

Nuria de Castilla

École Pratique des Hautes Études, PSL, Paris
ORCID: 0000-0001-6328-8214

Anna Cychnerska

Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika w Toruniu
Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń
ORCID: 0000-0002-5539-4401

Joanna Kulwicka-Kamińska

Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika w Toruniu
Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń
ORCID: 0000-0001-8566-9181

Aljamiado Literature in Renaissance Europe. Definitions, Area, Language

1. Introduction

The subject of this academic reflection is literature written in the Arabic alphabet, mainly religious literature, created in the Iberian Peninsula, the Balkans and the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania (GDL), i.e., modern-day Lithuania, Belarus, parts of Poland and Ukraine. It is now included in the so-called *Aljamiado* (from Arabic *al-ʾaǧamiyya*, meaning ‘foreign, non-Arabic’) *literature*.¹

One of the first scholars to seek to describe and define this phenomenon was Ottmar Hegyi. In 1979 he published *Minority and Restricted Uses of the Arabic Alphabet: The Aljamiado Phenomenon*. He claimed that the literature of Muslim minorities written in the Arabic alphabet is covered by the Romanised

1 This article is part of an international project, *Aljamiado Literature in Renaissance Europe. A Comparative Study*, conducted by the Centre for Kitab Studies at the Nicolaus Copernicus University (UMK) from 2019. The project includes comparative studies of Muslim cultural heritage in the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Balkans and Spain. See: *O projekcie*, access 2023; *Center for Kitab Studies. Grant*, access 2023.

term *Aljamía* or *Aljamiado* (from the Arabic term *al-‘aġamiyya*), which began to be used to refer to literature in Spanish written in the Arabic alphabet, copied and produced by Muslim communities in Christian Spain. Over time by analogy, it covered literature created in Portugal, Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia, Albania and even Ibero-Romanesque texts written in Hebrew [Hegyí 1979: 262]. Today this term also refers to writings by the Tatars of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The first scholar to classify the texts of the Polish-Lithuanian Tatars as *Aljamiado* was Werner Lehfeldt [1969], but pioneering research in this area only began in 2013 as part of the project “Tefsir” [Łapicz 2014; Dziekan 2015; Kulwicka-Kamińska 2018: 61–62]. Today, research into this literary phenomenon is conducted at the Centre for Kitab Studies.

Aljamiado literature also refers to the literary output of Muslim minorities from non-European countries, e.g., from western and southern Africa or southern and eastern Asia [Dobronravin 2016]. This practice should be interpreted as an expression of religious cohesion and an external sign of cultural ties with the world of Islam.

2. *Aljamiado* literature in the Iberian Peninsula: an introductory description

The term *Aljamía* used in the context of the Iberian Peninsula is a concept difficult to define, since strictly speaking it is neither a language nor a form of writing, nor a specific content. When we speak of *Aljamiado* literature, we refer, in general, to texts copied and produced by Mudejars and Moriscos (the Muslim communities in the kingdoms of Castile and Aragon under Christian rule, before or after the forced conversion), in which a linguistic variant of Castilian written in Arabic characters is used, characterised by strong Arabism, Aragonese and archaism. These texts were produced between the end of the 14th century and the beginning of the 17th century, especially in the kingdoms of Aragon and Castile, but also in other places, mainly North Africa, where many Morisco exiled after the interdictions imposed by Christian authorities in the Iberian Peninsula. A counter-example may, however, be found to all the points of this general definition and, if this sometimes renders it difficult to define the concept under discussion, it is at the same time a sign of the richness and complexity of the phenomenon.²

² Today, according to the dictionary of the Real Academia Española, the term *Aljamía* has three meanings: a) ‘Among the ancient Muslim inhabitants of Spain, a language of the peninsular Christians’; b) ‘A Morisco text in romance, but transcribed in Arabic letters’, and c) ‘Judeo-Spanish text transcribed in Hebrew characters’ [RAE]. I shall focus on the first two definitions.

Although the language usually used in Aljamiado literature is a Castilian strongly influenced by Aragonese with Arabic spelling, it should be remembered that the Mudejars and Moriscos also used other languages, which they rendered in Arabic characters, but also in Latin script: Latin, Catalan and, of course, Arabic.³

2.1. Languages

2.1.1. Castilian

The first meaning we find for *Aljamía* in the dictionary of the Real Academia Española (RAE) is: ‘Among the ancient Muslim inhabitants of Spain, the language of the peninsular Christians’, so we may deduce that it refers to Castilian. We know, in fact, that the use of the word *Aljamía* as an alternative for *Castilian* has been widespread since the 15th century. Thus, for example:

Ocultamente traía consigo una cierta moneda de plata en que había en ella letras y caracteres en lengua árabiga, que decían “ley lehe ele Alá”, que (en) *aljamía* querían decir que “no hay otro señor sino Dios solo”. (Granada, 1574) [ADC]⁴

In addition to Castilian, the Muslims of the Hispanic kingdoms of the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period used other languages, rarely listed in studies on this type of literature. This may be because they are not in Arabic characters (in the case of Catalan) or because they are not used in a context strictly linked to the Muslim religious sphere (as in the case of Latin). They are, nevertheless, languages that we also find in Mudejar and Morisco texts.

2.1.2. Catalan

At the end of the 14th century,⁵ a qadi, i.e. a Mudejar judge, or someone close to him copied in Valencia a Muslim legal treatise in Catalan entitled *Llibre de la çunna e xara* (Book of the çunna and xara). According to Barceló, the model was probably a translation of the Arabic text of the Islamic law, to which Christian ordinances were added [Barceló 1989: XIV]. Written in careful Latin

3 A first version of the contents of this section is available at: de Castilla 2020.

4 For more examples and meanings of *Aljamía*, see: Martínez de Castilla 2006, de Castilla 2020.

5 The manuscript includes a note written in Latin that indicates the date the work was written, 1308. Barceló, however, dates the copy to between 1460 and 1485 for graphic reasons and because of the watermark motif. She also suggests that the copy may have been made in connection with the granting of full jurisdiction over the area to the Lord of Sumarcarcer shortly before 1464 [Barceló 1989: XIII–XIV].

characters (humanistic script), the addressee is a Christian nobleman, probably the Lord of Sumarcarcer, who had been granted jurisdiction there in 1464, and who, according to the Valencian charters, would have to pass sentence on the advice of a Muslim qadi [Barceló 1989: XIV].

2.1.3. Latin

In the 15th and 16th centuries, Latin was the language used by scholars and clerics. Despite the scarce use of this language by the rest of the population, Morisco writings also convey passages in Latin, albeit exceptionally. Evidently, most of these are linked to the Christian prayers that the Moriscos had to recite in the catechisation processes after their forced conversion in 1502 in Castile or 1526 in Aragon.⁶ There are other cases, however, in which we also find this language, such as in the botanical Latinisms inserted in texts in Aljamía,⁷ or in the rare medical texts,⁸ in which Latin is also used as one of the fundamental languages of the manuscript. Although not in the first case, the fact that the Latin is written in Latin characters seems to indicate that both the copyist and the recipient would have no problem understanding it.

Probably along the same lines of understanding Latin, there are in turn a series of documents in this language, produced in medieval Christian Spain, which were known and used by the Mudejars and Moriscos. We are also certain that this type of document circulated among these communities, as there is evidence of it among the papers and codices in the Almonacid de la Sierra collection (now in the Tomás Navarro Tomás library, Madrid⁹). In many cases, Arabic annotations were more or less added to the Latin text [cf. de Castilla 2014: 89–90 and its bibliography]. Although very limited, the existence of writings and documents in Latin in these communities offers a new reading of the knowledge and use of this language by some members of the Morisco community, which leads to new hypotheses about their level of education.

6 “The priest was to teach the Moriscos the four fundamental prayers: the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Creed and the Hail Mary; the Ten Commandments and the Articles of Faith” (“El cura debía enseñar a los moriscos las cuatro oraciones fundamentales: el padrenuestro, el avemaría, el credo y la salve; los diez mandamientos y los artículos de la fe”) [Domínguez Ortiz, Vincent 1978: 95–96; Labarta 1978].

7 See, for example, Madrid, BRAH 11/9415 [cf. Martínez de Castilla 2010: 143–302].

8 Madrid, BRAH 11/9411. See: de Castilla, *Libros sin lectores* (forthcoming).

9 The library is part of the Center for Human and Social Sciences (CCHS), of the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC).

2.1.4. Arabic

Although it is true that Arabic was not a language commonly used by Christians in the 15th and 16th centuries [García-Arenal, Rodríguez Mediano 2010; de Castilla 2017], Mudejars and Moriscos made extensive use of it in their writings (although the idea is often repeated that the Spanish-speaking Moriscos “had forgotten Arabic” [Galmés de Fuentes 1986: 21]). A study on the manuscripts that were found hidden in a house in Almonacid de la Sierra (close to Saragossa) gives an eloquent result: 37.5% of the manuscripts (probably hidden there shortly before the final expulsion at the beginning of the 17th century) are written in Arabic, while 62.5% use Aljamía [Zanón 1995]. Despite the importance of the Arabic language in Mudejar and Morisco culture,¹⁰ the writings of these communities tend to be associated with Aljamía, generally defined as Castilian written in Arabic characters, in which a high percentage of Arabisms, Aragonisms and archaisms are used.

Despite the rather secret nature that has usually been attributed to these texts, inquisitorial translators seem to have known what they concerned at least since the 18th century [de Castilla, forthcoming a], but European scholars and bibliophiles were already buying such manuscripts from the end of the 17th century [de Castilla, forthcoming b]. José Antonio Conde has been credited with identifying and decoding the Aljamiado texts as Castilian texts in Arabic characters in the late 18th century [Domínguez Prats 2006: 888–889], although it was Pascual de Gayangos in the 19th century who began systematically to edit them and thus make them known. In the twentieth century, Álvaro Galmés de Fuentes gave new impetus to the study of this type of literature. The publication of the *Actas del Coloquio internacional sobre literatura aljamiada y morisca* in 1978 especially gave rise to a new generation of scholarship that has been diffidently perpetuated until the present day.

3. The *Aljamiado* literature in the Balkans: an introductory description

Aljamado forms an important part of the literature of the Balkan Peninsula. The term refers to the non-Arabic literary tradition, developed within Muslim society. Its use of the Arabic alphabet to write down texts, produced originally in national languages was a peculiarity [Nametak 1981: 7–41]. In the Balkans, works recorded with *Arebica* // *Arabica* may be found in Albanian, South Slavic and Greek literary output [Huković 1986].

10 Not only in terms of the Arabic texts from which the Aljamiado translations originate, as was pointed out by Wiegiers [1994: 30], but also in the very use of the Arabic language by these communities.

The cradle of Turkish populations, whose migrations to the Balkans initiated profound changes in local communities, may be found in modern-day Mongolia. Although these tribes were quite diverse, they did share some common features, such as external appearance, language and organisational aspects. In the 13th century, under pressure from Genghis Khan's troops, they moved with Persians from West Asia to Asia Minor. Suleiman, the first of the Ottoman dynasty, reportedly led numbers of Turks. He initiated Turkish-Christian border confrontations shortly after arriving in Rum, the Seljuk state [Lybyer 2015]. Suleiman's power grew owing to the influx to his lands of Muslims, who sought material benefits and glory in military service.

From the 14th century to the 16th the lands of the Balkan Peninsula were subsequently conquered by Turkish troops. The victories achieved in the mid-14th century on the Gallipoli Peninsula opened the way not only to the Balkans, but also to Europe. The Balkan states either came under the direct authority of the Ottoman Empire or resided within its sphere of influence [Lybyer 2015].

The areas under Ottoman rule were vast and extremely diverse. Muslims, the largest group, did not form a homogeneous stratum and often practised forms of Islam that were doctrinally distant from the orthodox Sunniism of the sultans [Imber 2020: 269]. As followers of Islam, they kept their freedom, although they had to fulfil duties imposed by the ruler. Infidels were captured and relocated, usually to the interior of the empire. They were then sent to various parts of the country where they performed functions entrusted to them. Many voluntarily converted to Islam.

The relationship between religion, the state and society in the Ottoman Empire endured. Everyone who was part of the ruling elite was required to be Muslim. It was important whether one was born into Islam. Social advancement required the renouncing of Christianity and conversion to Islam. Drawing on the Qur'an and Muslim teachings, the Sharia was the highest law, regulating all aspects of life. According to Albert Lybyer, the neophytes were perceived by the Ottomans not so much as helots, but rather as new members of the nation, as believers who would fight in defence of the state and religion [Imber 2020: 52].

The principles of Islam and the basics of the Arabic language were taught in compulsory religious schools. The most gifted students were allowed to broaden their knowledge, according to their predispositions [Imber 2020: 57]. A system for educating pageboys was also developed. Strong emphasis was placed on acquiring philological skills, learning Turkish, Arabic and Persian, which would be useful in further service.

During the conquests, the Turks colonised the conquered territories. In Bulgaria there lived the Jurors, relocated from Asia. The Turkish agricultural population settled in the valleys of Thrace, while Albanians and Wallachians, mainly engaging in pastoralism, settled in Macedonia, Kosovo Polje, Old Serbia and former Raška (Rascia). Part of the Christian population faced extinction or fled from the onslaught of Turkish armed forces. The discriminatory system contributed to the relatively rapid growth of Muslims among the Slavs, especially the Bosnian Bogomils. The persecution eased only after the consolidation of Ottoman rule in the Balkans. An administrative and legal system was introduced in order to regulate the exercise of power over enslaved nations. After a period of stagnation, cities dominated by Turkish populations began developing once again during the 16th century. By contrast, Turkish military garrisons were established in rural areas [Skowronek, Tanty, Wasilewski 1977: 170–186].

It is difficult to pinpoint when Balkan Muslims began to use the Arabic alphabet to record their own languages. It is known that it was adopted simultaneously with Islam, which was promoted by the Turkish authorities, but the very process of the Islamisation of the local population was quite complicated and developed over time. It was nevertheless completed long before the appearance of the first examples of the Balkan *Aljamiado* literature [Huković 1986, Kaleši 1956]. It is significant that, apart from the Arabic alphabet, other alphabets were also used in the Balkans, such as Latin, Cyrillic and Greek.

The adoption of the Arabic alphabet required Balkan users thereof to adapt it to the sounds of their native language. An attempt to modify a foreign script, representing sounds significantly different from those of the southern Slavic languages, requires individual authors to take decisions regarding the manner of representing individual characters. Omer Hum is believed to have been the precursor of the normalisation of spelling, but his version of *Arebica* was not accepted. The successive Slavic variants of the Arabic alphabet, as proposed by Ibrahim Berbić, Junus-Remzija Stovara, Hadži Ibrahim Seljubac and Sarajlija Arif, also received disapproving receptions. Hadži Mehmed Džemaludin Čaušević, who initiated major changes to the Arabic alphabet at the beginning of the 20th century, is considered the actual reformer of *Arebica*. It is known as *matufovača* // *matufovica* (from his nickname *Matuf*, given to Čaušević by his opponents) or *maktebica*, which, in turn, indicated the scope of its use (*makteb*, from arabic *Maktab*, meaning 'school') [Muftić 1969].

Rexhep Voka successfully adapted the Arabic alphabet to the Albanian language system. The variant of *Arebica* developed by him competed with other alphabets, including that of Sami Frashëri, which was largely accepted by the public [Kaleši 1956].

In the South Slavic territories, the first work written using *Arebica* dates back to the 16th century. Manuscripts using this script may have appeared as early as the 15th century, while the heyday of the literature referred to as *Alhamijado* // *Aljamijado* // *Adžamijska književnost* fell during the 17th and 18th centuries [Huković 1986]. The greatest number of texts representing the Slavic *Aljamiado* in southern Europe clearly belongs to the Bosnian literary and cultural heritage. Examples of such creativity may also be found among Serbs and Croats [Bečićanin 2016; *Hrvatska enciklopedija 2021: adžamijska književnost*]. From the 19th century to the present day they have been the subject of academic research, conducted intensively, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Albanian literary output of Muslim literature known as *elifbaja shqip* began to develop only at the beginning of the 18th century. This phenomenon encompasses the territories where Albanian Muslims settled, i.e. Albania, Kosovo and Metohija, Montenegrin Littoral and Macedonia [Kaleši 1956]. In the Balkans, texts written in the local language and noted in the Arabic alphabet appeared in parallel with works in other oriental languages, most often in Turkish, but also in Arabic and Persian [Nametak 1981, Kaleši 1956]. It may be argued that the *Aljamiado* literature remained in the shadow of these works and had been underappreciated for an extended period. In pioneering studies it was often marginalised, regarded as it was as offering little of value. Further research into the source material showed that it is clearly diversified in terms of subject and form, presents features specific to the area in which it was created (local dialectal background) and forms an invaluable part of the literary output of the Balkan nations living under Turkish rule.

The Balkan *Aljamiado* includes works of poetry and prose, often anonymous, although some of the texts are signed with the names and surnames of their authors. The topics cover both the intimate sphere (love poetry) and social and political issues. Satirical texts may also be found. There are many pieces of a religious nature, including *ilahiyas*, *kasides*, *mevluds*, short stories and tales, epistles and mystical and didactic texts. A separate group consists of appropriate letters (e.g. petitions), as well as textbooks and dictionaries [Nametak 1981: 8–9]. Taking into account the historical and cultural context, the development of *Aljamiado* literature in the Balkan Peninsula may be associated with the centuries-old influence of the Ottoman Empire on the communities inhabiting the conquered territories. During this period, the conditions of multilingualism were created in the Balkans, in which local languages occupied, for an extended period, a secondary position in relation to the Turkish, Arabic, and Persian languages. The assimilation of Balkan neophytes is therefore a natural consequence of constant contact with oriental languages. This process was clearly

reinforced by the propagation of Islam and the culture associated with it by the Ottoman Turks. Relatively well-known, due to having been taught within the framework of compulsory religious education, *Arabica* was an excellent tool of communication for a large section of the Muslim population and was therefore widely used, far beyond the religious sphere.

4. The *Aljamiado* literature in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania: an introductory description

An attempt to describe this phenomenon was made by Czesław Łapicz in the paper *Czy piśmiennictwo Tatarów – muzułmanów Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego jest słowiańskim aljamiado? (Is the Literature of Tatars – the Muslims of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Slavic Aljamiado?)*. According to Łapicz, the term *Aljamiado* literature denotes “literary works in a local language (mainly, but not limited to, Spanish), written with the appropriately adapted Arabic alphabet, which developed under the strong influence of the tradition and culture of Islam” [Łapicz 2014: 59]. The term derives from Arabic *al-luġa al-‘aġamiyya* [Dziekan 2015: 75]. Etymology does not limit the use of this term to a concrete language or a concrete adaptation of the Arabic script to non-Arabic alphabets [cf. Dziekan 2015: 75–76]. The term may also refer to the religious literature of the Tatars of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

In this regard, it is essential to consider the following factors: the regions the Tatars came from, the lands where they settled, the languages they spoke and the acculturation of Tatar settlers to the Slavic, Christian environment, an implication of which was, among other things, the origin of their writings.

The above issues will, however, merely be touched upon at this point, as a broader and more detailed description will be provided later in the text.

Tatars arrived in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the 14th century. They originated from the Golden Horde, a country founded by Batu Khan and comprising the Volga Region, a part of the Caucasus, Crimea, the Black Sea Steppes, the Urals, western Siberia and a stretch of Central Asia. Three stages of Tatar immigration may be distinguished:

- a) stage one ensued from the policy of compulsory Islamisation implemented by the Uzbek khan. The refugees from the Golden Horde had already found asylum in pagan Lithuania in the early 14th century; after the baptism of Duke Vytautas's dominion in 1387, however, they were forcefully christened. “Consequently, the first Tatar settlers in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania lost their original religious identity, were completely assimilated into the local population, and left no traces of their original – ethnic, cultural, and religious – distinctiveness” [Łapicz 2014: 65].

- b) stage two concerned the Tatars who arrived in the Slavic lands in the late 14th century. At the time, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was already a Catholic land, forming the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth with the Kingdom of Poland by means of a personal union. In their new homeland the Tatars received privileges similar to those of the Polish and Lithuanian nobility and other social groups, and enjoyed full religious freedom.
- c) stage three of Tatar settlement occurred following the Russian invasion of the former Kazakh and Astrakhan monarchies in the second half of the 16th and in the early 17th centuries.

The settlers from the Golden Horde were therefore an amalgam of Turkish peoples, large numbers of whom arrived in Slavic lands between the 14th and the 17th centuries.

Two significant layers may be distinguished in respect to the genetic language of GDL Tatars: Eastern Turki (Old Uyghur), the cultural influence of Central Asia and the Golden Horde (14th–15th century by origin), and South Turki (Osman-Turkish), the influence of Turkey (16th–17th century through trade or religious contacts).

The different tribes of Tatar settlers consequently did not speak one dialect. This was one of the factors in language assimilation. The Tatars adopted the languages of the indigenous people, Polish or Belarusian. The process commenced in the 15th century and culminated in the second half of the 16th century [Łapicz 1986: 33–60]. Rapid assimilation with Slavic people, Lithuanians, Poles and Belarusians, was an implication of inclusive culture, represented by the Tatars. As mentioned above, the Tatar-Muslim settlers enjoyed relative religious freedom and tolerance in their new homeland. They professed Sunni Islam, creating a diaspora in a Christian world. As an ethnic and religious group, they were not subjected to acculturation, i.e. the loss of the religion of their forefathers. This was reflected in both the material and immaterial cultural heritage of this ethnic group. This heritage includes both architectural objects and unique religious literature, including the first European translation of the Qur'an into a Slavic language, the so-called *tefsir* of the Tatars of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.¹¹ The heritage was intended to guarantee their ethnic and

11 In Islam, *tafsir* is a commentary on the Qur'an (Arabic: *tafsir* 'explanation, interpretation, clarification, or commentary – particularly that on or to the Qur'an'). GDL Tatars use the term *tefsir* to refer to comprehensive manuscript containing the full text of the Qur'an with interlinear translation into Polish with Belarusian features, recorded in the Arabic script and supplemented with an exegetical layer.

cultural identity, expressed mainly through Islam as early as in the 16th century [Konopacki 2010: 130].

Tatar manuscript literature originated in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, i.e. in the territory of historical Lithuania. Today it covers mainly the area of Lithuania and Belarus, but, between the 14th and 16th centuries, it also encompassed a part of Ukraine, the western borderland of Russia, Podlasie and stretches of Moldavia [cf. Wikipedia: *Wielkie Księstwo Litewskie*]. Between the years 1569 and 1795 the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland formed the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Today, the descendants of the Tatars who settled in the Duchy between the 14th and the 17th centuries, live mainly in Lithuania (e.g. in the vicinity of Vilnius, Trakai, Kaunas, and Alytus), Poland (e.g. in the regions of Podlasie, Pomerania and the Western Borderlands), and in Belarus (e.g. in the vicinity of Hrodna, Novogrudok, Slonim, Brest and Minsk). Situated in modern Ukraine, Volhynia and Podolia were part of the Kingdom of Poland in the 17th century and were places of Tatar settlement.

Two essential features distinguished the literature of the Tatars of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, written in Slavic languages: it was recorded in the form of manuscripts and by means of the Arabic script. In Islam the Arabic script is esteemed higher than the language itself. It is considered to be sacred, a fact confirmed by Islamic scholars: the Arabic script is considered the “holiest symbol of Islam, holier than the Arabic language” and meant to “record [...] the words of God and the message of the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad” [Dziedzic 2005: 216–217]. In the practice of their religion the Polish-Lithuanian Tatars could freely use liturgical Arabic or other languages of the Islamic world (particularly Turkic languages); they could translate, copy, promote and use their holy books in their religious and social lives.¹² They consequently used the Arabic script to adorn various content: from the strictly religious (translations of and commentaries on the Qur’an, prayers and *hadiths*) to secular texts (e.g. wedding speeches, legends, stories and parables, rhyming texts, letters, testaments) [Łapicz 2014: 67]. Their writings include: Qur’anic and commentary literature as well as excerpts from Old Polish and Christian literature, which were appropriately adapted to the principles and doctrine of Islam. The majority of this literature consists of translations. The Tatars translated texts derived from Islamic culture, particularly Turkic (Turkish and Persian), and borrowed Christian texts (e.g. passages from the Bible, translations of psalms, hagiographies

12 In the entire history of Tatar settlement in the lands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, over 600-year in total, there was recorded only one case of a pogrom of the Tatars and the burning of a mosque in Trakai, near Vilnius. This happened in 1609, i.e. at the time of Counter-Reformation [see Łapicz 2014: 66].

of Christian saints), adapting them to fit their books. They treated Polish and Belarusian secular texts, particularly functional ones (e.g. testaments, receipts), in a similar manner [Łapicz 2014: 66–67].

Bearing in mind the historical conditions and all the features, varieties and the religious and cultural significance of particular texts that originated in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the second half of the 16th century and developed until as late as the 20th century, it may be concluded that they meet the criteria of *Aljamiado* literature [Łapicz 2014: 68]. The texts were written in local languages (Polish and Belarusian), set down by means of the Arabic script, which was appropriately adapted to the phonological system of Slavic languages and developed under a strong influence of the tradition and culture of Islam, professed by the Muslim community of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania [cf. Łapicz 2014: 59]. They also display some distinctive features of their own: their genesis and purpose are different from those typical of the *Aljamiado* of Moriscos and Balkan believers in Allah. The Tatar literary output was meant primarily to help the Tatars living in a diaspora; to help them preserve their identity. It combines the culture of Islam with the tradition of Muslim mysticism (Sufism) and shamanism, as well as with Christian culture and the folk beliefs and traditions of the GDL peoples: Poles, Lithuanians, and Belarusians. This amalgam of various types of content significantly sets GDL Tatars apart from the rest of the Islamic world and constitutes a vital factor of their self-identification.

As indicated here, the research on the *Aljamiado* literature of selected Muslim ethnos is pioneering in nature. Its aim is to present the specificity of this literary output, and thereby to indicate similarities resulting from the ties with Islam, as well as differences which follow from historical and geographical factors.

Particular attention was paid to the definition of the *Aljamiado* literature and its reference to such regions of Europe as the Iberian Peninsula, the Balkan Peninsula and Central and Eastern Europe, including Lithuania, Belarus, parts of Poland and Ukraine. For the described ethnic groups, these writings were or still are part of their religious and national identity. Muslim communities living in the above-mentioned areas were strongly influenced by the culture of the Ottoman Empire with Turkic and Turkish literature being the source material for their manuscript literature. It was also emphasised that the local culture and traditions were creatively adapted to the Islam professed by the minorities, while the local languages were written in the Arabic alphabet, often expanded to include Turkish and Persian graphemes.

Translated by Ewa Kisiel

References

Sources (including the abbreviations used)

ADC – Archivo Diocesano de Cuenca, Leg. 262, núm. 3.573, in Real Academia Española, CORDE [access: 20 December 2016].

Dictionaries (including the abbreviations used)

RAE – Real Academia Española, *Diccionario de la lengua española*, online edition, <https://dle.rae.es/> [access: 3 July 2023].

Literature

Barceló Carmen (1989), *Un tratado catalán de derecho islámico. El Llibre de la çunna e xara dels moros*, Córdoba.

Bečićanin Fuad (2016), *Preplitanje kultura na tlu Srbije u osmansko doba na primeru alhamijado književnosti*, Beograd [PhD thesis].

Castilla Nuria de (2014), *Qur'anic Manuscripts from Late Muslim Spain. The Collection of Almonacid de la Sierra*, “Journal of Qur'anic Studies”, no. 2, pp. 89–138. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3366/jqs.2014.0149>.

Castilla Nuria de (2017), *The Teaching and Learning of Arabic in Salamanca in Early Modern Period*, in: *The Teaching and Learning of Arabic in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Charles Burnett, Alastair Hamilton, Jan Loop, Leiden, pp. 163–188. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004338623_008.

Castilla Nuria de (2020), *Les emplois linguistiques et culturels derrière les textes aljamiados*, “Intellectual History of Islamic World”, no. 8, pp. 128–162. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1163/2212943X-00702013>.

Castilla Nuria de (forthcoming a), *Libros sin lectores*.

Castilla Nuria de (forthcoming b), *Manuscripts mudéjares et morisques en France*.

Center for Kitab Studies. Grant (access 2023), <https://www.human.umk.pl/centre-for-kitab-studies/grant/> [access: 22 July 2023].

Dobronravin Nikolay (2016), *Non-Arabic / Ajami Manuscript Tafsir Studies: Perspectives of Comparative Research*, in: *Święte księgi judaizmu, chrześcijaństwa i islamu w słowiańskim kręgu kulturowym. Księgi wyznawców islamu. Kitabistyka*, ed. Monika Krajewska, Joanna Kulwicka-Kamińska, Arleta Szulc, Toruń, pp. 223–229.

Domínguez Ortiz Antonio, Vincent Bernard (1978), *Historia de los moriscos. Vida y tragedia de una minoría*, Madrid.

Domínguez Prats Antonio B. (2006), *José Antonio Conde (1766–1820). Autor de “Historia de la dominación de los árabes en España” (Madrid, 1820/21), descubridor de la literatura aljamiada, y primer historiador español moderno que usó las fuentes*

- árabes en lengua original*, “Espacio y Tiempo en la Percepción de la Antigüedad Tardía”, vol. 23, pp. 883–897.
- Dziekan Marek M. (2005), *Historia i tradycje polskiego islamu*, in: *Muzułmanie w Europie*, ed. Anna Parzymies, Warszawa, pp. 199–239.
- Dziekan Marek M. (2015), *Zastosowanie pisma arabskiego do zapisu wybranych języków indoeuropejskich. Perspektywa historyczno-porównawcza*, in: *Tefsir Tatarów Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego. Teoria i praktyka badawcza*, ed. Joanna Kulwicka-Kamińska, Czesław Łapicz, Toruń, pp. 75–99.
- Galmés de Fuentes Álvaro, ed. (1978), *Actas del Coloquio internacional sobre literatura aljamiada y morisca*, Madrid.
- Galmés de Fuentes Álvaro (1986), *La lengua española de la literatura aljamiado-morisca como expresión de una minoría religiosa*, “Revista de la Sociedad Española de Lingüística”, no. 1, pp. 21–38.
- García-Arenal Mercedes, Rodríguez Mediano Fernando (2010), *Un Oriente español*, Madrid.
- Hegy Ottmar (1979), *Minority and Restricted Uses of the Arabic Alphabet. The Aljamiado Phenomenon*, “Journal of the American Oriental Society”, no. 2, pp. 262–269. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2307/602662>.
- Hrvatska enciklopedija* (2021), red. Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, <https://tinyurl.com/y83zp3rk> [accessed 9 January 2022].
- Huković Muhamed (1986), *Alhamijado književnost i njeni stvaraoči*, Sarajevo.
- Imber Colin (2020), *Imperium osmańskie 1300–1650*, trans. Piotr Wróbel, Kraków.
- Kaleši Hasan (1956), *Prilog poznavanju arbanaške književnosti iz vremena Preporoda (Arbanaška književnost na arapskom alfabetu)*, “Godišnjak Centra za Balkanološka Ispitivanja”, no. 1, pp. 352–388.
- Konopacki Artur (2010), *Życie religijne Tatarów na ziemiach Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego w XVI–XIX wieku*, Warszawa. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31338/uw.9788323511076>.
- Kulwicka-Kamińska Joanna (2018), *Dialogue of Scriptures. The Tatar Tefsir in the Context of Biblical and Qur’anic Interpretations*, Berlin. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3726/978-3-653-06917-4>.
- Labarta Ana (1978), *Oraciones cristianas aljamiadas en procesos inquisitoriales de moriscos valencianos*, “Boletín de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona”, no. 37, pp. 177–197.
- Lybyer Albert Howe (2015), *Władanie Imperium Osmańskim w czasach Sulejmana Wspaniałego*, trans. Miłosz Młynarz, Oświęcim.
- Łapicz Czesław (2014), *Czy piśmiennictwo Tatarów – muzułmanów Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego jest słowiańskim aljamiado?*, in: *W podróży za słowem. Księga pamiątkowa z okazji jubileuszu 70-lecia urodzin profesora Emila Tokarza*, ed. Mateusz Warchał, Bielsko-Biała, pp. 59–70.

- Łapicz Czesław (1986), *Kitab Tatarów litewsko-polskich. Paleografia. Grafia. Język*, Toruń.
- Martínez de Castilla Nuria, see: Castilla Nuria de.
- Martínez de Castilla Nuria (2006), *Anduve mirando si parecía por allí algún morisco aljamiado*, in: *De Cervantes y el islam*, ed. Nuria Martínez de Castilla, Rodolfo Gil Grimau, Madrid, pp. 235–246.
- Martínez de Castilla Nuria (2010), *Una biblioteca morisca entre dos tapas*, Saragossa.
- Muftić Teufik (1969), *O arebici i njenom pravopisu*, “Prilozi za Orijentalnu Filologiju”, no. 14–15, pp. 101–121.
- Nametak Abdurahman (1981), *Hrestomatija bosanske alhamijado književnosti*, Sarajevo.
- O projekcie* (access 2023), <http://www.tefsir.umk.pl/o,1,0-projekcie.html> [access: 4 July 2023].
- Skowronek Jerzy, Tanty Mieczysław, Wasilewski Tadeusz, *Historia Słowian południowych i zachodnich*, Warszawa.
- Wiegiers Gerard (1994), *Datation et localisation des codices espagnols écrits en caractères arabes (aljamiado). Problèmes et perspectives*, in: *Le manuscrit arabe et la codicologie*, ed. A. Binebine, Rabat, pp. 21–30.
- Wikipedia: Wielkie Księstwo Litewskie* (access: 2023), <https://tinyurl.com/mwu6xtwt> [access: 23 January 2023].
- Zanón Jesús (1995), *Los estudios de lengua árabe entre los moriscos aragoneses a través de los manuscritos de la Junta*, “Sharq al-Andalus”, no. 12, pp. 363–374. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14198/ShAnd.1995.12.22>.

Nuria de Castilla, Anna Cychnerska, Joanna Kulwicka-Kamińska

Aljamiado literature in Renaissance Europe. Definitions, area, language

Literature written in the local language adapted to the Arabic alphabet and developed under strong influences of Islamic tradition and culture is referred to as aljamiado literature. It is not limited to a specific language or a particular adaptation of the Arabic alphabet for non-Arabic languages. In this article, aljamiado literature encompasses writings primarily of religious nature, created on the Iberian Peninsula, in the Balkans, and in the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which includes present-day Lithuania, Belarus, parts of Poland, and Ukraine. The presented research has a pioneering character, focusing on the specificity of aljamiado creativity in selected European countries historically influenced by the Ottoman Empire. It emphasises the similarities resulting from the connection with Islam, as well as the differences stemming from historical and geographical factors.

KEYWORDS: history of Romance and Slavic languages; aljamiado literature; Ottoman Empire; Mudejars and Moriscos; Tatars of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania; Balkan Muslims; Iberian Peninsula.

Nuria de Castilla, Ph.D., Full Professor at the EPHE – École Pratique des Hautes Études, PSL (Paris) and Scientific co-ordinator of the ERC Project “Saadian Intellectual Cultural Life” (2016–2021), focused on the study of the Arabic Manuscript Collection kept in the Monastery of San Lorenzo de El Escorial’s library. Her main research topics are the history of Arabic manuscript book, codicology, material culture and the history of the libraries of 16th-century Spain and North Africa, Mudejar and Morisco written culture, or the production and transmission of Qur’anic manuscripts in the Islamic West.

Anna Cychnerska, Ph.D., Professor at UMK – Balkan Studies Department, Institute of Linguistics, Centre for Kitab Studies, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. Research in the field of linguistics. Her research interests are: the phonotactics and typology of Slavic and Balkan languages, South Slavic word formation, history of languages in former Yugoslavia, Turkish influence on the languages of the Balkan Peninsula.

Joanna Kulwicka-Kamińska, Ph.D., Professor at UMK – Department of Polish Language, Institute of Linguistics, Centre for Kitab Studies, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. Research interests: diachronic and contrastive linguistics, Slavic-Oriental language relations (history of the Polish language), studies on northern and eastern border Polish (dialectology), translation from Semitic languages into Polish in the terminology of Islam and Christianity (translation studies), manuscripts of the Tatars of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania (kitabistics).