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Historiographic Narratives

The Discourse Strategies for Constructing Expellable “Moorish” Subjects

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Abstract: On April 9, 1609, a decree was issued ruling that all descendents of Spanish Muslims, known as “Moriscos” or “new Moorish Christians,” were to be expelled. The final decision of 1609 was a political decision dictated by many political circumstances. The decision could have been avoided, taken at another time or postponed indefinitely. However, once expulsion had been decreed, royalty found the need to justify the measure before the public and did so to clarify two conflictive aspects: on the one hand, this was the first time that an officially baptised collective was expelled; and on the other, expulsion affected the whole group and not individual subjects. These two measures—unprecedented in the western Christian world—required a discourse to explain the “justification” for a measure that, in theory, breached Roman and Christian Law, creating a dangerous precedent. This paper examines these different discourse strategies and the historiographic narratives that tried to define common characteristics of the Morisco community, give it certain unifying features and make it a “hateful” archetype that had to be eliminated once and for all.

INTRODUCTION

On April 9, 1609, a decree was issued ruling that all descendents of Spanish Muslims, known as “Moriscos” or “new Moorish Christians,” were to be expelled. The decree was signed by King Philip III on the instructions of his favourite, the all-power-

ful Duke of Lerma, and brought the curtain down on a period that had begun with the forced conversion of Muslims in Granada, ordered by the Catholic Monarchs in the Pragmatic Sanction of February 14, 1502, and later extended to all the kingdoms of the monarchy. Thus ended a long century of evangelising experiments, more or less inte-

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grating proposals, regulations and prohibitions—a long century of confrontations between those who supported the integration of the Moriscos and those who, from the outset, called for their exclusion and elimination.

The final decision of 1609 was a political decision dictated by many political circumstances. The decision could have been avoided, taken at another time or postponed indefinitely. However, once expulsion had been decreed, royalty found the need to justify the measure before the public and did so to clarify two conflictive aspects: on the one hand, this was the first time that an officially baptised collective was expelled; and on the other, expulsion affected the whole group and not individual subjects.

These two measures—unprecedented in the western Christian world—required a discourse to explain the “justification” for a measure that, in theory, breached Roman and Christian Law, creating a dangerous precedent. This paper examines these different discourse strategies and the historiographic narratives that tried to define common characteristics of the Morisco community, give it certain unifying features and make it a “hateful” archetype that had to be eliminated once and for all.

The Moriscos, a complex and diverse community, became “one Morisco,” a single, condemnable being that included all members of the community without exception.

BACKGROUND OF AN IMAGE: THE SO-CALLED ISLAMO-CHRISTIAN CONTROVERSY

A literature apologetic towards Islam and its relations with Christianity developed during the Middle Ages. Based on initial information received about Islam, particularly during the period of the Crusades, this knowledge was structured and pre-

sented in descriptive books, anti-Koranic dialogues and missionary works. In 1219 AD, Francis of Assisi gave a sermon before the sultan but was met with disdain. The Christian kingdoms that were expanding in the Iberian Peninsula received these proposals and integrated them in their conquest discourse. One theorist who wrote about this controversy was the Majorcan Ramón Llull, who studied Arabic with a Muslim slave and later designed a theoretical missionary project. According to Miguel Barceló¹, this was an unfounded controversy from the very beginning because it was aimed at captive public, i.e., conquered, Muslims who were hardly in a position to oppose the religion of their conquerors.

Islam’s lack of comprehension of this movement is evident since it did not seek to convert the members of the religions of “the book” and maintained contractual relations with them. This refusal to participate in the game was seen by polemicist Christians as an example of the clear inferiority of the religion of Muslims, who, by refusing to dispute this matter, revealed their inferiority and lack of arguments. Bernardo Pérez de Chinchón’s book *Antialcorano* (“Anti-Koran”) reflected this long tradition of medieval controversy, applying it to the conversion of Moriscos in Valencia.

MOHAMMED, THE CRUCIBLE AND MIRROR OF THE MORISCOS

Some men (the Moors) are
blue and coloured/
and live in deserted places/
and adore *zancarrón* (leg-bone without flesh).

—Lope de Vega, *The Porceles of Murcia*

During this long medieval period,

¹ BARCELÓ, Miquel: “Per sarraïns a preycar o l’art de predicar audiències captives,” 1st Series of Conferences on Catalan Philosophy: the intercultural debate in the 13th and 14th centuries. Girona, 1989, pp. 117-132.

information on the prophet was generally gathered from travellers, translators and monks from the Near East who travelled to the West. Other information was obtained from Greek texts brought to Spain toward the end of the Byzantine Empire, and which normally used the same sources. The Armenian, Syriac, Alexandrian, Nestorian and even Coptic communities contributed different information that developed into two important theories about Mohammed:

- a) The prophet was an impostor who took advantage of an uneducated people to dominate them using “his deceitful magic” and as a person he was an epileptic (the texts refer to coral gout) and dreamer prone to making things up who also possessed unbridled sensuality.
- b) He was influenced by a heretic monk who inspired him to develop a poor imitation of Christianity, a perverse imitation of Christian religion full of terrible errors.

Both aspects gave rise to two images: the image of the prophet, and the image of the “sect” he invented. For an ignorant people of nomadic shepherds, the prophet simplified the richness of Christianity, adding fantasies appropriate for that illiterate public². His doctrine included mainly Nestorian heresies and some Christian truths. “The false Mohammed convinced his vain sect, the simple and perplexed Arabic people, taking from each what he knew would calm his people.”³

During the 16th century, the figure of Mohammed was identified in a very partic-

² BERNABÉ PONS, Luis F. “De la imagen medieval de Mohammed a las caricaturas de Mohammed: una larga historia de miradas occidentales sobre el profeta”, 1st Series of Conferences on “The Imaginary, the Arab World and Islam,” Barcelona, Faculty of Communication Science, April 2009.

³ ROCA, Vicente, Historia de la origen y guerras de los turcos, Valencia 1556, fl.129.

ular way with the image that was being created of the Moriscos in the Iberian peninsula. Both images started to merge, and Moriscos became a mirror of Mohammed and vice-versa, since Mohammed was seen as the “ideal” Morisco. Controversial books warned Moriscos of this alleged psychological identification with Mohammed. Later, anti-Morisco pamphlets mixed both figures completely—Mohammed and the constructed unified Morisco—identifying them in terms of both character and depravity. Some historiographic events were complete inventions, such as the fictitious visit by Mohammed to Spain (Seville) during the times of Saint Isidore and his expulsion by this Christian thinker. Fictitious relic were invented (the prophet’s hand or leg) that would be worshipped by the Moriscos (the leg bone of Mohammed⁴), a fact “naturally demonstrated” by declarations obtained through torture during the Inquisition.

Mohammed (and his Morisco equivalent) was portrayed as a poor uneducated figure (mule driver), deceitful merchant (false money), with a simplified religion (imageless monotheism), delirious sick person (epileptic), lying traitor (the *taqiyya* or concealment of religion), lecher (Islamic heaven, the alleged permissivity of incest), etc. Eventually, Moriscos were seen as small living and close versions of Mohammed who had infiltrated Spanish lands.

UNIVERSAL MAN, CHRISTIAN HUMANISM, EXCLUSION OF THE “INHUMAN” OR UNACCEPTABLE TO REASON.

“Barbarians, infidels, devils,
savages, perjurers, blasphemers,
swine, scum, lowlife,

⁴ PERCEVAL, José María, “El zancarrón de Mohammed: de piernas, brazos y otros objetos corruptos e incorruptos”, published in French (trd. Jean Frédéric Schaub) in *Les Temps Modernes*, 507, 1988, Paris, p.1-20.

reprobates, heathens, perverts,
and, finally,
foreign men of reason.”

—*Comedy on “Patriarca Ribera,”*
Gaspar de Aguilar

Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian heritage during the Renaissance. Humanism promoted the study of the classics and constructed a new universal man, gradually overcoming the earlier divisions of society or estates of the realm. Nobility of blood transformed into nobility of spirit, and courage as a warrior into courage as a trader or intellectual. Individuals appeared who acted and thought independently through essays (Montaigne), novels (Lazarillo de Tormes), theatre (Shakespeare), and books on civility (Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam). This new universal man was a responsible individual who found his limits and bounds in the animal, bestial and wild side of his nature. In short, the inhuman.

However, this great progress that brought social and political renewal to Europe caused a huge fracture of internal and external exclusion. The introduction of new Renaissance concepts marked a change of paradigm: earlier opposition between Christianity and Islam was surpassed by new opposition between reason and inhumanity. From a humanist standpoint, Christianity was presented not only as a revealed religion but as the religion of civilisation, of true humanity. Thus, Islam was now defined from this new perspective as an inhuman and consequently unacceptable concept under Christian laws and inconceivable in European territory. In the Iberian peninsula, this new approach led to the inevitable superseding of the Mudejar phase. The presence of individuals who followed different laws could not be accepted. This difference could not be accepted because accepting it would be as condemnable as actually making the mistake.

The terrible religious and ethical step that Europe took was based on the Augustine conviction that God gives each human

being the necessary means for their salvation. Consequently, the choice of an incorrect doctrine, which leads to ruin, must inevitably be an assumed action and therefore evidence of an evil character. If a collective chose that option, it carried the mark of Cain, a collective sign that would be evident in all the group’s actions and behaviour⁵. Poverty, difference, exclusion, sickness, strangeness ... these characteristics were reinterpreted according to this pre-eminence of the universal and rational man.

The invention of the Moriscos and everything related to the Moors during the 16th century also revealed this evolution from charity and attention to what was different. Compassion for the misfortunate and poor associated with the medieval image of Christ transformed into the prevention and even fear of possible contamination by evil embodied in these beings excluded from civilisation. The strategies for dealing with “what is different” varied and caused enormous dispute among Christian intellectuals.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE ASSIMILATORS AND EXPULSIONISTS: ENDING WITH “EVERYTHING MOORISH” OR ELIMINATING “THE MORISCOS”

During the 16th and early 17th centuries, there was a separation of the strategies used against “others” in the Christian community that has been very poorly interpreted by later historiographers, particularly following the Spanish historicist reinterpretation in the 19th century, describing a struggle between liberals and conservatives that never existed. There are absurd references to an opposition between tolerance and intolerance. More absurd is the opposition between two ideas of Spain that would have

⁵ GEREMEK. Bronislaw, *La estirpe de Caín*, Mondadori, 1990.

competed to prevent the inevitable decline of the nation.

The two groups occupying clearly differentiated positions appeared during this period: the *assimilationists*, who supported the peaceful evangelisation of new converts; and *exclusionists*, who supported the elimination of this group. However, both groups shared one objective: the expulsion of Islam from Spanish soil, albeit using different means. Neither group was tolerant towards other religions, much less to the notion that “everyone can find salvation in their own religion,” a line of thinking severely persecuted during this period and punishable by death on the orders of the Inquisition. Some converts expressed this tolerant idea when arrested, to the rage of the Inquisitors.

The ghost of “freedom of conscience” was branded a foreign evil and a “protestant” deviation that was also pursued. The possibility of independent thought not humbled before God was considered an act of unbridled arrogance that could not go unpunished.

Assimilationists and expulsionists differed for another reason, namely between those who wanted to eliminate the irrational aspects of the other collective and those who considered that this could only be achieved by eliminating individuals with these monstrous characteristics. As described by Bernard Vincent, “the Mudejar phase, when attempts were made to make “others” easily identifiable, must be distinguished from the Morisco phase when attempts were made to erase the identity of “others.” The assimilation period broke with the destructive tendency of the enemy community. To a certain extent, the assimilationists’ ultimate aim was the utopian integration of Moriscos in the Christian community and equally rights (even if only on a theoretical level).”

There was no dispute between assimilationists and expulsionists but rather an internal controversy within Christian soci-

ety. They considered the best position to adopt against the other social group, which was represented because it did not have its own voice. A special “knowledge” was created to analyse “foreign” bodies, but it was never studied from a self-centred perspective. The disjointed perception of Moriscos as organisms, either as a sick part of society (assimilationists) or as an element introduced like a tumour (expulsionists), was always related with the dominant society and formed part of its discourse.

THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY: THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MORISCO “OTHER” WHO HAD TO BE ELIMINATED

Each aspect of the social life of the Morisco community was observed and examined. Every small detail that revealed externally its inner rottenness was closely examined. The assimilationists intended to clean that “dirt,” eliminate their customs and habits that made Moriscos—perhaps ingeniously—Muslims. At the same time, other attitudes and habits were promoted that must have naturally made them Christians. Writers were clear in their diagnosis but disagreed on the different elements that had to be eliminated. Below, I will examine some of the common themes.

The incorrectly named “books on controversy”—now “dialogue”—and doctrines were read in public or at least consulted by priests at Morisco rectories who then preached from pulpits, in Arabic or more often in Romance (even in French if necessary), to astonished Moriscos whom were themselves described as “sheep locked in a corral” or as souls who had to “be educated like children.” Schools for Morisco children tried to capture children under seven⁶ in order to break family structures through education, hoping to wrest native clergymen such as Albotodo in Granada, canon Marín in Almería, the controversial Jesuit

Casas in Valencia or an unspecified number of priests martyred during the Alpujarras uprising.

In order to become Christians, Muslims did not only have to change religion but also their name, language, culture, place of residence, customs and festivities. They had to completely alter their daily habits. Evidently, everything related with Muslim religion and Friday as the traditional day of prayer had to be eliminated, as well as their places of worship (mosques and oratories were converted into churches), annual rituals (Ramadan) and personal rituals (circumcision and prayer).

The first element of culture was language: Arabic is naturally inclined to Islam. The Morisco community was prohibited from using Arabic, which was replaced by Castilian or Catalan Romance. The 16th and 17th centuries witnessed a true “cleansing” operation in Castilian, starting with proposals by the Latinist grammarian Antonio Nebrija. The aim was to clean the language of words of Arabic origin and replace them with Greek and Latin neologisms. In the arts, sciences and particularly medicine, conflicts were constant. Nebrija himself considered this matter from a military perspective, declaring that “Arabic words are written in the opposite direction to the rest of the world and look like soldiers advancing in formation.” The Arabic term “algarabia” (its original meaning is “Arabic language”) was also used pejoratively in the 16th century, acquiring xenophobic connotations when used to refer to “unbearable street noise.”⁷

In terms of food, it was believed that the Moriscos had a deficient diet because they

did not eat pork or drink wine and that this even affected their personality. Food of Andalusí origin was not exactly persecuted but rather despised by Christian doctors and literary authors, who used it to make pejorative comments to define Moriscos as popular characters who tirelessly consumed vegetables and legumes in diets comprising abundant amounts of fried food, garlic and onion, and many species. Cervantes calls Cidi Hamete Benengeli, the fictional Arab author in *El Quijote*⁸, “Cidi Hamete Berenjena,” i.e., “the aubergine,” a clear reference to a vegetable commonly used in Morisco cuisine. What is today known as the Mediterranean diet was considered by Christian doctors as a poor and unmanly diet.

What they ate were vile things (in this a heavenly judgement has caused them to suffer here below), as, for example, vegetable rissoles (*fresas*) made from various sorts of ground pulses, lentils, beans, buckwheat, millet, and bread made from the same things. With this bread those who had the means combined raisins, figs, honey, grape jelly, milk and fruit in season, such as melons, even if they were green and no bigger than one’s fist, cucumbers, firm peaches (*duraznos*) and whatever else, even if it was not properly ripe, so long as it was fruit. After this they took the air (i.e., they did not drink wine), and they would leave an orchard wall intact. All year round they ate fruit, fresh and dry (they would store it until it had almost gone bad), and just bread and water, for they would not drink wine, nor buy meat or game killed by dogs or

⁶ “The children with most talent and the best appearance were chosen, Morisco children from each place, and taken to schools where they studied,” VALENCIA, f.154. Later he proposed a more profitable and attractive solution, namely to give boys to bishops and present them to nobles and knights as pages.

⁷ PERCEVAL, José María: “Algarabia: ¿Lengua árabe o alboroto?”, *Manuscrits*, 3, pp.117-127.

⁸ STOLL, André: *Al-Andalus revisité. Aux sources de l’histoire arabe du Don Quichotte*, Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris, 2007.

caught in snares or shot by guns (*escopetas*) or in nets, nor would they eat it unless the animals had been slaughtered according to the rite of Muhammad, so it will be seen they spent very little, whether on food or on clothing, although they had large amounts to pay out in dues to their lords." (Aznar Cardona, *The Justified Expulsion of the Spanish Moors*, Huesca, 1612, II, f.34)

As regards feminine adornment and make-up, the most persecuted element was henna. Its use was completely prohibited and considered demonic due to the drawings that were made on the hands and body. Moriscos caught wearing henna drawings suffered different types of punishment, such as having the henna drawings scraped from their hands or their hair cut off if it had been dyed with henna. All the decrees adopted during the 16th century on the Morisco community referred to a gradual elimination of traditional Morisco clothing and the Synod of Guadix in 1554⁹ clearly specified the aspects that had to be eliminated.

Baths were strongly attacked by priests because they invited complacency and the loss of virility necessary to work and fight. Such attacks were so common that the Morisco aristocrat Núñez Muley, in his famous book *Memorial* (1566), satirized the situation by stating that these institutions made the "naturals" (Moriscos) of the kingdom of Granada unfit to fight, benefiting the old Christians who had conquered the kingdom. Urban architecture in Andalusian cities also changed, even in Granada. Streets and buildings were moved and their decoration and structures modified.

⁹ GALLEGO BURÍN, Antonio; GÁMIR SANDOVAL, Alfonso: *Los moriscos del Reino de Granada según el Sínodo de Guadix de 1554*. Granada: facsimile of the 1968 edition, with a preliminary study by Bernard Vincent (1996).

The next century saw memorialists embark on fantastic projects, ranging from modest sermons to an elaborate plan to destroy cultural continuity by separating different generations and intersecting imaginary kinships (patrons, masters, etc.): this gradation ranged from retaining children in schools to the edict prohibiting children under the age of seven from being taken out of Spain.

The Bishop of Orihuela (1585) introduced a series of strict, methodical and carefully-planned rules on each aspect of the education of Morisco children for their gradual integration in Christian society. He also devised an appropriate system of rewards and punishments, and even stipulated the colour of new clothing to gradually substitute their habitual attire. These measures bring to mind the great utopias of the period, only that in this case they were applied to human beings who had to pay for the education that was imposed on them for their own good.

The "anthropological" conclusions drawn at the meeting of December 7, 1526, marked, as accurately described by Ortiz-Vincent and Gallego-Gamir, a sharp point of inclusion. These conclusions were expanded in the objectives of 1566 and after the partial expulsion of 1570. The phase between the forced conversion of Granada (1501) and the relative interruption of expulsion measures in 1526 focused on the ethnological aspects of the Morisco community.

Anthropology, as an ethnological study, preceded surgical or normative assimilatory intervention. The theologian Guerra de Lorca distributed the Moriscos of Granada into four classes, according to their greater or lesser adherence to Islam:

The upper class is formed by those who, after being baptised, faithfully conserved the group's clothing, language, names, ceremonies and rites; in public they confess that they are

Christians; I do not know if they are Muslims in private. The second group is formed by those who easily rejected any type of external practice or rules and did their utmost to temper their behaviour and bring into line with that of Christians. The third group includes those of Muslim ancestry for reasons of race or origin, because they come from Arabia or Africa; these, in memory of their group of origin, conserve certain ceremonies or rites due to family tradition. Lastly, there are those who were born from marriages between old Muslims and Christians; these are required to follow the faith of the parent in the best circumstances: similarly, since ancient times it has been established that the children of Christian fathers and Muslim mothers must be respected. (Guerra de Lorca, Pedro: *Catecheses Mystagogicae*, f.20)

According to Vincent (1988), “[b]etween 1502 and 1526, Morisco identity was examined, checked and defined. The least of suspicion gestures was declared and condemned and the corresponding catalogue of repressive measures established” (p. 26) However, Vincent continues, “the royal pragmatics, intended for the assimilation or rather Castilianisation of the Moriscos as a form of spiritual reform, were opposed by the Moriscos and ultimately led to armed rebellion” (Ibid., p. 26). The Morisco priest Albotodo and the Jesuits presided the handing over of “Christian” clothes, enthusiastic about the idea of ending the “problem.” The rebellious Moriscos entered the Albaicín district cursing the Morisco “traitor” Albotodo, who was eventually banished to Seville with the expelled Moriscos.

Most importantly, by patiently and conscientiously studying the Morisco community, isolating and highlighting specific

defining elements of that group, a giant and necessary step was taken to invent the “Morisco.” This well-founded theoretical construction was quickly embraced by supporters of expulsion but did not achieve the elimination of “everything Moorish” sought by the assimilationists (including collaborationists like Father Albotodo). The Moriscos had now been unified into a single imaginary Morisco who could be continually compared with what was considered to be a real or archetypal Morisco.

THE EXPULSIONIST STRATEGY: THE ANXIETY OF TRYING SOMETHING IMPOSSIBLE

The assimilationists were responsible for creating a whole series of specific reprehensible elements that eventually prevented them from achieving their advocated goals. The supporters of expulsion, driven by their desire to eliminate the Moriscos, were mainly responsible for discovering, analysing, situating and condemning the Moriscos. The expulsionists highlighted the exploitation of the Moriscos and, at the same time, continually referred to their existence. The assimilationist negation of difference had dramatic consequences. In contrast, the expulsionists discovered the plot when trying to quash it.

The expulsionists constantly highlighted the unfeasibility of the assimilationists’ objectives, of that negation of the identity opposed by fierce and, in their opinion, eternal resistance on the part of the target of their wrath, the Moriscos. The assimilationists’ approach changed rapidly from Christian charity to repressive action, while the expulsionists adopted a more anthropological stance. However, these attempts were not entirely unsuccessful: some communities were dissolved, while others disappeared or were eliminated. Contrary to what may be thought, the expulsionists were the staunchest supporters of Morisco

identity or identities in general. Their concern was, of course, to prevent the identity of the dominant classes from being contaminated or declining due to contact with other identities.

The information presented in the anthropological study carried out by the assimilationists proved to be crucial for the narrative strategy employed by the expulsionists. The theoretical and largely unrealistic proposals of the assimilationists were used in a completely different way to that imagined by their philanthropic creators, namely to demonstrate their impracticability and the anxiety caused by such excessive tolerance. The Moriscos rejected what the Christians so generously gave them: against meekness, arrogance; against patience, intransigence; against the opening of spirit, the closure of hearts. It was like "watering a dry field," "throwing wheat against stones," "preaching among animals." They did not want to listen.

Expulsionist theory, therefore, evolved from a request for local segregation (imposition of distinguishing marks and different settlements for the dominated community) to a call for absolute destruction based on the physical elimination of the other community. The assimilation campaign, a missionary and burning zeal for the conversion of Moriscos and the salvation of their souls, if it actually started, had to end after eighty years of poor and problematic results. The Moriscos' stubborn adherence to the beliefs of Mohammed prompted the need for "estrangement, elimination of that 'hostile and dangerous mass.'"

In reality, it was the country itself that needed to be purified, to erase that Moorish or Jewish past that made it suspicious in the eyes of European Christianity. After the Moors had been expelled, it was also felt that the actual word defining this episode had to be eliminated by erasing history. This would perhaps explain the disappearance of the historiographic episode of the expulsion (or any Arabic study) in the 17th and

18th centuries, as requested by Friar Gerónimo de la Cruz when addressing Philip IV: "The words "Jews" and "Moors" must be eradicated in Spain immediately, because the words alone do more harm today than the subjects did in times gone by." Spain had to be purified.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE "OTHER": THE SINGLE UNIFIED MORISCO

Hardly will you find among the whole race one man who is a sincere believer in the holy law of Christianity. Their only thought is how to scrape up money and keep it; and to this end they toil incessantly and spend nothing. The moment a real falls into their clutches, they condemn it to perpetual imprisonment; so that by dint of perpetually accumulating and never spending, they have got the greater part of the money of Spain into their hands. They are the grubs, the magpies, the weasels of the nation. Consider how numerous they are, and that every day they add much or little to their hoards, and that as they increase in number so the amount of their hoarded wealth must increase without end. None of them of either sex make monastic vows, but all marry and multiply, for thrifty living is a great promoter of fecundity. They are not wasted by war or excessive toil; they plunder us in a quiet way, and enrich themselves with the fruits of our patrimonies which they sell back to us. They have no servants, for they all wait upon themselves. They are at no expense for the education of their sons, for all their lore is but how to rob us. From the twelve sons of Jacob, who entered

Egypt, as I have heard, there had sprung, when Moses freed them from captivity, six hundred thousand fighting men, besides women and children. From this we may infer how much the Moriscos have multiplied, and how incomparably greater must be their numbers. (Cervantes, *The Dialogue of the Dogs*)

By the end of the 16th century all that unified Morisco had been constructed and all that remained was to condemn them and call for their elimination. The real Moriscos responded to this archetype because, as indicated by the Royal Chaplain and Father Confessor of Spain Jaime Bleda, “they are all the same: evil.” Cervantes’ “excellent” summary of the characteristics of the archetypal Morisco portrayed the latter as a liar and traitor who deceived and contaminated, who lied when he said he was a Christian and who lied when exchanging money (insinuating that Moriscos were false in all senses), who betrayed his own king because he sold himself to the sultan and because he gave false money (while hiding real money); his objective was to multiply with a monstrous fertility in order to occupy Spain once again. The insults thrown on the dogs in the dialogue removed this Morisco from the human world and placed him firmly in the world of the beasts.

The most serious step was the animalisation of the Moriscos, their expulsion from humanity. The main line of animalisation is opposition between animal and man, excluding “the beasts” or “the beast” we all have inside (the Baroque writer Soto de Rojas used words such “carcoma” (woodworm), “polilla” (moth) and “gusano” (worm) to describe our idleness and the Moriscos who corrode us; and also the opposition between superior animals and “poor beasts” used for food, sport-hunting or entertainment at the summit of the pyra-

mid. The animalising terms used varied as attitudes towards the Moriscos changed in the 16th century, from assimilationists who considered them to be “Christian” and “Spanish” to their rejection by expulsionists. The main obsessions of the anti-Morisco libellers (Bleda, Aznar, Fonseca) who “justified” the expulsion of 1609, are revealed by the use of words such as “rabbits,” “ants,” “mice,” “termites,” “apes,” “toads” and “bloodsuckers” to describe the Morisco community. They were seen as small, bothersome, ugly and prolific animals that were dangerous because they could contaminate abundantly.

CONCLUSIONS

A series of differential visible or apparent observations, as well as specific obsessions of the dominant community, gave rise to a whole chorus of unspecified rumours, including elements inherited from a long tradition of attacks (in this case, the anti-Islamic controversy), aggressions perpetrated previously against other communities (in this case, Jews), or a long dark tradition of what Norman Cohn defined as “family demons” of the dominant community in Europe.

During the 16th century and early 17th centuries, numerous authors directly or indirectly reflected these sentiments, phrases, jokes and observations, etc., giving them an order and coherence they previously lacked. This phase included the participation of “educated” members of the oppressive community who, ironically, often distanced themselves from popular actions provoked by stereotypes they themselves had fabricated.

These texts sought to identify the confirmation of that model in the “other,” a mask that was gradually sculpted incorporating new features or aspects that were continually being unearthed. The Moriscos, in this case, tried to react against the created image or adapt to it, reaffirming an identity

that had ceased to be their own from the moment—after assimilation had been decreed—the community did not have the means to culturally reproduce. In any case, they were no longer able to escape from the circle created from the incorrectly termed “controversy” (here only one spoke, responding to himself or searching for the adequate response in the other; there was no equality among litigants).

The process restarted continually, but this to-ing and fro-ing from “reality” to theoretical construction persisted. The wheel only stopped when the other community ceased to exist, either due to individual assimilation or due to expulsion of all its members or those who refused to be expelled. The speed of the process depended on alterations in the conquering community and its internal problems, and expulsions normally intensified at times of serious identity crisis, as eventually occurred in 1609 when a final decision was taken on the so-called Morisco “problem” invented by the dominant Christian community.

We will never be able to reconstruct rumours, words whispered under breath, easy jokes or minor everyday disputes between neighbours. However, we can refer to the measures that permitted these expressions of repulsion at what “disgusted” old Christians. This aversion was not instinctive but historical, a process that made coexistence with the Moriscos an arduous task for one century until “relief” came with their disappearance.

By 1609 a consolidated image of Moriscos had been established. It was constructed with input from assimilationists and expulsionists over more than one century. It was based on anthropological studies carried out to eliminate everything “Moorish” and was now impatient to expel real Moriscos. This does not mean that all Old Christians had the same image of Moriscos, because that would be the same mistake as creating an archetypal Old Chris-

tian, nor that should they be seen as a group except in the case of certain apologists, but we have analysed the remnants used to build the monster they eventually wanted to eliminate. Expulsion was the mechanism chosen to remove what they saw as repulsive and at the same time cut the Gordian knot of ethnocide—the assimilationists—and genocide—the expulsionists.

Between eliminating everything “Moorish” about the Moriscos or reducing Moriscos to a minimum, the decision was taken to expel them. To this end, it was first necessary to create a unifying image of “one” Morisco community representing “all” its members, before violence was eventually perpetrated against three hundred thousand people.

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