

HE WHO LOSES HIS LANGUAGE LOSES HIS LAW: THE POLITICS OF LANGUAGE IN MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN IBERIA.

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ABSTRACT: Analysis of language use in medieval and early modern Iberia has been carried out in different studies with a focus on either Muslim Iberia or Christian Iberia but we still lack more comprehensive comparative studies. In this article, the authors will approach the specific question of linguistic policies and linguistic attitudes in these two historical contexts from the vantage point of the interaction between language and religion. The association of Arabic with Islam and that of Romance with Christianity will be examined in these two historical periods in which each religious group constituted either the ruling class or the religious minority. The comparative analysis of these two linguistic situations will build on and benefit from recent work developed in the field of the sociology of language and religion.

Key words: Arabic; Romance; Sociology of Language.

QUEM PERDE A LÍNGUA PERDE A LEI: A POLÍTICA DA LINGUAGEM NA PENÍNSULA IBÉRICA MEDIEVAL E MODERNA

RESUMO: A análise do uso da linguagem no período medieval e no início da Idade Moderna foi realizada em diferentes estudos com foco na Península Ibérica muçulmana ou na Península Ibérica cristã, mas ainda carecemos de estudos comparativos mais abrangentes. Neste artigo, as autoras abordarão a questão específica das políticas linguísticas e das atitudes linguísticas nesses dois contextos históricos do ponto de vista da interação entre língua e religião. A associação do árabe com o islamismo e do romance com o cristianismo será examinada nesses dois períodos históricos em que cada grupo religioso constituiu a classe dominante ou a minoria religiosa. A análise comparativa dessas duas situações linguísticas se baseará e se beneficiará de trabalhos recentes desenvolvidos no campo da sociologia da linguagem e da religião.

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Palavras-chave: Árabe; Romance; Sociologia da Linguagem.

INTRODUCTION

When, in 711 CE, a Muslim army led by Tariq ben Ziyad, crossed the Straits of Gibraltar into the Iberian Peninsula, and conquered most of its territories in an astonishing short period of time, a new historical era began in this most Western land of continental Europe. The Christian Latin society, ruled by the Visigoths, that the Muslims had first encountered, was to undergo a profound transformation under the new Islamic rule. In addition to political and administrative changes, a deep societal transformation took place in Al-Andalus (the name by which Muslims referred to Muslim Iberia), from religious affiliation to family structure and urban planning. Language was no exception to this process of transformation. The local varieties of the early Romance spoken at the time of the Muslim conquest, along with Latin as a language of high culture, were gradually displaced by vernacular Arabic as an everyday language and by Classical Arabic as a language of formal communication³.

This linguistic change developed over more than three centuries of coexistence in al-Andalus of the four linguistic varieties, that is, Andalusí Arabic, Classical Arabic, Romance and (to a lesser degree) Latin. An early form of Romance was the native language of the overwhelming majority of the population in the initial period, regardless of whether they had already converted to Islam or had remained Christians. By the end of the eleventh century, however, the available evidence attests to the virtual disappearance of the use of Romance not just among Muslims but also among Christians who even had their Scriptures translated into Arabic for the sake of understanding⁴.

This linguistic evolution is closely related, on the one hand, to the prestige of Arabic as the language of Islam, the language of the social elite and language of the highest culture of the time. On the other hand, the predominance of Arabic in al-Andalus at the expense of Romance can be related as well to political and historical factors. Though the confrontation between the Christian kingdoms of the North and the Muslim state(s) of the South were relatively minor from the eighth to the eleventh century and they were not necessarily

³ This process has been described in Gallego (2003). The conclusions presented here regarding the linguistic situation in al-Andalus are based on data presented and discussed in that article. Also See Wright (1982, 2002).

⁴ Kassis (1997, p. 136-55).

viewed as Christianity versus Islam, the end of the eleventh century marks a turning point in the history of the Iberian Peninsula. In contradistinction with previous periods in which wars were still happening among Christian kingdoms (sometimes with Muslim armies taking side with one of the parties) and the other way round, there is a clear tendency to unite forces on both sides in this period. Major advances of the Christians towards the South and their conquering of emblematic places such as the city of Toledo in 1085 triggered the political unity among the Muslims. Furthermore, in view of the Christian threat, Andalusí rulers felt obliged to seek for the help of two North African dynasties, the Almoravids, at the end of the 11th century, and the Almohads, in the 12th century, both defendants of a rigorous interpretation of the Islamic doctrines. The status of Christians and Jews under Almoravid and, most especially, under Almohad rule, severely deteriorated. In this historical context, the defense of all symbols of Islam including its sacred language, (Classical) Arabic, was tantamount to the prejudices against the use of the Romance language, clearly identified by this time with Christian world.

From the 13th century until the end of the Reconquista and disappearance of the last Muslim State in Iberia in 1492, monolingualism in Arabic prevailed in al-Andalus. This linguistic differentiation vis-à-vis the Romance-Christian-Kingdoms was acknowledged and, in principle, respected by the peace treaty (Capitulaciones) between the Catholic Kings and the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada⁵. The preservation of religion, culture and customs of the new subjects was guaranteed by the Capitulaciones. These tolerant policies were abandoned, however, only a few years later, in favor of an aggressive policy of evangelization and acculturation. After several revolts of the Muslims against the assimilation policy of the new rulers, decrees prohibiting Islam and offering Muslims conversion or exile put an end to the initial coexistence of Christians and Muslims under Christian rule. From 1526, the practice of Islam was officially forbidden in Spain, but the goals of unity and homogenization promoted by the Catholic kings were far from being achieved. A new challenge emerged at this time: the assimilation and integration of the new

⁵ This is one of many treaties between Mudéjares (from the Arabic al-mudajjar, “people allowed to remain.”) and Christians. In fact, from 13th century onwards they were granted rights guaranteed by municipal charters (*fueros*) set up by the Christians for newly-conquered towns. Mudéjares were allowed to retain their religion, as well as their laws, customs and property. In the 14th century there was a progressive hardening of their living conditions and this had an impact on their taxes, the limitations to which they were subjected, the regulation to the millimeter of their life, customs. However, the Granada War would drastically change their social and political conditions (Echevarría, 2011-2013, p.7-8).

converts, known as Moriscos, into the Romance-speaking Christian society. Though baptized as Christians, they were suspected of secretly practicing Islam, as was actually the case for many of them. Furthermore the Moriscos of Granada and those living on the Eastern Coast (Levante) and other small areas of the Peninsula kept the use of the Arabic language. All of them (including those who already spoke Romance) maintained their distinctive customs including their ways of dressing, circumcision and funerary rites. Additionally, Christians suspected their collaboration with external Islamic forces such as the Algerian pirates who regularly attacked the Eastern coast of Spain and with the mighty Ottoman Empire.

After several failed policies of assimilation, King Philip II issued an edict in 1566 prohibiting the use of the Arabic language and all Morisco customs which resulted in a new revolt in 1569. After two years of war in the mountainous region of the Alpujarras, the punishment on the Moriscos this time consisted of expelling them from Granada and scattering their population throughout different Northern regions. Four decades later, however, the problem was still unresolved and new accusations of their alleged political and religious infidelity led to a final order of expulsion in 1609⁶.

In this historical evolution we observe, thus, that Muslims and Christians were alternatively the ruling class or the social/religious minority under duress. In both cases, the religious minority was identified, in periods of political crisis, with an external threat: the Christians Kingdoms of the North in the case of the Christian minority of al-Andalus, and the Ottoman Empire and the Algerian pirates, in the case of the Morisco population. In what follows we will examine these two parallel historical situations from a sociolinguistic perspective. The comparative analysis will be articulated through two main enquiries: First, the enquiry into the degree of knowledge of the language of the religious other and, more specifically, the awareness and interpretation of the two existing diglossias: Classical Arabic/Andalusi Arabic in the case of Muslims and Romance/Latin in the case of Christians. Second, we will address our enquiry into the linguistic policies (whether overt or surreptitious) and linguistic attitudes towards the language of the religious other as reflected in contemporary primary sources.

THE OTHER'S LANGUAGE, THE OTHER'S DIGLOSSIA

⁶ On the history of the Moriscos, see García Arenal (1996), Vincent (2006), Harvey (2005) and Bernard (2006).
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The existence of and use of two types of Arabic, namely *al-'arabiyya al-fuṣḥā* or eloquent Arabic and the common language or *al-'ammiyya* is one of the most remarkable characteristics of the Arabic speech community. These two varieties of the same language have very distinct roles: classical/standard Arabic, used for formal purposes such as the educational system, religious contexts, governmental speech and literary production, whereas vernacular or dialectal Arabic is the everyday spoken language of informal contexts. This linguistic situation is known as a diglossia according to the description given by Ferguson (1959)⁷. Each type of Arabic is perceived by the speakers as High (Classical Arabic) and Low (dialectal Arabic) and used accordingly for specific contexts and with differentiated functions⁸. One of the ideological pillars upon which Arabic diglossia is based relates to the sacred status that classical Arabic holds as the language of Islam, since for Muslims this is the language through which God chose to reveal His Message, the Qur'an. The superior status that language users give to the High variety is tantamount to the dismissive and pejorative view of the Low variety, as a vulgar and a corrupted form of the High variety. In the case of the Iberian Peninsula, the vulgar language was Andalusí Arabic, a “close-knit bundle of Neo-Arabic dialects resulting from interference by Ibero-Romance stock and interaction of some Arabic dialects” (Corriente, 2013).

In co-existence with the Arabic diglossia for several centuries, another prominent diglossia in the Iberian Peninsula was established between the Romance varieties and Latin. Latin was used in writing, as well as orally, in solemn occasions. The Low varieties⁹, vernacular or “vulgate” as they were referred to in medieval terminology, were initially confined to oral use, in everyday conversation, whereas the domains of Latin were those of the High variety: education, religion, science and literature. As in the case of Classical Arabic, Latin was highly standardized whereas Romance lacked a norm of usage, in a parallel situation to Andalusí Arabic. And, as is typical of diglossic situations, Latin was highly valued within the linguistic community, while Romance was considered “low” or “vulgar” speech.

Castilian, the variety of Romance that ultimately became the standard language of the Peninsula, was characterized by considerable fluidity until the 16th century. The

⁷ And specifically analysed for the Arabic language by Al-Sobh et al., (2015) and Versteegh (2001).

⁸ See Gallego (2010, p. 352-353).

⁹ Koch and Oesterreicher have elaborated on how language variation is determined by a basic, universal continuum between two poles, which they call Language of Immediacy, and language of Distance. They define this opposition by means of a series of communicative conditions and strategies (e.g. private vs. public; intimately related vs. unknown, etc.; see Koch and Oesterreicher, 2007).

beginning of the incipient codification of Castilian Spanish as a standard language with the publication of Nebrija's grammar in 1492, the first actual grammar of a Romance vernacular, and two dictionaries, also published in 1492 (Latin-Spanish) and 1495 (Spanish-Latin) was a turning point in the final replacement of Latin with Romance in most domains of the High variety¹⁰. The Latin / Romance diglossia was, thus, practically ended in the early modern era, when Castilian became a *de facto* standard language for most part of the Iberian Peninsula. In contradistinction to the Romance / Latin diglossia, however, the existence of two types of Arabic with distinct functions and viewed by the speakers as High and Low, remained alive until the expulsion of the last Arabic speakers from Spain in 1609 and it is still unresolved within the Arabic speech community to this date.

Considering the situation of co-existence of these two diglossic pairs and, more specifically, the political and religious connotations ascribed to each variety, let us analyze the perception of the religious/political other's diglossia.

In the case of the Muslims of al-Andalus and their acknowledgement of the Latin / Romance diglossia, it is important to keep in mind that Muslims seem to have found the Romance language of no special interest from an intellectual point of view due to its lack of a written tradition at this time, and the lack of any connection with the high culture of the era. From a philological point of view, investigation of the Romance language could have served a significant purpose in the analysis of their spoken language, the Andalusí Arabic dialect, some of whose linguistic traits are the outcome of the contact with Romance (Corriente, 1992). The very nature of the Arabic diglossia, however, that is, the low status of the Andalusí dialect according to the Fergusonian characterization, made this kind of study hardly unlikely, for the reasons commented above. The only descriptions of Andalusí Arabic came in the form of treatises on "errors" to be avoided in order to preserve the purity of the Arabic language, the so-called *Lahn al-‘amma* (lit. "mistakes of the common people") works

¹⁰ "The Hispanic linguistic tradition extends over centuries and closely parallels the development of a nation-state built around centralizing policy agendas put forward by powerful monarchs, as initially discussed by Haugen (1972 [1966]): the *de facto* promotion of Castilian as the official language via extensive cultural activities during the reign of Fernando III and Alfonso X; the strengthening of a central administration by the Catholic Monarchs (1474– 1504); and followed by an intense elaboration and codification of Castilian from the 16th century onwards as Spain spread its influence within and beyond the old continent. The imposition of Castilian as the national language— at the expense and in spite of other linguistic varieties— continued during the 18th century with the establishment of the Real Academia Espanola under the Bourbon dynasty (1700–present) in Spain, and maintained its status as official language in the Americas even as the new republics gained their independence during the second half of the 19th century" (Rei Doval and Tejedó Herrero, 2019, p.1).

such as those of the Andalusī scholar Ibn Hishām al-Lakhmī (d. 1182)¹¹. The only influence on the Arabic language that Muslim scholars attributed to Romance was the general assumption that the distortion of their language was the outcome of their contact with non-Arabic/barbarian languages, though no specific linguistic analysis was ever carried out on the mixing of Romance with Arabic.

By looking at the written production of the Muslims of al-Andalus one observes a lack of interest and scarce knowledge of Romance during the later periods of Andalusī history. Quoting and including Romance expressions, however, did occur in certain contexts. And in these cases the awareness of the Latin/Romance diglossia becomes evident. Pharmacological treatises are a case in point. The translation of the names of plants into many different languages does occasionally include Romance names that are introduced by the meaningful expression: “In vulgar Latin” (al-latīnī al-‘ammī), as in the Commentary on Dioscorides by the Andalusī pharmacologist Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh Ibn al-Bayṭār (1197–1248 AD):

[mursīnis īmārus] ...Its fruit is called in Syriac “murdāyānaj” and in vulgar Latin “murtān” and “murta.” The Berbers call its flowers “iqmmām” and in the language of the people of al-Andalus [=Andalusī dialect] they are called “raiḥān”¹²

The perception of Romance as a Low language is reflected as well in the way in which Muslim poets made use of it in a strophic verse composition known as *muwashshah* (moaxaja). The norms of the genre dictate that the final verses (*kharja*) should constitute a ludic, frivolous element, in contrast to the poem in which they are inserted. According to this thematic distribution, Muslim poets in al-Andalus employed Classical Arabic for the main corpus of the poem and Colloquial Arabic or Romance, for the final verses¹³. Though just a few cases are preserved, the use of Romance in the same context in which Andalusī Arabic is employed, confirms the perception of Romance as a Low language.

The existence of the High form of Romance was also acknowledged by Muslims in the first years of Islamic rule in the Iberian peninsula when the first coins they minted appeared with the fundamental statement of Islam (“In the Name of God, there is no god but God,

¹¹ See Pellat (2012).

¹² Dietrich (1991), 375/115 (Arabic text/Translation and commentary).

¹³ See Corriente (1997, p. 268-372) for a comprehensive analysis of the strophic poetry of al-Andalus including *muwashshah* (moaxaja) and *zajal* (céjel), especially the final chapters on the *kharjas* written in Romance.

alone, without compeer”) written in Latin. We may assume that the primary intention of having a Latin rather than an Arabic inscription was to inform Christians of the message of Islam. The linguistic choice here reflects not just the awareness of the linguistic barrier with the local population in this early period but also the realization that Latin and not Romance was the language of formal contexts, including religion.

In any case, as said before, the interest and acknowledgment of Romance (including its diglossia with Latin) was very limited among the Muslims of al-Andalus from the eleventh century onwards. In contrast, the interest and acknowledgment of the Arabic language including the existence of its two varieties was reflected in numerous works among scholars of 16th century Catholic Spain. The existence of native Arabic-speaking groups in Granada, Andalusia, Valencia and Aragon was arguably the main reason for this awareness. It was a fact reflected in the anonymous *Gramática de la Lengua Vulgar*, published in 1559 in Leuven. In its preface it provides an overview of the languages spoken in the Iberian Peninsula, information very rare in these grammatical treatises, and mentions all these regions as Arabic-speaking:

[Languages spoken in Spain] The first language is called Basque, which is the language of Biscay. Following this one [Basque language], the Arabic language, which is truly Hebrew, holds second place, not only because of its ancient and noble descendants, but also because many Spaniards have written diverse works in all the liberal arts well and perceptively: it is spoken in the kingdom of Granada, and in part of the kingdoms of Andalusia, Valencia and Aragon¹⁴.

The existence of these (Muslim) Arabic speaking communities was in the origin of the first grammatical and lexicographical attempts to describe the Andalusí Arabic dialect, that is, the Low form of Arabic within the diglossia framework. The authors had an obvious religious purpose. These treatises were intended to be used by Christian missionaries so that they could learn effectively and quickly the language spoken by the Muslim population. Missionaries had as their goal the conversion of the Muslim population in the first years and, later, after their forced conversion to Christianity, their proper evangelization. That the variety selected for these efforts was Andalusí Arabic seems logical for it was the natural means of communication of the Moriscos. These works can be considered the first

¹⁴ Síguese tras esta la Aráviga, que es verdaderamente Hebrea, la qual tiene el lugar segundo, no solo por su antigua i noble descendencia, como también por haver escrito en ella muchos españoles bien i agudamente diversas obras en todas las artes liberales: esta se habla en el reino de Granada, i en parte de los reinos del'Andaluzia, de Valencia, i Aragon.

grammars of applied linguistics for Andalusí Arabic or *algarabía* as Christians referred to this variety. Such is the case of the *Vocabulista arauigo en letra castellana and Arte para ligeramēte saber la lēgua arauiga* (Granada, Juan Varela de Salamanca) by Pedro de Alcalá (1505) published jointly. From this same perspective, in 1585 Francisco López Tamarid published *Compendio de algvnos vocablos arábigos introdvzidos en la lengua caftellana en alguna manera corruptos, de que comúnmente vjamos, pueftos por orden alfabético*. The main goal of this kind of work, that is, the teaching of the Andalusí Arabic dialect to missionaries, is made clear in the preface of the *Vocabulista* (1505, p. 100):

It is of greater benefit to the next [converts], and not least of all to the new converts to our holy Catholic faith, than to the old Christians, who are in so much need of being their preachers and teachers. Because just as the aljamiados (or old Christians) can by this work know Arabic, translating from Romance to Arabic, so the arauigos (or new Christians), knowing how to read the Spanish writing letter, taking Arabic first, can easily come to know the *aljamía*¹⁵ [the name by which Muslims referred to Romance].

Even though, for practical reasons, the Arabic Andalusí dialect was the first object of intellectual interest of Christian scholars, the fact is that both varieties High and Low were acknowledged, sometimes Classical Arabic even praised, in different publications during this period. The Franciscan Arabic expert Diego de Guadix¹⁶ did, for instance, distinguish between Classical Arabic (*arábigo fino y antiguo* [refined, ancient Arabic]) and Andalusí Arabic (*algarabía*) in several of his writings assuming the Arabic speakers perception of dialectal Arabic as a low form of Arabic: «porque en la mala algarabía que los árabes hablaron en España *es quiz*.» (s.v. *cálix*) [=because what the Arabs in Spain spoke was the bad Arabic which is a bitter cup]. This distinction was maintained in several entries in his *Recopilación* [=Compilation] as in his definition of *scorpion* in which he includes the Andalusí dialectal term pointing out that that type of Arabic is the vulgar form of Arabic spoken in Spain:

¹⁵ [...] Crecido provecho a los próximos, y non menos a los nuevos conuertidos a nuestra sancta fe católica que a los viejos cristianos, que tanta necesidad tienen de ser predicadores y maestros dellos. Ca así como los aljamiados (o cristianos viejos) pueden por esta obra saber el arauia, viniendo del romance al arauia, así los arauigos (o nuevos cristianos), sabiendo leer la letra castellana, tomando primero el arauia, ligeramente pueden venir en conocimiento del aljamía.

¹⁶ On Guadix, see Giménez Eguíbar (2010, p. 185-196.)

Note that in an Arabic book, the law of the names of the celestial signs, and that sign, which --in Latin-- they call *scorpio*, is --in [Classical] Arabic-- *cacrab*. I say this so that no one is fooled, by the vulgar name *cacrab*, which the Arabs used in the bad or corrupt *algarabía* that they spoke in Spain, Sicily, parts of Italy and França¹⁷ (s.v. *alacrán*).

Some of these Christian scholars did in fact defend the knowledge and use of Classical Arabic versus *Algarabía*. The Jesuit scholar (and Morisco of origin) Ignacio de Las Casas argued that the failure of the Moriscos' evangelization lay precisely in the use of Andalusí vernacular for these purposes rather than Classical Arabic. Las Casas stated that using *Algarabía* for the religious domain of evangelization was radically opposed to the worldview of the Muslims, their traditions and their culture since for them it was the learned language that was fit for this purpose: «because [the Moriscos] see that they [missionaries] do not know their language nor do they understand their Koran and books although they know their vulgar and common language like ours who know Spanish but do not understand or know Latin or even know how to read in Spanish¹⁸» (*Apud* El Alaoui, 2011, p. 18). Interestingly, Las Casas also emphasizes the different way of acquiring each variety according to what we know as the diglossia paradigm, giving as an example his own personal experience:

I knew when I was a child the Vulgar-Arabic language because of tradings and dealings I had with those from Granada [...] and I did not know how to write or read it. I leaned towards the study of the Hebrew language, [...] I also studied without a teacher or a guide enough to make my way through reading in Arabic¹⁹.

The Jesuit ends with a general explanation of diglossia in the Arab world and an interesting reflection on the difficulties faced by those who speak a dialect but do not know Classical Arabic given the fact that all the written production employs the high variety of Arabic. In fact, Las Casas points to the use of declension as the main difficulty for the understanding of those who only know a dialect. In this case, if the reader omits those signs

¹⁷ Nota que en un libro árábigo, ley de los nombres de los signos celestes, y llegando aquel signo, a que --en latín-- llaman *scorpio*, está --en árábigo-- *‘cacrab*. Esto digo porque no se engañe nadie, por el nombre vulgar *‘acra*, de que usaban los árabes en la mala o corrupta *algarabía* que en España, Sicilia, partes de Italia y França hablaron (s.v. *alacrán*).

¹⁸ [...] porque ven que no saben su lengua ni entienden su Alcorán y libros aunque saben su lengua vulgar y común como los nuestros que saben español pero no entienden ni saben latín ni aún saben leer en castellano

¹⁹ Sabía quando niño la lengua vulgar árábigo por el comercio y trato que con los de Granada tube [...] y no sabía ni escribir ni leer en ella. Inclíname al estudio de la lengua hebrea, [...] Estudié también sin maestro ni guía bastante a abrirme camino el leer en árábigo.

of grammatical complexity, the text becomes intelligible to the speaker of an Arabic vernacular:

The Arabic language is divided into vulgar or common and the language spoken with rules. This Arabic language has two parts, the common one is the vulgar one, which is divided into three dialects that have their well-known advantages in cleanliness and elegance. [...] The Arabic language has a very gallant thing that will seem almost incredible and that is that all the books are written with the precepts that its grammar requires regarding the proper spelling, since the writers are committed to it and they are usually men who make a living out of writing and copying since this profession is only practiced by those who know it well and not by those who are not learned men. And they do not usually put in these books those [inflection] signs by which grammarians know the case of each noun and whether the verb is active or passive, and the person, gender and number. So, if those who do not know the grammar and just know the vulgar language, no matter which dialect, are able to read, they can actually read these books, and those who are not able to read these books when they hear somebody read them without those signs [without inflection] they can very well understand their contents²⁰ (Apud El Alaoui, 2011, p. 25).

ATTITUDES AND POLICIES TOWARDS THE OTHER'S LANGUAGE

Though the use of Romance by Muslims as a native language in al-Andalus is documented in the first two centuries of Islamic rule as, for instance, in juridical records in which non-Arabised Muslims appear speaking in this language in court²¹, no other mentions can be found in later literature apart from exceptional or anecdotal references. Furthermore, there is no evidence of any kind of literature produced in Romance or any written description of this language in the form of grammars or dictionaries.

²⁰ Divídese la lengua arábica en vulgar o común y en la que se habla con preceptos Tiene esta lengua arábica dos partes, la una común y corriente que es la vulgar, la qual se divide en tres dialectos que tienen entre sí sus conocidas ventajas en policia y elegancia.[...] Tiene la lengua arábica una cosa galaníssima que parecerá casi increíble y es que todos los libros que se escriben en ella se escriben con lo preceptos que pide su gramática quanto a la devida ortographía, que en esto son puntuales los escritores, que por el ordinario son hombres que ganan de comer a escrevir y copiar porque no tienen impresión y no hazen este officio sino los que le saben bien ni escriben los demás no doctos; por el común y ordinario no ponen a estos libros ciertas vírgulas por las quales conocen los gramáticos en qué caso está cada nombre y si el verbo es activo o passivo y de qué persona, género y número son; y si los que no saben la gramática más que la lengua vulgar, sea de qualquier dialecto que quisieren, y saben leer, si saben leer estos libros o los que no saben leer los oyen leer así no apuntados, entienden todo quanto en ellos ay muy bien.

²¹ References can be found in the history of the judges of Cordoba compiled by the Arab jurist and historian Muhammad ibn Harith al-Khushani (10th century CE). See analysis and translations into English in Gallego (2003, p. 132-133). Edition of the Arabic text and Spanish translation in Ribera (1914).

In the middle and late periods of Andalus history only occasional references to the use of Romance appear in the written sources of the period. There is mention, for instance, of Andalus Christians acting as translators and intermediaries in the negotiations between Muslim rulers and Christian authorities, and we may assume that the close proximity with their Romance-speaking co-religionists helped maintain the use of this language alive among small groups. In regard to Muslims, references to their familiarity with Romance are exceptional and seem to originate in their contact with the Christians of the North. This is the case of Muslims who had been raised by Christian slave-women, as we may learn from the complaints of the Toledan vizier Abū Muṭarrif Ibn Muthannā (d. 1066 CE):

How far is high from low, the sky from the earth, the light from the darkness, the eloquent expression from the barbarism [...] Aren't we, people of this peninsula which is far away from the best nations [=the Arabian peninsula], neighboring the Barbar/Romance masses, aren't we the worthiest of excuse for [our] mistakes in speaking [Arabic]? [...] Because, isn't it true that since one of the sons of your nobility starts to hear when he is born [...], he does not hear but the words of a despicable, Barbar/Romance-speaking, simple minded slave-woman, and the baby does not suckle but from her breast, and does not acquire but her incapability of expression, and is not calmed but in her lap, and is not trained but under her direction? To the point that when he becomes a man, culminating his growth, he is in touch with the Christian Kingdoms since he speaks to them in their languages, he makes an effort in keeping their language, he is concerned about their social classes and tolerates their habits

Muslims could even carry a Romance nickname if they had been nursed by a Christian slave, as is the case of the Andalus scholar Abū Muḥammad al-Rushaṭī (b. 1133). His nickname al-Rushaṭī had its origin in the affectionate name (Rushatello) that a Romance servant gave to one of his ancestors when he was a little child, in reference to the large birthmark (“rosa” in Romance) that he had on one of his cheeks²².

From the 11th century onwards, when the confrontation between Islamic and Christian states in the Iberian Peninsula reached a point of no return, Arabic was the only language that was viewed as the language of Muslims in al-Andalus, whereas Romance was identified with Christianity. Clear evidence in this regard is the use in Andalus sources of the same term for both “Romance-speaker” and “Christian”, namely, the term ‘ajamī. Though

²² See Molina López and Bosch Vilá (1990, p. 18).

the original meaning of *‘ajamī* in Arabic is that of “non-Arab speaker” or “barbar”, in al-Andalus as in other parts of the Islamic Empire, the term came to designate the non-Arabic languages spoken among the new subjects, so that in Persia, for instance, it specifically referred to Persian whereas in al-Andalus it referred primarily to Romance. The semantic restriction from “Romance-speaker” to “Christian” in al-Andalus is documented, among other sources, in the chronicles of the eleventh century historian Ibn Ḥayyān, as in his narration of the episode of surrender of a rebellious group of Christians and Muslim converts (*muwallads*) to the vizier Hāshim ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, in 875 CE. According to Ibn Ḥayyān, Hāshim gathered everybody in one place and started asking each man: “*muslim anta am a‘jamī?*” (= Are you a Muslim or a Christian/Romance-speaker? If they answered *a‘jamī* (Christian/ Romance-speaker) Hāshim ordered to kill them immediately. To those who answered “*muslim*”, Hāshim asked them to recite a chapter of the Koran and then another one, and another one... until they hesitated or made a mistake, giving Hāshim an excuse to kill them, saying “*mā akhbartukum annahu a‘jamī?*” (= Did I not tell you that he was Christian /Romance-speaker?), until all the men were dead²³.

The religious meaning of Arabic as the language of Islam, along with the special circumstances of al-Andalus, in constant belligerent state with Romance speaking Christian Kingdoms, made of Arabic the only language that was viewed as the true language of Muslims in al-Andalus. Prejudices towards Romance as the language of the Christian enemy could have been compatible, however, with its study or investigation in a parallel case to what happened in 16th century Spain in regard to the study of the Andalusī Arabic dialect. But the fact is that Romance was viewed not only as a defective or barbaric language in comparison with Arabic, and a Low language, but also as a language that posed no threat vis-à-vis Arabic. No significant groups of Romance speakers existed in al-Andalus. It therefore comes as no surprise that there never existed a prohibition or overt policy towards its use. The linguistic efforts of the Andalusī political and intellectual elite seem to have focused rather on the preservation and good use of the Classical variety of the Arabic language versus vernacular Andalusī Arabic.

In sharp contrast to the Iberia under Muslim rule, the interest and presence of the Arabic language in 16th century Spanish politics and intellectual production is remarkable. As

²³ Arabic text in Makki (1973, p. 131-32). On the meaning and semantic evolution of the term *‘ajamī*, see Lapiedra (1997 p. 258-85).

in the case of al-Andalus, Arabic came to be identified as the language of Islam. At the very beginning of the 16th century the distinctive features of the Morisco communities were tolerated in order to carry out a peaceful assimilation to the dominant Castilian culture. Later on, due to the failure of assimilation measures, all manifestations of their culture were harshly persecuted (Gallego y Gámir, 1968, pp. 58-61). Language, the quintessential differentiating element, was the subject of various attempts of elimination through decrees, produced by the Spanish Crown in close consultation with the ecclesiastical bodies, such as the Church or the Inquisition. This was the outcome of the sociolinguistic conflict existing between the Christian and the Muslim communities after the edict of forced conversion.

The Algarabía was perceived as a threat, an unintelligible language to the Christians who viewed it as a vehicle through which treasons and conspiracies were hatched (Perceval 1990: pp. 21-47). The possession of books written in Arabic was considered an indication of Muslim practice and it was a cause for the intervention by the Holy Office (Bernabé Pons, 2009, p. 107). The elimination of the Arabic Language (algarabía) by royal decree happened gradually. The first major legal pronouncement was the 1526 Edict of Granada, the outcome of the assembly of the Royal Chapel of Granada, wherein the Arabic language was prohibited in favor of Castilian²⁴:

Furthermore to prevent and remedy the damages and problems which arise from the continued use of Arabic among the newly converted, we order that from now on none of them, nor their children, nor any other person of theirs, speak in Arabic or write anything in Arabic, and that they all speak the Spanish language²⁵.

The edict was suspended and revoked by Charles V (Harvey, 2005, p. 217-218). Several churchmen took advantage of the suspension and continued their campaign for the evangelisation of the Moriscos in Algarabía (Martín Pérez of Ayala, Hernando de Talavera) whereas others opposed it (Pedro Guerrero of Granada or Cardenal Cisneros). In 1565 the bishops of Granada, however, went a step further and sought to enforce a more general prohibition of all written and spoken Arabic among the Moriscos. After the recommendation of Granada's bishops, Philip II issued a royal decree in 1566 (published in 1567) finally prohibiting all written and spoken use of the Arabic language in Granada. The decree

²⁴ This language policy has been described in Giménez-Eguíbar and Wasserman-Soler (2011, p. 229-58). On the views of Arabic in 16th century Spain, see García-Arenal – Rodríguez (2010).

²⁵ Granada, Archivo de la Iglesia Catedral de Granada, Reales Cédulas of Carlos V, Book II, year 1526: f. 70, published in Gallego y Burín y Gámir Sandoval (1996, doc. 31).

identified the Arabic language as one of the chief impediments to the true conversion of the Moriscos:

[...] the use of the Arabic language, which the aforementioned newly converted, not only men but women and children as well, used in speaking and writing, and reading in the aforementioned tongue and producing their writings as they had, contracts and wills, and other dealings among themselves: through this language, they retain and conserve the memory of their ancient and dangerous sect and life. And by this same medium of the aforementioned language, they have dealt with each other freely and secretly [...] ²⁶

The Arabic language, according to Philip's decree, was an impediment to the program of Catholic evangelisation:

[...] Most of them, especially women and children, did not understand our language, and could not be instructed or indoctrinated in the holy Catholic faith and Christian religion, and few ministers knew the aforementioned language ²⁷

It seemed, therefore, that the appropriate solution lay in enforcing the use of the Castilian language and creating severe punishments for any use of Arabic among the Moriscos:

[...] So that they may learn to speak and write in our Castilian language, which they call Aljamia, none of the aforementioned newly converted of the kingdom of Granada, either man or woman, can speak, read, or write in the aforementioned Arabic language, either in their house, outside, in public, or in secret. Rather, they will speak, write, read, and interact in our Castilian language, under the penalty that the person who speaks, writes, or reads in the said Arabic language, will, for the first offense, be put in jail for thirty days, exiled from the said kingdom [Granada] for two years, and pay six thousand maravedís, with one third given to the denouncer, another third to the judge, and the final third to our chamber. ²⁸

These prohibitions reflect on the whole the association of the Arabic language with Islam and that of Castilian with Christianity. Before the prohibition took place, however, several Christian scholars defended the use of the Arabic language and contested its association with Islam, most notably Diego of Guadix. In his *Recopilación* he expressed admiration, for instance, for the extensiveness of the Arabic lexicon, some of it without

²⁶ Madrid, Biblioteca Marqués de Valdecilla, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, BH DER 36 (3): f. 6r.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.: ff. 6r-6v.

equivalent terms in Castilian «There is a lack of Castilian words to express the entire meaning of some Arabic words or verbs²⁹ » (s.v. *achoque*) or about the complexity of Arabic grammatical principles.

And I do not know what ray of light or natural inspiration they had helped them to arrange their Arabic language according to reason and grammatical sense, which art and science called nahu. And – these barbarians – found in it such great natural principles that they knew [how to] put their Arabic language into reason and cases [to elaborate grammatical rules]. (s.v. *algarabía*).

This unprecedented praise of the Arabic language is not exclusive to Guadix. The Morisco Jesuit, Ignacio de las Casas, defended a return to the evangelization of the Moriscos of the Kingdom of Valencia using the Arabic language. Furthermore, he argued that the preservation of Arabic was not due to its association with Islam but to its exceptional qualities including its elegance, eloquence, abundance and affection that made it especially attractive for the speakers. Its erudition, according to Las Casas, was not inferior to Latin or Greek:

The real reason for its having lasted so long and been preserved is because [the Arabic language] is elegant, copious and so affectionate and that it has so much propriety to say what it wants to say that it exceeds many others and, once known it pulls hearts behind it [...] if I say that in elegance and abundance it does not give way to Greek and Latin nor in the diversity of gallant poetry in various and different types of metre. But above all it exceeds in the erudition of its perceptive sayings and pithy proverbs, putting not a small part of its eloquence in speaking by parables and appropriate comparisons to what one] wants to persuade³⁰.

Las Casas insists on the very famous Núñez Muley's argument³¹ : the dissociation of the Arabic language and Islam in his *Memorial* (El Alaoui, 2011) by pointing out the fact that also Christians and Jews have Arabic as a native language in several parts of the world:

²⁹ Faltan palabras castellanas para significar la entera inteligencia de algunos bocablos o verbos arábigos.

³⁰ La verdadera razón de averse dilatado tanto y conservarse es por ser ella elegante, copiosa y tan afectuosa y que tiene tanta propiedad para dezir lo que quiere que excede a muchas otras y una vez sabida tira tras sí los coraçones; [...] si digo que en elegancia y copia no cede a la griega y latina ni en la diversidad de galana poesía en varios y diferentes géneros de metro. Pero sobre todo excede en la erudición de los agudos dichos y sentenciosos proverbios, poniendo no pequeña parte de su eloquencia en hablar por parábolas y comparaciones apropiadas a lo que quiere persuadir (*Apud* El Alaoui, 2011, p. 25)

³¹ Francisco Muñoz Muley a nobleman Granadan morisco who wrote the *Memorial* to the Audiencia of Granada. This *Memorial* contains the first defense of the Arabic language (BN ms. 6176 (R. 29), fols. 311-331 and also Garrad 1953, p. 198-226).

[the Arabic language] is used not only by the Mohammedans of the said regions but by the Christians and Jews who live there without their children or wives knowing any other, except the Jews who wherever they go know Spanish and not badly and use the two languages commonly. Today it belongs to the Syrians or Chaldeans, Jacobites and Maronites and some Armenians of all Georgians and Greeks called Malachites, Copts³² [...]. (Apud El Alaoui, 2011, p. 20).

The same opinion was held by Guadix who also argues that the Arabic language is spoken by millions of Christians in Asia proving thus that language and religion are two separate things:

A warning to the learned and cautious reader, that being Arab or Arabian is not the same as being a Moor[...] because language differs from religion greatly [...] other millions of Christians who live in Asia and Turkey are Arabs and speak the Arabic language, but they are not therefore descendants of Moors nor are they related to Moors³³ (s.v. *aguadinace*)

Another argument used by Guadix is the existence of the Arabic language prior to the emergence of the “accursed” Muhammad and his “accursed” sect:

Because they began to be Christians since the preaching of the apostles, which is -about- six hundred years before the accursed Muhammad was born, and before his accursed sect arose. I have said this so that no one is so ignorant that he thinks that it is all the same: speaking -in any land- the Arabic language and being descended from Mohammedans³⁴

The linguistic attitude of Guadix and Las Casas was, however, exceptional within a general anti-Muslim/anti-Arab environment. The prohibition decrees were the most visible aspects of a generalized feeling of rejection of the language that symbolized Muslim identity in the eyes of the Christians. Once the use of the Arabic language in any form (including its

³² Usan della [la lengua árabe] no solamente los mahometanos de las regiones dichas sino los varios christianos y judíos que en ellas ay sin saber sus hijos ni mugeres otra, excepto los judíos que doquiera que están saben la española y no mal y usan della comúnmente como desta. Es oy propria de los syros o caldeos, jacobitas y maronitas y de algunos armenos de todos los giorgianos y griegos llamados melechitas, de los coptos [...]

³³ Advierta el docto y discreto lector, que no andan a una el ser árabes o arábigos y el ser moros [...] porque difiere mucho la lengua de la religión [...] otros millones de christianos que habitan en Assia y Turquía, son árabes de nación y hablan la lengua arábiga, y no por esso son deçendeinetes de moros ni tienen que ver con moros.

³⁴ Porque començaron a ser christianos dende la predicación de los apóstoles, que es --como-- seisçientos años antes qu’el maldito Mahoma naçiese en el mundo, ni su maldita seta se publicase. Esto e dicho para que nadie sea tan ignorante que le parezca ser todo una pieçca o nada todo a una, el hablar --en alguna tierra-- lengua arábiga y el ser de aquella gente deçendienete de mahometanos (s.v. *aguadinace*)

script) was forbidden in Spain, the fight for the disappearance of all signs of Islam adopted other forms including the rejection of the Arabic influence on the Castilian language and, more specifically, its lexicon. López de Villalobos, in the preface of his *Problemas naturales y morales* (1543), criticizes the use of Arabisms that ‘obscure the clarity’ of the Castilian Spanish language:

In Castile, courtiers do not say *hacién* for *hacían*, or *comién* for *comían*, like this in all verbs of this conjugation; nor do they say *albaceha* (legal executor), nor *almutacen* (inspector of weights and measures), nor *atafoico* (soup plate or deep dish or a round table formerly used by the Moors or Jews), nor other Moorish words with which the people of Toledo dirty and obfuscate the luster and clarity of the Spanish language (López Villalobos, 1543, p. 434).

The author’s statement reflects a shared opinion among the Spanish intellectual elite in considering Arabic loanwords as an element of impurity in Castilian³⁵. When comparing the Castilian and Latin lexicons, scholars of this period considered the former inferior and insufficient. In the first place, because the Castilian lexis was considered to be a “corruption” of Latin, the mother tongue. In the second place, because of the abundance of the Arabic vocabulary. The abundance of Arabisms significantly separated Castilian from the humanistic aspirations inherent in the codification of Castilian Spanish (Harris-Northall, 2006). Frisio Gemma, who in the prologue of his translation of *Cosmographia* (1575), reflects on the development of the Spanish language, makes it clear that the enrichment of the language must be by resorting to Latin terms and discarding “scum Arabisms”:

It seems to me that, in translating these art into Spanish, they are not desecrated, thus among all the common languages, without prejudice to the others, Spanish can be said to be the most abundant, virile and rich, and the most widespread in many of the world’s nations and peoples. Thus, with particular diligence from many learned men who write books with great skill and supreme art, [the Spanish language] is enriched everyday, rejecting the dregs of some Arabic words and borrowing many Latin words, it returns to the natural and ancient nobility of the Romance language. (Apud Mancho & Nistal, 2001, p. 299)

In the same vein, Martín de Viciana, in his *Alabanza de las lenguas hebrea, griega, latina y valenciana* (1562) complains about the abundance of Arabic terms in Castilian that, in his view, deteriorates and undermines the value of Castilian:

³⁵ On linguistic attitudes towards Arabic loanwords in Spanish see Giménez Eguíbar (2016, p. 363-380).

It is sad to see that in the Spanish language whose mixture of terms and names from the Arabic Language has come from much communication, [...] ... and from this, the noble Castilian language receives little use, but great bias in allowing, that the most vile and dejected Arabic language to take words, or any noun, for there are thousands of Castile wise men, instead of the Arabs, they could find words themselves for anything, in addition to having the Latin language³⁶.

CONCLUSIONS

As we have seen in the previous study, the association of the Arabic language (both Classical and Andalusí Arabic) with Islam and that of Romance and Latin with Christianity was a prevalent notion in both the Iberian Peninsula under Islamic rule, and the Iberian Peninsula under Christian rule. The social attitudes and linguistic policies that evolved out of this association are, however, substantially different. In the case of al-Andalus, the interest in the language of the Christians was minimal. Though we may assume that Romance-speaking pockets remained in the later period of Andalusí history, the high degree of arabisation of the Christians of al-Andalus made any linguistic measures unnecessary should the Muslim rulers have wanted to issue any legislation against the use of Romance. Furthermore, since according to Islamic law, Christians and Jews were allowed to live safely under Islamic rule, no social homogenization or religious unification policy could actually be issued by the Islamic government. In contradistinction to what happened in early modern Spain, a linguistic policy addressed to undermine Christian identity was irrelevant since Christians were legally accepted in the Islamic state. Romance, in any case, never entailed any intellectual entity in the Muslims' world view of this period. Their pride in the use of Arabic, the sacred language of Islam, was accompanied by the prestige of being the language of science and high culture. The linguistic concerns of the Muslims of al-Andalus were rather addressed to their own use of vernacular Arabic, the "corrupted" form of the pure Arabic language whose deterioration was attributed to its contact with the non-Arabic peoples.

Sixteenth century Spain was under completely different social and political circumstances. The attempts, first, to convert Muslims to Christianity and, later, to culturally assimilate the new converts to the rest of the Christian population, led to an intellectual

³⁶ Es lástima ver, que en la lengua castellana cuya tanta mixtura de términos, y nombres del Árábigo [...] y desto rescibe la noble lengua castellana [...] muy grande prejuicio, en consentir, que de la más de vil y abatida lengua arábiga tome vocablo, ni nombre alguno.

interest in their vernacular Arabic (Algarabia) as an indispensable tool of communication with this population. The militant attitude of the Moriscos regarding their culture and customs, however, aggravated the anti-Muslim/anti-Arab feelings existing among the Christian population and reflected in the different legal measures adopted in this period. A few voices of well-known religious scholars such as Diego de Guadix and Ignacio de Las Casas strongly opposed the banning of the Arabic language whose complexity (including its diglossia) they both acknowledged and understood. In spite of these isolated efforts, however, the fate of the Arabic language in Spain was going to be that of rejection and, later, oblivion, due to its inextricable connection with Islam.

To conclude, medieval and early modern Iberia constitute a privileged scenario for the study of the interplay between language and religion as two major social systems. Though the field of the sociology of language and religion is still in the process of a definition of its theoretical framework, it has proved to be an illuminating approach in the understanding of the processes of language shift, maintenance and policy in Muslim and Christian Iberia that invites to further exploration.

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