop Pedro de Castro, 10 December 1615. The letter is followed on f. 738 by an undated letter to Castro by doña María de Verástegui, his widow, confirming this information.

I sought one for an older and better language I should have found him. In short, chance provided me with one, who when I told him what I wanted and put the book into his hands, opened it in the middle and after reading a little in it began to laugh. I asked him what he was laughing at, and he replied that it was at something the book had written in the margin by way of a note. I bade him tell it to me; and he still laughing said, "In the margin, as I told you, this is written: 'This Dulcinea del Toboso so often mentioned in this history, had, they say, the best hand of any woman in all La Mancha for salting pork.'"²³

And:

When I heard Dulcinea del Toboso named, I was struck with surprise and amazement, for it occurred to me at once that these pamphlets contained the history of Don Quixote. With this idea I pressed him to read the beginning, and doing so, turning the Arabic offhand into Castilian, he told me it meant, 'History of Don Quixote of La Mancha, written by Cide Hamete Benengeli, an Arab historian.' It required great caution to hide the joy I felt when the title of the book reached my ears, and snatching it from the silk mercer, I bought all the papers and pamphlets from the boy for half a real; and if he had had his wits about him and had known how eager I was for them, he might have safely calculated on making more than six reals by the bargain. I withdrew at once with the

23 Translation by John Ormsby on http://cervantes.tamu.edu/english/ctxt/DQ_Ormsby/part1_DQ_Ormsby.html, the Spanish reads: "Estando yo un día en el Alcaná de Toledo, llegó un muchacho a vender unos cartapacios y papeles viejos a un sedero; y, como yo soy aficionado a leer aunque sean los papeles rotos de las calles, llevado de esta mi natural inclinación tomé un cartapacio de los que el muchacho vendía y vile con caracteres que conocí ser arábigos. Y puesto que aunque los conocía no los sabía leer, anduve mirando si parecía por allí algún morisco aljamiado que los leyese, y no fue muy dificultoso hallar intérprete semejante, pues aunque le buscara de otra mejor y más antigua lengua, le hallara. En fin, la suerte me deparó uno, que, diciéndole mi deseo y poniéndole el libro en las manos, le abrió por medio, y, leyendo un poco en él, se comenzó a reír. Preguntéle yo que de qué se reía, y respondióme que de una cosa que tenía aquel libro escrita en el margen por anotación. Díjele que me la dijese; y él, sin dejar la risa, dijo:—Está, como he dicho, aquí en el margen escrito esto: "Esta Dulcinea del Toboso, tantas veces en esta historia referida, dicen que tuvo la mejor mano para salar puercos que otra mujer de toda la Mancha," Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, Francisco Rico ed., Madrid 2004, pp. 86–87.

Morisco into the cloister of the cathedral, and begged him to turn all these pamphlets that related to Don Quixote into the Castilian tongue, without omitting or adding anything to them, offering him whatever payment he pleased. He was satisfied with two arrobas of raisins and two bushels of wheat, and promised to translate them faithfully and with all dispatch; but to make the matter easier, and not to let such a precious find out of my hands, *I took him to my house, where in little more than a month and a half he translated the whole just as it is set down here* (my italics, GW).²⁴

At the end of the first part of the Quixote, the first-person narrator returns to the Lead Book affair. He tells us that he had tried in vain to find evidence about a third journey made by Don Quixote, until he met a doctor who possessed a lead box with an ancient manuscript inside.²⁵ The doctor said that the box had been found while demolishing an old hermitage; the parchment contained within it was written in Gothic letters and included Castilian verse. The contents were hard to understand, but the interpreters, academicians of Argamasilla (a small village in La Mancha that in reality could certainly not boast such a distinguished institution) had deciphered poems about the lives and heroic deeds of the main characters of the novel: Don Quixote, Sancho Panza, the horse Rocinante, and Dulcinea of El Toboso. The rest of the

24 “Cuando yo oí decir ‘Dulcinea del Toboso,’ quedé atónito y suspenso, porque luego se me representó que aquellos cartapacios contenían la historia de don Quijote. Con esta imaginación, le di prisa que leyese el principio, y, haciéndolo así, volviendo de improviso el arábigo en castellano, dijo que decía: *Historia de don Quijote de la Mancha, escrita por Cide Hamete Benengeli, historiador arábigo*. Mucha discreción fue menester para disimular el contento que recibí cuando llegó a mis oídos el título del libro, y, salteándosele al sedero, compré al muchacho todos los papeles y cartapacios por medio real; que, si él tuviera discreción y supiera lo que yo los deseaba, bien se pudiera prometer y llevar más de seis reales de la compra. Apartéme luego con el morisco por el claustro de la iglesia mayor, y roguéle me volviese aquellos cartapacios, todos los que trataban de don Quijote, en lengua castellana, sin quitarles ni añadirles nada, ofreciéndole la paga que él quisiese. Contentóse con dos arrobas de pasas y dos fanegas de trigo, y prometió de traducirlos bien y fielmente y con mucha brevedad. Pero yo, por facilitar más el negocio y por no dejar de la mano tan buen hallazgo, *le truje a mi casa, donde en poco más de mes y medio la tradujo toda, del mismo modo que aquí se refiere*. (my italics, GW)”

25 Chapter 52. I thank Professor Julio Baena of the University of Colorado at Boulder for drawing my attention to this passage. See Case, “Cide Hamete Bengeli,” pp. 21–22, who discusses the passage as well.

parchment appeared hard to decipher because the letters had been eaten away. However, they were submitted to an academician (of Argamasilla) who would, by conjecture, explain them. The first-person narrator had received notice that the man had been able to do this, with many sleepless nights and effort, and that he had the intention to publish them, in the hope of a third journey of don Quixote.²⁶ There can indeed be little doubt that these are references to the efforts to translate the parchment of the Torre Turpiana.

Miguel de Luna as Model for Cervantes' Novel

The first reference in the Quixote has generated considerable interest. The main focus of these studies has been the invented author Cidi Hamete Benengeli. However, I believe it is the humble Morisco translator, a man who does not even receive a name, who deserves our attention, for, as I will argue, it is clear that he was based on Miguel de Luna. First, as L.P. Harvey as already noted, Cervantes, who visited Granada in 1594, had every reason to be well-informed not only about the Torre Turpiana affair and the Valparaiso excavations, which were to take place in 1595, but very likely also about the *Verdadera Historia*.²⁷ And indeed it can be confirmed that Cervantes read the *Verdadera Historia*, as is evident from part 1, chapter 30 of the Quixote, in which we are told that

26 "Pero el autor de esta historia, puesto que con curiosidad y diligencia ha buscado los hechos que don Quijote hizo en su tercera salida, no ha podido hallar noticia de ellas, a lo menos por escrituras auténticas: sólo la fama ha guardado, en las memorias de la Mancha, que don Quijote la tercera vez que salió de su casa fue a Zaragoza, donde se halló en unas famosas justas que en aquella ciudad hicieron, y allí le pasaron cosas dignas de su valor y buen entendimiento. Ni de su fin y acabamiento pudo alcanzar cosa alguna, ni la alcanzara ni supiera si la buena suerte no le deparara un antiguo médico que tenía en su poder una caja de plomo, que, según él dijo, se había hallado en los cimientos derribados de una antigua ermita que se renovaba; en la cual caja se habían hallado unos pergaminos escritos con letras góticas, pero en versos castellanos, que contenían muchas de sus hazañas y daban noticia de la hermosura de Dulcinea del Toboso, de la figura de Rocinante, de la fidelidad de Sancho Panza y de la sepultura del mismo don Quijote, con diferentes epitafios y elogios de su vida y costumbres.[...] "Éstos fueron los versos que se pudieron leer; los demás, por estar carcomida la letra, se entregaron a un académico para que por conjeturas los declarase. Tiénese noticia que lo ha hecho, a costa de muchas vigili-
as y mucho trabajo, y que tiene intención de sacallos a luz, con esperanza de la tercera salida de don Quixote." (Cervantes, *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, the entire episode is on pp. 529–534, quotations on p. 529).

27 Harvey, *The Moriscos*, pp. 14–15.

Don Quixote's identity and valor depend on a mole on his right side under the left shoulder, the mark of a strong man. Horace Jeffery Hodges saw that this passage was very similar to a passage in the *Verdadera Historia*, in which a prophecy is discussed, which states:

that the Christians were to lose that land, and that it was to be conquered by the Moors: it said farther, that the Captain that was to gain it, was to be valorous and *strong*; and for a proof of the knowledge of him, he was to have a *hairy mole* as large as a garvanzo, or vetch, over the shoulder of his right hand. On conclusion of these words by that woman, the *Tariff* was much pleased, and before all his retinue *stripped himself*, and having carefully looked, *they found the mole* as the woman had said.²⁸

It is also significant that Luna was not only the translator and main forger of the Parchment of the Torre Turpiana and the Lead Books; he was also, like Cervantes' translator, a Spanish speaking Morisco, who was raised speaking Arabic and only later learned to speak Castilian. Furthermore, as García-Arenal and Rodríguez Mediano have recently discovered, Miguel de Luna was not the sincere Arab Christian he pretended to be. In the Toledo Inquisition trial of the Toledan Morisco Juan de Rojas (which took place between 1601 and 1603), Rojas is reported to have told a witness that Miguel de Luna, whom he had met in Toledo in the house of another Morisco merchant of the Alcaná, stated that: "in the Lead Books that had been found in the Holy Mountain of Granada it was written by Jesus himself that he was neither son of God, nor God and that God does not have a son"²⁹ And the Inquisitors learned other things, from which it becomes clear that Luna described the Lead Books as documents with an Islamic, polemical message.

Equally noteworthy is the fact that Cervantes' Spanish speaking Morisco is given a salary and housed by the first-person narrator during the six week translation process of the papers that the latter had discovered at the Alcaná, in what would seem to be a parody of the circumstances in which the Lead

28 Horace Jeffery Hodges, "Holy Moley: Don Quijote's Significant Señal," *Cervantes. Bulletin of the Cervantes Society of America*, 29,2 (Fall, 2009), 173–183, p. 175.

29 García-Arenal and Rodríguez Mediano, *Un Oriente*, pp. 192–193, "les declaró cómo en las hojas de plomo que se han hallado en el Monte Santo de Granada está escrito de mano de Jesucristo cómo el mismo dixo que no era ni hijo de Dios ni Dios ni Dios tenía hijo . . ." and see also Mercedes García-Arenal, "Miguel de Luna y los Moriscos de Toledo. No hay en España mejor moro," *Chronica Nova* 36 (2010), pp. 253–262.

Books were translated.³⁰ Adan Centurión, Marquis of Estepa,³¹ tells us that shortly after the parchment was discovered on 18 March 1588, a committee of canons was appointed by the bishop of Granada, Juan Méndez de Salvatierra, and bound by secrecy under the pain of excommunication. For the translation of the Arabic parts, the *licenciado* José Fajardo, who had been professor of Arabic at the University of Salamanca was first approached. However, he excused himself, stating that he did not know Arabic well enough. The second candidate was the licentiate Francisco López Tamarid, “familiar y intérprete del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición deste reino de Granada” and *racionero* of the cathedral of Granada, who also excused himself. Then, Miguel de Luna, who, with the Morisco Alonso del Castillo, was seen as the most qualified person for the task, examined the Arabic parts, assisted by Tamarid and Fajardo, between 26 and 30 March 1588. Because he was not able to decipher everything (I will not go into the details here), Luna demanded that he be allowed to read the parchment at home in order to study it more quietly. This request was duly granted.³² Subsequently, and allegedly independently from Miguel de Luna, Alonso del Castillo studied the parchment between 2 and 5 April of the same year.³³ The similarities between the translation process of the parchment in

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- 30 It is interesting to observe that the *morisco aljamiado* receives a salary. This salary is presented as modest in the Quixote. The historic Luna built a career on the Lead Book affair and tried to become an *hidalgo*. We do not know yet how well he was paid for his work, but we find a lot of evidence about payments to the translators by archbishop Pedro de Castro in the records kept in the Archive of the Sacromonte. These records need further study. However, that the translation process was very expensive is confirmed by a document kept in the Archivo General de Simancas. It is dated 26 January 1597 and in it, Archbishop Pedro de Castro informs the King about his extreme financial needs and tells him that he has had to spend his personal wealth for the qualification of the documents and the expenses of the prelates who came to discuss their authenticity. See Archivo General de Simancas (AGS), Legajo 494, f. 121. I am grateful to Drs. Antonio Carmona y María Luisa Valverde for drawing my attention to this document.
- 31 Adan Centurión, *Información para la historia del Sacromonte, llamado de Valparaiso y antiguamente Illiputano junto a Granada donde parecieron las cenizas de S. Cecilio, S. Thesiphon y S. Hiscio, discipulos del Apostol, único patron de las Españas, Santiago y otros santos discipulos dellos y sus libros escritos en láminas de plomo*. Primera Parte. Granada, 1632, f. 6r–12r.
- 32 Centurión, op. cit., f. 11r “... que avia menester verlo despacio, y pido se lo dexassen llevar a su casa. Y aviendo tratado entre si el Prouisor, y los quarto asistentes, se le mandaron entregar, y dio recibido.”
- 33 Dario Cabanelas Rodríguez, *El morisco granadino Alonso del Castillo* (estudio preliminar: Juan Martínez Ruiz), Granada, 1991, p. 243. Van Koningsveld and Wieggers, “Five Documents,” show that Alonso del Castillo was not involved in the forgery. Boyano

Granada and the papers found at the Alcaná in Cervantes's novel is striking. In both cases, a Spanish speaking Morisco is requested to translate old papers connected to Spain's Arabic heritage in a process of close surveillance.

Judging from the new evidence, we may conclude that the historical model for Cervantes' Spanish speaking Morisco is very likely Miguel de Luna. Cervantes' Morisco is presented as the translator of the story of Don Quixote, but the reader should understand that he was rather the inventor, who therefore was also the inventor of its author, the noble Moor Cide Hamete Benengeli. Thus Cervantes makes fun of Miguel de la Luna as the forger of the Parchment, Lead Books and, more particularly, the *Historia verdadera*.

If we now turn again to the Quixote, we may notice that Arabic names in the novel are usually inventions. Benengeli is pictured as an Arab Muslim from La Mancha, and a nobleman: Cervantes refers to him as Cide, from the Arabic Sayyidi, meaning "My Lord" and the common indication for Muslims who claim to have be a descendant of the prophet Muhammad. The name Hamete undoubtedly refers to the Arabic name Ahmad. Interesting is Devin Stewart's suggestion for the etymology of Benengeli, which, he argues, may refer to a place name, perhaps Bani Indjil, i.e. "Sons of the Gospel." The reference to *Sons of the Gospel* is interesting in the light of the evidence presented above with regard to the content of the Lead Books. Maybe Cervantes invented this name to make fun of Miguel de Luna and the *Essence of the Gospel*, viz. the *True Gospel*. However that may be, it seems very likely that both Cervantes' Cidi Ahmete Benengeli and the Spanish speaking Moriscos, the "*morisco aljamiado*" are manifestations of the Granadan doctor and royal interpreter for the Arabic language, Miguel de Luna.

Conclusion

Having visited Granada, Cervantes was aware of the Parchment, Lead Books and *Verdadera historia de Don Rodrigo*. In the Quijote he makes fun of Miguel de Luna as someone who makes a career out of inventing tales and passing them off as historical sources and sacred lore. Using the literary device of the *manuscrit trouvé*, the Quixote is presented to the reader as the translation of a Spanish speaking Morisco whom the first person narrator met at the Alcaná in Toledo, the Arab original being a history of chivalry written by a noble Arab from La Mancha, Cide Ahmete Benengeli. In the Quixote, he refers to the

Guerra, "En busca del original a través de la traducción: De nuevo sobre el pergamino," discusses Castillo's low esteem for Luna.

discovery of the parchment and makes fun of the interpreters and the contents. Instead of a lofty prophecy about the end of time shedding light on the origins of Christianity in the Iberian Peninsula, the parchment found in his novel contain stories about the main tragic characters of his novel. Whereas the humanist and biblical scholar Benito Arias Montano offered direct and serious scholarly criticism on the parchment and its significance, Cervantes used the weapon of literary irony.