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# Questioned Identity: Morisca Women and the Spanish Inquisition

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**Questioned Identity: *Morisca* Women and the Spanish Inquisition**

By

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**Master's Thesis**

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Nathan Van Aken

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A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of
Western Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment
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**Abstract**

The sixteenth century in Spain was a century of redefinition of religion and religious orthodoxy which terminated in the expulsion of the *morisco* community of Spain in 1609. *Moriscos*, former Muslims who were converted to Christianity and their descendants, faced severe persecution from the Spanish Inquisition and the records that their heresy trials leave behind are revealing. This thesis focuses on women who were tried by the Inquisition for *morisco* related heresies, with a goal of understanding the ways that *morisca* women adapted and survived in a climate where both Muslim religion and Islamic Iberian culture were outlawed. Particular attention is paid to individual trials of *moriscas* and what these trials can tell us about the lives and religious practices of these women. Previous scholarly work on the topic of *moriscos* has largely focused on the group as a whole, with less regard to gender. This thesis argues that *moriscas* faced unique and specific challenges as women and adapted to them in distinct ways. By understanding the ways in which *moriscas* navigated a rapidly changing Spanish Empire, we can develop a deeper understanding of the religious climate of sixteenth century Spain and bring to light a group that has received relatively little scholarship within the field of religious history.

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## Introduction

On an evening in December of 1596, a baby was born in the small Spanish town of Deza. While the baby had been baptized María by the local parish, she was also secretly given the Muslim naming ceremony of the *fadas* by a woman named María la Jarquina. The baby was washed, the elder María recited a prayer from the Quran, adorned her with bracelets and necklaces of gold and coral, and gave her a Muslim name, Marien.[1] This ceremony is an important piece of morisco history, but the morisca who performed the ceremony may be even more emblematic of the changes that had occurred in morisco culture following the mass conversions of the early sixteenth century. Only a few years later, in 1603 in the city of Toledo, a young woman, coincidentally also named María, stood before Inquisitors and condemned her uncle, Jerónimo de Rojas to death by testifying that he taught her to "fast by not eating or drinking all the day long until night." Her testimony would go on to be the final nail in the coffin of a complex Inquisition case that would see Jeronimo die at the stake in Toledo the same year.[2]

A common thread that these cases share is that they are the recorded traces of the lives of morisca women living in a system where the Inquisition is ever present. [3] For María la Jarquina, her pseudo-clerical role was derived mainly from the fact that the practice of Islam was outlawed

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[1] Patrick J. O'Banion, *Deza and Its Moriscos: Religion and Community in Early Modern Spain* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2020), 100.

[2] Mercedes García-Arenal and Benítez Rafael Sánchez-Blanco, *The Inquisition Trial of Jerónimo De Rojas, a Morisco of Toledo (1601-1603)* (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 290-3.

[3] Morisco/a in this paper will refer, as it does commonly in the field, to any Spanish New Christian who had Muslim ancestry and who would have been treated as such by the Inquisition and society at the time in question. This moniker is applied both to those who continued the practice of Islam in secret post conversion but also to those who were descended from the formerly Muslim inhabitants of the Iberian peninsula. In this thesis, the term will be applied as a system in order to identify those who were under suspicion of practicing Islam by the Inquisition, regardless of the actual religious practices of those involved, as the suspicion of the Inquisition, rather than the actual religious practices, are what this thesis will argue shaped the communities in volved in unique and interesting ways.

and the duties formerly associated with imams were driven underground and into the private sphere, where women like María were able to continue their traditions. For María de Cadena, her interactions with her family and the Inquisition show an important contrast between the duty to one's family and the pressures placed upon her by the Inquisition. Both of these stories show the struggles and opportunities provided by this complex and ever-changing system.

While there has been less academic study of the history of moriscas as opposed to moriscos, that does not mean that they did not interact with the Inquisition in their day to day lives. There were a multitude of interactions between the Inquisition and moriscas. This thesis will be an attempt to understand how moriscas interacted with their communities and with the Inquisition at large. It will draw heavily from Inquisition cases, such as the above-mentioned María de Cadena, as well as other compilations of morisco experiences, like that of María la Jarquina. By using these cases in tandem with secondary literature, this thesis will show the importance of morisca women to the broader morisco experience with the Inquisition, showing how they have been ignored, and how they were influential to the morisco interactions with the Inquisition leading up to 1609 where all *moriscos* were expelled by royal decree.

With the intention of looking at the Spanish Inquisition in a different light, historians have applied a new, critical eye to the previous myths and understandings of the Inquisition and those the Inquisition persecuted. With that renewed interest came a deeper study of Jewish history in Spain, leading to the focus on Jewish conversos within the Inquisitorial historiography. While in the past, conversos have been the more prevalent topic of historical study, there is also a growing interest in the comparisons between conversos and *moriscos*. According to historian James Amelang: "In both cases, violence was accompanied by exclusion and followed by expulsion. And in both instances the victor was the same: a self-confident, militant Christianity,

now determined to mark a new course by disowning its former willingness, however grudging, to tolerate followers of different dogmas."[4]

The key example where these circumstances play themselves out in parallel ways is through the Inquisition records. Because *conversos* and *moriscos* were treated with similar tactics, their records can be useful when used in tandem to better understand the Inquisition's interest in the two groups. They provide insight from the view of the oppressor, but these views have been seen in the past as the only ones that were accessible. Historians such as Mercedes García Arenal argue that *moriscos* and *conversos* alike were able to partially assimilate into the communities they already inhabited, which leave very little in the way of a written record.[5] This creates a problem, especially in the field of *morisco* studies, where the lack of firsthand accounts means that, until recently, they were a perpetually understudied group in early modern Spanish history.

In addition to the complexities involved in finding and analyzing sources, *morisco* history in Spain is itself complex. Muslims had been in the Iberian Peninsula ever since the conquest of the majority of the peninsula in 711 by the Umayyad Caliphate. While their power and authority varied depending on the time and place, by the mid-fourteenth century, the Muslim political presence in Iberia had dwindled to the Kingdom of Granada in the south, which itself was conquered by the Kingdoms of Castile and Aragon in 1492, effectively ending nearly eight centuries of Muslim rule in the region. After the conquest of Granada, new complexities were introduced to the Christian monarch. Many regions that were conquered were majority Muslim,

[4] James S. Amelang, *Parallel Histories Muslims and Jews in Inquisitorial Spain*. (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2013). 163.
[5] See Mercedes García-Arenal. "Religious Dissent and Minorities: The Morisco Age." *The Journal of Modern History* 81, no. 4 (2009).

with regions like Valencia having been occupied by Christians for almost three hundred years at this point, which made the dynamics between Christians and Muslims particularly difficult. Amelang explains that, while Medieval Iberia is seen by some as a paragon of coexistence, this was rarely caused by deliberate policy and instead the reality necessary because of the delicate balance of power between Muslims and Christians on the peninsula.[6] However, regardless of how intentional this *convivencia* was, by the start of the sixteenth century, that coexistence was at its end.

Starting with the areas that were the most Muslim, Amelang explains that forced conversion of Muslims started in 1500. Inasmuch as modern historians are still concerned with assigning dates to long term events and histories, 1500 seems to be a good year to start what can be considered *morisco* history. By 1526, all of Castile and Aragon (modern day Spain) had outlawed the practice of Islam and the variety of cultural practices that went along with it.[7] These restrictions led to the areas with the most former Muslims to rise up, leading to a bloody and brutal conflict spanning from 1568-1571 sometimes called the War of Granada, or the Alpujarra Rebellion, named after the mountains, south of the city of Granada. During the rebellion, in 1569, moriscos were expelled from the Granada region and resettled in other regions of the peninsula. Formal expulsion of moriscos from Spain would follow beginning in 1609. However, it is important to avoid viewing the history of *moriscos* through the lens of the final outcome. As Amelang explains "While official prejudice against the moriscos was always in evidence, there was no clear long-term state or church policy towards the converts."[8] With that said, extra focus is needed to look at the approximately hundred-year history of moriscos through different lenses

[6] Amelang, *Parallel Histories*, 8.
[7] Amelang, *Parallel Histories*, 7-9
[8] Amelang, *Parallel Histories*, 8.

based on what region and time one is studying. As a result of the sparse records mentioned above, this thesis specifically focuses on women who were dealing with the Inquisition near the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries. The experiences of these women should not be held as emblematic to all *morisca* experiences throughout Spanish history, but rather examples that can help illuminate a marginalized group in history.

As one of the pioneers in the field of morisco studies, Trevor Dadson explained, "In many ways, the accepted history of the moriscos is like a house built the wrong way round, with roof put on before the foundations have been dug and the walls erected."[9] If this is the case, then the last 20 years of morisco historiography has been building that foundation. Progress has occurred both within the study of moriscos, as well as the study of the Inquisition more broadly. Microhistories, due to their extremely tight focus on a single individual or group, have been especially helpful in broadening the scope of sources used to study moriscos. Patrick O'Banion, in his work *Deza and Its Moriscos: Religion and Community in Early Modern Spain* has accumulated a plethora of sources on the small village of Deza using Inquisition and secular court sources to get a more complete view of moriscos and how they interacted and lived within their community. Similarly in the field of Inquisition studies, Lu Ann Homza uses the triad of Inquisitorial, ecclesiastical, and ducal court sources to expand the view of the Inquisition past that of red robed, omnipotent judges, to a more realistically flawed and fragmentary system that did not often deliver exact results.[10] By using sources from the Inquisition in tandem with non-Inquisitorial sources, historians are able to paint a more detailed and complete portrait of how

[9] Trevor J. Dadson, *Tolerance and Coexistence in Early Modern Spain: Old Christians and Moriscos in the Campo De Calatrava* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: Tamesis, 2014), 3.
[10] See Lu Ann Homza, *Village Infernos and Witches' Advocates: Witch-Hunting in Navarre, 1608-1614* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2022). While this source is not related to *morisco* studies, it does present an excellent example of how to deal with inquisitorial documents in new and creative ways, while also looking outside of traditional inquisitorial records for different types of sources.

moriscos interact in pre-expulsion Spanish society. By using a broader variety of sources, new avenues into morisco life are opened to the historian.

*Historiography*

Because of the nature of the field, historians of *moriscos* have to engage with several different historiographies. The three that will be most referenced in this thesis are the historiography of the Spanish Inquisition, early modern Spanish religion and women's religious practices and their interactions with the Inquisition. Historian of both Jewish and morisco interactions with the Inquisition, James Amelang points out the immediate problem with the method, in a chapter of *Parallel Histories* titled "Vigilance through Violence" where he points out that the majority of what we know about *converso* (and *morisco*) history comes from the Inquisition itself.[11] Throughout his book, Amelang lays out a central difficulty with studying these two groups. There is much written about what people *believed* about moriscos and converso, but not nearly as much written about how they saw themselves. For example, when talking about converso communities, Amelang points out that many contemporary Spaniards believed *conversos* to be endogamous or marrying only within their own group. However, Amelang is quick to point out this could be a result of the fact that many Old Christians separated themselves deliberately from New Christians, which may have led to the latter group avoiding marriage with the former. While the particularities of *converso* marriage traditions are outside the scope of this thesis, they serve as an important example in the shift in the way that historians are thinking about the Inquisition, *conversos*, and *moriscos*. Instead of taking the Inquisition's records as factual, it is important to analyze them as one singular perspective,

[11] Amelang, *Parallel Histories*, 80-81.

leaving room for interpretation both into the actions of the Inquisition itself, as well as those that they were trying.

Once this shift of view surrounding the Inquisition had started, it allowed recent historians of the Inquisition to focus on different things within Inquisition studies. For example, after historians like Kamen and Bethencourt published their works, they were followed by a variety of microhistories that looked at the Inquisition's interactions on a more granular level. Two microhistories that have come out in the last ten years encapsulate this shift well. Luis R. Corteguera's *Death by Effigy: A Case from the Mexican Inquisition,* and Lu Ann Homza's *Village Infernos and Witches' Advocates* both look at very specific cases and are generally about how much control the Inquisition had in reality, as opposed to the control they were believed to have. Because of this, both of these works are still instrumental in showing how the Inquisition's actual power is quite different than what has been portrayed for centuries. Homza, focusing much more on women's and children's interactions with the Inquisition says "Forty-five years ago, scholars were sure the Spanish Inquisition functioned like a machine; now, we know how uncoordinated and fractious it could be. The best recent work on the Spanish Inquisition in the Spanish Empire focuses on the ways in which particular environments affected practice and high-lights the range of priorities that inquisitors could bring to their offices."[12] As Homza's work is the newest included here, her account of the current state of Inquisition studies bears extra emphasis. The change in view from a well-functioning machine to an uncoordinated and fractious institution is important. By allowing environments and people to take center stage, the Inquisition is stripped of much of its mythology and allowed to be studied as it actually was.

[12] Homza, *Village Infernos,* 10.

With a new view of how the Inquisition is studied in its social and cultural context, *morisco* historians were able to expand how they studied the populations that were controlled by the Inquisition as well. Homza again has something to say on this stating "Previous research on this witch persecution was overwhelmingly grounded in descriptions and observations by Inquisitors and thus written according to the perceptions of intellectual elites."[13] By solely focusing on Inquisition views, previous historians were inadvertently giving an outsized voice to elites and those who wrote the records they published. While this is not always the case, for example even Carlo Ginzburg, an Inquisition historian and the founder of microhistory stated "The Inquisition, far from being a monolithic structure, was an institution that experienced development and changed, in terms of organization, procedures, and definitions of the law throughout its long history."[14] However, despite acknowledging that the institution was flawed, historians still generally were forced to rely on Inquisitorial sources when studying moriscos.

While Inquisitorial sources are the norm, scholars such as Mercedes García Arenal have explained this lack of non-Inquisition sources by saying it was common to "chose anonymity through a total or partial absence of differentiation that enabled hundreds of thousands of moriscos, Jewish converts, and European Muslims to become virtually invisible within the wider society."[15] This makes the process of finding these moriscos without using Inquisitorial records nearly impossible and indeed, this paper will not shy away from using Inquisition sources. Both Dadson and O'Banion use a diverse source of archival resources and engage with them in novel ways. Dadson's treatment of the moriscos at Villarrubia show a unique example of how moriscos

[13] Homza, *Village Infernos*, 8.
[14] Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: the Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 3. While Ginzburg is writing about the Italian Inquisition, it is notable that one of the foremost scholars in 20th century inquisitorial history was noting these cracks in the inquisition as early as 1976.
[15] Dadson, *Tolerance and Coexistence*, 34.

were able to integrate into wider Christian society and many were able to return to Villarrubia with the help of the Old Christians in the area. Contrasting to that is O'Banion's new work on the moriscos of Deza, another surprisingly well-documented group of moriscos who were unable to avoid expulsion in the way the moriscos of Villarrubia were. O'Banion ultimately attributes this to a failure of integration on both sides, Christian and morisco. The moriscos were less willing than those of Villarrubia to give up Muslim practices, and the Christians less tolerant of dissent.[16] In this work, O'Banion explains again the trouble with Inquisition sources when he cautions readers by saying "Inquisitorial documents, especially trial records, need to tread carefully, comparatively, against the grain, and alongside other contemporary sources, especially other types of archival materials."[17] This mindset will provide a key tool in understanding and deciphering the Inquisition's sources, which, due to their extensive archives, will be the primary source pool from which this thesis will draw.

As previously mentioned, Homza's work on the Basque country is heavily geared towards the women and children caught up in a regional witch panic. This view of women interacting with the Inquisition mirrors a similar trend in Spanish religious history as a whole. For example, another important scholar of early modern Spanish religion is Amanda Scott, who recently released her book titled *The Basque Seroras: Local Religion, Gender, And Power in Northern Iberia* which focuses heavily on *seroras* or laywomen that were, in her words "unmatched and unique," being recognized by the church and falling within the local and regional diocesan authority.[18] Scott's work focuses not on New Christians of any kind, but rather a group of women were officially recognized in their religious roles by the Catholic Church in

[16] O'Banion, *Deza and Its Moriscos*, 5-6.
[17] O'Banion, *Deza and Its Moriscos*, 8.
[18] Amanda L. Scott, *The Basque Seroras. Local Religion, Gender, and Power in Northern Iberia, 1550-1800* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2020) 19-20.

Spain. Although the work is not centered around *moriscos* and instead looks at women within the traditional Catholic paradigm, the work is still influential as it shows the ways in which women were able to act in an official capacity within the Catholic Church. While the *moriscas* examined in this thesis were obviously not sanctioned by the Catholic Church and were targets of the Inquisition, recognizing this thesis's place within the larger historiography of women and religion in early modern Spain is important, and works such as Scott's will undoubtedly provide important context within which to tell the stories of these moriscas.

*Cast of Characters*

This work will be centered around several specific trials that all look either at a specific morisca woman who was accused of heresy and denounced by the Inquisition or the roles moriscas played in the trials of morisco men. Special focus will be given to interactions between moriscas and the Inquisition itself, looking at how they were treated either as defendants or witnesses and what weight their testimonies were given. Trials from various regions of Spain have been included to provide a wider variety of sources and compare how the Inquisition acted in different regions in the late sixteenth century.

The first of these trials comes from Patrick O'Banion's *This Happened in my Presence,* a compilation of sources from the small town of Deza which is located near Zaragoza and acted as a border town between the two primary Spanish kingdoms of Castile and Aragon.[19] While O'Banion's work is a collection of a variety of different sources, the trial of Román Ramirez will

[19] Patrick J. O'Banion, *This Happened in My Presence: Moriscos, Old Christians, and the Spanish Inquisition in the Town of Deza, 1569-1611*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017).

be specifically examined, looking into his relationship with the broader morisco community of Deza as well as the specific interactions he had with his wife and daughters while in prison.

Ramirez, a morisco from Deza, was a man of contradictions. The evidence provided in *This Happened in my Presence,* which is the most complete compilation of records of his life and interactions with the Inquisition, paints him in a contradictory light. He was a jack of all trades, being, at times in his life, a farm hand, guard, gardener, healer, and storyteller. In addition to this, he owned an extensive library of chivalric and medical texts, which probably contributed to his storytelling abilities in the Deza morisco community. Early in his life he became associated with Gerónimo de Salamanca, one of the richest men in Spain at the time, a situation which Ramirez would use to his benefit time and again when he was in legal trouble with both secular and Inquisitorial authorities. By 1594 his home had become a center for Islamic instruction, a process often seen in post-conversion morisco societies.[20] He was denounced for making a deal with the devil in 1595, his denouncers citing his prodigious memory as evidence of this pact. While he did admit some of the crimes levied against him by the Inquisition, by 1600, his health had begun to turn, and he was transferred to a hospital in Cuenca where he died. His bones were later transferred to Toledo, where they were burned for his crimes in an auto de fe with King Phillip III and his wife, Queen Margaret present for the ceremony.[21]

Such an interesting and influential member of Deza's morisco society obviously had ties to many other moriscos. His life will be examined to explain the complex and interlocking relationships within morisco communities. Ramirez had eight children with two wives and many of them were also connected in different ways to the community. The story related at the

[20] See Amelang, *Parallel Histories.*
[21] Patrick J. O'Banion, *This Happened in My Presence: Moriscos, Old Christians, and the Spanish Inquisition in the Town of Deza, 1569-1611*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017, lxxiii.

beginning of this thesis about the birth and naming ceremony performed by María la Jarquina was for Ramirez's youngest daughter, also named María. This shows that Ramirez was both indeed a practicing Muslim as well as someone connected well enough in the community to have someone like María come to his home during his daughter's birth. In this thesis, Ramirez will serve as the focal point around which the various *Dezanos* orbit. His is the most in depth of the records that O'Banion published, and his can help understand the dealings that moriscos and moriscas in the Deza community had with the Inquisition, as well as how they were able to continue practicing their religion in secret.

The other main figure from Deza that will be examined here is María la Jarquina. As has been previously stated, María played an important role in the Deza morisco community. There is less information about her life other than the fact that she lived in Deza nearly her entire life and served in a pseudo-clerical role to the moriscos in Deza. She had a collection of Islamic prayers and by 1608 she and her only living child, Luis de Hortubia, was arrested. Her punishment by the Inquisition will be explored in more depth in chapter one, but she did survive a series of brutal interrogations by the Inquisition after denouncing many of Deza's moriscos. By 1611, she appealed her case to the Inquisitorial court at Cuenca and she was allowed to be freed and comply with the royal expulsion decree in that same year.[22]

The majority of what we know about María comes from letters written by her family members which reference her. From these, we are able to piece together more about her life before her denunciation, as well as her place within the community as a whole. As has been mentioned above, María served an important pseudo-clerical role in the Dezan morisco

[22] O'Banion, *This Happened in My Presence*, lxiv.

community. She was a scholar of morisco literature and had several holy texts that helped her instruct others on the various Muslim rituals that had to be adapted to underground religious practice. From a letter written by her nephew, we know that María earned her living "spinning on her wheel"[23], likely as a seamstress or working in a cottage textile industry. Though she had collected Islamic literature and rituals, it is unclear if she was literate, the one letter we have from her being written via a proxy, Francisco el Romo. However, regardless of her literacy, the impact she had on her community was immense. María will serve as the example of a unique phenomenon in morisco culture where women, rather than men, became guardians of Islam within their communities. O'Banion quotes historian Bernard Vincent by calling these women "the guardians of morisco culture" and says that they replaced more traditional religious figures in playing an "active role in transmitting the legacy of Islam to the next generation through ritual, instruction, and practice."[24] This shift was due to necessity as the persecution of Iberian Islamic practices drove their worship underground into the domestic sphere and therefore into the command of moriscas.

The final morisca whose story will be examined is that of María de Cadena, niece to Jerónimo de Rojas. Rojas was a morisco who was born in Toledo and went before the Inquisition for trial in 1601. Like many other moriscos of his time, he was denounced by a neighbor and was held in the Inquisition's jail for some time before his trial was heard. However, the unique circumstances begin to manifest when one reads the papers he wrote in prison, as well as the testimonies of his cell mates. One of these cell mates happened to be a famous Christian heretic, Hernando de Santiago, known colloquially as *pico de oro*, or golden tongue, who was a well-

[23] O'Banion, *This Happened in My Presence*, 140
[24] O'Banion, *Deza and Its Moriscos*, 101.

known Catholic orator at the time and who was imprisoned by the Inquisition for the socio-political messages of his writings. Santiago became the subject of missionary attempts by Rojas, who tried on numerous occasions to convert the Jesuit friar to Islam.[25] These attempts would be detailed in Santiago's testimony, which, in addition to Rojas's own writings would become central to the case against him.

Rojas did not stop his missionary efforts with Santiago either, attempting at various times to convert other cellmates and guardsmen that were stationed at his door. He also attempted, rather poorly as it will be seen, to smuggle out letters to his family about how to continue to run the family business while he was in prison and generally conveyed a tone of nonchalance while at the same time urging unity within his family in the face of the Inquisition's probing. Through these letters, Rojas stressed the importance of familial unity, a sentiment that held within the family against the Inquisition's probing. Perhaps because of this unified front put on by his family, throughout his time in prison, both from his own writings and those of Santiago's, Rojas seemed unconcerned with the position in which he found himself. He and his family had attempted to flee to Morocco the year previous, but he did not seem to be bothered with the trial, continuing to pray and procuring a rough stone which he used to scrub his body in lieu of the traditional Muslim bathing rituals. His initial testimony admits some wrongdoings but tries to minimize his crimes, seeming to rely on the chance that he would be spared and required to wear the *sambenito*.[26] However, this all changed when María de Cadena broke ranks with the rest of the family's unified front and testified against her uncle.

[25] García-Arenal Mercedes, Sánchez-Blanco Benítez Rafael, and Consuelo Lopez-Morillas, *The Inquisition Trial of Jerónimo De Rojas, a Morisco of Toledo (1601-1603)* (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 5.
[26] García-Arenal, *Inquisition Trial of Jerónimo De Rojas,* 294.

Cadena's testimony proved to be pivotal to the Inquisition's case against Rojas. She testified that not only had Rojas openly practiced Islam while she had lived with him and his family, but he had also taught her how to fast and practice Islam.[27] Her account proved to be damning for Rojas, as his own later admission belies. After having made a confident first statement, he asked to be allowed to write a second statement after Cadena's testimony. In it he asked for mercy even though his crimes had been "much repeated and in the first case the repetition had negated the confession of the crime."[28] However, his change of heart came too late for the Inquisition. Where there were initially detractors who wished to spare his life, after Cadena's testimony the sentence was clear: Rojas was to be first handed to the torturers to denounce any other heretics that he knew and then finally to be commended to the secular authorities of Toledo, who, in 1603 would pass down the sentence of death by burning at the stake.[29]

While both Rojas' and Cadena's behavior was peculiar, special focus will be given to the letters Rojas attempted to smuggle out of prison, as they will give the greatest insight into Cadena's state of mind. While there are no writings directly from her hand (it is unclear if Cadena was literate at all), these letters will be used in conjunction with the aforementioned scholarship on women and the Inquisition to attempt to understand the pressures Cadena was under both from her family and the institution of the Inquisition as well.

[27] García-Arenal, *Inquisition Trial of Jerónimo De Rojas,* 36.
[28] García-Arenal, *Inquisition Trial of Jerónimo De Rojas,* 386. This was a common procedure in the Inquisition. As it will be shown in chapter 3, by this point in the late sixteenth century, the Inquisition was deeply interested in rooting out perceived groups of crypto-Muslims and therefore they took every opportunity to extract information from any arrested and denounced *morisco.*
[29] The intricacies of Rojas's case will be analyzed in a future chapter, but for now it is important to note the unique nature of the case, as well as the role that María de Cadena's testimony played in Rojas's fate.

While chapters one and two will focus on individual, detailed accounts of *moriscas* involved with Inquisition trials, chapter three will take a broader scope and examine the concept of *moriscos* in the popular imagination. It will cover a variety of topics ranging from other individual *moriscas* who were targeted by the Inquisition, to several early modern novels that feature *moriscos* as their protagonists. There will also be further references to other edicts and important works in the field of *morisco* studies with the goal of understanding the arguments that center around the expulsion or integration of the *morisco* population. Prominent in chapter three is Francisco Núñez Muley, a Granadan *morisco* who likely was converted to Christianity as a small boy. From there, Núñez Muley served as a page for the archbishop of Granada in 1502 and seems to have worked most of his life navigating the delicate balancing act of being a *morisco* in Granada. This balancing act would come to an end in 1567 when the Royal Council in Madrid would pass a series of restrictive laws that targeted *morisco* with the attempt to assimilate them. Núñez Muley wrote a memorandum which urged for the laws to be repealed and attempts be made to tamp down the rebellion brewing.[30] As will be shown in chapter three, these calls fell on deaf ears, and the region would erupt into a brutal revolt in 1568.

The story of Núñez Muley's memorandum and the other real and fictional *moriscos* mentioned in chapter three will help to serve as a reminder that the teleological view of the expulsion as inevitable is flawed. By looking at individuals who attempted to find common ground between *moriscos* and Old Christians, chapter three shows the importance of understand a broad variety of historical and literary *morisco* figures, with the goal of interpreting how these individuals were viewed at the time in which they lived.

[30] Francisco Núñez Muley, *A Memorandum for the President of the Royal Audiencia and Chancery Court of the City and Kingdom of Granada*, trans, Vincent Barletta. (Chicago; University of Chicago Press, 2007), 4-5.

The final character of this Inquisitorial tale that bears emphasis is that of the Inquisition itself. The Spanish Inquisition was founded in 1478 to protect and standardize the Catholic faith in the consolidated Spanish lands after the *Reconquista.* It is important to note that Reconquista, or reconquest is a loaded and debated term in Spanish history. It implies a concerted effort throughout Spanish Christendom to conquer lands thought to have been lost to the Umayyad Caliphate in a process of conquest that lasted from around 711 CE to the final defeat of the Kingdom of Granada in 1492. The truth of this idea is often debated, with notable historian of the Spanish Inquisition, Henry Kamen saying, "No military campaign in the history of mankind has lasted that long," and going on to explain how the myth of the reconquest arose around 1798 to unify Spain more concretely.[31] Therefore, the Spanish Inquisition served as another tool in the arsenal of Spanish assimilation, with concerns both for the purity of faith arising after the Protestant Reformation as well as the interest in a unified Spanish church after the conquest of Granada.

With the Kingdoms of Castile and Aragon tied together in marriage, Isabella and Ferdinand established the Inquisition with the intention of enforcing Christianity among the converted Jewish population acquired from the recent conquest of formerly Muslim lands. Henry Kamen states that this population probably numbered around one hundred thousand. He further states that this was a time of increasing inter-religious tensions in the region.[32] This period was exacerbated by the increased popularity of moving Jewish populations to *aljamas* or specifically Jewish quarters of the city. By the beginning of the Inquisition, persecution and mistrust had

[31] Henry Kamen, *Imagining Spain: Historical Myth & National Identity*. (New Haven, Conn.; Yale University Press), 2008.
[32] Henry Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition: a Historical Revision*. Fourth edition. (New Haven: Yale University Press), 2014, 13-15.

multiplied throughout Iberia, shifting the paradigm of conversos from adhesion to the faith to a full-fledged, enforced conversion to Catholicism.[33]

While Jews had been the initial target of the Inquisition, after 1492, moriscos soon joined them. Beginning in 1511, a series of decrees began to make Muslim cultural and religious life impossible. Restrictions were placed on dress, ritual eating, and circumcision with the intent to modify the cultural behavior of moriscos and force them to abandon any semblance of Islamic practice.[34] Because of the restrictive laws put in place, the Inquisition was able to target each of these groups more explicitly, and religious converts became the primary target of the Inquisition.

While the Spanish Inquisition was indeed restrictive and draconian in its persecution of moriscos and conversos, there are also many modern-day stereotypes that plague the field of Inquisition studies. Some of these will be analyzed further in later chapters, but it is important here to analyze, in brief, the source of these beliefs. Henry Kamen dates the foundation of these beliefs as beginning with the popularization of the printing press. He explains that proponents of the Reformation used the Spanish Inquisition as an example of Catholic barbarity and framed the Inquisition as attempting to not only punish unreformed Muslims and Jews but all of Christianity as well.[35] These attitudes were given root in Catholic Europe as well, with some of the most fervent anti-Inquisition writings coming out of France, likely due to their periods of intense political rivalry. Further Northern European polemics would arise from the formerly Spanish Netherlands as they fought for their independence, painting the Spanish as backward and their nobility as "tainted" with the blood of Muslims and Jews.[36] Therefore, it is important to note that

[33] Kamen, *Spanish Inquisition,* 46.
[34] Kamen, *Spanish Inquisition*, 160.
[35] Kamen, *Spanish Inquisition,* 374.
[36] Kamen, *Spanish Inquisition,* 378.

not only were the Spanish attacked for persecuting crypto-Jews and Muslims, but they were also attacked for being Jewish and Muslim themselves.

These anti-Spanish attitudes have sometimes been called "The Black Legend," but as Kamen himself points out, this nomenclature has been used "for ideological ends in order to rebut any criticism of Spain's imperial record which has made it both unsuitable and inaccurate. In any case, many of Spain's actions, as with imperial powers today, were all too real and no 'legend'."[37] Thus, historians of the Inquisition must walk a narrow tightrope, not falling to tropes of red clad British comedians appearing where you least expect them, nor excusing the real and actual harm and violence perpetrated against minority religious and racial groups within Spain's imperial borders.

This thesis will attempt to look at the real stories of moriscos and moriscas that lived in a world constantly overshadowed by the Inquisition. At times, they were persecuted by the Inquisition, denounced and even killed for practicing their traditional religion. At other times, they worked within the systems set up by the Inquisition, denouncing family members seen as threatening for their obvious Muslim practices or using these denunciations to seek revenge against neighbors and rivals. Because of this, and barring personal writings from many of these subjects, motives are notoriously difficult to understand. Instead of attempting to explain the thought processes of Román Ramirez, María la Jarquina, Jerónimo de Rojas, María de Cadena, or the Inquisitors with whom they interacted, this paper will seek to make a web of connections, weaving together various narrative threads and explaining how each of these individuals dealt with the system in which they found themselves. It will be a study of morisco culture through the

[37] Kamen, *Spanish Inquisition*, 379.

lens of the Spanish Inquisition and seek to understand how women were treated by the Inquisition and their own morisco community.

## Chapter 1: María la Jarquina, a Stumbling Block to Assimilation

María la Jarquina was a well-known figure in the small town of Deza. [38] After the death of her husband in her mid-twenties, she declared herself an "old widow" and avoided every remarrying. She had several children, a cart where she sold "fruit and other things" and visited various parts of Aragon and Castille regularly.[39] However, these were not the reasons why la Jarquina was so well regarded. As shown in the introduction, la Jarquina also fulfilled an important role as a sort of unofficial religious leader in Deza. She performed the naming ceremonies for children in town and was part of a secret group that met regularly to discuss religion and learn Arabic. All of these things would come to a head when, in 1608, she and her son Luis were arrested by the Spanish Inquisition.

While the basic facts of María la Jarquina's life are known to us, such as the before mentioned collection of Arabic books, her profession, her deceased husband, and her Islamic spiritual practices, mostly associated with childbirth, there is very little from her own mouth. Only once she was arrested do we begin to learn about her religious life in more detail. After her trial, she was sentenced to wear the *sambenito,* a yellow penitent garment, which she did until 1611 where she appealed her case to the Inquisitorial court at Cuenca and she was allowed to be freed and comply with the royal expulsion decree in that same year.[40] For María la Jarquina, her pseudo-clerical role was derived mainly from the fact that the practice of Islam was outlawed, and the duties formerly associated with imams were driven underground and into the private sphere, where women like María were able to continue their traditions.

[38] Due to the fact that all three women examined in this thesis are named María and none of them have official last names, their titles will be used to distinguish them and clarify who is being examined.
[39] O'Banion, *Deza and Its Moriscos*, 105.
[40] O'Banion, *This Happened in My Presence*, lxiv.

The town of Deza was also an important influence on la Jarquina's life. She was born in 1568, just before many of the prominent *moriscos* in her town were charged by the Inquisition and the schools of learning were broken up in 1570. Deza was, as previously mentioned, a former border town between Aragon and Castile and served as a type of dry port until the union of Isabella and Ferdinand. Since then, the town had become much less central and more insular. By 1570, the area was known to have a large *morisco* population and Inquisitor Dr. Diego Gómez was sent with an Edict of Grace to the town's *moriscos*. By 1571, some of the prominent *moriscos* of the town had negotiated a more favorable edict and 173 of the town's *moriscos* were reconciled via the modified edict.[41] By the 1590s, the town's population had plateaued at about 1600 people, which left it small but sizeable enough to still attract the attention of the crown. Furthermore, it was a town that was once again growing. A newer, upper neighborhood was established, and a new, larger parish church was built. The Duke of Medinaceli had a large estate just north of town and a small but active group of minor nobles was thriving.[42] However, unlike Villarrubia de los Ojos, another small town with a significant new Christian population, Deza was not united. The divisions between new and old Christian ran deep here, like it did in much of Spain at the time. This could have to do with the fact that many of the new Christians of Deza that were "troublemakers" were influenced heavily by the proximity to Aragon.

As O'Banion says "Dezanos who wanted to be good Muslims could learn how with relative ease because of the town's proximity to Aragon. Aragonite *moriscos* formed a kind of religious lifeline for Deza's crypto-Muslims."[43] The fact that many of the *moriscos* in Deza sought to hold onto their old faith with the help of traveling teachers was easily a source of

[41] O'Banion, *This Happened in My Presence*, 7.
[42] O'Banion, *This Happened in My Presence*, xxvi.
[43] O'Banion, *This Happened in My Presence*, xxxiii.

tension for the Old Christians of Deza, who were likely suspicious of the foreigners coming to teach their neighbors the Law of Muhammad. One of these teachers was likely the one who taught many of the townspeople how to read and write Arabic, as an *alfaquí* from Aragon came to Deza in the 1560s and taught several of the Dezan *moriscos* how to read Arabic letters, study religious texts, and memorize prayers.[44] It is notable that women participated in these lessons, as women were often indoctrinated into these rituals, usually around their early teenage years.[45] As la Jarquina would not be born for another eight years, it is impossible for her to have been indoctrinated here, but others who learned in this instance would have likely taught her Arabic and the rituals necessary to eventually serve in a pseudo-clerical capacity.

While much of the Arabic that la Jarquina and the other Dezan *moriscos* learned would have been suspect to the crown, sixteenth century Spain was still a multi-lingual nation. As Claire Gilbert explains in *In Good Faith*, Castilian monarchs maintained trade and diplomatic relations with Muslim nations throughout the Mediterranean. This, in addition to the Spanish military garrisons present in North Africa allowed for the presence of Arabic in Spanish courts well into the seventeenth century.[46] However, as Gilbert is quick to explain, this translation effort was weaponized by the Inquisition, where they used Arabic translations of Christian texts to attempt to instruct and indoctrinate new *morisco* converts.[47] By the late sixteenth century, edicts against the use of Arabic were enacted in Granada and Valencia, and the Arabic that la Jarquina

[44] O'Banion, *This Happened in My Presence*, 4.
[45] Mercedes García-Arenal, *Inquisición y Moriscos: Los procesos del Tribunal de Cuenca* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1978), 65. Also see Kathryn Miller, *Guardians of Islam: Religious Authority and Muslim Communities of Late Medieval Spain*. (New York, NY: Columbia University Press), 2008.
[46] Gilbert, *In Good Faith*, 67.
[47] Gilbert, *In Good Faith*, 152.

and the other *moriscos* of Deza were learning was meant to keep them in touch with the Islamic roots generally and the teachings of the Qur'an specifically.

Much of la Jarquina's own words come from letters that were complied with the rest of the inquisitorial testimonies in Deza and comes from letters written by her family members which reference her and inquire after her. From these, we are able to piece together more about her life before her denunciation, as well as her place within the community as a whole. As has been mentioned above, la Jarquina served an important pseudo-clerical role in the Dezan morisco community. She was a scholar of morisco literature and had several holy texts that helped her instruct others on the various Muslim rituals that had to be adapted to underground religious practice. From a letter written by her nephew, we know that la Jarquina earned her living "spinning on her wheel," likely as a seamstress or working in a cottage textile industry. [48] Though she had collected Islamic literature and rituals, it is likely she was literate regardless of the fact that the one letter we have from her was written via a proxy, Francisco el Romo. However, regardless of her literacy, the impact she had on her community was immense. La Jarquina served as the example of a unique phenomenon in morisco culture where women, rather than men, became guardians of Islam within their communities. These women provided an important factor in the communities that they inhabited. O'Banion quotes historian Bernard Vincent by calling these women "the guardians of morisco culture" and says that they replaced more traditional religious figures in playing an "active role in transmitting the legacy of Islam to the next generation through ritual, instruction, and practice."[49] This shift was due to necessity as

[48] O'Banion, *This Happened in My Presence*, 140
[49] O'Banion, *Deza and Its Moriscos*, 101.

the persecution of Iberian Islamic practices drove their worship underground into the domestic sphere and therefore into the command of *moriscas*.

With a better understanding of Deza and the role that la Jarquina played in the town, it is important to examine how the Inquisition reacted to the pseudo-clerical roles that women held in *morisco* communities. In the terms of Deza, as previously mentioned, there was a general Edict of Grace issued for the *moriscos* of the area, showing that the Inquisition was aware of the fact that crypto-Muslim practices were alive and well in Deza. According to the visitation of Licentiate Reynoso, the inquisitor whose visit preceded the Edict of Grace, several Dezan townsfolk approached him "without being summoned", meaning that they came of their own will. This was meant to make their testimonies seem more legitimate, as they were not doing it for any other reason than to "unburden their consciousnesses". A bevy of witnesses came before Reynoso, many of whom accused their neighbors and associates. The most vociferous denouncement came from the town vicar, Miguel Benito, who claimed that all of the *moriscos* of Deza abstained from pork and wine and caused their children to do the same. He further denounced several *moriscos* by name and was the first to mention the name Román Ramírez. Ramírez's child was the subject of the anecdote at the beginning of this thesis and was furthermore a prominent *morisco* in Deza, taking on the role of *alfaqui* after this denunciation, where his close relationship with the local Duke saved him from any serious punishment from the Inquisition. Given that these events took place only three to four years after María's birth, la Jarquina was not present in these denunciations, but many of the *moriscos* with whom she would work and teach were. This event was catalyzing for the *moriscos* of Deza and was part of why la Jarquina took on the role she did in the future. This was also not uncommon for *moriscos* across

Spain. The idea that they were educating a future generation comes up often in writings on *moriscos*, both in O'Banion's work as well as the works of other historians.[50]

In addition to her pseudo-clerical role, we know that la Jarquina was literate, at least to the standards of the time. As historian Jacqueline Pearson explains of early modern women,

> Literacy has traditionally been tested by the ability to write one's name: but in this period writing was taught separately from, and at a later stage than, reading, so that even the person unable to write her own name might have reasonably fluent reading skills. Moreover, even by 1700 an oral culture had not been entirely replaced by a print culture, and women participated fully in this oral culture as the special guardians of old tales, proverbs, songs, poems and ballads.[51]

Therefore, it is perfectly reasonable to have letters from la Jarquina where she is using a scribe to write them, but also assume that she is literate enough to read the Qur'an and learn of the rituals mentioned above that she would have participated in. Trevor Dadson also references the importance of literacy among *morisco* communities when he breaks down the likely literacy rates among *moriscos* in other parts of Spain. He says "The value of this education would be seen at all levels of society, but especially among the Moriscos, who saw in it, as we have noted, both a route to social advancement and the shedding of their marginal status."[52] This idea that literacy and education could be used to shed a marginal status seems to apply very well to the *moriscos* that Dadson is talking about, specifically ones who were able to integrate more fully into the society in which they lived, many even returning post expulsion at the behest of the Old Christian townsfolk.[53]

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[50] See Mercedes García-Arenal, "Religious Dissent and Minorities: The Morisco Age." *The Journal of Modern History* 81, no. 4 (2009): 888–920 and James Amelang's *Parallel Histories*, as well as the O'Banion works cited throughout this chapter.
[51] Jacqueline Pearson, 'Women Reading, Reading Women', in Women and Literature in Britain, 1500–1700, ed. Helen Wilcox (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 81.
[52] Dadson, 64.
[53] See Trevor J. Dadson, *Tolerance and Coexistence in Early Modern Spain: Old Christians and Moriscos in the Campo De Calatrava* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: Tamesis, 2014).

However, Dezan *moriscos* did not attempt to assimilate in the say way as the *moriscos* that Dadson is writing about. As O'Banion is quick to point out in his study of Deza drawn from the sources upon which this chapter is based, Deza was not Villarrubia de los Ojos and the *moriscos* in Deza did not integrate, as is evident in the above-mentioned denunciations.[54] Therefore, the simplest reason seems the most logical when it comes to la Jarquina's literacy. She learned to read because many others also learned to read with the visit of various *alfaquies* to the village, and she took on a more active religious role in the town as a result of this.[55] While this is not uncommon, it is still quite important. The idea that women became guardians of *morisco* culture hinges on this ability to read and recount scripture from texts such as the Qur'an. This, in turn, became an important part of la Jarquina's identity as well as an important tool to help us understand the position of many of the women who were in these pseudo-clerical roles.

With the 1570 and 71 Edicts of Grace, the *alfaquies* were either arrested or had fled and the *moriscos* of Deza were left without any formal religious instructors. As a result, women replaced these teachers in key ceremonies, like the baby naming ceremony mentioned at the start of this chapter. O'Banion says "*moriscas* took a more active role in transmitting the legacy of Islam to the next generation through ritual, instruction, and practice."[56] This is when, according to historian Bernard Vincent, they truly became "guardians of Muslim culture."[57] Similarly, Renée Levine Melammed looks at both *moriscas* and *conversas* and the ways in which they upheld tradition after the Inquisition began to crack down on more traditional methods. She explains that even in the home, a space commonly seen as the women's domain in this time, it was not fully safe to practice non-Christian religion due to servants who could be used as

[54] O'Banion, *Deza and Its Moriscos*, 99-100
[55] O'Banion, *Deza and Its Moriscos*, 100-5
[56] O'Banion, *Deza and Its Moriscos*, 100.
[57] ibid

informants by the Inquisition. Regardless of this, the home still was a place where Islam was taught, usually through teaching Arabic to children as well as other traditional rites that were outlawed.[58] This rings true in the case of la Jarquina, as it was her own mother who taught her to fast for Ramadan when she was ten years old, and acting as the first notable Muslim experience in the record of her life.[59] Therefore, la Jarquina's story is not all together uncommon, rather she, like many others, served as a matronly guardian of traditional language and customs, a role that would eventually cost her and her family their homes and lives in Spain.

However, the expulsion was still years away, and la Jarquina was just now coming into her own power and authority. By 1593, la Jarquina's husband had died, and she began to refer to herself in her letters as an "old widow". She began to travel more, often for work, selling "fruits and other things" and generally showing an entrepreneurial spirit.[60] She taught her son, Luis, some degree of literacy and he went into business breeding and selling goats. All in all, the small family prospered in the late sixteenth century even as the Inquisition collected one thousand ducats from Luis at the start of the seventeenth century.[61] All of this was in addition to other roles that la Jarquina took on in the town of Deza, roles that coincided with her knowledge of Islam. She was part of a tight knit group of about fifteen *moriscos* who were committed to passing on their knowledge to future generations. O'Banion claims she was the youngest and most energetic of the group, her role soon outstripping the others by 1600.[62] The *fada* or naming ceremony mentioned at the beginning of the chapter was one such way that la Jarquina distinguished herself. One of the *moriscos* claimed that, by the late sixteenth century, only

[58]. Renée Levine Melammed "Judeo-Conversas and Moriscas in Sixteenth-Century Spain: A Study of Parallels." *Jewish History* 24, no. 2 (2010): 155–68.
[59] O'Banion, *Deza and Its Moriscos*, 112.
[60] O'Banion, *This Happened in my Presence*, 135-6.
[61] O'Banion, *This Happened in my Presence,* 140.
[62] O'Banion, *Deza and Its Moriscos*, 106.

women were performing this ceremony which was traditionally performed by an *alfaqui*.[63] According to testimony later given by to the Inquisition, la Jarquina performed a half dozen *fadas*, all without the help of a man, other than sometimes having the father of the child present, as Roman was for Marien.

In addition to her role naming children, la Jarquina, as well as another woman in her village, also seemed to develop some gift for divination or prophecy. This too was common among *moriscas* as Melammed points out, saying "Another parallel development in the two communities was the appearance of female visionaries whose enthusiastic reports frequently offered hope and salvation to members of the two converso communities."[64] O'Banion elaborates on this, saying that la Jarquina often used her gift of prophecy to foretell the outcome of serious diseases by observing the shape of molten lead poured into a mortar while reciting Islamic prayers.[65] This gift was often spun as much more severe than it would seem. Commonplace gifts of prophecy that were employed by both New and Old Christian alike in the time and region were framed as dangerous witchcraft by the Inquisition. The women of Deza who performed these rituals and rites were viewed as sinister, especially after the 1570 Edict of Grace, their secrecy that was a necessity of their way of life often reframed as nefarious and diabolical.[66] These views of witchcraft will arise again when la Jarquina is charged, but for now it is important to note that, while she did have some freedoms and abilities thanks to her pseudo-clerical role, she was in no means free to do as she pleased without fear of reprisal.

[63] O'Banion, *Deza and Its Moriscos*, 107.
[64] Melammed "Judeo-Conversas and Moriscas", 162.
[65] O'Banion, *Deza and Its Moriscos*, 110.
[66] O'Banion, *Deza and Its Moriscos*, 111. Also see, Bernard Vicente, "Las Mujeres Moriscas" *Historia de las Mueres en Occidente*, Vol. 3, 1992, pp. 585-596.

O'Banion cautions readers against an overly feminist view of the position of *moriscas* broadly in this time period as well. Although it is true that la Jarquina and others like her were important members of the community, they were still subject to the specific gender norms of the time. As he says, "Men exercised authority over their daughters and wives…As Mateo Romero el mozo told his wife soon after their marriage, 'Women must do what their husbands tell them.'"[67] However, as previously mentioned, la Jarquina was by this point a widow and she refused to ever marry again. While she left no record of her reasoning why she never remarried, it is possible that la Jarquina was devoted to other pursuits. She had a flourishing business, she was a well-known and respected figure in the *morisco* community of Deza, and she had a son who himself was flourishing. Potentially it is for these reasons that la Jarquina never remarried and instead seems to indicate that she was more interested in helping the small crypto-Muslim community thrive rather than grow her own family.

While it is possible to read this as a feminist act, it is also likely that the insular nature of the *morisco* community was at play here as well. James Amelang emphasizes the separation between *morisco* and Old Christians even in small towns like Deza. As they were close to Aragon, a major hotspot of *morisco* communities, it is likely that the two groups were hostile to each other. When it comes to marriages, Amelang points out that religious reformers saw interfaith marriages as a solution to assimilation, a situation that *morisco* communities were familiar with and therefore preferred marital endogamy.[68] This, therefore, could have been a reason that la Jarquina did not marry again after her first marriage. She was financially independent, already had a community and family, and did not want to weaken her ties to Islam

[67] O'Banion, *Deza*, 114.
[68] Amelang, *Parallel Histories*, 43.

by marrying an Old Christian. Therefore, even in her widowhood, la Jarquina's status as a *morisco* and a crypto-Muslim are reaffirmed.

With this information at hand, it is much easier to draw a picture of María la Jarquina. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, she was in her 30s, a mother of one and a prominent member of a small, crypto-Muslim group within Deza. She spoke and read Arabic, something illegal at the time, performed a variety of Muslim rituals, and was one of the most devoted members of the crypto-Muslim group, dedicated to keeping Islamic practices alive in Deza. She was an entrepreneur, traveling around Castile and Aragon, and her son was also successful in his own business. By all measures, la Jarquina was a thriving member of Dezan society. However, the success of the *moriscos* of Deza ultimately did not last. By 1608, the situation in Deza had become untenable for the Old Christians. While the ways in which the Inquisition came to understand that Deza was not reconciled is unclear, it is clear that more arrests were imminent for the *moriscos* of Deza. In 1608, most of the members of the small, tight knit group of *moriscos* were arrested by the Inquisition, among them la Jarquina and her son, Luis de Hortubia. This did not come as a complete surprise to la Jarquina, as another member of the community, Francisco de Cebea testified that he happened upon her washing her clothes just a few days before her arrest. She said to him "Now I've got clean clothes for when the Holy Office comes to arrest me."[69] Once arrested, it is clear that la Jarquina was subject to torture, eventually breaking and naming many of Deza's *moriscos,* both male and female, as her associates. However, her treatment by the Inquisition shows that this was not new information for the Holy Office. Following her trial, she was paraded around the town riding a donkey, wearing only a shift and

[69] O'Banion, *Deza and Its Moriscos*, 114

received 200 lashes for her crimes. She also was sentenced to "perpetual and irremissible incarceration in Cuenca and to wear the *sambenito* for the rest of her life."[70]

Despite harsh punishment, what little information we have from la Jarquina in prison seems to be that she made the best of her situation. While incarcerated, she wrote to her sister Francisca seeking after the wellbeing of her grandchildren (Her son, Luis had been sentenced to five years of galley slavery and his children were likely being raised by Francisca while he was serving his punishment.)[71] She sought after the wellbeing of several neighbors and even sends "two pieces of silk fabric and twelve little needles for those poor orphans [Luis's children], for I have nothing else."[72] While her situation was obviously dire as she had been held prisoner in Cuenca for three years at this point, la Jarquina did not falter, continuing to send what little money she had and cloth that she spun to her grandchildren and helping other prisoners. After a time, she petitioned the Holy Office to be released to be allowed to comply with the expulsion order of 1609, which was permitted on April 11th, 1611, and she left for parts unknown.[73]

Thus ends the record for María la Jarquina, *morisca* of Deza. While it is unfortunate to simply lose touch with her record, this is a situation that is incredibly familiar to all historians, but especially to those studying *moriscos* who were expelled from Spain. As Mercedes Garcia Arenal puts it, it is difficult to even grasp who to study post expulsion. Either because they were able to successfully assimilate to their new homes, they were welcomed back discreetly to Spain by their neighbors and able to assimilate, or they were simply lost to the historical record, post-

[70] O'Banion, *This Happened in my Presence*, Lxiv
[71] O'Banion, *This Happened in my Presence*, 135
[72] Ibid, 136
[73] O'Banion, *This Happened in my Presence*, Lxiv

expulsion *moriscos* are notoriously difficult to track.[74] This thesis will not attempt to trace la Jarquina nor any of the other women who are the subjects of this work post expulsion. Instead, let us consider those final years of la Jarquina's life in Spain. She was arrested, tried, punished, and eventually expelled. Did the Inquisition treat her differently because she was a woman? Was her pseudo-clerical role even acknowledged by the Holy Office, or did they simply see another lapsed Muslim and punish her accordingly?

While documentation on the inner thoughts of the Inquisitors is impossible, it is clear that la Jarquina knew her role was important in the community, and it would be dangerous to publicize this. In her testimony, she frequently claims to have "seen" ceremonies, rather than participating in them.[75] This likely meant that the Inquisition was unaware of the particularities of la Jarquina's influence in the community, but that does not mean they turned a blind eye to her practice. Amelang sheds some light on how *moriscos,* and especially *moriscas* were viewed by the Holy Office that may give us some idea of how they would have viewed la Jarquina's special position within the Dezan community. According to Amelang, much of what we have seen about la Jarquina is common across the *morisco* experience. The gaps filled by legitimate Muslim religious authority were quickly filled by women, and the Inquisition was quick to recognize this. Calling them *dogmatizadoras*, or "dogmatizers" about a quarter of *moriscos* tried by the Inquisition were women between 1520-1620.[76] The fact that there was an official name for this group of *moriscas* shows that the Inquisition was indeed interested in them and understood that women could fill these clerical roles. In the case of Deza, with multiple arrests going on at the

[74] Mercedes García-Arenal, "Religious Dissent and Minorities: The Morisco Age." *The Journal of Modern History* 81, no. 4 (2009): 888–920.
[75] O'Banion, *Deza and Its Moriscos*, 289.
[76] Amelang, *Parallel Histories*, 37.

same time, it was likely that the Inquisitors singled out la Jarquina and identified her as the most vocal of the group, as was seen in the official record.

In addition to being targeted by the Inquisition, Amelang can shed some light on the books that la Jarquina was tried for having. Among them was, of course, the Qur'an, which remained a staple in these crypto-Muslim spaces throughout the sixteenth century and into the expulsion. However, she may have also had books that fall in the category of popular religious books. Books that contained spiritual writings and prophecies that were used for magical purposes were common among *moriscos* and given the fact that la Jarquina was both literate and tried for having heretical books, it is likely that her own prophesying and divination could have come from these types of books.[77] With the idea that books on prophecy and religion were popular among *moriscos,* the ideas that la Jarquina filled a folk magic, as well as a clerical, purpose makes more sense. This translated, as many things did, to increased persecution by the Inquisition. Amelang even writes about this phenomenon, explaining "*moriscos* won widespread fame for their expertise in healing…In the hands of the Inquisition, this fame turned to notoriety during the sixteenth century. Moriscos stood out among the best-known cases of healers whom the Holy Office tried for diabolic magic."[78] This may not have been the specific charges brought against la Jarquina or the *moriscos* of Deza, but it was likely in the minds of the Old Christian neighbors as well as the Inquisitors who would later torture and try la Jarquina. These commonalities in the experiences of *moriscas* and their treatment by the Inquisition seem to ring true in the case of María la Jarquina. She was practicing folk magic, healing, and divination. She had a collection of banned books in Arabic and was literate enough to read them. Furthermore,

[77] Amelang, *Parallel Histories*, 49.
[78] Amelang, *Parallel Histories*, 42.

the Inquisition likely knew about her pseudo clerical role in the community and would have sought her out intentionally.

While this chapter thus far has been focused on the public and communal aspects of la Jarquina's religious performance, it is important to return to the story at the beginning of the chapter and look at the private domain where much of the crypto-Muslim rites are taking place. According to Melammed, the persecution of women by the Inquisition goes further than them just being suspect of religious dissent. She claims that Muslim women, due to their distinctive style of dress and distinctive rites were viewed as the most serious obstacle to assimilation and that this was the reason for the targeting by the Inquisition.[79] In addition to this, the underground nature of Muslim religious practices enhanced women's influence, as the private domain became the only option for rituals. As has been seen, women adapted to this, learning Arabic and participating, and in the case of women like la Jarquina, leading these rituals.[80] Melammed touches too on the idea of the *fada* performed at the beginning of this chapter, saying that it served "as a naming ceremony that became a way to nullify the baptism. The child would be washed in order to remove the baptismal oils and rub off the chrism."[81] This becomes extremely important in understand *morisco* culture. The idea that they were actively fighting against the Christianizing influences of their neighbors puts the conflict between New and Old Christian in stark contrast. Deza, as O'Banion argues, was not Villarrubia de los Ojos. It was not a place where *moriscos* and Old Christians worked in harmony to assimilate the *moriscos*. Through the work of women like la Jarquina and others, we can see an intentional guarding of traditional

[79] Melammed, "Judeo-Conversas", 157.
[80] Melammed, "Judeo-Conversas, 158-9
[81] Ibid.

Muslim culture. She and the others in the tight knit community of dissenters served as a bulwark against attempts at assimilation, and, in the end, they paid the price for it.

Returning to O'Banion, he agrees with the statements of Melammed, explaining how often *morisco* men felt incapable of performing religious rituals without their wives present. As O'Banion shows, this goes much further than these rituals, extending to women planning meals to meet the requirements of Islamic law and fasts and teaching elements of religious observance to their children once they were old enough to be discreet about such things.[82] We have seen this with la Jarquina, learning to fast for Ramadan at age ten under the instruction of her own mother. Thus, women truly became protectors of Islam in *morisco* communities. By having stronger control over private spaces, women were able to both perform rituals and pass on religious knowledge that would help further the religion for years to come. As we see with la Jarquina, the boundary between public and private was blurry in *morisco* communities, instead transforming to a boundary between the in group and everyone else. While there were certainly limitations to what *moriscos* did outside of the home, it is clear that they were keenly aware of who was trustworthy and who was not, sharing aspects of their culture with those they could trust, and keeping silent when they knew the space that they were in was not safe.

As was stated in the introduction, the history of *moriscas* is blurry. The fact that nearly every source in this chapter comes from the Inquisition and has to be read against the grain is difficult. It is extremely uncommon to find writings by *morisca* women about themselves in this time period. It is even less common to find writings after their expulsion and therefore, whether on the pyre of the Inquisition or through expulsion, most of the stories in this thesis have an

[82] O'Banion, *Deza and Its Moriscos*, 110.

unsatisfying ending. María la Jarquina, who served as a pseudo-cleric for the small *morisco* community of Deza, is no different. Even though she was eventually arrested and forced to name others among her community who were keeping the Muslim faith, she still held an extremely important role in the community as a whole. She performed *fadas* for several of the town's children. She worked with other *moriscos* to teach subsequent generations of *moriscos* about their Muslim heritage. If it were not for expulsion, it is likely that even after her arrest and detention in Cuenca the *morisco* community in Deza would continue alone, having been educated by her and others. While she was a minor figure in a minor village in Castile, la Jarquina serves as a prototype of the *dogmatizadoras* that the Inquisitors feared so much. Women like her proved to be stumbling blocks to assimilation by upholding the values of their religion and using their influence in private spaces to continue on Muslim teachings and practices that would otherwise be lost. As will be shown in subsequent chapters, this was not always the case, and *morisca* women sometimes took on other roles to survive in a world dominated by the Spanish Inquisition.

## Chapter 2: María de Cadena, a Very Good Christian Daughter

By February 25th, 1602, Jerónimo de Rojas, a *morisco* who hailed from Toledo had been in Inquisition custody for over a year. He had been arrested shortly after Christmas, 1600, when he was denounced by Francisco Enriquez, a miller whose family had been exiled from Granada. Despite over a year in custody, Rojas's spirits were high when he was led back into the Inquisition hall to hear one final testimony. Rojas had, in his mind, given a contrite and believable confession the month previous and, by all accounts, he expected to be let off with a slap on the wrist. Up to this point, his family had held strong. Not one had testified against him, and the prosecution had no testimony to back up Enriquez's claims that he was teaching others about Islam.[83] However, Rojas's fate would change when the witness gave her testimony. In walked eighteen-year-old María de Cadena, Rojas's niece and the linchpin to his downfall. Cadena testified that, while she was living with Rojas several years before, Rojas had taught her to "fast, not eating or drinking all the day until the night."[84] Furthermore, Rojas and his wife had taught Cadena a cleansing ritual common to Islam known as the *guadoc* which entails washing one's arms and legs as well as "shameful" parts of the body.[85] Finally, she said that she had witnessed Rojas and his wife praying in Muslim fashion several times but had never joined them herself.

Cadena's testimony was a bomb for Rojas's case. This was the crack in the foundation that allowed the Inquisition to flow in. They finally had justification for their original denunciation, and more importantly, they had a second witness to back up what Enriquez had

[83] Mercedes García-Arenal, Rafael Benítez Sánchez-Blanco, and Consuelo Lopez-Morillas. *The Inquisition Trial of Jerónimo de Rojas, a Morisco of Toledo (1601-1603)*. Translated by Consuelo Lopez-Morillas. Leiden: Brill, 2022, 36.
[84] García-Arenal, *Jerónimo de Rojas*, 290.
[85] ibid

said over a year ago. Rojas was finished. To fully understand the gravity of this testimony and potentially understand better Cadena's actions, it is important to further examine Rojas's case, the state of *moriscos* in Toledo, and what we know about testimony given to the Inquisition. As María la Jarquina gave us insight into the lives of crypto-Muslims and their practices, Cadena gives us examples of how *moriscos* acted once accused and what their family's role in the proceedings could be. María de Cadena represents a different side of the Inquisition's interactions with *moriscas* than María la Jarquina. While it is impossible to say if she was being honest with the Inquisition in regard to her religious practices, all the accounts that we do have of her imply that Rojas attempted to "convert" her to Islam and that attempt largely failed. As will be shown below, it is difficult to get at the actual spiritual beliefs of any witness present during Inquisition trials. It is not in Cadena's best interests to admit to any crypto-Muslim practices that she may have maintained, as this would lead to her condemnation as well. Instead, Cadena provides a look into the life of a young girl who had two conflicting and powerful influences pulling at her, the institutional power of the Spanish Inquisition, and the power of family and community.

What little unique information about María de Cadena that we can gather from Inquisition sources is limited, but not completely nonexistent. We have no correspondence in her own hand (indeed we are unsure if she was literate at all) and we don't have the in-depth information about her life that we do of María la Jarquina, who faced her own inquisition trial. Instead, most of the information on her life comes as part of her introduction to us within Jeronimo de Rojas's trial records. As such, it is useful to examine both her life, and the life of Rojas in order to get a better feel for the *morisco* community of Toledo as a whole.

Jeronimo de Rojas was denounced by a single witness to the Spanish Inquisition on May 10th, 1601. The witness, fellow *morisco* Francisco Enríquez, knew Rojas before the denunciation for some time and the manner of Rojas's denunciation was somewhat unusual. It was not unusual for the fact that Enríquez knew Rojas, indeed, we have already seen examples of *moriscos* being denounced by their associates and, according to historian Luis Corteguera, the Inquisition was aware of false denunciations well before the seventeenth century.[86] Corteguera's book looks at the fascinating case of an Inquisition trial that dealt with misappropriation of Inquisition symbols rather than traditional accusations of Jewish or Muslim practices. However, Corteguera points out that the idea of false accusations by neighbors and others was common enough that the Inquisition usually only intervened if two or more reliable witnesses brought claims to the tribunal, as was the legal precedent. In Rojas's case, Mercedes García-Arenal points out the oddity of a singular witness being used as the basis for a denunciation in her forward Rojas's compiled case. She says, "As a general rule the tribunal would receive several testimonies before it orders an arrest – usually at least two fairly reliable witnesses are required – and the accusation is based on earlier actions by the party in question."[87] Instead Rojas's case pivoted on actions after his arrest, specifically gathered from conversations he had with fellow cellmates and letters he attempted to smuggle out of prison to his family through various means. What makes Rojas's case unique is that he condemns himself, so to speak. By continuing to disrespect Inquisitorial authority, likely due to his confidence in knowing that Enríquez was the only denouncer, Rojas's continued Muslim practices lead the Inquisition to look for further witnesses, a trail of events that lead to them finding María de Cadena.

[86] Luis R. Corteguera, *Death by Effigy: A Case from the Mexican Inquisition*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, Inc), 2012, 13.
[87] García-Arenal, *The Inquisition Trial of Jerónimo de Rojas*, 3.

After having been arrested on the word of Enríquez, Rojas asked to appear before the Inquisition on May 24th, 1601. His tone was not the contrite penitent seeking forgiveness, a common enough strategy employed by those who had been accused and wished to receive a lighter sentence and minimize the chance of torture, but instead that of a cocky man who saw the whole affair as beneath him. He had been previously questioned by the Inquisition about an incident where he had rubbed out a red painted cross near his home and it seems that he thought this encounter with the Inquisition was based off the same issue, as he is reported to refer to "that affair with the cross."[88] This was, however, no longer the Inquisition's interest in Rojas. After a recounting of Rojas's history where we learn he was born between 1557 and 1558 and that he came originally from Extremadura, Rojas was returned to his cell. The Inquisition, as was customary, did not inform Rojas of what he had been accused but only told him to "examine his conscience."[89]

This began a four-month period of high activity in Rojas's case. It is in this period where much of the damning evidence comes into play, as Rojas was cellmates with an individual named Hernando de Santiago, commonly known as *pico de oro*, or golden tongue. Santiago was himself in the Inquisition's prison for heretical statements and blasphemy, but not in favor of the *moriscos*. Indeed, Santiago was deeply anti-muslim and anti-*morisco*. While sharing a cell with Rojas, Santiago began to gather information about Rojas's religious beliefs, and Rojas in turn attempted on several occasions to convince Santiago and the guard outside of his cell of the correctness of Islam.[90] Santiago would have none of this. In the middle of June 1601, Santiago requested papers from the jailors to write an anti-morisco polemical screed. The four-and-a-half-

[88] García-Arenal, *The Inquisition Trial of Jerónimo de Rojas*, 12.
[89] García-Arenal, *The Inquisition Trial of Jerónimo de Rojas*, 13.
[90] García-Arenal, *The Inquisition Trial of Jerónimo de Rojas*, 24, 258-9

page document serves more to give us the religious thoughts and acts of Rojas, as Santiago generalizes Rojas's behavior to all *moriscos*, saying, among other things "all these *moriscos* live in the Sect of Mohommad, though they pretend otherwise."[91] Santiago's feelings were not unique. Indeed, the Archbishop of Valencia was at this very same time presenting similar feelings about the *moriscos* to Phillip III, something that would eventually lead to the expulsion of all *moriscos* from Iberia starting in 1609.[92]

Regardless of Santiago's feelings and the broader anti-muslim sentiment that it reflects, Rojas was confident in his position during this four-month period, but by the end of July, his confidence had begun to falter. Despite this, he was still continuing on his anti-Christian rants (according to Santiago) and performed several *guadoc* rituals with whatever water he could obtain from his jailors.[93] While he continued to practice Islamic rituals in secret, he decided to change his tactics with the tribunal. Theorizing that they had not begun his trial because he had failed to give up other *moriscos*, Rojas went to the tribunal and told them of several Aragonese *moriscos* who were living in Toledo. This was ineffectual, however, as Santiago had informed them that Rojas would attempt this and if the tribunal wanted to find more evidence of Rojas's heretical practices they should question his friends, family, and neighbors, as he was more likely to share his beliefs with those who were closest to him, not simply and *morisco* from a similar region of Spain as him.[94]

Despite Santiago's obvious dislike of Rojas, as well as the fact that Santiago was feeding information to the tribunal, Rojas liked and trusted his cellmate, as well as the warden of the

[91] García-Arenal, *The Inquisition Trial of Jerónimo de Rojas*, 26.
[92] Benjamin Ehlers, *Between Christians and Moriscos: Juan de Ribera and Religious Reform in Valencia, 1568–1614*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006, 128-9.
[93] García-Arenal, *The Inquisition Trial of Jerónimo de Rojas*, 28.
[94] García-Arenal, *The Inquisition Trial of Jerónimo de Rojas*, 28-9.

prison. Because of this, Rojas entrusted several personal letters to Santiago, who was due to be released from Inquisition custody. Santiago immediately took these to inquisitors and the letters were added to the growing list of evidence against Rojas.[95] Despondent, Rojas took a different tactic, attempting to smuggle several letters out of the prison in his dirty laundry. This attempt also failed, but the letters give us a significant insight into the life of Rojas and his family. He writes to his eldest son, asking about the progress of their business and expressing confidence that their property will not be confiscated.[96] This is surprising, as most *moriscos'* property was often confiscated, even when they were charged with minor crimes by the Inquisition.[97] Rojas seems worried about the state of his family, asking if any of them had been arrested.[98] This seems to be most likely born both of a genuine concern for his family, and also part of a larger strategy of having his family hold the line and not testify against him in the upcoming trial.[99] He also wrote a brief letter to the Aragonese *moriscos* whom he had sold out to the Inquisition, urging them to flee Spain.[100]

While the particularities of the letters that Rojas writes are not too scandalous, the contents of the letters and the circumstances of their creation bear further investigation. In addition to isolating the prisoners from their families by taking away their ability to communicate, the Inquisition also restricted letter writing ability to maintain *el secreto*, or the secrecy around Inquisition trials, ostensibly for the protection of their witnesses. As with witnesses, the Inquisition did not want the prisoner to be aware of any outside goings on. For Rojas, that meant the Inquisition wanted him to be in the dark about the state of his family's

[95] García-Arenal, *The Inquisition Trial of Jerónimo de Rojas,* 220-8
[96] García-Arenal, *The Inquisition Trial of Jerónimo de Rojas,* 224.
[97] Homza, *The Spanish Inquisition*, xxvii.
[98] García-Arenal, *The Inquisition Trial of Jerónimo de Rojas,* 225.
[99] García-Arenal, *The Inquisition Trial of Jerónimo de Rojas,* 29.
[100] García-Arenal, *The Inquisition Trial of Jerónimo de Rojas,* 226.

freedom, the state of his business, and his property. All of this was meant to further instill fear of the consequences that the Inquisition could provide. While Rojas's attempt to smuggle out communications through various people he thought were friendly toward him is not unusual, it is interesting to consider the sequence of letters that he wrote, and who he addressed them to. Unfortunately for Rojas, but fortunately for us, the Inquisition intercepted most of his letters and so they are included with the trial record.

Only a few days after his initial arrest, Rojas attempted to smuggle out his first letter when he attempted to bribe the prison guard with fifty ducats to take a letter to his friend and business partner, Gonzalo Mexíca.[101] This letter starts a pattern for Rojas where he attempts to smuggle out various letters over a two week period using the prison guard. The guard takes the letters to the Inquisition tribunal and often they tell him to deliver the letter and collect a response, probably seeking to further incriminate Rojas. Luckily for Rojas, most of the letters in this initial phase are simply business communications between him and Mexíca. He attempts to instruct Mexíca in the best way to keep as much of Rojas's property safe in case the Inquisition attempts to seize it later in the trial. However, that began to change when Rojas, potentially catching on that the prison guard was not really on his side, began attempting to smuggle out letters sewn into his laundry.

This plot was also eventually foiled by the Inquisition, who added these letters to the trial record without Rojas's knowledge. While this was a setback for Rojas, he was as of yet unaware of the letter's interception and therefore we can gain plenty of insight into his state of mind as well as his relationship with his family. For example, the only correspondence he seems to have sent to his wife was a letter where he asked her to contact some female friends of hers who

[101] García-Arenal, *The Inquisition Trial of Jerónimo de Rojas,* 187.

apparently were adept at practicing witchcraft. He asked his wife to see if they could prepare a spell for Rojas to cast on the inquisitors.[102] This again shows the deep connection between *morisca* women and the supernatural. While Rojas was practicing Islam openly, he did not have the same types of knowledge about things like witchcraft and the divine. This led him to ask his wife for help in this regard. As the letters were intercepted, we had no way of knowing if his wife had ever heard of these requests, nor who she would have asked to help if she had received the letter.

While communication with Rojas's wife was limited, his communication with his son was the most extensive. Most of the intercepted letters are addressed to his son and have to do with his various business dealings. As the letters continue to be intercepted, Rojas grows more and more desperate, urging the *moriscos* who he denounced to flee, and lamenting his wife's lack of response. In the last recorded letter to his wife, he says "Lady Ysabel de Benabides, how you have forgotten me! I do not understand what can keep you so busy that you do not remember me!"[103] The frustration and desperation show he deeply cares about his wife, but also that the strains of prison are starting to wear him down. Obviously, he had no way of knowing that none of these letters arrived. Indeed, he continues to write as if he is being ignored by his family and friends. However, in addition to an insight into his state of mind, Rojas's letters towards his wife also show the role that she seems to have played in her family. It seems that she, like la Jarquina was connected to a broader network of *morisca* women, some of them who were known for practicing witchcraft. She also seems to have acted as a comfort to her husband, supporting him in his business as well as his religious practices, as will be shown more extensively with the

[102] García-Arenal, *The Inquisition Trial of Jerónimo de Rojas,* 188.
[103] Ibid.

testimony of Rojas's niece. These things seem to be in line with other *morisco* relationships, and therefore these letters prove to be invaluable to a deeper understanding of *morisco* relationships in the home.

This series of setbacks seems to have sobered up Rojas somewhat. After these events and the departure of Santiago, Rojas's trial began to move towards the eventual conclusion of execution, even if Rojas was still unaware of the severity of his situation. By September, two months after having appeared before the tribunal for the first time, Rojas was brought back to hear his charges. The charges against Rojas were incredibly detailed and heavily focused on the transgressions he had committed while in prison. Rojas seized on this and accused his accusers, specifically Santiago and the warden, of having coerced him into showing the different Islamic rites to them, describing his motivations as "with no intent to act as a Moor or truly pray, only as a mockery and to please Fray Hernando."[104] While this justification did not do much to exonerate Rojas, it also left the Inquisition still unable to find any more collaborators, leaving Rojas and the Inquisition at an impasse yet again. The Inquisition was eager to find co-conspirators who Rojas had practiced Islam with or to whom he had taught Islamic practices but with their current evidence and witnesses they only had proof against Rojas's misdeeds within the prison itself.

Here, it is important to stress the procedural nature of the Spanish Inquisition, while their brutality and use of torture is accurate, there also was an important layer of procedural legitimacy that the Inquisition sought to adhere to in their trials. The problem is that this use of procedure was just another tool in the kit of an Inquisitor. For example, much like in Rojas's case, the accused is never told any identifying features of a witness. They are instead called before the

[104] García-Arenal, *The Inquisition Trial of Jerónimo de Rojas,* 325.

Tribunal, the statement is read, and then the accused must respond to these accusations immediately. The main style of defense against this which developed was to discredit the witness in some way. Either through proving one's own Christian belief, or by calling the legitimacy of the witness into question, the accused was presumed guilty and had to prove their innocence. The attempts at casting doubt against a witness were made doubly difficult by the fact that the witness was usually unknown to the defendant. Furthermore, if the Inquisition did not find enough evidence against the accused, they could simply put the accused's case on hold, waiting until more evidence was to come forward.[105] This makes the gaps in Rojas's case where he was languishing in prison more understandable, the Inquisition was gathering more evidence, looking for witnesses, and preparing an even stronger case against Rojas.

With the Inquisition constantly searching for a better witness, it is understandable that their new witness, found a month after Rojas's last appearance ended in a draw, was such a bombshell for Rojas's case. The witness was the aforementioned María de Cadena, Rojas's niece and the first witness to break the wall of silence that Rojas had erected between his family and the Inquisition. As mentioned previously, Cadena explained to the Inquisition that Rojas had taught her various Muslim practices and attempted to get her to pray with his family in the Muslim tradition.[106] These accusations would be the downfall for Rojas. After several more meetings of the Inquisitorial tribunal and a few arguments about sentencing, Rojas would be consigned to his cell where he would stay until June 1st, 1603, where he would be "relaxed" to secular authorities and burnt at the stake.

[105] Homza, *The Spanish Inquisition*, xxiv.
[106] García-Arenal, *The Inquisition Trial of Jerónimo de Rojas,* 290 and 379-82 for a full account of Cadena's testimony.

Before pivoting to analyzing María Cadena and the reasons she may have had for turning on her uncle, it is important to analyze Rojas's case both in the context of the city of Toledo, as well as the ways in which Rojas and the Inquisition may have viewed the outcome of his case. Throughout his trial, it is clear that the Inquisition was looking for a larger group of organized *moriscos* in Toledo or the nearby area.[107] Viewed in this way, the Inquisition's investigation into Rojas was a failure. The *moriscos* who Rojas did turn on were already known to the Inquisition and there does not appear to be the same levels of organization as the *moriscos* of Deza. The reasons why Rojas was interrogated and eventually burned at the stake come down to the Inquisitors in his trial who voted against reconciliation. As has been shown above, Rojas thought that reconciliation was the most likely outcome to his case. The letters to his business partner and son all hint that Rojas was very worried about what would happen to his belongings if the Inquisition did decide to confiscate them. Without a broader conspiracy, the Inquisitors would latch on to the testimony of Cadena as evidence of a conspiracy that did not seem to exist. While Rojas did teach his niece, it does not seem that he was living in the same types of circles that Román Ramirez or María la Jarquina were in Deza. This leads naturally to another question, were these circles present in Toledo? If they did exist, did Rojas know of them and if not, why?

Understanding the intricacies of an insular community such as the *moriscos* is undoubtedly difficult. However, Toledo presents an interesting and unique look into the place that *moriscos* held in Old Christian Spanish society. After the previously mentioned Alpujarra rebellion, thousands of *moriscos* were sent to Toledo from Granada. These *moriscos* went on to establish communities and by the time of Rojas, were probably well entrenched in the city. Because of this, the Inquisition was more interested in the city than most, but this also led to an

[107] García-Arenal, *The Inquisition Trial of Jerónimo de Rojas,* 198.

interesting layer of *convivencia* in the city. Claire Gilbert, in her book *In Good Faith*, explains the importance of *morisco* and *converso* translators to the city of Toledo. According to her, various *moriscos* were educated enough to serve as translators in Toledo and the surrounding towns and villages. This led to an increase in the translation between Arabic to Castilian and allowed the Spanish government to quickly adapt many Arabic laws after 1492.[108] Therefore, by Rojas's time, Toledo was well known as a hub of *morisco* activity, and likely one of the few places where one's knowledge of the Arabic language would not be an instant condemnation by the Inquisition.

Regardless of the long-standing translation traditions, the Inquisition did not stop focusing their attention on the city. Because of the influx of *moriscos* after the rebellion in Granada in 1568, the *morisco* dynamic changed. Adding thousands of *moriscos* who were recently caught up in a violent rebellion against the crown naturally made the Inquisition more punitive and attentive to the region, which also led to the increased importance of the Holy Office of Toledo for the Inquisition. All of these factors potentially led to the irregular behavior in Rojas's case. Because he was a merchant in a city that was being increasingly divided between *moriscos* and Old Christians, the Inquisitors thought he was part of a broader conspiracy.[109] The torture and even his eventual execution were likely in part due to the nature of Toledo as a city and the way that the Inquisition was fearful of the *morisco* population therein.

[108] Claire M. Gilbert, *In Good Faith: Arabic Translation and Translators in Early Modern Spain*. (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020), 27. Also see Mercedes García-Arenal Rodríguez, "Miguel de Luna y los moriscos de Toledo: 'No hay en España mejor moro.'" *Chronica nova*, no. 36 (2010): 253–262 for a detailed account of Miguel de Luna, a *morisco* translator who was potentially the author of the "lead books" a famous case of an attempt at syncretism between Islam and Christianity which will be examined further in chapter 3.
[109] García-Arenal, *The Inquisition Trial of Jerónimo de Rojas,* 7-8.

Understanding the series of events that brought Rojas to the wooden scaffolding that would be his end, it is important to analyze why Cadena turned on her uncle. What reasons did she have for breaking the silence between Rojas's family and the Inquisition? Unfortunately, Cadena only appears within the pages of Rojas's own trial, so information about her personal life is extremely limited. By understanding how witnesses like her acted with the Inquisition, we can hopefully understand more of Cadena's state of mind and why she would condemn her uncle to death whether unwittingly or deliberately. The first important point to stress is that Cadena herself was a *morisca*. She was eighteen years old when she testified but that does not mean she was unaware of the Inquisition and the problems they could cause for her in her own life. As Amelang explains, the general feeling towards *moriscos* was that they were not sufficiently assimilated and therefore became targets of the Inquisition. Many *moriscos* were targeted because, in the words of the Inquisition they were "taking part in confession and communion only to comply on the outside and cover up their apostacy by appearing to be Christian."[110] This exact quote comes from the trial of a *morisca* tried by the Inquisition around the same time as Rojas's trial. To say that Cadena had heard of this specific case is unlikely, but the general sentiment about *moriscos* in Toledo and elsewhere was that they were Christian in appearance only. Because of this, Cadena probably feared even admitting to learning Muslim practices from her uncle. For many *moriscos*, the Inquisition was simply looking for an excuse to accuse them of being a false Christian.

Amelang explains that generalizing about the beliefs of *moriscos* is nearly impossible, but trials and other records seem to suggest that *moriscos*' relationship with Christianity was

[110] Amelang, *Parallel Histories*, 35.

superficial at best.[111] As we have already seen with María la Jarquina, she did seem to be a true believer in Islam, learning the rituals necessary to pass on this knowledge to future generations. It seems that Rojas was similar to Jarquina as well. He attempted at every turn to convert those around him, whether in prison or not. Cadena could well have been one of these unwitting targets of Rojas's religious fervor, or she could have been a young *morisca* attempting to connect with her cultural heritage. Unfortunately, due to lack of study in this field, as well as the fact that all *moriscos* were expelled from Spain about a decade later, there is little evidence to suggest that the younger generation of *moriscos*, which Cadena was a part of, were any less loyal to Islam.[112] Therefore, it is most likely that, unless new evidence emerges saying otherwise, María de Cadena was not as loyal to the Catholic faith as she claims in her testimony. Once she decided to testify, Cadena seems to have seen the writing on the wall for Rojas. She gives him up completely, as mentioned above, saying that he taught her to fast as well as the rites for the ritual bathing which he practiced in Inquisition custody. She points out both Rojas and his wife fasted multiple times while she lived with them and even taught her to pray using the phrase "*Ala Hocbar"* or God is Great, specifically in contradiction with the teachings of the Catholic Church.[113] This testimony, as has been shown, was devastating for Rojas, confirming the suspicions of the Inquisition that a man who was so brazen in his practice of Islam while in the custody of the Inquisition would also attempt to teach others outside of Inquisition custody.[114]

Despite the eventual consequences that Rojas would face, Cadena seemed to do everything in her power with her testimony to save face for herself and the rest of her immediate

[111] Amelang, *Parallel Histories,* 36.
[112] See Mercedes García-Arenal's *Inquisición y Moriscos: Los Procesos del tribunal de Cuenca* as well as the previously mentioned *Deza and its Moriscos* for some insight into the feelings of younger *moriscos* close to the expulsion.
[113] García-Arenal, *The Inquisition Trial of Jerónimo de Rojas,* 292.
[114] García-Arenal, *The Inquisition Trial of Jerónimo de Rojas,*338.

family. When they asked her any questions about her own religious practice, she was quick to state that he only attempted to teach her these things once and after living with Rojas she "had been in the house of her father where there would be no space to practice these things because he [her father] is a very good Christian and he would not have taught such things."[115] This is one of the few situations where Cadena references her life outside of the time spent living with Rojas and it is quite informative. Again, she seemed to be saving face before the Inquisition here, taking the tack of an innocent young Christian girl whose wicked uncle attempted to lure her away from the correct teachings of Christianity that she had learned in her own father's house. Whether this sentiment is legitimate or not, it seems to have worked with the Inquisition. By positioning herself firmly under her father's authority, as any young unmarried woman was expected to do at the time, Cadena showed that she was not involved in Rojas's practice of Islam beyond what she testified. As Allyson Poska explains in her book *Women and Authority in Early Modern Spain*,

> Spanish society viewed women as inherently weak, easily deceived by the devil, and prone to religious excess. They were vulnerable to sexual temptation and in need of constant protection. As a result, Spanish society demanded that women live according to an unyielding culture of honor based on strict chastity and modesty.[116]

While Poska is writing about mostly Old Christian women, the standard could doubly apply to a minority population like *moriscas.* With the societal pressures of femininity as well as the pressures on the broader *morisco* community, Cadena had to walk a tightrope act every day of her life, understanding that one misstep could have her falling out with her community or, as was the case here, standing in front of an Inquisition tribunal. While there is nothing overtly sexual to

[115] García-Arenal, *The Inquisition Trial of Jerónimo de Rojas,* 292.
[116] Allyson M. Poska, *Women and Authority in Early Modern Spain: the Peasants of Galicia*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 2.

Cadena's testimony, with the idea that early modern women, especially young women, were easily tempted and led astray, Cadena seems to be setting up a duality in her testimony. She portrays her uncle as someone attempting to prey on her weakness and innocence and her father as protecting her Christian honor.

The fact that Cadena was a *morisca* is not the only part of her background that would have been relevant to her status before the Holy Tribunal. A newer trend in Inquisition literature has led to a more intense focus on women's experience before the Inquisition. Stacey Schlau in her 2012 book *Gendered Crime and Punishment: Women and/in the Hispanic Inquisitions* writes about a variety of groups of women who had intense interactions with the Inquisition. While she does not write about *moriscas* specifically, she does mention some similarities between *conversas* and *moriscas* that we have already seen. For example, she mentions that the domestic sphere was where much of the crypto-Jewish practices took place and therefore women were often targeted by the Inquisition for heretical acts related to preparation of food, bathing, and dressing.[117] From there, Schlau breaks down several different cases that play out in a similar way to María la Jarquina's, but due to the larger body of sources, scholars are able to track more of a pattern in the way that the denounced individuals acted when denounced, as well as how the Inquisition acted against them.

In an interesting parallel to Cadena's case, Schlau recounts the story of María Zárate and José Sánchez. Zárate was an Old Christian born in New Spain who, through distant relations, was actually related to Martínez Silíceo, former archbishop of Toledo. Zárate eventually married a *converso* named Francisco Botello who was born in Andalucía around 1593 and married Zárate

[117] Stacey Schlau, *Gendered Crime and Punishment Women And/in the Hispanic Inquisitions*. (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 37.

in 1636. José Sánchez, the young man who would denounce Zárate and her husband was raised by Zárate's mother, María de la Paz, until de la Paz's death in 1643, when Zárate took full custody of the child. The relationship was not fully familial however, with Zárate describing him as "half servant and half part of the family."[118] Sánchez, like Cadena, eventually went to the Mexican Inquisition and denounced his foster family. In her defense, Zárate leans heavily on her role as a caretaker when trying to discredit Sánchez's actions, accusing him of being ungrateful for having raised him and provided for him for a number of years.[119]

Issues arose when Zárate was tortured and examined by the Inquisition. For men, circumcision was an easy marker of their Jewish belief or conversion. But for women, the Inquisition had a different strategy. They examined Zárate's shoulder, looking for scars that indicated a piece of skin and flesh had been cut off "as a sign of reverence and community."[120] After several scars were found, her case grew worse when she admitted to having washed clothes and cooked meals for prisoners who had previously been accused of Judaizing.[121] This indicates one of the most gendered aspects of Zárate's case. As was seen with la Jarquina, tight knit communities were often formed among minority groups, even in the case of Zárate whose conversion to Judaism seems doubtful. The fact that one of the women in the community would wash clothes and cook for other members of the community was not uncommon, but nevertheless, the Inquisition viewed this as treachery, leading to Zárate eventually confessing and being abjured.

While Zárate's case is a denunciation of a woman's role in community, another case that Schlau cites, that of Bernarda Manuel, aptly highlights the precarious situation *conversas,* and

[118] Schlau, *Gendered Crime*, 42.
[119] Schlau, *Gendered Crime*, 43.
[120] Schlau, *Gendered Crime*, 46.
[121] Schlau, *Gendered Crime*, 48.

likely *moriscas*, found themselves in. Manuel, an immigrant from Portugal to Spain was married to Gómez Borges who, by all accounts, was an angry man prone to paranoia and bouts of anger. His paranoia may have also stemmed from his crypto-Jewish beliefs and the threat of the Inquisition but regardless the situation led to a long history of physical abuse against Manuel. However, instead of Manuel going to the Inquisition to accuse her husband of Judaizing in an attempt to escape him, Manuel actually found herself denounced to the Inquisition by her husband in 1650, with him going as far to say that she taught him to follow the Law of Moses.[122]

The interesting interactions with the Inquisition arose when Borges decides to withdraw his denunciation, but the Inquisition decides to proceed regardless. Manuel's testimony before the Inquisition is illuminating and should sound somewhat familiar. In her defense, Manuel attempted to claim authority within the patriarchal system in which she lived. She explained that she was married to her husband by her parents without any say, but that she went along willingly to honor them. She said that her husband is an erratic and violent man and painted herself as a weak woman who was a victim of a violent man.[123] Similar to Cadena, Manuel seemed to understand the Inquisition's feelings about women and used them to further strengthen her case. However, while Cadena was simply testifying against her uncle and trying to avoid incrimination, Manuel was already denounced by the Inquisition. Because of this, we see how the picture of a weak, repentant woman was continually evoked throughout the trial. Even during the multiple sessions of torture that Manuel was subject to, she continued to explain how she lived in daily fear that her husband would kill her.[124] While these attempts may have had some

[122] Schlau, *Gendered Crime*, 51.
[123] Schlau, *Gendered Crime*, 52.
[124] Schlau, *Gendered Crime*, 54.

effect, Manuel was eventually found guilty but repentant, sentenced to wear the *sambenito* in perpetuity, much like la Jarquina.

The final case that Schlau mentions that could shed light onto how the Inquisition interacted with *morisca* women is the case of María Ana de Castro. Castro was famous in Lima for her beauty and charm and provides an excellent look into the gendered stereotypes around women at the time. It was said that she was "constructed as all body, no mind or soul, female sexuality incarnate."[125] This hearkens back to the Poska quote above, the fact that women existed in early modern Spain in a dual role. At one end of the spectrum, the ideal woman was like the Virgin Mary, virginal, righteous, and pure, while at the other end was Mary Magdalene, a comparison that was made many times to Castro. This would prove disastrous for her. Castro found herself before the Inquisition in 1728 and would remain there until her execution in 1736.

Most of what is known about her trial and the aftermath actually comes from the prosecutor in her case writing to the Supreme Council. In this letter, we learn that Castro confessed several times, and the prosecutor takes the tact that Castro was a "weak, helpless woman, victimized by an unscrupulous power monger."[126] Even when a woman with Castro's reputation was brought before the Inquisition, there were different types of gendered language about her. This idea matches the way that all of the women previously have been treated by the Inquisition. La Jarquina, Cadena, Zárate, and Manuel all experienced similar types of gendered treatment by the Inquisition. While the records are better in some cases, Castro's and Manuel's cases seem to have the most overtly gendered language in them, for example, each case experienced this treatment to one degree or another. While Cadena was merely a witness, she still likely understood the ways the Inquisition viewed her as a *morisca* and as a woman and

[125] Schlau, *Gendered Crime*, 56.
[126] Schlau, *Gendered Crime*, 58.

therefore likely used whatever skills she had to play upon the sympathies of the Tribunal while avoiding falling out with them. She strayed more towards the Virgin Mary, rather than Mary Magdalene.

The sincerity of Cadena's religious beliefs, as well as her motivations for testifying against her uncle are unfortunately lost to us by time. However, when considering the typical inclination of *moriscos* towards viewing Christianity as a necessary façade, as well as the expectations placed on women at the time, Cadena's veracity seems to be called into question. Did Rojas only try to teach her about Islam once? Was her father truly "a very good Christian?" The truth of these things will likely forever remain unknown to us. What is known is that the Inquisition saw fit to not pursue any charges against Cadena. In addition to this, we know a bit about the way that Rojas reacted to these accusations. When he was faced with the charges that Cadena confessed to the Inquisition, Rojas initially acted in anger. He said that this secret witness must have been Francisco Enríquez, who had been the original person to denounce Rojas to the Inquisition. In his defense against this, he says that all of Cadena's testimony (which he thought was Enríquez's testimony), was false and it was only said out of hate. He says that the Inquisitors did not do their due diligence in vetting these sources and that they must seriously consider that Cadena is lying to them because this could lead to his death.[127] While Rojas makes an impassioned plea for his defense, the fact that he misdiagnosed who the witness was would contribute to his downfall. Maybe the Inquisitors would have taken Enríquez's testimony with more of a grain of salt than they did Cadena. Indeed, they had already received Enríquez's testimony months ago and had not moved against Rojas until Cadena came forward. The fact that

[127] García-Arenal, *The Inquisition Trial of Jerónimo de Rojas,* 381.

Cadena had lived with Rojas and had claimed to see the practices that she testified she saw strengthened the case beyond anything that Enríquez could have done.

The final mention of María Cadena in the record mentions that they "removed her from the proceedings" and afterwards she is only mentioned as "a certain *morisca*."[128] Her testimony ended up serving as the linchpin in the case against Rojas. It provided the Inquisition with all the excuses they needed to find Rojas guilty enough to be burnt at the stake. When interacting with an institution such as the Spanish Inquisition, it is impossible and unhelpful to attempt to assign morality to the decisions of those called as witnesses. Blaming Cadena, or for that matter the *morisco* neighbor who first denounced Rojas, of the murder of Rojas would be irresponsible. Instead, as it will be shown below, the Inquisition was responsible for setting up a system of fear among the *morisco* community which lead to the unfortunate circumstances where a young *morisca* woman had to defend her own honor by denouncing her uncle to the Holy Tribunal.

[128] García-Arenal, *The Inquisition Trial of Jerónimo de Rojas,* 294, 338.

## Chapter 3: Questioned Identity

The history of *moriscos* in Spain is a history that is complex and contradictory. The ways that the Inquisition deals with the *morisco* population was not consistent throughout different regions of Spain and throughout the centuries. The previous two chapters have focused on specific women and their dealings with the Inquisition. One was tried and found guilty by the Inquisition; the other's testimony condemned her uncle to death. While individual examples can shed a light on the lived experiences of moriscas, this chapter is conceived to help the reader decipher some of the contradictions in policy and culture of Spain and the Spanish Inquisition leading up to the expulsion. This chapter will reference poems, edicts, novels, letters, and other documents, official or not, that help illuminate how moriscos were seen and how they lived. Instead of following a central narrative it will attempt to reconcile, or at least explain, how a group who was obviously so fascinating to the broader Christian population of the region ended up being summarily expelled by royal decree early in the seventeenth century.

The previous two chapters covered individual women and their unique experiences with the Inquisition. However, the Inquisition's interactions with the *morisco* population are well documented, even if the interactions with *morisca* women are not. Attitudes about *moriscos* began to solidify soon after the conquest of Granada ended in 1492 with complete Christian control over the peninsula. From there, the Kingdom of Granada became a source of constant concern. Small conflicts over assimilation eventually led, in 1567 to a series of decrees that greatly restricted the rights of the *morisco* population of Granada, forcing them to assimilate into broader Christian society. However, these decrees were not universally popular, and met with backlash from the *morisco* and Old Christian populations alike. One of these critics, a prominent Granadan, Francisco Núñez Muley to write a memorandum to the Chancery Court of Granada in

order to plead for the rights of the *moriscos* and argue that gradual, cooperative assimilation would be a much smoother path forward. Núñez Muley argues for several different rights, such as the issues regarding *morisco* clothing and dress, which he says has been presented as a small matter but would end up affecting nearly 150,000 *moriscos* and causing them undue stress and discomfort.[129] In the memorandum, Núñez Muley makes an interesting argument, attempting to distinguish between *morisco* culture and Muslim religious practice. He contends that their manner of dress is already distinct from Muslims from Morocco or the Barbary Coast and says that much of their informal wear is already similar to the Castilian manner of dress. [130]

In addition to their style of dress, Núñez Muley also argues against the taxes levied against the Granadan people as well as their treatment by the Crown, the Inquisition, and Castilians at large. He explains that "the natives [*moriscos*] are treated in every way as recent convert" even though "It was over 67 years ago that the process of conversion to Christianity began in this kingdom."[131] In essence, Núñez Muley is questioning how long assimilation will take. His memorandum is both a plea for the traditions of *moriscos*, as well as a question of how long they will be treated differently than the Castilians. Núñez Muley's pleas were unsuccessful, due in part to the broader *morisco* response to the decrees. In 1568, on Christmas Eve, the War of the Alpujarras began, led by wealthy *moriscos* who were upset by the taxes and restrictions levied against them. With Núñez Muley's plea for a peaceful solution falling on deaf ears, the bloody revolt lasted three years and ended with almost all of the 150,000 *moriscos* Núñez Muley mentioned in his memorandum being expelled. It is from this event that many of the "foreign" *moriscos* which we have encountered arrive in Toledo and Deza, as they were spread throughout

[129] Núñez Muley, *Memorandum*, 66.
[130] Núñez Muley, *Memorandum*, 70
[131] Núñez Muley, *Memorandum*, 71, 73.

the various regions of Spain as a punishment for their insurrection. Nevertheless, Núñez Muley's memorandum stands in contrast to the official governing policies of the region. His work serves as one of the most prominent calls for coexistence, rather than assimilation. While his calls were unheard through official channels, the undercurrent of a live and let live attitude would continue to be present throughout the sixteenth century and would provide a counterweight to the dominant narrative of assimilation or expulsion that would develop by the start of the seventeenth century.[132]

However, the arguments between assimilation and expulsion were not formed in a single day. Instead, they were complex issues that had been developing throughout the middle ages and into the early modern era. One of the more well-known works on *moriscas*, Mary Elizabeth Perry's *The Handless Maiden*, tracks this diversity of views on *moriscos* throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Starting her book with the end of the war of Alpujarras, Perry attempts to explain the variety of methods that *moriscos* employed for survival in the post revolt period. Perry chooses to focus on *moriscas* as a representative for all *moriscos* because, in her words "We can see these women as representative of all Moriscos who were disempowered and made into "others" in early modern Spain."[133] Perry shows that many *moriscas* found themselves in the position of María la Jarquina, using their power in domestic spaces to teach future generations Arabic and Muslim prayers. This resistance, according to Perry, blended with the centuries of overt armed conflict during the *Reconquista* leading to a situation where the *morisco* home was politicized in the sixteenth century.[134] It was during this time that we see the "natural

[132] Also see David Coleman's *Creating Christian Granada: Society and Religious Culture in an Old-World Frontier City, 1492-1600.* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press), 2013 for an in depth look at the ways in which Granadan culture and government was changed to assimilate the region following the *Reconquista*.
[133] Mary Elizabeth Perry, and Bernard Vincent. *The Handless Maiden: Moriscos and the Politics of Religion in Early Modern Spain.* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press), 2005, 29.
[134] Perry, *Handless Maiden*, 89.

domesticity" of women become emphasized by individuals such as Fray Luis de León, writing *La perfecta casada* (the perfect wife) in 1583 and placing the woman's place firmly in the home, raising children[135]

While this gendered prescription would have been limiting for *morisca* and Christian women alike, part of the unique situation of *moriscas*¸ argues Perry, was their ability to use this prescription to raise their children with proper understanding of Islam and Arabic. This, of course, also meant that Catholics began targeting *morisco* children, attempting to convert them early, with Jesuits establishing *morisco* schools in Granada and Valencia in the late sixteenth century.[136] As shown with la Jarquina, and to a lesser extent the home of Rojas, the *morisco* home therefore began to transform into a space of resistance. Far away from Christian centers of power such as the church, the home became the main place where *moriscos* learned about their Muslim ancestry, and just as la Jarquina taught others about their history, Perry explains that this was a common practice that *morisca* women took up en masse.[137] This too, as we have seen, led to a shift in the Inquisition's thinking about how to stamp out heresies. As Perry says "*Morisco* mentalities thus became contested space and the object of inquisitorial investigations."[138] This fact too is borne out through the investigations that we have seen above. The Inquisitors in the case of Rojas were intently focused on his state of mind, as well as the state of mind of Cadena.

Another example of the focus on *morisca* thought comes from the *Auto de Fe* that took place in Granada in 1571, just after the second Alpujarra War. In Lu Ann Homza's primary source reader *The Spanish Inquisition 1478-1614*, Homza publishes the *Auto de Fe* which shows

[135] Perry, *Handless Maiden*, 91. Also see: Fray Luis de León, *La perfecta casada* (1583), in *Biblioteca de Autores Españoles* (Madrid: M. Rivadeneyra, 1855).
[136] Perry, *Handless Maiden*, 93
[137] Perry, *Handless Maiden*, 95.
[138] Perry, *Handless Maiden*, 104.

a variety of heresies based around knowledge and speech, both of which were things that *moriscas* were being targeted for. For example, one *morisca* was charged for owning the Qur'an and books expounding on the Qur'an, with another being charged for saying "How could a married woman remain a virgin after giving birth?" in reference to the Virgin Mary.[139] In addition to these *moriscas* who faced the harshest punishments, another four women were confined to prison and had their belonging confiscated for a variety of Muslim practices such as performing the *guadoc* and *zalá*, similar to María de Jarquina from the first chapter of this thesis.[140] With these examples in mind, it is obvious that the Inquisition began a trend after the War of the Alpujarras which would reach its culmination with the expulsions of the early seventeenth century. As the Inquisition had outlawed any outward form of Islamic practice, they thus turned inward, looking for internal doubts about Catholicism and secret Islamic practices. This, in turn, led to a split between the arguments of assimilation and expulsion by the late sixteenth century, which would start a debate that would not end until the first expulsion order was signed by Phillip III in 1609.

One of the leaders of these narratives of expulsion was the Archbishop of Valencia, Juan de Ribera. In his book, *Between Christians and Moriscos*, Benjamin Ehlers looks at Ribera as well as the city of Valencia and examines the tensions within the city that helped create the policy which led to expulsion. An illegitimate son, Ribera would follow in the steps of many other illegitimate children at the time and enter the priesthood, being appointed to his first bishopric by the age of 30. Through the influence of the Council of Trent, bishops in the Catholic Church were being empowered and tasked with the doctrinal purity of their flocks. It was in this

[139] Lu Ann Homza, *The Spanish Inquisition, 1478-1614: an Anthology of Sources*. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co.), 2006, 240-1.
[140] Homza, *Spanish Inquisition*, 245.

climate of religious counter-reform that Ribera took his first seat as bishop of Badajoz in 1562, just a year before Trent formally ended. Because of this, Ribera took to reform naturally, publishing a report analyzing his plan to curb clerical excess among other perceived problems.[141]

It is from this early career as a reformer and a clergyman who took specific interest in the worship of his parishioners that created the man who would eventually become the Archbishop of Valencia and advocate for the expulsion of the *moriscos.* With his background firmly planted in a Catholic theology that was increasingly geared towards the individual worship of its members and curbing irregularities, and being assigned to a city with a large morisco population that was not well loved by the Old Christians, it is clear to see how the roots for the expulsion grew in Ribera.[142] However, this attitude was not universal. Upon the accession of Phillip III, many criticized the idea of expelling the *moriscos*, arguing either that it was unchristian, or that they did not have the approval of the Pope to act in such a manner. Even Ribera's former secretary and later bishop of Segorbe continued the calls for conversion and assimilation.[143] Ribera took the other side of the argument, advocating on a platform of economic, religious, and racial fears that depicted *moriscos* as "a diaspora community of the dreaded Moors living in the heart of Spain."[144] This depiction of *moriscos* as culturally different from Old Christians was popular with expulsion literature, but as we have seen previously, the facts are much more blurry than that.

While some *moriscos* like María la Jarquina were indeed practicing their religion in secret, others like María Cadena were in a more complex position, seemingly being raised in a

[141] Benjamin Ehlers, *Between Christians and Moriscos Juan de Ribera and Religious Reform in Valencia, 1568-1614*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006, 5.
[142] For background on Ribera's time dealing with the *moriscos* of Valencia, see chapters 4 and 5 of *Between Christians and Moriscos*.
[143] Ehlers, *Between Christians and Moriscos,* 126.
[144] Ehlers, *Between Christians and Moriscos,* 127.

Christian community with *morisco* roots. Núñez Muley's memorandum was structured to address the issue of separating the culture of *moriscos* from the religion of Islam, determined that these two things could be separated and that the *moriscos* of Spain could be assimilated. Later in this chapter, it will also be shown that at the same time that Ribera was advocating for the expulsion of the *moriscos*, there were authors writing *morisco* novels attempting to explain the precarious situation that the *morisco* population of Spain found themselves in since the fall of the Kingdom of Granada more than a century prior to Ribera. Ribera's advocation for and later apologetics in defense of the expulsion may have been the position that prevailed, but Ehlers and the other authors referenced herein show that this was not the only, nor even necessarily the most popular position at the time. Instead, Ribera was a creation of policy and shifting norms. He began his career in religion in an age where the Catholic Church felt threatened for the first time in a thousand years and was acting desperately to identify threats to their religion. An easy threat to identify for Ribera and others in Spain was the *moriscos*, a group which had their freedoms restricted ever since the second war of the Alpujarras in 1571. Ribera's actions then reflect a broader shift in Spain where religious and royal authorities were attempting to create a narrative of the "vision of Spanish history as a march toward political and religious unity."[145] To create this unity, the Church and Crown decided to simply restrict and expel the members of that community that didn't fit into the religious and cultural mold.

An example of this cultural shift would play out after the expulsion and even serve to answer some of the questions around assimilation that Núñez Muley was raising in his memorandum. In the primary source reader *Inquisitorial Inquiries,* Richard Kagan lays out the case of Diego Díaz. In 1609, Díaz, like almost all *moriscos,* was expelled from Spain by royal

[145] Ehlers, *Between Christians and Moriscos,* 153.

decree. As Kagan points out, Díaz was expelled from Spain and destined for "Christian Lands" as exiling *moriscos* to Muslim areas was prohibited, as it was thought that they would likely convert to Islam.[146] However, as was the case with many other *moriscos*, Díaz's ship instead set sail for Algiers, where he and the other passengers were sold into slavery, where Díaz was circumcised and converted to Islam. However, Díaz was not content to stay in Algiers, instead making his way onto a fishing boat where he jumped overboard off the coast of Spain and swam to shore. He quickly established himself as a butcher near the city of Cuenca where he married Magdalena de Castillo. After thirteen years, in 1632, Díaz and his wife were brought before the Inquisition on the grounds of secretly practicing Islam.[147]

In Díaz's testimony, we see an interesting parallel to María de Cadena, as well as something of a culmination of Núñez Muley's memorandum. Both Díaz and De Castillo claim that they did not practice Islam, with Díaz appearing before the Inquisition several times to attest to this. When he was questioned about his time in Algiers, he says that he did not go there of his own free will and that there were "in Algiers, more than six thousand [*moriscos*], who are Christians."[148] While there is no recorded reaction to this statement by the Inquisition, it seems that they were at least somewhat understanding of Díaz's circumstance. While they did interrogate him in a similar manner to the other *moriscos* who we have seen in this thesis, it seems that there was some understanding of his forced conversion, or potentially *moriscos* were no longer a priority after the expulsion. Either way, Díaz was abjured *de levi*, or with a lighter admonition and told to "abstain from saying or doing things similar to those of which he had

[146] Richard L. Kagan and Abigail Dyer. *Inquisitorial Inquiries: Brief Lives of Secret Jews and Other Heretics*. (2nd ed. Baltimore, Md: Johns Hopkins University Press), 2011, 147.
[147] Kagan, *Inquisitorial Inquiries*, 149.
[148] Kagan, *Inquisitorial Inquiries*, 163.

been accused."[149] With that, the story of Diego Díaz ends. He was a rather strange case for the time, being accused of committing heresies after he had been forcibly circumcised and converted and returning to Spain. This case seems to echo the difference between culture and religion that Núñez Muley was attempting to make. Díaz, it seems, may have retained certain *morisco* or Algerian practices once he returned to Spain and these practices were what drew the Inquisition's attention. While it seems unlikely that Díaz was actually practicing Islam, he did retain certain cultural markers such as his manner of eating and attitude towards the Sabbath. These were enough to get him denounced, but when looking back, it seems that they were more simply markers of culture rather than evidence of religious practice. While this theory is, of course, unverifiable, Díaz's case still presents an interesting example of the divergence between culture and religion that lays at the heart of the *morisco* problem.

One of the ways in which the Spanish Crown restricted the lives of *moriscos* and *conversos*, even before the rebellion and later expulsion, was to restrict their immigration to the Americas. However, despite this restriction, historians such as Karoline Cook have found an abundance of sources of *moriscos* in the Americas, arguing that they had a powerful impact on "Spanish American society and the everyday workings of empire. Indeed, even small numbers could induce powerful anxieties about defining nation."[150] This comment about defining nation is enlightening, as it shows the problems that Old Christians feared that *moriscos* would bring. As seen above with Núñez Muley's memorandum, assimilation versus coexistence were powerful forces pulling against each other at this time. There were those like Núñez Muley who wished for peaceful coexistence, and then there were the governing bodies which were passing

[149] Kagan, *Inquisitorial Inquiries*, 171.
[150] Karoline P Cook, *Forbidden Passages: Muslims and Moriscos in Colonial Spanish America*. (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press), 2016, 2.

laws restricting *morisco* movement and cultural practice. Cook further explains that the sixteenth century became a defining period in the history of the Spanish empire, and the *morisco* question was central to this debate.

The Inquisition too was involved in the regulation of *moriscos* in the colonies, seeming to acknowledge that, despite their best efforts, *moriscos* did in fact make it to New Spain and beyond. For example, John Chuchiak shows in his documentary reader *The Inquisition in New Spain, 1536-1820*, that as early as 1576, the Inquisition was releasing edicts of faith in which they described Muslim, Jewish, and Protestant heresies so that the broader populations could be aware of them. The 1576 edict required "all people of any state, class, or condition, both ecclesiastical and secular, within the present confines of this Kingdom of New Spain should come forth and denounce any and all crimes against the faith committed by them or another."[151] The edict goes on to describe various things that should be reported, such as the use or possession of prohibited books, amongst which is the Qur'an and any form of blasphemy or heresy.[152] While very few of the edicts contained within Chuchiak's reader directly address *moriscos*, they do show an awareness of *morisco* religious practices making their way to the colonies as early as the 1570s. Because of this, it is important to look at how *moriscos* were defined and what sort of circumstances would lead them to being denounced in the colonies as well as in the Iberian Peninsula.

Both in terms of defining who was a *morisco*, and by defining what a *morisco* did, Cook argues that the question of what to do with the *moriscos* was a central question in domestic and imperial policy. She explains that the definition of *morisco* stretches past the definition of a

[151]John F. Chuchiak *The Inquisition in New Spain, 1536-1820: a Documentary History*. (Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Maryland), 2012, 135.
[152] Chuchiak, *Inquisition in New Spain*, 136-7.

*morisco* as a Muslim individual who converted to Christianity, either by force or voluntarily. She defines the term to be more inclusive, focusing on how the term would have been used to describe any number of individuals, families, and groups that had at one time been Muslim. Instead of a firm definition, she says she "moves away from trying to define who was or was not a *morisco*, thereby mirroring Spanish authorities' assumptions about *moriscos* by shifting the focus to practices and attitudes that early modern Spaniards associated with *moriscos.*"[153] By changing the definition from those who may have identified as *morisco*, to those who the Spanish crown felt had *morisco* tendencies, Cook is expanding the scope of her work. This probably proves useful, as the actual documented cases of *moriscos* in the colonies are somewhat limited. However, while the individual accounts are less common, their impacts are still quite impressive.

One such individual who shows the importance that *moriscos* played is María Ruiz who, in 1594 denounced herself to the Mexican Inquisition. She explained that she had been practicing Islam in New Spain for the last ten years and that she now wished to be reconciled and live out her life as a good Catholic.[154] While the specifics of her crisis of faith are not known to us, Ruiz can help understand the fears that Catholics had around *moriscos* and the reasons why they would go to such lengths to restrict their movement and religious practice. One of the important points that Cook raises in her book about individuals such as Ruiz and others that she mentions throughout her work is the dichotomy between Spanish legal policy and the reality of individuals freedom of movement. Cook explains that the Spanish legal system was "porous and diffuse, lacking a codified series of laws," and that competing jurisdiction, as well as the difficulty of managing the movement of peoples throughout three continents was simply too unwieldly to

[153] Cook, *Forbidden Passages*, 5-6.
[154] Cook, *Forbidden Passages*, 10.

manage effectively.[155] These lapses in the legal system allowed for *moriscos* to move much more freely than the laws would allow. It is through these circumstances that we see individuals such as Ruiz being able to live in Mexico City for at least a decade and still be practicing Islam enough to feel the need to denounce herself. The disorganized and vast nature of the colonies allowed for certain individuals to slip through the legal cracks and immigrate to the colonies, while still maintaining some of the religious life that we have seen practiced by individuals and communities across Spain.

These practices would, as Cook explains, also come under more intense scrutiny in the colonies, as the bar for denouncing an individual for Islamic practices seems to have been lower there. Cook explains that there was an increasing trend in the sixteenth century where Spanish authorities linked political loyalty to true Christian belief, mostly out of fear that *moriscos* would collaborate with the Ottoman empire against Spain. This attitude was further strengthened by the military victory of the Spanish at Lepanto in 1571, which allowed Spanish authorities to focus more on the internal threat of *moriscos* rather than the external Islamic empire of the Ottomans.[156] One point that Cook is quick to make is that religiosity varied as widely in the colonies as it did in the metropole. Much like la Jarquina and María Cadena, the individuals who were denounced by the Inquisition in the new world held a variety of true beliefs. However, regardless of the truth of their beliefs, by the late sixteenth century, the piety of *moriscos* was politicized by the Inquisition and other Spanish authorities.

Returning to Ruiz, the *morisca* who denounced herself to the Inquisition in 1594, giving us increasing insight into some of the feelings for *moriscos* broadly throughout the Spanish empire. Like many, Ruiz was expelled from Granada following the second Alpujarra uprising in

[155] Cook, *Forbidden Passages*, 54
[156] Cook, *Forbidden Passages*, 80

1569. She explained how the Inquisition was constantly suspicious of her no matter where she resettled. She also echoed the feelings of Núñez Muley, saying that she was always labeled as Muslim due to her food, dress, and music, regardless of her religious beliefs.[157] What is interesting about Ruiz's case is that it seems that she was indeed practicing Islam throughout her life. An added layer of complexity that Cook brings to the story of Ruiz and many *moriscas* like her is the concept of *taqiyya*. Cook explains that this concept literally translates to precaution and allows them to "perform the exterior acts of the religion being imposed on them, so long as they remained faithful to Islam in their hearts."[158] *Taqiyya* certainly could explain some of the feelings and actions of those whom we have encountered before. For example, this could explain the feelings that Cadena expressed to the Inquisition about being "a good Christian daughter" or it could explain why many *moriscos* still attended Mass to keep up appearances.

In Ruiz's case, *taqiyya* certainly led to an increased sense of caution around her own religious beliefs. She, like many other *moriscas* encountered here, learned much of her understanding of Islam and the Arabic language from her mother. This too mirrors similar cases we have already seen, such as la Jarquina performing the *fadas* and women in general becoming the guardians of Muslim values in *morisco* society. The case of Ruiz is complicated, however, and her true religious beliefs, like many of the *moriscas* we find in the record, are unknown. She was married to an Old Christian and lived far away from other *morisco* communities back in Spain.[159] When she denounced herself, it could have been the case that she was attempting to obtain absolution for past sins so that she could continue her Christian life in Mexico City. That being said, Ruiz's case does not offer a concrete example of a *morisca* who seems to be truly

[157] Cook, *Forbidden Passages*, 82.
[158] ibid
[159] Cook, *Forbidden Passages*, 85

converted to Christianity, but rather someone who attempted to syncretize the two belief systems and reconcile her familial faith, with that of her husband, and the larger Spanish society where she lived.

Ruiz also is not the only *morisca* in the Inquisition's records to be evidence for syncretic practices between Islam and Catholicism. In the edited volume *Women in the Inquisition*, Mary Giles introduces Beatriz de Robles, a native of Seville who was tried by the Inquisition in 1624 for *alumbradismo* or Illuminist practices. Robles was one of a small percentage of *moriscas* who were allowed to stay in Spain after the 1609 expulsion edicts, likely because she was married to an Old Christian and was, more or less, living as a "good Christian" at the time of the expulsion.[160] However, it is the charge of Illuminist practices here that is particularly interesting, combined with the fact that she was a *morisca*. As the author of the chapter on Robles, Mary Elizabeth Perry, points out, Illuminism was on the rise in seventeenth century Spain and often appealed to the powerless, especially women.[161] Robles, like many illuminists before and since, claimed to experience visions, speak with God, and receive messages of guidance from Him. Illuminism especially appealed to women, as Perry explains, because of the fact that their visions allowed them to transcend the accepted social hierarchy.[162] A woman may feel constrained by the situation in which she finds herself and rely on these spiritual visions as a way to influence others. Robles embodied all of these ideas, meeting with other groups of women, sharing her visions with the community, and using them as a basis for moral judgements.

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[160] Mary E. Giles, *Women in the Inquisition: Spain and the New World*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 179.

[161] Illuminism, broadly put, was a spiritual movement that has been present in many different Christian societies. In this specific case, it refers to the practice of taking communion often, even to a degree which the traditional religious authorities would call excessive, a special emphasis on mental prayer rather than liturgy, and the idea of a direct communication with God or an outpouring of God's love on an individual which drives them to visions.

[162] Giles, *Women in the Inquisition*, 174-5

While charges of illuminism were not new to the Inquisition, Robles does appear to be somewhat unique in the historical record, as she was an illuminist as well as a *morisca.* Amelang does point out in *Parallel Histories* that there was a sixteenth century trend of conversos be drawn to illuminist teachings. He says, "New Christians loomed large among the many advocates of more interiorist and individualistic approaches to the Christian faith in the numerous and diverse movements of spiritual renewal that characterized sixteenth-century Spain."[163] While Robles is living about fifty years after the peak of these movements, these themes do complicate her story somewhat. Illuminism was not necessarily linked to Islam or *moriscos*, indeed, Robles appears to be the only *morisca* illuminist that survived in the historical record.[164] Her trial also takes place more than a decade after the expulsion and doesn't show any signs of Islamic worship. As we have seen previously, *moriscos* were often tried for teaching or learning prayers in Arabic, fasting, or obeying dietary laws. Robles was not charged with any of these, rather she was solely charged with illuminist practices. This raises an important historical question, was Robles an example of a *morisca* who had assimilated to the point that she was adopting Christian heretical spirituality? Or was she an example of *morisco* syncretism with Christianity, using the power of her vision as a way to gain acceptance in a larger society and potentially make up for the problems that her background would have caused.

While it is impossible to know about Robles's own beliefs, she is, at least historically, an example of syncretism. Her story represents the possibilities when a *morisca* was allowed to join broader society in such a way that she was able to absorb and understand different movements within Catholicism itself. In this way, she represents a similar example as the famous "lead books" found in Spain between 1595 and 1606 which taught of a way that Islam and Christianity

[163] Amelang, *Parallel Histories*, 127.
[164] Giles, *Women in the Inquisition*, 180

could be reconciled by tracing Spanish Christian heritage to an individual known as Caecilius of Elvira, who claimed that there were Arabic speaking Christians in Iberia as early as Nero's reign over the Roman Empire.[165] The books were declared forgeries by the Catholic Church in 1682, well after the Muslim "problem" in Iberia had been solved by the expulsion. However similar to the lead books Robles may have been, syncretism was not an option, especially post-expulsion. Most clerics and inquisitors demanded nothing less than total conformity to Catholic orthodoxy, and Robles's illuminism was not Catholic orthodoxy.

Whether Robles was a beacon of syncretism between Islam and Christianity or not, the Inquisitors did not seem to think this was the case. When they came to her small village outside of Seville to arrest her, she was only charged with illuminist heresies, nothing related to her *morisca* heritage. By the end of her trial, she was sentenced to work in a hospital for women under the watchful eye of an assigned confessor and afterwards, it does not seem that she ever had any interactions with the Spanish Inquisition again.[166] However, regardless of her actual beliefs, Robles represents the syncretic possibilities of Catholicism and Islam. Robles's faith would not have been considered orthodox in either religion, but she does represent a group of people who had, until the early seventeenth century, been coexisting and intermingling more or less successfully for almost nine hundred years. The fact that Robles was tried exclusively as an illuminist shows that the Inquisition either overlooked or did not know about her status as a *morisca*, showing that, to the Inquisition she was an assimilated Christian who had assimilated so well that she was now in a new category of heretic based not on her religious ancestry, but on her gender and heretical views.

[165] Amelang, *Parallel Histories*, 54-9
[166] Giles, *Women in the Inquisition*, 187-8

While *moriscas* and *moriscos* like Robles or Rojas whom we have looked at thus far have been real individuals, looking at the fictional *moriscas* that were made popular by Spanish literature can also help understand the ways that *moriscas* ideally would fit into larger Spanish society. One of the most famous literary works to come out of Spain in this time period is, *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes. In his seminal work, Cervantes introduces modern readers to a character and in doing so, reveals much about the sentiments of the broader Spanish public to *moriscas*. The figure is Ana Felix, a woman initially encountered while leaving Barcelona via galley who the group initially thinks is an Algerian corsair. Felix is introduced in part two of the novel, which was first published in 1615, after the initial expulsion of the *moriscos*. Once Felix is captured, she is questioned by the Viceroy of Catalonia where he asks her if she is "Turk, Moor, or renegade" to which she replies that she is none of the above, instead identifying as "a Christian woman."[167] From this very first introduction, Cervantes shows the audience that Felix is mercurial and untrustworthy, not easily fitting into any of the boxes in which the Viceroy tries to place her. Indeed, some have seen her as Cervantes writing about the threat to masculinity in Spain at the time, which was one of the many moral panics that were occurring.[168] Others have analyzed Felix in terms of her identity, both national and religious.[169] Certainly, the fact that the Viceroy and crew believed her to be some type of Muslim pirate shows that, either by her appearance or the appearance of her crew, they believed her to be Muslim and either North African, Turkish, or a renegade *morisca* but according to her, she is a Christian woman. Her

[167] Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote.* (Salt Lake City: Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation), 2004.
[168] Lucas A. Marchante-Aragon, "Don Quixote's Ana Felix: The Virile Morisca Maiden and the Crisis of Imperial Masculinity." *Hispanófila*, no. 176 (2016).
[169] Odile Lasserre-Dempure. "De Zoraida a Ana Félix, o la identidad cuestionada en el Quijote de Cervantes." *Criticón (Toulouse, France)* 127 (2016): 31–40.

further protestations show that Cervantes, and perhaps the public more broadly, were familiar with the ways that *moriscos* used this dual nature to their advantage.

In a scene reminiscent of María de Cadena, when permitted to tell her story, Felix says that she was born to *morisco* parents and that two uncles carried her away to Barbary (likely as part of the broader *morisco* expulsion) despite the fact that "I declared I was a Christian, as in fact I am, and not a mere pretended one, or outwardly, but a true Catholic Christian."[170] The insistence that even in the face of familial pressures, she remained a strong Christian was a tool used by other *moriscas* whom have already appeared in this thesis, however, it is also important to note that these are not the actual words of a real *morisca*, but the words of a Christian author writing a *morisca* character. Therefore, it tells us more about what Christians thought about *moriscas*, rather than anything actually relevant to the broader *morisca* population. Indeed, much of how Cervantes characterizes Felix shows us what the public was feeling towards *moriscos* generally at the time. In a dramatic turn of events, Felix's father, Ricote happens to be aboard the same vessel as the others who makes himself known. Ricote begs for mercy for her daughter who is eventually pardoned and given shelter in the home of Don Antonio Moreno due to the "good-will and kindliness of the beauty of Ana Felix."[171]

It is through the characters of Felix and Ricote, both *moriscos,* that we learn more about Cervantes's attitude towards the Expulsion broadly as well. The last time the reader hears about Felix and Ricote is in the house of the Viceroy, where Cervantes writes "Two days later the viceroy discussed with Don Antonio the steps they should take to enable Ana Felix and her father to stay in Spain, for it seemed to them there could be no objection to a daughter who was

[170] Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, 527.
[171] Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, 529.

so good a Christian and a father to all appearance so well disposed to remain there."[172] Felix and Ricote are painted as "one of the good ones," a beautiful and dutiful daughter who had been waylaid by a life in crime but who was now repentant, and a kind, unassuming father whose only wish was to remain in Spain. Cervantes uses the characters of Felix and Ricote to show the drawbacks of the expulsion, that with the broad sweeping declaration that all *moriscos* were to leave Spain, good hearted, productive members of society were also taken away and sent to foreign lands where they were corrupted.

Cervantes is not the only one to comment on *moriscos* and their fates post expulsion. In fact, many scholars have used his work to establish a feeling for how Old Christians viewed the expulsion. Richard Hitchcock, in an article titled "Cervantes, Ricote and the expulsion of the Moriscos" attempts to understand the factual history lying within the fictional pages of *Don Quixote*. For one thing, Hitchcock points out that the characterization of the first *morisco* we encounter in *Don Quixote*, Ricote, is more or less the ideal of assimilation. As mentioned above with the real-life story of Robles, assimilation was always the gold standard for *moriscos* to strive towards. It was also the thing that the Inquisition was most keen on protecting and rooting out any heresies. Because of this, the fact that Ricote was a prudent business owner, an impeccable speaker of Castilian, and a neighbor to Sancho Panza shows the ways in which Ricote had assimilated into Spanish society and how devastated he would have been at the expulsion.[173]

With the expulsion, Cervantes is also able to use Ricote as a bit of political commentary on the rest of Europe based on their treatment of the expelled *moriscos*. Here again, Cervantes

[172] Cervantes, *Don Quixote,* 537.
[173] Richard Hitchcock, "Cervantes, Ricote and the Expulsion of the Moriscos." *Bulletin of Spanish studies (2002)* 81, no. 2 (2004): 180.

uses a fictional character to explain real history, what would have been at the time of the book's inception, real current events. He explains that France was good to Ricote for a time, but that he did not stop there, instead continuing onto the city of Augsburg in modern day Germany. Here, as Hitchcock explains, Ricote finds "freedom of conscience" in his religious worship. Ricote is able to practice Catholicism more freely than he could in Spain, and Cervantes wants his audience to be aware of this.[174] However, as Hitchcock points out, Ricote's story is also used as a plot device. While Cervantes is aware of the plight of the expelled *moriscos* by the 1610s, he is not necessarily intent on explaining it fully to his audience. Instead, he wants to use a familiar trope and character in his writing to engender sympathy and move forward the plot. As will be shown below, the use of *moriscos*, and especially the discussion around what a "desirable" *morisco* looks like was prevalent in Spanish society at this time, and a tool that Cervantes would have definitely used.

In a chapter in *The Anxiety of Sameness in Early Modern Spain*, Christina Lee explains the world that Cervantes was probably experiencing when he was writing about Ricote and his daughter. She explains that *moriscos*, rather than foreign Muslims (she uses the term "moors", but I will refer to them as Muslims), were the largest threat to the Spanish body politic. She explains that, for the most part, *moriscos* and Muslims were seen as "depraved, unscrupulous, and fundamentally unredeemable figures."[175] However, in that same paragraph, she goes on to explain that certain Muslim figures in Iberian literature are idealized, using the term "literary Maurophilia" to describe the way that early modern Spanish novels sometimes portrayed Muslims as gallant and brave, invoking the same feelings that one was supposed to feel

[174] Hitchcock, "Cervantes," 183-4.
[175] Christina H. Lee, "Desirable Moors and Moriscos in Literary Texts." In *The Anxiety of Sameness In Early Modern Spain*, 184–213. (Manchester University Press), 2015, 184.

whenever Christian knights were in literature. However, given the propensity to see Muslims as a problem in Spanish society, it is not surprising that these Muslim heroes were not interested in upending the social hierarchy. In examining Lee's theory around the respectability of some Muslim characters in literature, we will look at two early modern Spanish novels which heavily feature Muslim characters, *El Abencerraje* and Ginés Pérez De Hita's *The Civil Wars of Granada.*

*El Abencerraje* and *The Civil Wars of Granada* are two sixteenth century Spanish novels commonly referred to as Moorish novels. *El Abencerraje* examines the story of Rodrigo de Narváez, a knight and governor of two towns in the Málaga region of Spain during the fifteenth century. The novel centers around Narváez meeting a young Muslim man who is introduced as Abindarráez the younger, a member of a wealthy family of Granadan Muslims who fell out of favor of the king of Granada, who is on his way to marry his betrothed in the town of Coín. Narváez and Abindarráez serve as the main characters of the novel and they each show important themes of honor, chivalry, and other traits that knights were supposed to show at the time. In her work on the novel, María Soledad Carrasco-Urgoiti explains the importance of the inclusion of the Muslim character, saying "Abindarráez, who represents the refined but almost decadent culture of Granada, has accepted his lot as an outcast and performs no specific service to his country. Neither does he show ambitions of power or fame, engrossed as he is in his love for Jarifa [his betrothed]."[176] The character of Abindarráez therefore shows the ideal of a Muslim and therefore, the ideal of a *morisco* once Castile had conquered Granada. While the author of the novel is anonymous, the themes of how to behave honorably certainly resonate throughout

[176] Barbara Fuchs, Larissa Brewer-García, and Aaron Ilika. *"The Abencerraje"; and "Ozmín and Daraja": Two Sixteenth-Century Novellas from Spain*. Edited by Barbara Fuchs, Larissa Brewer-Garcâia, and Aaron Ilika. (University of Pennsylvania Press), 2014, 68.

the book. In the case of Abindarráez, honor resides in being loyal to his future spouse, being kind, and not being too wrapped up in his Granadan heritage. While never explicitly stated in the work, the goal for the young man seems to be assimilation to his new reality.

In a way, all *moriscos* at the time of writing would be in similar positions to Abindarráez, having been exiled, either explicitly or figuratively, from their homeland and therefore forced to accept the reality of their new situation, living in a Christian Castilian society, rather than a Muslim Granadan one. The novel, while never stating it, encourages those who find themselves in Abindarráez's situation to handle it like he did, with loyalty to Narváez, and loyalty to the new order in which they find themselves. As Mary B. Quinn points out in *The Moor and the Novel*, while this theme seems at first inclusive and positive, it is only positive in its views of assimilation. Echoing themes of Edward Said's *Orientalism*, Quinn explains that "The outcome of most Western texts is the depiction of another culture as a way of demonstrating ultimate superiority."[177] This use of a cultural "Other" to demonstrate the ultimate superiority of Castilian Spanish culture seems to be a through line in these types of novels. Even though it is admirable to portray Muslims in a positive light and seemingly call for acceptance and peace, that acceptance and peace often takes the shape of the dominant Castilian society, rather than any kind of blend that allows for distinct cultural differences.

In the same vein of the Moorish novel, as *El Abencerraje*, Pérez de Hita's *Guerras Civiles de Granada* is often attributed as one of the first of the Moorish novels. Pérez de Hita himself is also an interesting figure whose life almost definitely influenced his writing. For our purposes, it is important to note that Pérez de Hita was possibly a *morisco* himself. According to

[177] Mary B. Quinn, *The Moor and the Novel: Narrating Absence in Early Modern Spain*. 1st edition. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. 57.

Quinn, both the sympathetic views towards Al-Andalus and *moriscos* that Pérez de Hita expressed in his writing, his profession as a cobbler would hint at his morisco roots, as cobblers were often *moriscos* in early modern Spain.[178] Pérez de Hita lived in Murcia and supplemented his income by writing local histories of the region which eventually led him to write the two-part *Guerras Civiles*. Despite the evidence that he may have been a *morisco* himself, Quinn is cautious to say that Pérez de Hita was actually a *morisco* and instead potentially lived in an area where he could have experienced true *convivencia* with his *morisco* neighbors, a situation that would have led him to being sympathetic to their cause and potentially writing his work as a result of this positive attitude towards *moriscos*.[179] Whatever the case may be, Pérez de Hita's work was incredibly influential and shows a positive view towards *moriscos* that even novels like *El Abencerraje* failed to accomplish.

At its core, the *Guerras Civiles* is a novel divided into two parts. The first treads similar ground to *El Abencerraje*, covering the tournaments, festivals, and lavished court life of the Kingdom of Granada. This section helps show the splendor and magnificence of Granada as well as the honor of its people. Most important to this section is the emphasis Pérez de Hita places on the *convivencia* of Christian Spain with the Kingdom of Granada. He shows in one scene of a duel between a Christian and a Muslim how they seemed to live together as equals in this region, saying "Oh the courage of gentlemen who sit conversing with one another as if they were friends, although in fact they were enemies and of different creeds, and on the verge of a fatal duel."[180] This quote typifies Pérez de Hita's views of Muslims and Christians throughout his novel. Much like *El Abencerraje*, Pérez de Hita's work does rely on heavily Orientalized

[178] Quinn, *The Moor and the Novel*, 68. See also, Maria Soledad Carrasco Urgoiti. *The Moorish Novel: El Abencerraje and Pérez de Hita*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1976, 42.
[179] Quinn, *The Moor and the Novel*, 69.
[180] Ginés Pérez de Hita, *Guerras civiles de Granada: (selección)*. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1975, 119.

stereotypes of the Muslims of Granada, using them as foils for Christian characters and playing up their otherness. However, this is also matched with the attempt to equate, rather than to contrast, the two groups. As Quinn explains, he is showing that both had honor and pertained to a "certain brotherhood of man."[181] While these broad generalizations about individuals and certain characters may seem a bit heavy handed, it is typical of Pérez de Hita's writing. He often uses individuals to stand in for larger groups and in doing so, allows the reader to understand more fully the ways that society would view each group at the time. In the first part of the novel, the very fact that individuals are somewhat interchangeable allows us to understand that, to the Christian world, many Muslims, and by extension, *moriscos*, were viewed as part of a larger whole, while only Christians were given the agency to be individuals.

This tone changes in the second half, however, with more interest in historical accuracy and more nuances given to the characters involved in the unfolding drama. The most notable character from the second half of the book for our purposes is the Queen of Granada, who is referred to by several names throughout the work. Notably, she is called simply *reina* or queen, which is the same title that Pérez de Hita uses for the Catholic queen Isabela. This causes some confusion, but is possibly intentional, as Quinn explains. She claims that the queen represents a sort of "Darwinian shapeshifter" who uses her abilities as queen to gain loyalty of both Muslims and Christians alike.[182] This allows for a type of ethnic breakdown not commonly seen in Moorish novels. She is unlike the other characters that we meet, embodying the Orientalized Muslim and the noble Christian at once. For example, once Granada is conquered in the novel, King Ferdinand marries the Granadan queen to a Christian noble and gives her a pair of

[181] Quinn, *The Moor and the Novel*, 70.
[182] Quinn, *The Moor and the Novel*, 71.

residences to allow her to continue to live in comfort. As Quinn explains, this differs from the typical themes of this type of novel. Instead of looking backwards to a more ideal time, the Queen represents an appeal for future tolerance and coexistence.[183]

It is also interesting to note that a Muslim woman is the vehicle for this optimistic future that Pérez de Hita seems to call for in his novel. While it is often the case that the standards of each society are upheld by men, they seem to be bridged by women, a role that we have already seem women play within Spanish and *morisco* society. Whether Pérez de Hita was writing from a place of self-interest as a *morisco* or whether he was writing from a place of positive feelings about *moriscos,* the work is nevertheless influential and was so during the sixteenth century.[184] While the coexistence embodied by the Queen is aspirational, it is also ahistorical. As we have seen, after the reconquest, Spain continued to become more and more prejudiced rather than less so. With the expulsion of the Jews in 1492 and the eventual expulsion of the *moriscos* in 1609 and beyond, the trends that Pérez de Hita advocated in his novel never came to fruition. However, the fact that they were influential during his time is noteworthy and show a possibility for Spain to go down a different path rather than the path towards expulsion and homogenization.

When writing about *El Abencerraje* as well as another Moorish novel, *Ozmín and Daraja,* Barbara Fuchs focuses even more on the instances of Maurophilia in these novels than Quinn. She explains that these novels helped present a positive message about the history that Christians and Muslims shared on the Iberian Peninsula. She explains how much of the dress, architecture and art from the time period that was considered Christian had deep Muslim origins. This contextualization of cultural exchange and hybridization is, according to Fuchs, crucial for

[183] Quinn, *The Moor and the Novel*, 71-2.
[184] See Quinn, *The Moor and the Novel*, 74-9.

understanding the context of the literary idealization of Muslims in these types of novels.[185] By the time that these novels were being written, the centuries of uneasy *convivencia* that both Christians and Muslims had enjoyed was coming to an end. According to Fuchs, due to an increase in suspicion around religious divergence brought about by the Catholic Counter-Reformation of the sixteenth century, increased pressure was put on any non-standard religious practices, which included the nominally Christian *moriscos*. Because of this, the novels serve as somewhat of a cultural reminiscence for Mateo Alemán's *Ozmín and Daraja*, reminiscing of a time, only one hundred years previous, where his Muslim hero and heroine were not limited to their status as Muslims, but where they could be seen as complex and mercurial individuals which did not fit neatly into a singular box.[186] Fuchs argues that, unlike *The Abencerraje*, *Ozmín and Daraja* is unique in the fact that it is published in a time where *moriscos* were no longer idealized but rather persecuted. This makes the story of the titular pair of lovers all the more interesting, as they are taken prisoner by Ferdinand and Isabella during the Granadan Wars. The dual nature of the leads is made present from early in the book, where it is explained that Daraja "spoke Spanish so well that it would have been difficult to tell that she was not an Old Christian, for as a fluent speaker she could pass for one."[187]

This interest in Daraja's abilities to "pass" for a Castilian Spanish speaker is interesting, as it echoes several other humanist themes within the two novels. While *El Abencerraje* seems to call for toleration and understanding through its depiction of a sympathetic *morisco* prince who is displaced, *Ozmín and Daraja* takes a more cynical tone in its depictions of Spanish royalty and decadence in the vein of the picaresque novel.[188] Both of the titular characters are shown several

[185] Fuchs, *"The Abencerraje"; and "Ozmín and Daraja"*, 3.
[186] Fuchs, *"The Abencerraje"; and "Ozmín and Daraja"*, 7.
[187] Fuchs, *"The Abencerraje"; and "Ozmín and Daraja"*, 49.
[188] Fuchs, *"The Abencerraje"; and "Ozmín and Daraja"*, 16.

times to be cleverer than their Spanish hosts/captors, employing disguises and trickery to achieve their ends. According to Fuchs, their trickery and unreliability are actually laudable, rather than disgraceful, as she says "What can one actually believe of what Ozmín and Daraja say to the Christians who surround them, given how little leeway for expression, much less for action, they enjoy?"[189] This depiction of the *morisco* experience as deeply closeted and deceitful by necessity seems to be similar to the actions of the women who have been analyzed above in their dealings with the Inquisition. Like Daraja, how can María de Cadena ever be expected to be honest in her recollections of her upbringing, religion, and morality to the Spanish Inquisition if she has grown up in a world where honesty with the Inquisition has led to harsh punishment. This is, of course, not a confirmation that Cadena was lying to inquisitors during her uncle's trial, but rather a further contextualization of the ways that *moriscos* and Old Christians were aware of the status quo, and how that awareness bled over into the popular literature of the time.

Many of the works, both fictional and historical, quoted in this chapter represent an alternate path that Spain could have gone down. The expulsion of the *moriscos* in 1609 was not inevitable, character like Ozmín and Daraja, historical figures like Francisco Núñez Muley, and events such as the discovery of (the admittedly fake) lead books show a desire in Spain for inclusion and integration, rather than restriction and expulsion. While the actual historical fact is that, starting in 1609, *moriscos* across Spain were expelled, there were other voices that could have been heeded more carefully and different policies pursued that may have changed things for *moriscos*. While it is not relevant to speculate how this would have changed Spain, showing the

[189] Fuchs, *"The Abencerraje"; and "Ozmín and Daraja"*, 17.

counternarrative to the narrative of expulsion can help readers better understand the complexities in the feelings of society and individuals regarding the *morisco* question.

## Conclusion

In the introduction to Jerónimo de Rojas's inquisition trial, Mercedes García-Arenal notes that Inquisition trials are similar to picaresque novels in the fact that they deal mostly with the social lives of their main players.[190] In saying this, García-Arenal is acknowledging the expanding trend in Inquisition studies to look at the social lives of the victims of the Inquisition. In this thesis, I have attempted to do the same. By looking at one of the most underrepresented sections of Inquisitorial victims, *moriscas*, I have sought to bring to light a segment of sixteenth century Spanish society that has been remarkably absent from the historiography. By using figures such as María de Cadena, María la Jarquina, María Ruiz, and Beatriz de Robles, I have examined their lives through the minimal evidence they have left behind. In so many cases of Inquisition studies, much of the information available to us is inherently biased. Their testimonies and lives are condensed into court transcripts which are recorded secondhand by an inquisitorial secretary. This makes the work of examining their lives doubly difficult, as we must both wade through the limited information that they give the court as well as the limitations of the secretaries themselves. However, when examined closely, it can paint an impactful, if incomplete picture.

By using court documents, we are able to see the life of a spiritual leader in María la Jarquina, who was obviously influential in her small community. She helped birth and raise a new generation of *moriscos* who would, for the most part, be expelled from their homeland only a few years after her trial. She was a widow who ran a fruit stand and bore four children. She was literate and showed charity to her grandchildren and fellow prisoners, giving them sustenance

[190] García-Arenal, *The Inquisition Trial of Jerónimo de Rojas*, 4.

and what little she had. Once arrested, she admitted to practicing Islam for over 30 years, which represented nearly her entire life up to that point. Because of this, she was found guilty, subject to the humiliation of being paraded around the town naked from the waist up and received 200 lashes for her crime. She was given the punishment of wearing the *sambenito* and only after her appeal in 1611 was she allowed to remove the garment and comply with the expulsion edict where she disappears from the historical record.[191]

Unlike la Jarquina, María de Cadena was a witness, rather than a defendant in an Inquisition trial. Her experience with Islam is less known, but we do know that she was taught by her uncle, Jerónimo de Rojas, how to pray, fast, and perform Islamic cleaning rituals while she lived with him. We know she claims that her father was a good Christian man who brought her up to be a good Christian herself. We also know that her testimony broke a wall of silence that Rojas had carefully erected within his own family which would have dire consequences. After her testimony, Rojas's trial gained new steam, spiraling downward towards an eventual conclusion that would see a divided tribunal relax him to secular authorities where he would be burned at the stake. We have no way of knowing if Cadena testified against her uncle out of a threat to her own life, or perhaps a threat against her family. We do know that she was never prosecuted for the crimes that she admitted but was instead said to be reconciled to the Church without a trial. After her testimony in Rojas's case, she disappears from the historical record.[192]

Third in our trio of Marías is María Ruiz, who, unlike her counterparts, denounced herself to the Inquisition for Islamic practices. Ruiz lived in Mexico city and denounced herself to the Mexican Inquisition. Her reasons behind this are unknown, but it is possible that her

[191] O'Banion, *This Happened in My Presence*.
[192] García-Arenal, *The Inquisition Trial of Jerónimo de Rojas.*

marriage to a Christian man and her status as a *morisca* put her in significant peril of being denounced by one of her neighbors, as had happened to Rojas. Her testimony introduces us more to the concept of *Taqiyya*, or the idea that Muslims were allowed to outwardly practice other religions while still holding inward Muslim beliefs. This concept likely inspired the worship of many *moriscos*, who found themselves divided, much as Ruiz seems to have felt, between their traditions and the legal nature of the state in which they lived. Ruiz's life shows this conflict brilliantly, as we are able to see the active debate in her own mind between the merits of Christianity and Islam. Gone were the times of *convivencia*, where each individual could be saved in their own religion. Instead, all were being mandated to conform to the Spanish Catholic religion. Ruiz was reconciled to the church in secret and told to never speak of her trial to anyone. Afterwards, she disappears from the record.[193]

The final individual case considered here is perhaps the most interesting example of *Taqiyya* which we see, that of Beatriz de Robles. Denounced not for being a *morisca,* but an Illuminist. Living in Spain after the expulsion, Robles shows the potential for syncretism between Islam and Christianity. She believed in an internal type of spirituality that led to visions from God which directed her in her life. However, this too was heretical to the Inquisition and once her trial was finished, she was sentenced to work in a hospital for women under supervision of a personal confessor. As with all the others, she afterwards disappears from the historical record.[194]

All of these women's lives seem to exist in singular points in the historical record. The only real record they left (other than la Jarquina who herself wrote a few letters) was through the

[193] Giles, *Women in the Inquisition*.
[194] Cook, *Forbidden Passage*.

voice of the Spanish Inquisition. While it may seem somewhat bleak to reduce these women to a trial transcript, there is still much that can be gained from their examples. La Jarquina represents the change in Islam that took place after the Reconquista. Islam became a personal, familial, and secret religion on the Iberian Peninsula, leading to the rise of women as spiritual and religious leaders that was not present in Islamic cultures elsewhere. Cadena shows the expectations of family and faith placed on young women, *morisca* and otherwise in sixteenth century Iberian society. Ruiz shows the immense strain that conflicting religious beliefs could have on an individual and Robles shows that for some, assimilation was possible insofar as they conformed to other societal norms.

The field of Inquisition studies would do well to continue to expand their scope to increasingly include women. The work of historians highlighted in this thesis, as well as the work of many others continues to move this work forward. While progress is slow, by continuing to look at the unique experiences *moriscas* face, we as historians can delve deeper into the personal and familial lives of our subjects. By including new and diverse groups in the expansive field of Inquisition studies, we can show the diverse ways that individuals and communities dealt with the massive and all-encompassing institutions of the Inquisition and the Catholic Church in early modern Spain, bringing voices to those who have traditionally been voiceless and expanding our understanding of the past.

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