The Nasrid Kingdom of Granada between East and West

(Thirteenth to Fifteenth Centuries)

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Contents

Preface IX

List of Figures and Tables XII

Introduction. The Nasrid Kingdom in the History of al-Andalus 1

Pierre Guichard

PART 1

Political and Institutional Aspects

1 The Banū Naṣr: The Founders of the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada
(Thirteenth–Fifteenth Centuries) 39

Bárbara Boloix Gallardo

2 Political Structures 73

Antonio Peláez Rovira

3 Islamic Law and Religion in Nasrid Granada 100

Amalia Zomeño

4 Granada and Its International Contacts 124

Roser Salicrú i Lluch

PART 2

Socioeconomic Structures

5 The Nasrid Economy 155

Adela Fábregas

6 The Nasrid Population and Its Ethnocultural Components 177

Bilal Sarr

7 Families and Family Ties in Nasrid Granada 195

Amalia Zomeño

PART 3***Spatial Organization and Material Culture***

- 8 Organization of Settlement and Territorial Structures in the
Nasrid Kingdom of Granada 219
 Antonio Malpica Cuello
- 9 The *Madīna* and Its Territory: Urban Order and City Fabric in the
Nasrid Kingdom 237
 Christine Mazzoli-Guintard
- 10 Domestic Spaces during the Nasrid Period: Houses 263
 María Elena Díez Jorge
- 11 Productive Activities and Material Culture 304
 Alberto García Porras
- 12 The Palatine City of the Alhambra, Seat and Center of Power 327
 Antonio Malpica Cuello

PART 4***Modes of Thought and Artistic Creation***

- 13 Art and Architecture 341
 Juan Carlos Ruiz Souza
- 14 The Cultural Environment 368
 María Dolores Rodríguez Gómez
- 15 Nasrid Literature: Ascesis, Belles-Lettres, and Court Poetry 393
 José Miguel Puerta Vilchez
- 16 Science and Knowledge 413
 Expiración García Sánchez

PART 5***Posterity: The Conquest and Incorporation of Granada into the Crown of Castile***

- 17 Granada and Castile: A Long Conflict 441
Daniel Baloup
- 18 A New Society: The Castilians 467
Rafael G. Peinado Santaella
- 19 An Old Society. Mudejar Neighbors: New Perspectives 495
Ángel Galán Sánchez
- 20 The Christianization of the Mudejars of Granada and the
Persistence of Islam after the Expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain
(1492–ca. 1730) 519
Gerard Wiegers

PART 6***Sources for the Study of the Nasrid Kingdom***

- 21 Arabic Sources for the History of Nasrid al-Andalus 547
Francisco Vidal Castro
- 22 Christian Sources for the Last Muslim Kingdom in
Western Europe 589
Raúl González Arévalo
- 23 Archaeological Sources 630
Alberto García Porras
- Index Nominum 657
Index Locorum 667

The Christianization of the Mudejars of Granada and the Persistence of Islam after the Expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain (1492–ca. 1730)

Gerard Wiegers

1 Introduction¹

Elsewhere in this volume Ángel Galán Sánchez discusses the conquest of Granada and the vicissitudes of the Mudejar elite until the forced conversions of all Mudejars of Castile, followed by the forced conversion of the entire Muslim population in Spain in the first decades of the sixteenth century. In the present contribution I will deal with the forced Christianization of the Mudejars of Granada, the Granadan Moriscos, their descendants, and especially the Morisco elite; their expulsion, first to Castile after their rise against the authorities in the Alpujarras (1568–1571) and then to North Africa in 1610; and finally, the persistence of Islam in Granada until the early eighteenth century. I will focus on Morisco religious life, and discuss in particular the significance of the famous Parchment of the Torre Turpiana (1588) and the Sacromonte Lead Books (1595–1599).

2 The Conquest of Granada and Its Aftermath

Shortly after the conquest of the Islamic city of Granada, the Catholic elite started to reflect on the meaning of the conquest in the history of Christianity and to construct a Christian discourse about it. In that emerging discourse the city was seen as the New Jerusalem, Spain as the New Israel, and a messianic role was projected onto the conquerors of the kingdom, the Catholic Monarchs, whose conquest of Jerusalem as well as the defeat of Islam and the spread of Christianity over the whole world, with North Africa as the start, was

¹ Acknowledgements: I wish to thank the archivist of the Sacromonte Archive D. Juan Sánchez Ocaña, and Drs. María Luisa García Valverde and Antonio López Carmona for their help.

near.² Oran was indeed conquered in 1506 and later on strongholds were established on the North African coast.³ While many Mudejars fled, others stayed and some converted to Christianity.⁴ In addition, the Catholic Monarchs transformed State-Church relations to the detriment of the power of the Vatican. Thus the Early Modern nation-state model started to replace the earlier pluralistic state-religion model. In the new discourse, which extolled religious and political unity to the detriment of religious diversity, Judaism and Islam were meant to disappear. Two religious figures played an important role at this stage: the first was the Hieronymite Hernando de Talavera (1428–1507), the second the Franciscan Francisco Ximénez de Cisneros (1436–1517). For a long time, Talavera was believed to have supported a model of coexistence between the Christian conquerors and the Mudejar population. The second figure, Francisco Ximénez de Cisneros, Cardinal of Toledo and Inquisitor in the city of Granada between 1499 and 4 February 1500, was the main force behind the harsher policies towards the children of Christian converts to Islam (*elches*, *rumías*) that led to the revolt that broke out in the Albaicín.⁵ However, while indeed Talavera and Cisneros differed with regard to conversion policies, they differed less than hitherto assumed with regard to their view on Islam. While being a supporter of a gradual conversion politics, Talavera held no less polemical views on Muslims and Islam than Cisneros did.⁶ Moreover, Isabelle Poutrin has shown that it was the expectation of a rapid massive conversion of all Muslims to Christianity, rather than the preservation of a status quo ante – that is, a continuation of the Mudejar situation – which permeated the spirit of the capitulations of the city of Granada.⁷ What this early-sixteenth-century discourse lacked, however, was a role for pristine Christian origins. In fact, Granada could not claim much in this respect. It had been ruled by Muslims for many centuries and then became a frontier between the worlds of Christianity and Islam. But according to the Aragonese and Castilians, many Muslims living in Granada had been descendants of converts from Christianity

2 It should be remembered that Ferdinand *el Católico* received the title King of Jerusalem in 1510, a title that the Spanish monarchy has kept ever since.

3 García-Arenal, "Granada as a New Jerusalem," 16; Galán Sánchez, "De Mudéjares a Moriscos," 326; Salvador Miguel, "Cisneros en Granada," 167.

4 See for late-fifteenth-century migrations the Arabic chronicle translated as *Fragmento de la Época*, ed. Bustani; for the migrations and settlement in the Maghrib after 1610, see, e.g., García-Arenal, "The Moriscos in Morocco"; Razûq, *Al-Andalusîyûn wa hijratuhum ilâ 'l-maghrib*.

5 Salvador Miguel, "Cisneros en Granada," 156, 161.

6 García-Arenal, "Granada as a New Jerusalem," 36–40; Biersack and Martínez Medina, *Fray Hernando de Talavera*.

7 Poutrin, "Los derechos de los vencidos."

and Islam was merely a superficial layer.⁸ Such assessments must be considered ideology-driven and meant to justify the efforts towards a rapid conversion of the Muslims. More reliable figures indicate that the number of Christian converts to Islam living in Granada must have been about three hundred.⁹ The city had also been associated with a very long Jewish history, and Jews had lived as a minority until the conquest of the city by the Catholic Monarchs, but as is well known, shortly after the conquest the Monarchs decided to expel the Jews, and those who remained behind were punished by the death penalty if they refused to convert.

3 After the Conversion

The partly voluntary (i.e., of the so-called collaborators) and partly forced conversions of the Granadan Mudejars to Christianity between 1499 and 1501 were followed by campaigns of evangelization and a number of repressive measures by which the authorities aimed to eradicate all memory of Islamic life among the new converts and transform the city from a Muslim to a Christian one.¹⁰ One of these was the edict to burn all Islamic books in the entire kingdom, including Qur'ans. The orders to do so date from 12 October 1501.¹¹ In 1502, all Muslims in Castile were forced to convert or leave; most remained in Spain. In addition to those who remained Muslims in secret, to whom we will turn below, other Mudejars accepted Christian rule and beliefs. Among them were members of the Nasrid elite, the nobility even, and religious scholars, who had collaborated with the Christians during the conquest and had accepted their dominant position.

Shortly after the conquest, the Catholic Monarchs founded a hermitage very close to the place where the keys of the Alhambra had been handed over to them, and close to the *mazmorras*, the underground caves where Christian captives had been held in the Muslim period. They did so as a commemoration of the martyrs who had died in the city during the Muslim period, among them the Franciscans Pedro de Dueñas (1377–1397) and Juan Lorenzo de Cetina

⁸ García-Arenal, "Granada as New Jerusalem," 33.

⁹ Salvador Miguel, "Cisneros en Granada," 157.

¹⁰ See on this the contribution by Galán Sánchez in this volume. On the campaigns and the role of images and the stress on shared beliefs, albeit in a polemical way: García-Arenal *et al.*, "The Perennial Importance of Mary's Virginity."

¹¹ Ladero Quesada, *Los Mudéjares de Castilla*, doc. 146. The association of the book burning with Cisneros seems to be of a later date, as Salvador Miguel, "Cisneros en Granada," has argued. See also Ženka, "A manuscript of the Last Sultan of Al-Andalus."

the effects of baptism to be temporary and hoped to be able to practice Islam openly again, but for the time being they could not. Abū l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. Abī Jumʿa al-Maghrawī al-Wahrānī (d. 917/1511), a mufti at Fez, wrote around 1504 a *fatwā* for Muslims living in “strange lands” (Ar. *ghurabāʾ*, a word with strong eschatological connotations, as we will see below) who were forced to express unbelief and dissimulate.¹⁷ His advice, soon translated into Spanish (in Arabic script, *Aljamiado*) was that they might, if forced, dissimulate (*taqiyya*): they were allowed to express unbelief and dispense with the obligations connected with ritual ablutions and prayer. Amina Nawaz found passages aiming to help Moriscos dissimulate in Catholic churches in *Aljamiado* manuscripts uncovered in the Aragonese village of Almonacid de la Sierra (now kept at the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Biblioteca Tomás Navarro Tomás, no. 32).¹⁸ From recent research the varieties of local religious trajectories have become clear. Being a Morisco in Ávila, for example, was very different from being one in rural areas in Valencia and Aragon, or in urban areas in Granada and cities in Castile. These local forms of Muslim life were at times surprisingly vital. Recent research also shows to what extent the new converts had been integrated into Iberian society. Moreover, it has become increasingly clear that Moriscos, in spite of existing barriers, also succeeded in integrating into the middle and higher classes. (Fig. 20.1)¹⁹

The (oral) use of Arabic was concentrated in Valencia and Granada; Castilian was spoken in Aragon and Castile and written in *Aljamiado* and Latin script. Muslim religious life in the late Nasrid period (including the brief Mudejar period) and its literary culture is not well known yet. In the last few years it is increasingly drawing the attention of scholars and interesting articles and books have been published.²⁰ The Arabic texts of the Sacromonte Lead Books, as

17 See Stewart, “Dissimulation in Sunni Islam and Morisco *taqiyya*.”

18 Nawaz, “Sixteenth-Century Morisco Devotional Manuscripts,” 95–99.

19 This and the two following images of Moriscos are from Christoph Weiditz, *Trachtenbuch* [*Dress book*], Germanisches National Museum MS 22474, ca. 1530–1540.

20 On the history of late Nasrid society see Celia del Moral (ed.), *El epílogo del islam andalusí*. The manuscript findings are those of, for example, Cútar and the Castilian village of Pastrana, where a hoard of Arabic manuscripts was found in the seventeenth century that had belonged to Granadan Moriscos who had settled there after their expulsion from Granada. Pastrana was an intellectual centre of Granadan Moriscos; see on Pastrana and the Arabic manuscripts García-Arenal and Rodríguez Mediano, *Un Oriente español*. This study is, together with Carlo Alonso's *Los Apócrifos del Sacromonte (Granada)*, the most extensive study to date about the interpretation process of the Lead Books. On the manuscripts found in Cútar see, e.g., Barceló and Labarta, “Tawq al-Ḥamāma: un muwašṣaḥ apocalíptico.” An important contemporary Morisco source about Morisco life and the Lead Books is Aḥmad Ibn Qāsim Al-Ḥajarī: see his *Kitāb Nāṣir al-Dīn ʿalā ʾl-Qawm al-Kāfirīn*.

FIGURE 20.2 Morisco bearing bread, fol. 264. Christoph Weiditz, *Trachtenbuch* [Dress book]

will be argued below, can also be seen as examples of Granadan Morisco religious culture.

4 Mounting Tensions and Conflict

In the course of the sixteenth century tensions in Granada mounted. In 1567 Fernando Nuñez Muley, an elderly Granadan nobleman – in his youth a page in the household of Archbishop Hernando de Talavera – voiced in a discourse the Morisco protest against a number of imminent measures taken at the highest level of church and state.²¹

These measures aimed at prohibiting the wearing of the *almalafa* by Morisco women, the use of Moorish baths, and even the use of written and spoken Arabic. It was in vain. In 1568 the Granadan Moriscos revolted.²² The revolt spread to the Alpujarras, a mountainous region to the southeast of Granada, and was especially virulent there, with many killings on both sides. It lasted for two years. It could be repressed, but only at the cost of many lives and disappointment in the possibilities of a peaceful coexistence. Most Granadan Moriscos were expelled from the city and were forcibly dispersed all over Castile. In fact, of the fifteen or twenty thousand Moriscos who lived there

²¹ Garrad, "The Original Memorial of Don Francisco Núñez Muley."

²² See on this period Domínguez Ortiz and Vincent, *Historia de los Moriscos*, 25–26; Harvey, *Muslims in Spain 1500–1614*, 204–37.

at the beginning of the revolt, three or four thousand remained in 1571.²³ The consequences of the expulsion of the Granadan Moriscos to Castile were serious. It is from this time onwards that the sources start to speak of a “Morisco problem” in Castile and in Spain in general, as Granadan Moriscos formed networks of open or silent resistance. On the surface, the expulsion ended Muslim life in Granada. But as will be seen below, this was not the whole story. Islam in Granada appeared to be remarkably persistent. In order to explain how that persistence came about, we have to return to the fifteenth-century conquest of the Kingdom.

During the long conquest and for some time after it had been effected, Granada, as a frontier society, had attracted many people from other parts of Iberia and even beyond, among them many Mudejars from Castile.²⁴ Granada offered many economic possibilities to these migrants. Apparently many of the Granadan Moriscos were able to acquire considerable wealth and good positions as notaries, medical doctors, and advocates of the Royal Chancellery.²⁵ Some even rose to the nobility. The most notable example was Pedro de Granada Venegas, who became the first Marquis of Campotéjar (1559–1643). According to Enrique Soria Mesa, not all families which flourished were of noble Nasrid birth; many stemmed from the lower classes. Research by Soria Mesa and others in recent years has led to a drastic revision of the established image of Moriscos as belonging to the margins of Spanish society. They now appear to have been very much part of that society, and were integrated so well that they were able to escape, first, the expulsion to Castile after the revolt in 1568–1570, and then, much later, the expulsion from Spain to North Africa. The main way in which they achieved this, as painstaking research into archival documents by Soria Mesa shows, was that they were able to produce forged documents that proved their status as faithful collaborators with the Castilian Crown before and after the conquest of the city. Many of these Moriscos had probably become sincere and faithful Christians and participated in the Christian social and literary life of the city.²⁶ However, a number of them, while completely assimilating and integrating and hence virtually disappearing, remained Christians only outwardly and Muslims inwardly.²⁷ Even after the forced migrations to Castile in 1571, therefore, Moriscos still lived in

23 Coleman, *Creating Christian Granada*, 185.

24 See López de Coca Castañer, “La emigración mudéjar al reino de Granada”; Salvador Miguel, “Cisneros en Granada,” 158.

25 Soria Mesa, *Los últimos moriscos*, 15.

26 See on them García-Arenal, “El Entorno de los plomos”; Childers, “Disappearing Moriscos.”

27 The Muslim identities of these individuals remained hidden to the outside world and, if not for research into Morisco sources and the Inquisition trials discussed below, would never have become known.

Granada, but they had integrated well within the Old Christian society and outwardly lived as Christians. These Moriscos often tried to pursue noble status (*hidalguía*) in order to prevent a possible expulsion, and for the same reason produced fraudulent documents that they hoped would prove their Old Christian identity.²⁸

In 1588, during building works on the new cathedral, workers found a box in the Old Minaret of the Great Mosque which appeared to include some saintly relics and a large sheet of parchment covered with texts in Arabic, Spanish, and Latin. Then, from the year 1595 onwards, a total of twenty-two small Lead Books were discovered in the caves of Valparaíso Hill ("The Hillock of Paradise") outside Granada, together with some mortal remains (ashes and bones) attributed to the earliest apostles of Christianity to Spain, especially Granada, in the first Christian century. After the authentication of the relics (not of the books) during a regional council, the Hillock of Valparaíso was renamed *Sacro Monte* ("Holy Mountain"), and the Abbey built there became a centre of pilgrimage and religious life. Under the supervision of the Archbishop of Granada, Don Pedro de Castro Vaca y Quiñones (1534–1623), the dates and circumstances of the discoveries were recorded, and translators sought to translate the materials. The Lead Books were assessed, and the Archbishop arduously defended them as authentic early Christian lore, rejecting interpretations which advocated Muslim influence and Morisco origins. He was supported by influential translators who confirmed his views, among them the Morisco translator Miguel de Luna and the Marquis of Estepa, whose "Christianizing" translation became after Castro's death in 1622 the standard reference for the study of the Lead Books.²⁹ In agreement with the rules established at the Council of Trent, the Vatican had and demanded the right to assess the contents of the Parchment and Lead Books in Rome, and in 1643, after a long debate, the Lead Books were transported there. A Vatican committee of scholars deciphered, translated, and evaluated the documents and concluded that the Parchment as well as the Lead Books were heretical. In 1682 this judgment was confirmed by the Pope, who declared them prohibited. From that year onwards the materials remained inaccessible in the Vatican archives. At the recommendation of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (at the time prefect of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith and now emeritus Pope), Pope John Paul II decided to return the materials to Granada, where the Archbishop of the city finally granted Pieter Sjoerd van Koningsveld and the present author permission to prepare a critical edition and translation on the basis of the original Lead Books. In our

28 Childers, "An Extensive Network of Morisco Merchants."

29 Especially in the translation published by Hagerty, *Los Libros Plúmbeos del Sacromonte*.

work we were able to critically study the work of the translators and make use of the voluminous archive of the Vatican committees of scholars. It is a complex project which now approaches its completion. To date, we have published editions and translations of two of the Lead Books and a preliminary study in which we summarize our main findings so far.³⁰ In my discussion below, I base myself on that study.

The aforesaid Christian interpretation welcomes and defends the Parchment and Lead Books as historical witnesses of the lives and martyrdom of a number of early Christian figures who had spread Christianity in the company of the Apostle James. In fact, the Parchment and Lead Books were seen as solid evidence that Granada had been founded as a Christian city by the first-century bishop Cecilio, and that Mount Valparaíso had been the site of the martyrdom of the said Cecilio and a number of his companions. In the writings of the defenders of their authenticity the documents were subsequently connected to the long history of Christian suffering at the hands of Muslims of al-Andalus, up to and including the revolt of 1568–1671, which I have described above.³¹ Justino Antolínez de Burgos (1557–1637), church historian of the Sacromonte and defender of the Christian authenticity of the Lead Books, presents them in his *History of the Church of Granada* in this way as well.³² However, quite a few scholars and translators, including the Vatican scholars and the Pope, declared them heretical and full of Muslim lore. What can be said on the basis of the study of the original documents?

5 The Discourse of the Parchment and Lead Books: The Final Victory of Islam Predicted

The composer of the parchment signs in Arabic as “Cecilio, bishop of Granada.” He tells about a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, from which he brought back a prophecy about the destruction of the world which he ascribed to Saint John, the Evangelist and Apostle. He, Cecilio, had translated this originally Hebrew prophecy from Greek into Spanish. He translated from Greek into Arabic its poetical commentary “for the ‘Mozarabs’ [Arabophone Christians] living in Spain.” The Spanish prophecy and its poetical commentary in Arabic predict eschatological turmoil and the appearance of a dragon, but the meaning of prophecy and commentary remains far from clear.

30 Van Koningsveld and Wiegers, *The Sacromonte Parchment and Lead Books*.

31 See Barrios Aguilera, *La invención de los libros plúmbeos*.

32 See Antolínez de Burgos, *Historia eclesiástica*, fol. 2r.

In a final note, written in Latin, a servant of Cecilio, Patricius, informs us that his master, when he saw the end of his life and his martyrdom drawing near, had asked him to hide the treasure of the prophecy and relics in a safe place, so that they would never fall into the hands of the “Moors” (Muslims). The anonymous author thus postulates that Cecilio lived before the arrival of Arabs and Islam in Spain.

The Granadan Lead Books consist of a collection of twenty-one different bound books of lead consisting of between three and thirty-seven round, lead leaves; in total there are about 240 plates with written texts. Twenty of them are written in Arabic, and one (no. 17), entitled *The Essence of the Gospel* (*Ḥaḡīqat al-injīl*), is written almost entirely in an unknown script, except for one leaf in Arabic. LP 1 and 2 have bilingual Latin and Arabic titles, with Latin used on the covers. The diameters of the leaves vary between 50.8 and 73.9 mm. The books include a variety of genres, such as an extensive gospel, the *Book of the Outstanding Qualities and Miracles of Our Lord Jesus and of His Mother the Holy Virgin Mary* (*Kitāb Maḡāsīn Sayyidinā Yaḡū‘ wa-Ma‘ājizihi wa-Ummihi Maryam al-Ṣāliḡa al-‘Adhra*, no. 7).³³ They include a lengthy book (in two parts) devoted to the Acts of James, four theological texts, prayers, a miraculous story (about the Seal of Sulaymān), prophetic texts, revelations (including a Heavenly Journey made by Mary and her conversations [Ar. *Munājāt*] with the Angel Gabriel), and visions.³⁴ The books were discovered between 1595 and 1600 on the slopes of the Valparaíso hillock later called the Sacromonte, together with ashes which were believed to have belonged to paleo-Christian martyrs. Some of these seemed to be the “seven young men” who, according to some Christian traditions, had accompanied James/Santiago to Spain in order to spread Christianity. The Lead Books identify two of those men, Thesiphon and Cecilio, as Arabs, whose original names were Tis‘ūn and Sais al-Āya. Cecilio, the reader was given to understand, had been the Bishop of Granada who had signed the Parchment found in the ancient minaret in 1588. The Lead Books even mentioned its name: Turpiana Tower. This name evoked the idea that it had been built in ancient times, implicitly confirming the historical and religious claims of the Parchment.

The Lead Books include, as it turns out, an ingenious narrative that can briefly be described as follows. The said two Arabs, Tis‘ūn and Sais al-Āya, had travelled from Arabia, converted, and become disciples of Jesus. They witnessed Jesus’s life and demise and that of Mary, and heard both their preaching. They

33 See our edition in Van Koningsveld and Wiegers, “Marcos Dobelio’s Polemics.”

34 See our edition of LP 22 in Van Koningsveld and Wiegers, “The Book of the Enormous Mysteries.”

travelled with James to Spain on a missionary voyage which brought them to Granada and its Holy Mountain; they returned with him to Jerusalem, only to go back to Spain for a second time. During that voyage James died in Spain and was buried there. During their travels the company tried to convert pagans to Christianity. As disciples of Jesus and later of James, they play a main role as secretaries to record the revelations and acts of Jesus, Mary, and James in the Lead Books. Cecilio, a.k.a. Sais al-Āya, as the bishop of Granada and as a martyr, plays an important role in the Parchment and Lead Books, which, so it appears, were written by the same authors.

One central religious notion in the Lead Books is the creed that “There is no God but God; Jesus is the Spirit of God” (Ar. *Lā ilāha illā Allāh; Yaṣū*³⁵ *rūḥ Allāh*). While the Sacromonte Abbey and other defenders of the Christian nature of the Lead Books argued that this was in agreement with the Christian view, it is in fact an Islamic Creed, which used the Christian, not the Islamic variety of the name of Jesus, son of Mary (ʿĪsā b. Maryam). A second element which can be found in many Lead Books is the doctrine that “all [revealed] books are the truth” (*kullu kitāb ḥaqq*). This inclusiveness is also stressed by the use of the “Shield of David” (*Magen David*) or the “Seal of Solomon” (*Khātam Sulaimān*), which has its origin in pre-Islamic Jewish magic and symbolized this same idea.³⁶ In short, what we find is the inclusive Muslim doctrine on the chain of revelations, which culminates in orthodox Muslim theology in the Qurʾān, which corrects and perfects all previous revelations. In all books we find the so-called chain that culminates in the Lead Book called the *Essence of the Gospel* (Ar. *Ḥaqīqat al-Injīl*).

In the Lead Book narrative the books are buried in the Sacred Mountain of Granada, including a book called the *Essence of the Gospel* that had been revealed (literally: “sent down”) to Mary after her Heavenly Journey at the occasion of Pentecost. She then wrote it by her own hand with brilliant light on tablets made of precious stone.³⁷ The original *Essence of the Gospel* disappeared in the interior of the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, which burst open and closed again, but a copy was made on leaves of lead and taken by James and his companions to Spain.³⁸ The true contents of the *Essence of the Gospel* would have to remain hidden from the Believers until the end of time, when the books would be presented at a council to be held in Cyprus. During that

35 Sic, with *ṣād* instead of *sīn*. See Van Koningsveld and Wiegers, *The Sacromonte Parchment and Lead Books*, 21.

36 Van Koningsveld and Wiegers, *The Sacromonte Parchment and Lead Books*, 18.

37 Van Koningsveld and Wiegers, *The Sacromonte Parchment and Lead Books*, 29.

38 Lead Book 20, fol. 6b, see Van Koningsveld and Wiegers, *The Sacromonte Parchment and Lead Books*, 28.

Council a young Arab would explain the true meaning of the *Essence of the Gospel*, the book that included the alleged key to the correct understanding of all the other revealed books, extolling the religious virtues of the Arabs and the Arabic language as their vehicle. As we have seen above, the place of Arabic was the subject of fierce disputes in sixteenth-century Spain in general, and Granada in particular. Our researches have made clear that with the *Essence of the Gospel* the authors evoke in fact the Qur'an, which is projected as a future revelation, but which, evidently, was already in existence at the time when the anonymous authors lived.³⁹ Then, the Lead Books predict, Jesus will return and will struggle against the false messiah (Ar. *al-dajjāl*). The sun will rise in the West and one religion will prevail. This religion is Islam. While these events coincide with Islamic descriptions of the Hour and its Signs, including the turmoil with regard to the social order, they are set in the time that is closely associated with the fate of the Moriscos in Spain, as we encounter it in a number of Morisco prophecies and eschatological traditions. It is in this context that Lead Book 15⁴⁰ mentions the fact that the religion (*dīn*) will again be a "stranger" (*gharīban*), as it had been at the start of its existence. This is a reference to a Prophetic Tradition that states that Islam had started as a stranger, and will return to being one. As we know from other sources, the Moriscos applied this Tradition to their own situation as an oppressed minority living at the end of time.⁴¹ We also find a reference to Moriscos as "strangers" in the fatwa of Aḥmad b. Abī Jum'a al-Maghrawī al-Wahrānī mentioned above. The most important conclusion to be drawn from this brief description and analysis is without doubt that our research on the original Arabic texts shows the Lead Books to be Islamic, not Christian texts. The texts are tainted throughout with Muslim elements (such as the denial of Jesus's crucifixion and the polemical rejection of Jerusalem), and can be seen as an attempt to imagine and propagate the existence of an early Christian community which was divided over the Jesus's true message, and to imply that the Muslim view is the correct one. The revelation of a Holy Book, i.e., the *Essence of the Gospel*, to Mary turns her into a prophetess, a status she does not have in orthodox Islam. Moreover, she is presented not only as a virgin before, during, and after giving birth (to Jesus), she is also free of sin, which means in Islamic terms that she is also

39 Van Koningsveld and Wiegers, *The Sacromonte Parchment and Lead Books*, 42 ff.

40 Lead Book 15, fol. 3b, see Van Koningsveld and Wiegers, *The Sacromonte Parchment and Lead Books*, 43.

41 Harvey, "A Morisco Collection of Apocryphal Ḥadīths," 29; Harvey, *Muslims in Spain*, 60, 63 and note 8.

pictured as a prophetess. In many ways, therefore, the Lead Books can be seen as idiosyncratic, or even outright heterodox.

While these notions are known to us through the texts of the Lead Books, we may assume that discussions and texts with similar ideas circulated even earlier among the Morisco communities, to which the author(s) in all likelihood belonged. The books take up themes that are also discussed in Morisco lore in Arabic and Aljamiado. Be that as it may, further study will have to determine the precise relationship of the Lead Books to the lived religiosity of the Moriscos.

Who were the authors of these intriguing texts? The persons most likely to be responsible for their contents are the Morisco Miguel de Luna and his son Alonso. Miguel de Luna was born in Granada around 1550.⁴² His family originated in Baeza, and he and his family considered themselves descendants of Mudejars who had converted out of free will, i.e., they were so-called Old Moriscos (*moriscos antiguos*). Luna read medicine at the University of Granada. He belonged to the parish of San Miguel, and possessed a garden at the foot of Mount Valparaíso.⁴³

FIGURE 20.3 Moriscos going to the garden, fols. 267–269. Christoph Weiditz, *Trachtenbuch* [Dress book]

42 Archive of the Real Chancillería de Granada, leg. 2432.2, fol. 296r. The following passage is based on Wiegers, “Miguel de Luna, traductor (c. 1550–1615).”

43 Archive of the Sacromonte in Granada, C. 49, fol. 31 ff.

Miguel de Luna married an Old Christian woman, María de Veráztegui, and had at least two sons with her, Alonso and Juanico. We do not know much about his activities before the discovery of the Parchment of the Torre Turpiana in 1588. He translated Arabic documents related to the war of the Alpujarras in 1568–1571 and diplomatic letters related to Morocco.⁴⁴ The Granadan Morisco Alonso del Castillo described him as a person “*de los de contrabando*” (i.e., of doubtful political loyalty).⁴⁵ In March 1588 the then archbishop of Granada, Juan Méndez de Salvatierra (c. 1530–1588), asked him to translate the Arabic parts of the parchment of the Torre Turpiana, which he defended as an authentic early Christian document. In 1592 he composed and sent to the King a medical treatise on the value of baths in the struggle against the French disease, and wrote the first part of his pseudo-historical True History of King Roderick, *Historia Verdadera del Rey don Rodrigo*. The *Tratado de los baños* was written in the form of a letter in which Luna asked that public baths be restored in the entire kingdom. In his *Verdadera Historia* Luna invented the figure of an Arab historian who allegedly wrote a hitherto-unknown Arabic chronicle, which Luna translated into Spanish. According to Luna, that Arabic manuscript was extant in the library of El Escorial. The author’s alleged name was Abulcasim Tarif Abentarique, a Moor (*moro*) of the Arab nation.⁴⁶ Already in the 1590s others, such as the Arabist Diego de Urrea (ca. 1559–1616), suspected that Luna was the true author of the forged history, which presents the Arabicized Christians of al-Andalus as loyal servants of the Muslim emirs and caliphs and hence, implicitly, makes the use of Arabic by the contemporary Arab Christians, the Moriscos, acceptable to the Christian authorities.⁴⁷

From 1595 until his death in 1615, Luna worked in the service of Archbishop Pedro de Castro as translator of the Lead Books and defended in his writings the authentic Christian origins of the Books. He was also appointed Royal Arabic interpreter and attempted around 1611 to obtain a knighthood.⁴⁸ Miguel de Luna presented himself as a “*cristiano árabe*,” i.e., an Arabophone Christian. However, according to a number of witnesses in an Inquisition trial against the Morisco from Hornachos Jerónimo de Rojas (dating from 1601 to 1603) there was no better Muslim than he (“*no había mejor moro que él*”).⁴⁹ According to these witnesses he had also declared that in the Lead Books found in the Sacromonte of Granada, Jesus himself had said that he was not God, nor the

44 García-Arenal, “Miguel de Luna y los Moriscos de Toledo,” 256.

45 *Ibid.*

46 See Bernabé Pons, “Estudio preliminar,” xlv ff.

47 García-Arenal and Rodríguez Mediano, *Un Oriente*, 237.

48 Cabanelas Rodríguez, “Cartas del morisco Miguel de Luna.”

49 García-Arenal, “Miguel de Luna y los moriscos de Toledo,” *passim*.

son of God, and that God had no son; and that no one should be fooled, for on the Day of Judgement the miserable Christians would find out that they would be condemned because these ideas had been introduced in the Latin language in their councils. Jesus also declared that he himself was a prophet, as is also confirmed by the Prophet Muḥammad. Miguel de Luna was not included in the expulsion of 1609, nor was his family, as we will see. In fact, he died as a faithful Christian and was buried in Granada.

I have already briefly mentioned Luna's sons. About a figure who was very likely one of them, Alonso de Luna, two Inquisition documents are very important. The first is found in the National Historical Archive (Archivo Histórico Nacional, AHN) in Madrid, the second in the Archive of the Sacromonte of Granada (AASG). The AASG document, which came to my knowledge only after the publication of the presentation in Granada in March 2019 and hence was not discussed there, is much more extensive on the accused's ideas and practices than the one in the National Historical Archive. It mentions the alleged "crimes" committed by the accused by name and dates them to particular periods of his life.⁵⁰ These documents tell us the following: Alonso de Luna was first tried before the Inquisition of Granada in 1609 (AASG) for apostasy and heretical Muslim views, but apparently fled during the hearings (*audiencias*). In 1614 he was caught and tried before the Inquisition of Murcia, which continued the process that had started in Granada five years earlier. The first statement regarded the question of whether a confession to a priest was necessary, the second the statement that the Holy Virgin Mary had said that the best generation was that of the Muslims, and the third that many of those found guilty were in fact sinless, because of false testimony against them. He was sentenced to an abjuration *de levi*, and punished with banishment from the districts of the Inquisition of Murcia and Granada for six years. Probably around 1618 he was arrested again because new evidence against him had become available. After hearings he was locked in the secret prisons of the Inquisition in Granada in June 1618 (as the AHN document tells us), and finally, after having been

50 Two documents have been preserved, the first in Archivo Histórico Nacional, Inquisición 1953, exp. 65, fols. 1a–3b, and the second in Archive Sacromonte de Granada, Legajo 7, 2ª parte, fols. 350–53b. The second document, quoted in Cárdenas Bunsen, *La aparición de los libros plúmbeos*, 244, is much more detailed about Alonso's beliefs and practices and includes dates not found in the AHN document. In earlier publications I already drew attention to Alonso's role: see for example Wiegers, "The persistence of Mudejar Islam?". The AHN document referred to was discussed by and published in Vincent, "Et quelques voix de plus." I base myself here on the original documents. The text published by Vincent lacks some vital elements of the original document: for example, it does not mention the passage which calls Alonso an inhabitant of Granada.

delivered to the “secular arm,” was sentenced to life imprisonment. He had to appear at a public *auto de fe* in the Church of Santiago in Granada, which was used for these rituals, as it was very close to the buildings of the Holy Office. The first of the new heretical statements, confirmed by witnesses, was that illness only leads to death because doctors have not yet been able to find a cure, and that God does not wish the death of humans. This statement, judged heretical, may have been twisted, and perhaps expressed a medical position that was not uncommon at the time, one that no longer accepted the divine as a cause of illness.⁵¹ The origins of illness had to be sought in natural causes, to be established through empirical investigation. The second statement was that Heaven and Hell were not eternal, and that God’s mercy would prevail: on the Day of Resurrection he would bring all those in Hell to Heaven. This statement, also seen as heretical, is in fact in line with the sort of inclusive, mystical thought that we find in the Lead Books. Alonso had been told that this was against the Christian faith, but he had not been convinced and had made statements about life in heaven, and that life and matter were the same there as in this existence. During the trials he made additional statements. He told the inquisitors that his name was Alonso de Luna (in one instance in the AASG document Alonso Fernández de Luna), that he was a citizen of the city of Granada, had been born in Linares, and was fifty years old in 1618, the beginning of his interrogations. He must have been born in 1568. He had spoken Arabic from childhood onwards. He claimed to have been initiated in Islam around his eighteenth birthday by a “Moor in the city of Granada” (AAGS document), and had lived for four years in Italy, Rome, and later Madrid and other places. He had been in contact with Moriscos in the South of France. He was steeped in the Qur’anic sciences, had studied medicine, and had earned a licentiate in medicine, philosophy, and Latin. He mastered four languages: Castilian, Latin, Italian, and Arabic. At first it was said that he had suffered from diseases which had obscured his memory and his judgement at the time he was taken prisoner again by the Inquisition of Murcia. For that reason he denied the accusation that he had made heretical statements about the question of whether Adam’s Paradise was on earth or not, saying that he had never said heretical things when he was of sound mind. Then, by August 1618, additional statements against him were made, and four of his letters were read, one written to “*su santidad*” – perhaps the Pope (thus the AHN document), but maybe the Archbishop (perhaps of Granada) – and three to “*su Magestad*,” i.e., the Spanish King; all had been signed by him and were written in “a Moorish way.” In them he stated that he had received a revelation in which he had been taken

⁵¹ Arrizabalaga, “Medical responses to the ‘French Disease.’”

to from the fourth to the sixth heaven (i.e., had performed a *Mi'rāj*), where God had told him that the Time of the Resurrection was near, all heresies would come to an end, the Arab nation and the Arabic language would be a help, and all the world would convert to the Holy Catholic faith. He was to bring this Divine message to the Pope and the Spanish King and act as an interpreter of a book that had hitherto proved to be impossible to decipher, which was found among the Books of the Holy Mountain in "this city" (i.e., Granada); all this would produce a general conversion and a "general reformation to be brought about by the accused." He claimed that the Lead Books he was going to interpret contained "the complete Catholic and evangelical truth" while, according to him, the Qur'an was divine revelation as well.⁵² *The complete Catholic truth was thus equivalent to the truth of Islam.* This, as we have seen, is identical to the views we have identified as the core message of the Lead Books. Moreover, he claimed that the time of the Resurrection had already started and the earthly Paradise was already visible. This explains why he said that his father, "el doctor Luna," who had passed away, was in fact not dead but had been lifted by God to a "fábrica" called *el Ternete*, a word perhaps related to Spanish *tierra* or Italian *terra*, meaning something like "earthly paradise." This *fábrica* is above us, and God houses the righteous and the good there (*que está sobre nosotros que llama Dios el ternete, porque tiene allí a los justos y buenos*). Humans will live in this earthly Paradise, while the more perfect angels will be lifted to the Heavens. He also said that demons did not exist. According to witnesses he had practiced Islamic rituals, and the said letters contained quotations from the Qur'an. In short, he was a Muslim heretic, something he himself denied, saying among other things that since God himself had commanded him to say and do these things he could not be considered a heretic.

It seems likely that Alonso was the son of Miguel de Luna, lived in Rome around 1609–1610, and mediated between Miguel de Luna and the Vatican (including one of the physicians of the Pope) about a possible transfer of Miguel de Luna to Rome.⁵³ The elder Luna had indeed died in 1615. Alonso was a Morisco physician (although according to the AHN document he claimed to be an Old Christian [*Cristiano Viejo*], which implies that he saw himself as having that status probably because he belonged to a family that had converted voluntarily to Christianity before the forced conversions). Miguel de Luna, very likely his father, had claimed the same. He probably lived in Granada for most of his life, leaving for Rome in 1609, after he had been exiled by the Inquisitions of Granada and Murcia. It does not seem likely that he was indeed taught about

52 The expression used was "*rerum divinarum collectio*."

53 See Cabanelas Rodríguez, "Cartas del morisco Miguel de Luna," 39.

Islam by a random crypto-Muslim in the city; more likely he was carefully instructed. Perhaps he taught at the university, since the document discusses his disputes with students; perhaps these were his own students. In a letter dated 1609 published by Domínguez Ortiz and Vincent, Archbishop Pedro de Castro speaks about a Morisco who held a chair at the university.⁵⁴ Might this have been Alonso de Luna? Be that as it may, Alonso claimed a number of things that match very well the message of the Lead Books and display an intimate knowledge of their contents, which were unknown to the outside world. “Might he be one of those who had served as interpreters?” the Inquisitors wrote in the margin of the AHN document. His knowledge of the Lead Books’ contents included their mystical aspects, related to the doctrine of the Oneness of Being. The conclusion seems therefore inescapable that he, as well, must have had a hand in the affair as an author. As the son of Miguel de Luna, he probably cooperated with his father. This may also explain why Miguel de Luna sometimes does not seem to understand particular passages in the Lead Books. Under pressure of torture, Alonso de Luna took back some of his earlier statements, but the things he then said only seem to confirm his authorship: he confesses that he had made up things that had been revealed to him by Divine intervention, and that he had merely wanted to propagate the Sect of Muḥammad. We conclude from this that he not only believed himself divinely inspired to transmit the message, but probably also (co-)created it. Taking this information into account, and within the framework of the Islamicly heterodox views of the Lead Books on Mary as a prophetess, we may wonder whether we are dealing with an esoteric group, a kind of *cofradía de Nuestra Señora del Sacromonte*, of which Miguel de Luna and Alonso de Luna formed part.

That a sort of group of believers in the message of the Lead Books actually existed can be made plausible on the basis of evidence about such a group long after the expulsion had taken place. During an Inquisition trial against a group of people in Granada around 1728, the Inquisitors describe their beliefs as follows:

They rejected the veneration of statues and painted images, because, as they say, these are just wooden sticks, which one should not adore. They maintain that only Abraham, Isaac, and some saints are in heaven, and they venerate them in four “temples” in this city, believing them to be the saints of the Holy Mountain, and to them and to no others, nor to their images and paintings, should prayers be offered, because their descendants were believers in the sect of Muḥammad, and for his sake they

54 Domínguez Ortiz and Vincent, *Historia*, Appendix VIII, 282.

suffered martyrdom at the said Sacred Mountain. And [they say] that in a stone which is found in the said church [at the Sacromonte], in which we Christians believe piously, a book is buried which deals with the immaculate conception of the Most Blessed Mary, and they say that it contains the true explanation of the Qur'an. And [they say] that this book will not become manifest until a certain year which is mentioned in the [Inquisition] trial records, and in that year a council will be convened in Cyprus to which all Arabs will be summoned; and then, by the high providence of their Prophet, the said stone will be opened, producing the said book, which has been shut up for so many years, in order to undeceive the Christians, so that they will know that only their [the Muslim] sect is the true one.⁵⁵

These ideas seem to have existed in a community consisting of hundreds of persons in Granada who cherished beliefs and practices in which the Lead Books played an important role. Its members believed that in the church of the Sacromonte Abbey a (hollow) stone was buried which hides a book that, once discovered, would prove the truth of Islam. They venerated four saints associated with the Lead Books in four churches in the city and did so while not turning to the images of these saints. Being Muslims, they rejected the veneration of images. The historical and religious background of this group has been the subject of a number of recent historical studies, starting with Rafael de Lera García, María Soledad Carrasco Urgoiti, Mikel de Epalza, and Enrique Soria Mesa.⁵⁶ These studies show that there must have existed a continuous

55 "Negaban asimismo la adoración de las imágenes de talla y pinturas, porque dicen ser éstas unos palos, a quien no se debe ve [sic] venerar. Dicen que sólo están en el cielo Habraham, Isaac y algunos santos que se veneran en cuatro templos de esta ciudad, los quales se cree ser los s[an]tos del Monte s[an]to, y a éstos y no a otros ni a sus imágenes y pinturas se deben dar oración, por haver sido observantes de la secta de Mahoma sus descendientes, y que por él padecieron martirio en d[ich]o Sacromonte, y que en una piedra que está en d[ich]a Iglesia, en la qual los Christianos creemos piadosam[en]te que está enterrado un libro que trata de la puríssima conceción de María Santíssima, dicen ellos que en dicha está y contiene la verdadera explicación del Alcorán, y que este dicho libro no se manifestará hasta cierto año que en las causas se cita, en el qual se juntaría un concilio en la Chipre, al qual serán convocados todos los árabes; entonces, por alta providencia de su Profeta, se abrirá dicha piedra, entregando el dicho libro, que tantos años ha tiene encerrado para desengaño de los christianos y que reconozcan que sola su secta es la verdadera": Carrasco Urgoiti and Epalza, "El Manuscrito 'Errores de los moriscos de Granada,'" 240. This is the publication of a manuscript in the Library of the Fundación Bartolomé March (Mallorca).

56 In 1984 Rafael de Lera García published an article based on the Inquisition trial extant in the Archivo Histórico Nacional in Madrid: Lera García, "Cripto-musulmanes ante la

FIGURE 20.4 Morisco dance, fols. 267–269. Christoph Weiditz, *Trachtenbuch* [Dress book]

transmission of crypto-Islamic learning starting with converts to Christianity in pre-conquest Granada until at least the end of the eighteenth century and possibly even longer.

6 Conclusion

The Parchment and Lead Books take up some of the elements of the Christian discourse about the Christian origins of Granada. They present Cecilio, one of the seven men, as the first bishop of the city and a martyr, and confirm James's mission to Spain as a master of Cecilio, and of James's burial near the sea. However, the original texts make clear that the authors projected upon that Christian past another discourse, that of Islam, in a variety that exalted the position of Jesus and Mary in a very idiosyncratic way, presenting Mary here as a sinless prophetess and presenting the most pious among the early "Christians" as Arabs. The Holy Mountain in Granada is presented as a place of pilgrimage and an alternative to, if not a substitute for, Jerusalem. In the Lead Books we find Islamic polemical notions with regard to Jerusalem in relation to Jewish life. They refer to Jerusalem as the "Height of neglect." Of course, that

Inquisición Granadina en el siglo XVIII." Soria Mesa, *Los últimos moriscos*, 194, mentions the trial, but does not mention the connection between the religious ideas of this group and the Lead Books.

Islamic veneration for Moriscos could only be an *inward* veneration. To the outside world, the pilgrims would be Christians. In this way the Lead Books legitimized the participation of Moriscos as a vanguard of Islam at the end of time. In other words, they seem to have served a two-pronged goal: integrating the Moriscos, including their (crypto) Islamic beliefs, into Old Christian society, and legitimizing the existence of the Moriscos, including their use of Arabic, in the eyes of Christian society. A very small group, having escaped the expulsion, was actually able to maintain these beliefs in Spain until well into the eighteenth century.

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