

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Aljamiado Literature as a legacy of “in-between” cultures within Medieval and Early Modern Spain

SUPERVISORS

	First name	LAST NAME	University	Research Unit
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Fields of study

Spanish Philology
 Literary and Cultural Studies
 Arabic and Islamic Studies
 Cultural Anthropology
 Codicology and Palaeography
 Art History

Requirements (academic background, languages...) needed to apply for this research topic

- Master Degree
- It is a must to have studied subjects in medieval Spanish literature at degree or master's level. It is also convenient to have studied subjects in Aragonese language or literature.
- Minimum level required for the following languages:
 - Spanish: C1
 - French: B2
 - English: B2
 - Arabic: A2

5 main KEYWORDS

Aljamiada literature, Mudéjares, Moriscos, Socio-cultural minority, Religious minority.

ABSTRACT (250 words max.)

The Mudejar legacy constitutes one of the most significant elements of Aragonese cultural heritage. The declaration of Aragonese Mudejar Architecture as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1986 and 2001 recognizes the value of its

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artistic and historical contributions to universal culture. This architectural tradition exemplifies the coexistence of Christian and Islamic aesthetics and serves as a visible testimony of a complex intercultural past. However, the cultural contribution of Aragonese Mudéjar and Morisco communities goes far beyond the monumental with particular forms of intangible cultural heritage. As a minority yet diverse group, they also produced a significant body of literary and cultural works in the Spanish linguistic varieties used within Islamic communities that deserves further study and recognition: Aljamiado Literature. Usually written in Aragonese language through Arabic script, these texts aimed to convey ethic and religious teachings and the literary experience.

From Qur’anic translations and religious poems to legends, fables, sermons, and practical knowledge such as popular magic, medical remedies or ethical treatises, Aljamiado texts encode an alternative historical narrative that has been historically silenced or marginalized. Despite its richness, a vast portion of this corpus, mainly discovered in Aragon, remains unexplored, scattered across public libraries or archives, and private collections. Many texts are only accessible in manuscripts, often in fragile conditions and require both philological and digital intervention to be studied, classified and preserved.

Research aims and methodology

From Qur’anic translations and religious poems to legends, fables, sermons, and practical knowledge such as popular magic, medical remedies or ethical treatises, Aljamiado texts encode an alternative historical narrative that has been historically silenced or marginalized. Despite its richness, a vast portion of this corpus, mainly discovered in Aragon, remains unexplored, scattered across public libraries or archives, and private collections. Many texts are only accessible in manuscripts, often in fragile conditions and require both philological and digital intervention to be studied, classified and preserved.

The objective of this line of research is twofold.

1. In internal terms, it aims at a more adequate knowledge of the aljamiado literature, as:
 - 1.1. A piece of identity resistance of the Islamic minority under Christian sovereignty in the Iberian Peninsula.
 - 1.2. A cultural production intended not only for indoctrination, but also for the ‘plaisir du texte’, in particular through collective read-aloud evenings.
2. In external terms, it seeks to raise awareness of this part of Aragonese, Spanish and Mediterranean cultural heritage, in order to:
 - 2.1. Highlight both the materiality and the content of the Aljamiado manuscripts.
 - 2.2. Raise public awareness of the interest of this part of the Iberian cultural legacy and the need to preserve and study it.
 - 2.3. To encourage the current reading public to discover and enjoy Aljamiado literature.

The integration of the various methodologies is explained in the estimated schedule below.

Relevance and added-value of the proposed research in relation to the current state of knowledge

This research line positions Aljamiado literature not only as a subject of historical inquiry but as a living legacy that challenges us to rethink cultural identity, religious coexistence and heritage politics in the Iberian context. It offers a rare opportunity to bridge the tangible and intangible, the local and the transnational, the past and the present—by shedding light on a corpus still waiting to be read, an opportunity to shed light on what is like to be “in-between cultures”.

Interdisciplinary nature of the research together with the alignment with the CHORAL programme and complementarity expertise of the teams

The interdisciplinary nature of the research lies in its combination of elements of tangible and intangible heritage, art and literature, orality and writing, as well as the cooperative use of cultural, sociological and religious studies.

The project aligns with the following CHORAL research priorities:

- **Intangible CH and identity narratives:** Aljamiado literature captures the oral traditions, religious practices, and cultural identity of the Morisco community, functioning as a discursive bridge between East and West cultures and mentalities, and providing insight into transnational history, linguistic hybridity, and minority self construction, identity building, and collective resistance.
- **Study and preservation of tangible CH:** The manuscripts themselves, often held in public libraries such as the Biblioteca Nacional de España, constitute valuable material artefacts that demand conservation, cataloguing, and study within the framework of heritage legislation and manuscript preservation.
- **Enhancement and dissemination of cultural heritage:** Through digitisation, storytelling, education and public engagement, this project aims to recover and valorise this neglected heritage, integrating it into wider narratives of Aragonese, Spanish and Mediterranean culture. The creation of open-access platforms, critical editions and didactic resources would ensure its accessibility and dissemination.

Output plan including publication and dissemination activities

The means of dissemination of the progress and results of the research would be, among others:

- Presentation of research progress at the doctoral conferences of the Escuela de Doctorado and the Instituto de Patrimonio de Humanidades of the Universidad de Zaragoza.
- Participation in workshops and seminars organised by the laboratories or groups to which the supervisors belong: Spanish Research Project PID2021-127063NB-I00: *Narremas y Mitemas: Unidades de Elaboración Épica e Historiográfica*, the Spanish Research Group H34_23R: *Polymathía: Grupo de investigación para el estudio interdisciplinar de las tensiones, las emociones y los procesos socioculturales* and the French Research Unit ALTER (Arts/Langages.Transitions & Relations. UR 7504) at the Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour.
- Presentation of lectures at international conferences in the discipline, such as those of the Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas, Asociación Hispánica de Literatura Medieval, Sociedad de Estudios Medievales y Renacentistas or Asociación Internacional "Siglo de Oro".
- Publications in specialised journals of Hispanic Studies, Arabic Studies or Cultural Studies.

Estimated schedule

Estimated schedule of the doctoral dissertation by quarters for a three years period

NOTA BENE: Applicants should be aware that, in accordance with current doctoral regulations, doctoral candidates must undertake internships outside the University of Zaragoza for a minimum of nine months, either in a single period or over several periods. Of this internship, at least six months must be spent at UPPA, with which the cosupervision agreement is established, while the rest may be spent at other academic institutions or research centres.

Year 1: Foundation & Planning

- **Q1: Grant Inception & Refinement**
 - Initial meetings with supervisor: Detailed discussion of research scope, objectives, and preliminary methodology. Establish a regular meeting schedule with the supervisors for feedback.

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- Comprehensive literature review (initial phase): Identify key authors, theories, and gaps. Begin identifying potential data sources and relevant literary works in Aljamiado.
- Develop a detailed research proposal/dissertation plan (even if already done for grant application). Refine research questions and hypotheses.
- Explore software/tools needed for the research (e.g., Nodegoat Relational Database for the Humanities or stylometric tools like Stylo [R package] or Signature Stylometric System).
- Attend relevant seminars/workshops.
- **Q2: Deep Dive Literature & Methodology Design**
 - Continue intensive literature review, focusing on specific theoretical frameworks or methodological approaches. Draft initial sections of the literature review chapter.
 - Explore different methodological options: quantitative, qualitative or mixed-methods; interdisciplinary approaches combining philology, history, art history, cultural studies, anthropology and sociology. Select the most appropriate methodologies and approaches.
 - Develop a detailed methodology section: define research variables, textual corpus, data collection protocols, data analysis plan. Refine methodology based on supervisor feedback.
 - Potentially attend conferences or workshops to present preliminary ideas or network.
- **Q3: Pilot Study/Preparation**
 - Conduct pilot study with a sample of the fixed textual corpus and prepare for data collection.
 - Analyze pilot data and make necessary adjustments to methodology. Finalize all preparations for main data collection.
 - Order any necessary software (see the 4th point of Q1 schedule).
 - Confirm access to research sites or participants. Dedicate time to writing the literature review and other introductory chapters.
- **Q4: Data Collection (Phase 1)**
 - Initiate primary data collection through close reading of the textual corpus. Start organizing collected data as it comes in.
 - Regular check-ins with supervisors to report progress and discuss challenges.
- **Q5: Data Collection (Phase 2) & Data Management**
 - Complete primary data collection through close reading of the textual corpus. Begin initial data cleaning and organization as data comes in. Thorough data cleaning, coding, and preparation for analysis.
 - Familiarize with data analysis software, if needed.
- **Q6: Data Analysis (Phase 1)**
 - Begin core data analysis based on your methodology plan. Generate preliminary findings.
 - Discuss emerging patterns and challenges with the supervisors. Start outlining the “Results” or “Findings” chapter.
- **Q7: Data Analysis (Phase 2) & Findings Chapter Drafting**
 - Continue with in-depth data analysis, performing qualitative coding and, eventually, statistical tests. Refine findings and ensure they directly address your research questions. Begin thinking about the implications of the findings.
 - Draft the “Results” or “Findings” chapter, presenting your data clearly and concisely. Review the chapter with the supervisors.
 - Prepares articles for peer-reviewed journals to report initial research results or advance preliminary findings, to ensure dissemination and obtain feedback.
- **Q8: Discussion & Conclusion Drafting**
 - Start drafting the “Discussion” chapter: interpret your findings in relation to the existing literature, discuss theoretical and practical implications, acknowledge limitations.
 - Begin outlining the “Conclusion” chapter: summarize key findings, re-state contributions, suggest future research.
 - Refine “Discussion” and “Conclusion” chapters based on supervisors’ feedback. Integrate these chapters with the “Results” or “Findings” chapter for coherence.

- Attend conferences to present findings or receive feedback. Write new scientific papers by looking in depth at specific cases drawn from the textual corpus.

Year 3: Writing, Refinement & Defense Preparation

- **Q9: Introduction & Abstract Refinement, Dissertation Cohesion**
 - Write or, eventually, refine the “Introduction” chapter, ensuring it clearly sets the stage for the research, states the problem, research questions, and significance. Draft the “Abstract.”
 - Focus on overall dissertation cohesion: check for consistency in arguments, terminology, and formatting across all chapters.
 - Submit a full draft of the dissertation to the supervisors for a comprehensive review. Proofread for grammatical errors and typos.
- **Q10: Comprehensive Review & Revisions**
 - Address all feedback from the supervisors. This will likely involve significant revisions to various chapters.
 - Focus on improving clarity, argumentation, and flow. Conduct final checks on references and formatting according to University guidelines. Consider getting professional editing/proofreading (if budget allows).
- **Q11: Final Polish & Submission Preparation**
 - Conduct final, meticulous proofreading. Ensure all eventual figures, tables, and appendices are correctly formatted and referenced. Prepare for official submission (e.g., binding requirements, digital submission portals, necessary forms).
 - Formal submission of the dissertation.
 - Begin preparing for the viva/defense: review your dissertation, anticipate questions, practice presenting your work. Attend practice defense sessions, if available.
- **Q12: Dissertation Defense & Post-Defense**
 - Dissertation Defense (Viva Voce): Present your research and defend it before your examination committee. Address any minor corrections requested by the committee.
 - Make the corrections requested by the committee.
 - Begin thinking about publications from the dissertation research.
 - Networking for post-doc or career opportunities.