

ARTÍCULOS

Retelling the Narratives of the East in the West: The Unique Morisco Account of the Polemic of Wāṣil of Damascus

Recontando las narraciones de Oriente en Occidente: el singular relato morisco de la polémica de Wāṣil de Damasco

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Abstract

This article discusses the polemics of Wāṣil of Damascus at the Byzantine court in a hitherto unstudied Aljamiado manuscript copied by Moriscos, or Muslims converted to Christianity in Early Modern Iberia. This debate, which unfolded in the first centuries of the expansion of Islam, has so far been studied on the basis of a single Arabic manuscript. The present contribution adds to the discussion the Aljamiado materials and a number of relevant Arabic sources. It reassesses the character of Wāṣil, his involvement in Byzantine politics and iconoclastic controversies, and his identification with the early theologian Wāṣil b. ‘Aṭā’ (d. 2nd/8th c.). The historical data in Ibn ‘Asākir’s *Ta’rīḥ* (6th/12th c.) and the role of Wāṣil as the true hero of the story also justify the need for a detailed and extensive analysis of the Muslim readings of the text. The unique Morisco account will be discussed alongside the new evidence, paying attention to the uses of this narrative and its adaptation in the passage from East to West. The practices of retelling tie with the examination of how the original triumphalist story and the key issues of the early Eastern Muslim-Christian debates acquired meaning in the face of the expansion of Iberian Christian society that ended with the expulsion of the Jews and, ultimately, the Moriscos. Taken together, the evidence attests to the preservation of this polemics over the centuries in Muslim circles and its dissemination sometimes in contexts far removed from the original, such as the Muslim West.

Keywords: Wāṣil of Damascus; Muslim-Christian polemics; Byzantine iconoclasm; Morisco literature; retelling narratives.

Resumen

Este artículo analiza la polémica de Wāṣil de Damasco en la corte bizantina en un manuscrito aljamiado hasta ahora no estudiado, copiado por moriscos o musulmanes convertidos al cristianismo en la Iberia temprano moderna. Este debate, que se desarrolló en los primeros siglos de la expansión del islam, se ha estudiado hasta ahora a partir de un único manuscrito árabe. La presente contribución añade a la discusión los materiales en aljamiado y una serie de fuentes árabes relevantes. Se reevalúa el carácter de Wāṣil, su implicación en la política bizantina y las controversias iconoclastas, y su identificación con el teólogo temprano Wāṣil b. ‘Aṭā’ (m. s. II/VIII). Los datos históricos del *Ta’rīḥ* de Ibn ‘Asākir (s. VI/XII) y el papel de Wāṣil como verdadero héroe de la historia justifican también la necesidad de un análisis detallado y extenso de las lecturas musulmanas del texto. El singular relato morisco se discutirá junto a las nuevas pruebas, prestando atención a los usos de esta narración y a su adaptación en el paso de Oriente a Occidente. Las prácticas de recontamiento enlazan con el examen de cómo la historia triunfalista original y las cuestiones clave de los primeros debates orientales entre musulmanes y cristianos adquirieron significado ante la expansión de la sociedad cristiana ibérica que terminó con la expulsión de los judíos y, en última instancia, de los moriscos. En su conjunto, las pruebas atestiguan la conservación de esta polémica a lo largo de los siglos en círculos musulmanes y su difusión a veces en contextos alejados del original, como el Occidente musulmán.

Palabras clave: Wāṣil de Damasco; polémicas musulmano-cristianas; iconoclasia bizantina; literatura morisca; recontamiento de narraciones.

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1. Introduction

The story of Wāṣil of Damascus narrates an encounter of polemics between Muslims and Christians, set against the backdrop of the first centuries of Islamic expansion. The Byzantine court (in the Arabic narrative, the references are to *al-rūm*) is the scenario within which Wāṣil, a Muslim captive of Damascus, meets Baṣīr, a Christian convert to Islam who later reverted to Christianity.¹ At first, the dispute involves only these two characters, but the sessions are later joined by priests and the king. The traits of the characters—who include political and religious leaders, war captives, converts, and apostates—echo those of the most important individuals of the time. The same can be said of the arguments that are put forward, which form the core of the early controversies between Islam and Christianity: the divinity of Jesus, baptism, the authority of priests, and the worshipping of images. Both the subjects and the plot appear to have maintained their appeal to Muslims over the centuries, as evidenced by a number of manuscripts that circulated among them. Scholars have indeed long been aware of a copy in the library in Leiden whose original possibly dates back to the 2nd/3rd c. H (8th/9th c. CE).² They have also noticed that Wāṣil's narrative draws on two traditions and that other central characters (e.g., Baṣīr) are also mentioned in Syriac and Greek Christian sources.³ Conversely, studies have thus far ignored the recension contained in the *Ta' rīḥ madīnat Dimašq* (History of the City of Damascus) by the scholar known as Ibn 'Asākir (499H/1105CE–571H/1175CE).⁴ Nor

have they considered the account as told by Naḡm al-Dīn Abū l-Raḡā Muḥtār b. Maḥmūd al-Zāhidī (d. 658H/1260CE) that is held at the library in Damascus.⁵ In addition, a hitherto unknown copy in a miscellaneous codex from the 19th-century discoveries in the Aragonese town of Almonacid de la Sierra (Spain) and written in Romance in Arabic script (a linguistic use known as Aljamiado) must be added to the existing body of knowledge concerning the circulation of the story.⁶

The Aljamiado copy of the polemics of Wāṣil has specific relevance for the purposes of the present contribution, as it provides evidence that the story reached westwards to the Iberian Peninsula and was known by the Muslims from the Christian territories who practiced Islam—first in public and then clandestinely—until their expulsion in the early 17th century. With little doubt, the Aljamiado copy is based on a *vorlage* written in Arabic. It thus serves as a case in point for examining translation. Moreover, given that it belongs to the Aljamiado production, the translation is both linguistic and narrative, since a significant portion of the corpus is composed of both retellings and retellings of retellings. One can even say that in Mudejar and Morisco writings “each sample is a reflection of a previous sample on which the new author/editor acts.”⁷ Much of this literature does indeed consist

¹ *al-rūm* refers to Romans and Byzantines. For the purposes of this discussion, the meaning fits the historical context of the story. In texts pertaining to Muslim minorities, such as the one examined in this contribution, the term translates relatively consistently as Romans, although the narrative context often indicates that it should be understood more broadly as referring to Christians in a looser sense. One example appears in the *Recontamiento de la doncella Carcayona* [The Story of the Carcayona Maiden], in which, as indicated by Luis F. Bernabé-Pons, the “‘Romans’ of India” (“‘romanos’ de la India”) are the “rumies or Christians of India” (“*rumis o cristianos de la India*”), Bernabé-Pons, “El signo islámico de la profesión de fe”, vol. 1, pp. 219-241; p. 232. Unless mentioned otherwise, all translations are mine.

² MS Leiden Oriental 951 (2). The copy of Leiden has been dated either in 799-800H/1397-1398CE (Steinschneider) or in 696-697H/1297-1298CE (Hamaker). See, Griffith, “Bashir/Bēsēr”, pp. 293-327; p. 299. See also, Thomas, “Hadīth Wāṣil al-Dimashqī”.

³ Griffith, Sydney H., “Bashir/Bēsēr”, pp. 293-298.

⁴ Ibn 'Asākir/al-'Amrawī, *Ta' rīḥ madīnat Dimašq*. Here, under *Wāṣil* in vol. 62, pp. 376-382, Nr. 7954. The narrative exhibits only minimal differences from the one in Leiden.

⁵ The manuscript copy of this work has been preserved at the Syrian National Library, MS Damascus, Uṣūl 658. See Thomas, David, “al-Zāhidī”. For the purposes of the present discussion, I will use Muḥammad al-Miṣrī's edition (al-Zāhidī/al-Miṣrī, *al-Risālat al-nāṣiriyya*, pp. 57-61). The narrative seems to follow that of Leiden and Ibn 'Asākir but with some differences. Here only a few points of interest will be highlighted, but an exhaustive comparison between this manuscript and the others will not be made.

⁶ Until recently, the materials in the Escuelas Pías of Zaragoza have been very poorly catalogued and, in large part, barely known. I identified Wāṣil's story and other remarkable texts during a visit to this institution, MS 11 Olim. D (este. p. tab V, Nr. 26), ff. 371v-385v. Brisville-Fertin now provides a thorough description of the two codices preserved in the Escuelas Pías and dates the manuscript copy containing the story at hand to the last decades of the sixteenth century, see, “Los códices aljamiados de las Escuelas Pías de Zaragoza I”, vol. 22, p. 8 n. 2 (see also a second paper by this author recently published in *Sharq al-Andalus* on the contents of the manuscripts “Los códices aljamiados de las Escuelas Pías de Zaragoza. II: relación de contenidos”, vol. 23). Although I refer to Brisville-Fertin's publication as needed, I mainly use my own observations and notes.

⁷ “‘tradición literaria’..., donde cada muestra es reflejo de una muestra anterior sobre la que actúa el nuevo ‘autor/redactor.’” Monferrer-Sala adds to that “[It is at this point where our main task will consist of] to discover the hidden paths that lead from one text to another, where the latter is always an interpretation of the previous one, which acts as a ‘producer of

of texts that have been told anew and adapted, often accompanied by changes brought about as they have been passed and represented across languages. This is not the only salient point. When the act of retelling is approached as a displacement or translation of the narrative along the axes of space and time, any questions of language and fidelity to the originals fall squarely within the framework of other, more urgent questions, such as those concerning the uses and meanings of texts within particular contexts: in this case, that of the Muslim religious minorities residing in the Christian territories.

Along with the above considerations, it is important to recall that “retelling” is actually the term used by the Morisco scribe to refer to the story that he introduces with the words “this is the ‘recontamiento’ of Wāsil of Damascus,” (with “recontamiento” meaning both “to tell” and “to retell”).⁸ One element that should be considered

texts’ in the form of influence.” “[Es en este punto donde nuestra tarea principal va a consistir en] descubrir los caminos ocultos que conducen de un texto a otro, donde el posterior siempre es interpretación del anterior, que actúa como ‘productor de textos’ en forma de influencia.” Monferrer-Sala, “La ora ke la olyó muryó”, vol. 1, pp. 861-874; p. 868.

⁸ “este es el recontamiento de Waşil de Dimasco * fue reconchado por”, MS 11 Olim. D (este. p. tab V, Nr. 26), ff. 371v-372r. The full transcription of the Aljamiado text is provided in the Appendix. Entertaining the possibility of this double meaning does not seem either too risky or modern for the present case. As Corominas points out, from “contar” (from the Latin *computare*, or “calculate”), derives the term “narrar, relatar,” which properly means “to make a count” and which “is as old in Castilian as the other.” Corominas, *Breve diccionario etimológico*, p. 168. “Recontar” is a derivative prefixed with re-. Early evidence of this derivative exists in Castilian, as well as in other Romance languages, including Aragonese. Real Academia Española, *Diccionario de la lengua castellana*, p. 524; Nagore Laín, *Vocabulario*, p. 389. The various meanings of “recontar” include “to recalculate” and “to refer again,” and “to give an account of a thing over and over again.” One example, perhaps contemporary or at least not too distant from the date of the manuscript copy discussed here of the use of “recontar” to mean “to retell” is provided by the following fragment from the anonymous *Lazarillo de Tormes* (published in 1554), where we read: “The evil blind man told everyone who was near my disasters, and he told them over and over again, both about the jar and about the bunch (of grapes), and now about the present. Everyone’s laughter was so loud that all the people who passed by on the street came in to see the party; and it was with so much grace and air that the blind man retold my exploits that [...], it seemed to me that justice was not done to him in not laughing at them.” (emphases are mine), [Contaba el mal ciego a todos cuantos allí se allegaban mis desastres, y dábales cuenta una y otra vez, así de la del jarro como de la del racimo, y agora de lo presente. Era la risa de todos tan grande que toda la gente que por la calle pasaba entraba a ver la fiesta; mas con tanta gracia y donaire recontaba el ciego mis hazañas que [...], me parecía que hacía sinjusticia en no se las reír.]. Anonymous, *La vida del Lazarillo de Tormes*

is the introduction of the Arabic narrative to the reader as a *ḥadīṭ*: a story that is preceded by an *isnād* (or chain of transmitters of traditions).⁹ This detail can be of importance when approaching the text from a Muslim perspective, as aptly recalled by Hans van Rensburg in his re-evaluation of the contents of the Leiden manuscript.¹⁰ Based on our knowledge of the Mudejar and Morisco vocabulary, however, the Aljamiado adaptation (“recontamiento”) does not necessarily seem to be an exact translation of *ḥadīṭ*. Rather, it can be assumed that the adventures of Wāsil had the broader meaning of exemplary narration, thereby issuing a warning to believers, and thus worth retelling.¹¹ The argument that I advance in this paper conforms to this understanding, claiming that the importance of the Almonacid manuscript resides not so much in what it reveals about the relationship of the Aljamiado adaptation to an Arabic original, but in what it reveals with respect to the practice of retelling with regard to Muslim identity within a Christian context. Based on this Aljamiado manuscript, the following discussion focuses on unearthing several meanings that the story of Wāsil may have had for the members of these Muslim minorities, as well as the importance that they attached to the retelling of these stories.

I consider two aspects about this narrative and its displacement from East to West. One is the

y de sus fortunas y adversidades. Project Gutenberg, 20 June 2023, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/320/320-h/320-h.htm>.

⁹ As is well known, the *isnād* is one of the key elements in transmitting knowledge of traditions in Islam and establishing one’s authority in this regard. See *EP* (Robson) s.v. “Isnād.”

¹⁰ Van Rensburg, “Muslim-Christian Polemics”, vol. 2, pp. 136-146. The two main methods of transmission of the *ḥadīṭ* tradition (memorization and textual transmission) appear to be valid in our case. As is known, Muslim scholars initially preferred to be faithful to the original *ḥadīṭ* in the application of these methods, but later allowed more space for its transmission *ad sensum* (*riwāya bi-l-ma’nā*). The latter procedure has occasionally called the authenticity of these traditions into question. Juynboll, “The Authenticity of the Tradition Literature”, p. 114.

¹¹ Mudejars and Moriscos employed a diverse vocabulary in order to express themselves within the semantic field of references to the transmission of stories and traditions (e.g., *narración*, *estoria*, *dicho*, and *ḥadīṭ/alhadiç*). Examples illustrating the nuance of interest within the present context include the translation of Sūra 34:20 in the Qur’ān of Toledo (dated in 1606), which is well-known for being the only full translation of these communities to be rendered in Arabic characters: “fa-ḡa’alnahum aḥādīṭ fa-mazzaqnahum” as “Y pusimoslos que fuesen alhadiç y que recontar. Y despartimoslos.” (the emphasis in text is mine), Vernet Ginés, & Roqué Figuls, “Alcorán: traducción castellana de un morisco anónimo del año 1606”, p. 283. See also the study by López-Morillas, *El Corán de Toledo*.

reassessment of the identity of the character of Wāṣil, to whom the story owes its name, particularly with regard to his involvement in Byzantine iconoclastic controversies and politics. The as yet unexamined information in the *Ta'riḥ madīnat Dimašq* is combined with what previous studies have revealed about his Christian opponent, Bašīr. In addition to being a worthy opponent of the Christians, Wāṣil proves to be a supporter of anti-iconophile sensibilities within their ranks. This point can help to clarify the appeal that his character could have had to Muslims. The second aspect to be discussed is the actual exercise of retelling. Following a brief review of the basic contours of the Aljamiado text in connection to the Arabic, the greatest attention is directed toward the dynamics of the expression of retelling in its intersection with its near synonym: recreation. The current analysis re-emphasizes the importance of the role of religious polemics in teaching Islam, as noted in previous studies of the story of Wāṣil. The Aljamiado manuscript was penned by Muslims who were enduring increasing pressure from the Christian society, and they saw how the restrictions that were being imposed by the majority gradually erased Muslim knowledge within their groups. Wāṣil provides a strong example of two systems encountering each other, thereby providing a suitable framework for the transposition of meanings, the recreation of this story, and its retelling. The fact that the polemic is staged within a Christian setting was undoubtedly significant for Muslims who were immersed in a dominant Christian context with social-religious structures and ways of thinking that were gradually permeating their groups and would ultimately urge them to abandon Islam and convert. The triumph of the Muslim character serves as a paradigm, in which readers see themselves reflected and in which they can find a role model for their lives under harsh conditions. I argue that the particular reading assigned to this story by these communities fits within the Muslim strategies of coping with the Christian proselytism and rhetoric at the time.

2. Wāṣil of Damascus and Byzantine Controversies in Light of New Information

The victory of Wāṣil does indeed appear to be yet another story of the victory of an emerging Islam over Christianity. One lesson to be learned from this story is how a religion manages to impose itself on other communities, within both the territories that it takes under its control and

those of its enemies. It thus illustrates how Islam and its followers are able to succeed, even under disadvantageous conditions (e.g., captivity). The historical references in the story are nevertheless purely general, providing no clues concerning the exact time at which the events that are being narrated actually took place. At any rate, this is not clear from the known Arabic copies available to us, in Leiden and in Damascus, which both include only a vague reference to the Umayyad rule. In fact, most of the information that helps to situate the text has thus far been provided by sources other than Muslim ones. As previously noted, the Muslim polemic of Wāṣil of Damascus has a broader scope—a “Christian link,” as examined by Sydney Griffith in an article published in the 1990s. Griffith also edited the Leiden Arabic manuscript, avidly asserting that Wāṣil’s Christian opponent echoes the Christian historiographies of Byzantine iconoclastic policy in the time of Leo III (717-741CE).¹² He observes that Greek and Syriac Christian chronicles refer to an individual by the name of Bēsēr or Bašīr, who was taken captive by Muslims and later released. Sometime between 722 and 723CE, Bēsēr or Bašīr engaged in a heated polemic with the emperor and encouraged him to effectively destroy all Christian images. The sources seem to agree that this Christian convert from Islam was associated with the imperial family. Only the Syriac accounts note that, in a ruse, Bēsēr or Bašīr claimed to be Tiberius, the son of the emperor Justinian (in those of Michael the Syrian [d. 1199CE] and the anonymous *Chronicon ad 1234*). As Griffith demonstrated, the *Chronicle* by Theophanes (d. 818CE) draws a polemical link between the Muslim anti-Christian policy of the time and that adopted by Leo III. In this context, the character of Bēsēr or Bašīr embodies the idea of knowledge transfer across regions, from Christianity to Islam, and vice versa. In the Syriac sources, Bašīr is also depicted as a

¹² I am aware of a later edition by Šāliḥ Ya‘qūbī in 2001 of Ibn Sammāk (344H/955CE), *Ġuz’ fīhi Šurūṭ amīr al-mu‘minīn ‘Umar b. al-Ḥaṭṭāb raḍīya Allāh ‘anhu ‘alā al-Našārā, wa-fīhi hadīṭ Wāṣil al-Dimašqī wa-munāzaratuḥu lahum raḍīya Allāh ‘anhu*. On p. 13, Šāliḥ Ya‘qūbī provides the reference of the narrative of Wāṣil in the *Ta’riḥ madīnat Dimašq* but, surprisingly, he seems to overlook the information to be discussed here (although the edition of the work used by Šāliḥ Ya‘qūbī is not the same as the one consulted by this scholar). Van Rensburg, “Muslim-Christian Polemics”, p. 139, also notes that the Leiden copy is preceded by a copy of the *šurūṭ*. I do not know if it is the same work.

hybrid: “Roman by race, but Muslim by dress.”¹³ In all accounts, he is presented as someone to be mistrusted. Moreover, iconophile authors advance the idea that disruptive currents in Christianity (e.g., iconoclasm) have been brought about by the damaging influence of Islam.

The new information in Ibn ‘Asākir’s *Ta’rīḥ madīnat Dimašq* is consistent with the reading of this polemic in close relation with the iconoclastic controversies in Byzantium—and not only through Bašīr. The information immediately following Wāṣil’s encounter of polemics, as taken from a *ḥadīṭ*,¹⁴ reveals many aspects about the life journey of this main protagonist. In this account, we read that Wāṣil came from Damascus, that he was known for his righteousness, prayer, and patience, and that he had become a captive and enjoyed high esteem among the Christians (as this information is provided after the narrative of the polemics discussed here, it seems to suggest that such esteem was due to his victory in the encounter with Bašīr). This is followed by the interesting detail that, when Constantine (Constantine V, r. 741-775) and his brother-in-law, Artabasdos (or Artabās, in Ibn ‘Asākir’s *Ta’rīḥ*), had a disagreement, Constantine sent Wāṣil along with his patrician in an envoy to al-Walīd b. Yazīd (al-Walīd II, r. 125H/743CE–126H/744CE). Constantine wanted the Caliph to help him against Artabasdos, and he reached an agreement with Wāṣil to reward and release him after taking charge of what he had asked for. Wāṣil announced that he had been commissioned by and had spoken with al-Walīd. The patrician informed the Caliph about the authority of his master (i.e., Constantine), and the

partisans of Artabasdos stood up and spoke on behalf of Artabasdos. Having heard both sides, al-Walīd reasoned that, if he had been a Christian, he would have helped Constantine against his enemies. Because they were enemies, however, they were bound to draw their swords against each other. Realizing Wāṣil’s weak condition, the Caliph had a brief conversation with the patrician (or patricians) with whom he came, and did not let him depart, but kept him as his prisoner.¹⁵

Artabasdos, son-in-law of Leo III, is well known in history for having challenged Constantine V’s appointment as Leo’s successor around 741-742 and until 743CE, as well as for possibly having opposed his iconoclastic policy.¹⁶ The fragment refers to this “difference,” which should probably be understood as the struggle for power and the opposing positions on the cult of images. One noteworthy detail in this regard is the position adopted by al-Walīd, which clearly indicates that he would have been willing to support the iconoclast Constantine were it not for the fact that they belonged to two opposing religions. It is also important to consider Wāṣil’s interesting role as an emissary prisoner of the Christians, who simultaneously enjoys their respect (as mentioned previously in this article). Even having been defeated by him, the Christians still recognize his eloquence as a tool for seeking support for settling their internal disputes. From the perspective of Muslims reading the story, this recognition—which partially acknowledges the qualities of the “other” and the closeness of Islam to Christianity—makes Wāṣil’s victory all the more painful to the enemy.

The information provided in the Arabic accounts clearly departs from that provided in Christian sources with regard to the role of the

¹³ Griffith, “Bashir/Bēsēr”, p. 295.

¹⁴ As taken from a *ḥadīṭ* that was transmitted by Abū I-Qāsim ‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm b. al-‘Abbās (b. 424H/1032CE) and others. See for this scholar al-Ḍahabī (d. 748H/1348CE), *Siyar a’lām al-nubalā’*, vol. 19, pp. 358-361, Nr. 212. The chain of transmitters for the following account in the *Ta’rīḥ* is: Abū I-Qāsim ‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm and others reporting on ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Aḥmad; Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Naṣr ‘Uṭmān b. al-Qāsim b. Ma’rūf b. Ḥabīb (b. 327H/938CE, al-Ḍahabī, *Siyar*, vol. 17, pp. 366-368, Nr. 230); Abū I-Qāsim b. Abī al-‘Aqab ‘Alī b. Ya’qūb al-Hamdānī al-Dimašqī (d. 353H/964CE, al-Ḍahabī, *Siyar*, vol. 16, pp. 38-39, Nr. 25; Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm; Ibn ‘Ā’id. Although the final transmitter could have been Muḥammad b. ‘Ā’id (150H/767CE–233H/847CE; or 232H/847CE; or 234H/848CE), Rosenthal advises caution concerning the truthfulness of the information regarding his figure: Ibn ‘Asākir’s *Ta’rīḥ* is the only source at our disposal, and this author could have conflated information about various individuals under the same name. See *EF* (Rosenthal) s.v. “Ibn ‘Ā’idh.”

¹⁵ Ibn ‘Asākir/al-‘Amrawī, *Ta’rīḥ madīnat Dimašq*, vol. 62, pp. 376-382, Nr. 7954 for the character of Wāṣil and his polemics. Here on p. 382, we read:

لما اختلف قسطنطين وأرطباس، بعثني قسطنطين ببطارقه إلى الوليد بن يزيد يستنصره على أرطباس وجعل العهد لنن أنا قمت برسالته والإعراب عنه مع بطارقه جائزة كذا وكذا، وتخلية سبيلي، قال: فقدمت على الوليد بهم، وتقدم من عند أرطباس من يسأل الوليد نصرتهم وموالاتهم على قسطنطين. قال واصل: فتكلم عند الوليد، وقامت البطارية بلغت عن صاحبها، وقامت بطارقة أرطباس فتكلمت عن أرطباس، واستمع الوليد من الفريقين، ثم أقبل عليهم فقال: لو كنت ناصرة أحدة لنصر قسطنطين على من خلفه، ولكن انصرفوا فلكم عدو، وليس بيبي وبين أحد منكم إلا السيف، ثم أقبل على البطارقة الذين جئت بهم فقال: أرايتم صاحبنا هذا أتخننته الجراحة فأسرتموه فلا سبيل لكم إليه قد رده الله أم ألقى بيديه فهو عيذكم يرجع معكم. فقالوا: بل أتخننته الجراحة فحبسني الوليد وأمر بالجيش فسيروا وأمضى الغمر بن يزيد في صانفته، فوافي اختلافا بينهم، فغتم وسبي.

¹⁶ Gregory, “A History of Byzantium”, p. 211. See also Speck, “Artabasdos, der rechthgläubige Vorkämpfer der göttlichen Lehren.”

character of Bašīr, who here is no longer responsible for introducing foreign, Muslim knowledge into Christianity, thus fueling internal disputes. This point concerns an inter-religious polemic that pits the two great powers of the time—Christianity and Islam—against each other. Some of the characteristics of the character of Bašīr are similar to those of his namesake in the Christian sources (e.g., his captive status, his Arabization, and his knowledge of Islam). He also remains a protagonist (as noted below, his importance is accentuated in the Aljamiado version). To be exact, the story actually centers on Wāšil, and it is tailored to highlight his abilities in all their glory: Bašīr is merely a sounding board for his plots. In other words, Bašīr serves primarily to remind the reader that the truth of Islam will always prevail, even when put to the test before an expert opponent like Bašīr. With the inside knowledge that he acquired as a convert living among Muslims, Bašīr is able to provide solid arguments with which to refute Islam, although he still fails to emerge victorious. Another notable difference with respect to this character in the Christian sources is that, in the Arabic narrative, Bašīr neither questions the use of images by Christians nor does he convince the Roman king to destroy them: it is Wāšil who does so.

Combined with the new information, Wāšil's role as the true hero of the story justifies emphasizing the importance of extending our consideration of the Muslim reading of the text beyond exploring the possibility of a "Christian link." This approach has already been demonstrated by Hans van Rensburg in a re-evaluation of the Leiden copy, a decade after Griffith. With regard to assessing the elements that had meaning for a Muslim audience, Van Rensburg adds that these polemical texts are remarkable, in that they share "features of a catechism and a history. Readers are not only informed about the arguments, but also about the contenders."¹⁷ I agree that one of the main features of religious polemics is the edifying force of the arguments contained within them. In addition to being addressed to a religious adversary, the primary addressee in many polemics is indeed the community itself. This is the case for the Muslim account of Wāšil of Damascus in Arabic, as well as for the Aljamiado account, in which the elaboration of correct belief plays a major role (as demonstrated in the next section).

¹⁷ Van Rensburg, "Muslim-Christian Polemics", p. 137.

3. The Aljamiado Account of Wāšil of Damascus

The Aljamiado narrative of Wāšil, as preserved in the miscellaneous Morisco codex from Almonacid, relates to the discussion above in several ways. Some elements are simplified, including the *isnād*, or chain of transmitters with which the *ḥadīth* is introduced in the Arabic accounts. Both the Leiden manuscript and Ibn 'Asākir's *Ta'riḥ* include a chain of transmitters extending back to Wāšil. Ibn 'Asākir's longer *isnād* only partially matches that of the Leiden manuscript. One example of the differences involves the transmitter before Wāšil who, in this case, is not Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn, but Maḥlad b. al-Ḥusayn—a scholar who settled in Maššīša (d. 191H/806CE), and whose name is mentioned by al-Balāḍurī (d. 279H/892CE).¹⁸ The *isnād* in the Aljamiado copy is much shorter. With only two links, its brevity characterizes Mudejar and Morisco works, in which these chains are sometimes omitted altogether.¹⁹ This *isnād* contains no explicit mention of Wāšil, but only of Aḥmad b. 'Abd Allāh, who could perhaps be identified with the obscure figure of the storyteller Abū l-Ḥasan al-Bakrī (Iraq, second half 8th c. H/13th c. CE),²⁰ and Ibn 'Abbās, the cousin of Muḥammad. In light of this observation, the terminus *post quem* of the original on which the Aljamiado copy was based should probably be placed at the time that al-Bakrī's activities were flourishing. It should be noted, however, that the brevity in the *isnād* is

¹⁸ In referring to a tradition about the situation of Antioch under the rule of Mu'āwiya (d. 60H/680CE). Bashear, "Apo-calyptic and Other Materials on Early Muslim-Byzantine Wars", pp. 181-216; p. 211. Cf. the *isnād* in Griffith, "Bashir/Bēsēr", p. 314, l.4 (p. 315, l.6-7). The other transmitters in the *isnād* in Ibn 'Asākir are Abū Muḥammad b. al-Akfānī; 'Abd al-Karīm b. Ḥamza; Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Barakāt al-Ḥuṣū'ī, who report on Abū Bakr al-Ḥaḥīb; Ibn Razqawī, Abū 'Amr b. al-Sammāk; 'Abīd b. Muḥammad b. Ḥalaf al-Bazzār; al-Ḥasan b. Šabāh al-Bazzār (Wāšit, Baḡdād, d. 249H/863CE); Muḥammad b. Kaḥīr al-Maššīšī al-San'ānī, reported on Maḥlad b. al-Ḥusayn (d. 191H/806CE); and he, on Wāšil.

¹⁹ As noted by Bárbara Ruiz-Bejarano, the *isnāds* in Morisco accounts tend to be omitted for the purpose of simplification, with the authority of Muḥammad apparently having greater weight instead. See Ruiz-Bejarano, "Praxis islámica de los musulmanes aragoneses a partir del corpus aljamiado-morisco y su confrontación con otras fuentes contemporáneas", p. 194.

²⁰ He was purportedly the author of the *Kitāb al-Anwār* (Book of Lights). López-Morillas, *Textos aljamiados sobre la vida de Mahoma*, p. 26. The *Kitāb al-Anwār* belongs to the popular genre of Mudejar and Morisco literature, and it was very widespread among its members, who liked its narrations of the lives of the prophets. See Harvey, *Muslims in Spain, 1500-1614*, pp. 148-149. See also Lugo Acevedo, *El libro de las luces*. López-Morillas, *Textos aljamiados*.

not unique to the Aljamiado adaptation and that in the materials available to us, for example, in al-Zāhidī, it is omitted altogether and Wāsil's account is presented by way of example, simply and directly, with “and in it there is a nice story.”²¹

On the other hand, the Aljamiado narrative provides new information on Bašīr that brings about a dramatic twist in his character. This information seems to be linked to the question of whether Bašīr was a prince—a possibility that, as noted above, has been suggested by some Christian accounts and that lends itself to evaluation alongside the possibilities that are already known to be contained within the sources. The Aljamiado text thus states that “he [Bašīr] fled from Islamic towns to Roman towns and when his *father* [the king of the Romans] knew that, he sent for the boy.”²² Perhaps of greater interest is that the Aljamiado adaptation provides information that does not appear in the Arabic accounts whereby the capture of the young Bašīr by the Muslims is placed during the rule of ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (‘Umar II) (r. 98H/717–101H/720CE).²³ It is worth recalling the great popularity that ‘Umar enjoyed among the Mudejars and Moriscos. Evidence of such popularity has been found in various sources, including the Aljamiado version of the dispute attributed to him and Leo (the so-called “letter of ‘Umar”) in the Aljamiado manuscript that is kept at the National Library of Spain MS BNE 4944. Leo is indeed the same emperor referred to in Christian accounts about Bēsēr/Bašīr. At this point, however, it is also important to note that, in the Leiden manuscript, Wāsil's polemic is bound together with the *šurūt* ‘Umar (“Covenant of ‘Umar”) with the Christians. This raises the question of whether the mention of ‘Umar in the Aljamiado text could have been due to corruption resulting from the joint circulation of the two texts. Van Rensburg proposes reading these two texts as a unit, insightfully claiming in support of such a possibility that “stipulations [...], were annotated or complemented with a manuscript providing blueprints for theological disputes.”²⁴

The new information on Wāsil regarding his role in Constantine's envoy to al-Walīd as is contained in Ibn ‘Asākir's *Ta'riḥ* seems to enhance the possibility that Bašīr's captivity occurred under the rule of ‘Umar, indeed. Although further evidence is needed in order to confirm such a claim, based on the historical details provided by the Aljamiado version, it is attractive to place Bašīr's captivity effectively under his rule and to place his polemic with Wāsil at the court of Leo III.

Placing the captivity of Bēsēr/Bašīr during the rule of ‘Umar II does actually not hinder any identification of Wāsil with the famous *mutakallim* and one of the founders of the Mu'tazilite school of thought, Wāsil b. ‘Aṭā' (b. ca. 80H/699-700CE–d. 131H/748-749CE).²⁵ This possibility (as suggested by Griffith) seems rather to be reinforced when considered in light of the information contained in the *Ta'riḥ* and in the Aljamiado text.²⁶ Considering the complete body of available evidence, the following sketch of Wāsil b. ‘Aṭā' is which, in part, reads in the light of Bašīr's: thus, we suggest that Bašīr was born around 700-702CE, that he was captured as a youth (around 15-17 years of age) and that this happened during the first years of ‘Umar's rule (i.e., around 99H/717CE).²⁷ Bašīr could have arrived as a young adult in the presence of Leo III—as Griffith points out, this could have occurred no later than 103-104H–722/723CE—and he could indeed have remained there until at least 107-108H–726/727CE. Bašīr may have been taken prisoner again by Muslims in 119/120H–737/738CE and eventually killed during the Artabasdos' revolt in 123/124-125H–741/742–743CE, as mentioned by Theophanes.²⁸ These events seem to correspond well to the identification of Wāsil with his namesake, Wāsil b. ‘Aṭā', who would have been about the same age as Bašīr at the time of the dispute (which I would like to suggest may have taken place at some point between 108/118H–727/737CE, and no later than the envoy to al-Walīd). Wāsil would have already been of an age to be endowed with a title of respect: *šayḥ*. It is on account of the latter consideration,

²¹ al-Zāhidī/al-Miṣrī, *al-Risāla*, p. 57:

وفيه حكاية لطيفة

²² My emphasis. MS 11 Olim. D (este. p. tab V, Nr. 26), ff. 372r: “fuyó (i.e. Bašīr) de las villas de al-islam a las villas de los-romanos i laora que llegó aquello-a su padre envió por-él”.

²³ MS 11 Olim. D (este. p. tab V, Nr. 26), f. 372r. The Leiden manuscript includes a marginal note by a reader who observes that the one who was in power at the time was ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān (who ruled between 26H/685CE–86H/705CE). See Griffith, “Bashir/Bēsēr”, p. 315, n. 1.

²⁴ Van Rensburg, “Muslim-Christian Polemics”, p. 139.

²⁵ See *EP* (Ess) s.v. “Wāsil b. ‘Aṭā'.”

²⁶ Griffith, “Bashir/Bēsēr”, pp. 302-303. The suggestion is taken up by Van Rensburg, “Muslim-Christian Polemics”, p. 140.

²⁷ The Aljamiado text provides no indication about the fact that Bašīr was at the Caliph's court as a youth “during the rule of the banī ‘Umayya.” This detail is indeed included in the Arabic recensions.

²⁸ Griffith, “Bashir/Bēsēr”, pp. 294-296.

and if Wāṣil's envoy is placed during the years of Constantine's strife with Artabasdos in 123-124/125H-741-742/743 CE, that we should probably discard the possibility that Wāṣil fell into Christian hands during the Muslim naval defeat in Constantinople in 98-99H-717-718 CE.²⁹ As for what happened after the dispute, the Arabic and Aljamiado accounts mention that Wāṣil is driven out to the dwellings (*diyār*), or territories (*bilād*), of Damascus. Only the Aljamiado text, however, mentions his actual release.³⁰

In short, there are grounds to argue that the story's main character could have been the historical figure of Wāṣil b. 'Aṭā' or, at least, that the polemical encounter should be placed at a time close to the time frame outlined above.³¹ These speculations correspond best to the new information, as other possibilities require setting them aside. For example, this would be the case if we were to place Bašīr's captivity under the rule of 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān, something which as noted can be read in the margins of the Leiden manuscript, and which has now been proven quite unlikely. It would also be the case if we were to assume a large age difference between Bašīr and Wāṣil, as this would mean regarding all known information incorrect, including that contained in Christian sources.

Beyond the question of Wāṣil's identity, there is the issue of the princely lineage of Bašīr, as suggested in some Christian accounts and picked up by the Aljamiado narrative. The implications of assuming such a lineage might lie behind an element that marks a radical difference between the Aljamiado plot and the Arabic narratives. If Bašīr is the son of a king, he must eventually come to hold the throne, and it is precisely this element that is introduced into the plot. In this way, and after embracing the Christian faith again, the Aljamiado text presents Bašīr not as a patrician but as a king. This creates a relatively unusual situation, in which there are two kings at court: the king of the Romans (whose name we do not

know) and the king Bašīr, who enters into dispute with Wāṣil. Regardless of the reference to Bašīr as being the son of a king, the Arabic text contains elements that lend themselves to be read under the same key. One example is when Wāṣil says, "I am a prisoner in your power [...] If I answer you not the way you want, I am afraid for my life."³² Another example is presented as Bašīr refers to himself when saying, "I see you are a man who has learned dialectic (*al-kalām*). I am a man who is master of the sword."³³ Other elements in the narration point in the same direction as well. The Aljamiado narrative explicitly refers to Bašīr from the outset, and on a number of occasions, as "king Bašīr." The plot nevertheless changes again, and king Bašīr disappears when, after one of the sessions of dispute with Wāṣil, the king of the Romans enters the scene. The dispute with Wāṣil then continues in his presence, against the chief prelate of the Christians.

A "double" king is undoubtedly a striking element that produces a certain level of confusion in the narrative (e.g., which of the two kings is more powerful? Might Bašīr and the king of the Romans be one and the same person?). I would nevertheless like to argue that it is also relatively easy to see that such a discrepancy fades in light of the particular significance that the figure of Bašīr could have had for the Mudejars and Moriscos. At this point, it is important to recall that this "king" (Bašīr) is a Christian who was once a Muslim, and that this element (this "Muslim link") may have had a strong appeal to Muslim audiences within a context characterized by sustained contacts with Christians and Jews, as well as in which conversions to and from another religious groups were relatively frequent. As the main Christian contender in the dispute, "king Bašīr" is especially powerful, as the king usually serves as a model for the community. The impact of a religious opponent of such a status who ultimately admits defeat before the Muslim Wāṣil is tremendous—even more so considering that many Muslims had been forced to abandon Islam for Christianity. They might have identified themselves with a convert like Bašīr and felt the appeal of returning to Islam. The significance of this defeat could not be compared to that which would have occurred if Bašīr had been an ordinary patrician.

²⁹ Such a possibility is called into question by Griffith in "Bashir/Bēsēr", p. 303 and n. 38, also claiming that Wāṣil b. 'Aṭā' could hardly have been considered a *ṣayḥ* at this age.

³⁰ Ibn 'Asākir/al-'Amrawī, *Ta' rīḥ*, p. 381; MS 11 Olim. D (este. p. tab V, Nr. 26), f. 385r. The account of al-Zāhidī seems to be the briefest of all, interrupting after the scene to which we will return below in which Wāṣil enters one of the Christian churches and invokes the name of God. See al-Zāhidī/al-Miṣrī, *al-Risāla*, p. 61.

³¹ Griffith adds to the mentioning of this possibility the suggestion that the author of the polemic had merely been inspired by this scholar. "Bashir/Bēsēr", p. 303.

³² Griffith, "Bashir/Bēsēr", p. 317 (p. 316, l. 6-7). Van Rensburg, "Muslim-Christian Polemics", p. 327 (326, l. 11). MS 11 Olim. D (este. p. tab V, Nr. 26), f. 373v.

³³ Griffith, "Bashir/Bēsēr", p. 317 (p. 316, l. 6-7) and p. 319 (p. 318, l. 17-18).

4. Retelling Wāsil's Polemics in the West

The reception of this narrative in the Western Mediterranean region, particularly among Mudejars and Moriscos, produces a major shift in the retelling of the Aljamiado narrative in which Bašīr becomes king. The pious tales that were added to the plot were known to have been highly prized by these communities as a means of teaching the fundamentals of Islam. One of these fundamentals concerns death (and all that it entails), which is much more present in the Aljamiado narrative, which thus also introduces several elements of eschatology in Islam that do not appear in the Arabic narrative. Examples include the Malak al-Mawt (Angel of Death), who transports the souls of the deceased. References to this angel are of great importance to Muslims residing in the Christian territories, as they represent the torment of the grave and the judgment of sins by the angels Nakīr and Munkar, who feature abundantly in their literature.³⁴ Some of the eschatological references in these works are of a polemical character, as is the case for some critical stances towards the ability of Jesus to raise the dead.³⁵ In contrast, in the Aljamiado polemics of Wāsil, it is the authority of the priests that is called into question, and the Muslim protagonist wonders whether priests can actually ward off death, the torments of the grave, and the fright of Malak al-Mawt. Wāsil boldly asks, “Who is greater, the Malak al-Mawt or the high priest?”³⁶ In the Arabic narrative, which contains no reference to the angel, the high priest becomes angry and orders Wāsil to be removed from his presence. In the Aljamiado version, the king's reaction is completely opposite—he displays satisfaction with Wāsil and his great knowledge of the subject of death. All of these new elements in the Aljamiado narrative serve to prepare the reader, as they are chronologically positioned immediately before the discussion of a question that is also found in the Arabic text of why did Jesus not kill his mother (if he was God and had the power to do so, as Christians

claim), but instead tortured her by allowing her to die in agony.³⁷

Overall, the divinity of Jesus and the reasons advanced by Christians for worshipping him receive the most attention and greater development in the Aljamiado text, as explained hereafter. The text introduces several arguments used by Christians in their defense. First, they claim to worship ʿĪsā (Jesus) because he had no father and the angels prostrated before him. Wāsil retorts that the same could be said of Edam (Adam). A second reason given by Christians is that Jesus brought the dead back to life, to which Wāsil responds that Ḥasqīl (Ezekiel) had done the same.³⁸ A third reason has to do with the fact that Jesus performed miracles, which Wāsil counters by noting that Yūšaʿa (Joshua) b. Nūn had also performed miracles. A fourth reason advanced by Christians is that Jesus was taken to heaven (*al-samāʿ*). To this, Wāsil answers that the same happens every day to the angels who are with each soul in the morning and at night (in the Arabic version)³⁹ and (in the Aljamiado text) that Edris (Idrīs), the prophet, was also brought to heaven to be with God and all the saints. At this point, the Aljamiado version takes the Christian arguments a step further. Wāsil retorts that, if Christians claim that their worship of Jesus is due to the waters being opened before him, the same could be said to have happened with Mūsā b. Imrān (Moses). If they worship him because Maryam (Mary) conceived Jesus while still a virgin, this could be compared to the miracle worked by the prophet Šāliḥ (Saleh) when the she-camel and her foal appeared from among the rocks of the river of al-Qurei to the idolatrous people of Tamūd. If Christians claim to worship Jesus because Mary gave birth as a virgin at eight months, the same could be said for the daughter of al-ʿAbīd.

The story of the daughter of al-ʿAbīd (likely to be read as al-ʿAbīd, literally, “the servant of God”) is somewhat peculiar and deserves atten-

³⁴ Vázquez, *Desde la penumbra de la fosa*. Also, Casassas Canals, *La muerte y el más allá según el islam*.

³⁵ See the challenge that Jesus faces in having to resurrect Usām, the son of Nūḥ (Noah) in Sánchez-Álvarez (ed.), *El manuscrito misceláneo 774*, pp. 174-175 transcription of the manuscript at the National Library of Spain, MS BNE 5223, ff. 240r-241r.

³⁶ MS 11 Olim. D (este. p. tab V, Nr. 26), f. 378r: “pues cuál es más-fuerte i más onrrado i más poderoso Malaku el-Mawti * o el-pelrrado mayor.”

³⁷ “He said, ‘So why did Jesus not kill his mother?’ * He tortured her by the death agony”, Griffith, “Bashir/Bēsēr”, p. 325 (p. 324, l. 1). In MS 11 Olim. D (este. p. tab V, Nr. 26), f. 378v: “pues cómo-no-tuvo poder de desviar la-muerte * a su-madre pues-que era cosa-tan-amaña i tan-cara en-su-poder”. The version given by al-Zāhidī is somewhat different, and among other things it omits some parts of the dialogue, including this particular issue. al-Zāhidī/al-Miṣrī, *al-Risāla*, p. 60.

³⁸ This and subsequent claims summarized here are in MS 11 Olim. D (este. p. tab V, Nr. 26), f. 379r-380r.

³⁹ al-Zāhidī explicitly uses human being, *insān*, instead of *nafs*, which, although it may have this meaning, too, has the more direct meaning of soul. al-Zāhidī/al-Miṣrī, *al-Risāla*, p. 60.

tion.⁴⁰ In this account, the father of this girl finds a bone on the road during the season of the Banū Isrāʾīl. He wonders whether it is human, and the Devil (*al-Šayṭān*) challenges him to ask God to use it to create a human of flesh and bones. As the story continues, al-ʿAbīd casts the bone inside his house, and a tree blooms from it, with leaves like butter, smelling of musk and tasting of honey. The daughter of al-ʿAbīd eats one of these leaves, becomes pregnant and gives birth to a boy through her mouth. The boy is able to talk at the moment of birth, and he begins speaking to his mother and his grandfather. He eats with them and converses with them (*i-alḥadiḡó con-ellos*). Later—it is not stated exactly at what time or how—the boy falls into a well and dies. Al-ʿAbīd comes back from his prayer (*asumu ʿa*) and calls the boy, who stands up, wiping his face with his hand. Although he informs his grandfather that he is dead, God Almighty resurrects him, and he addresses his grandfather as follows: “Oh, grandfather! I died in the pit, and I have been resurrected with God’s power. Now, I am going back to my tree and you will not see me until the Day of Judgment. I am from the bone that you found when you had doubts about God’s power.”⁴¹ The child then re-entered the tree and once again became a bone, as he had first been.

The tree motif bears strong echoes of the Qurʾānic Maryam, who is told when she is about to give birth under a palm tree “[a]nd shake toward you the trunk of the palm tree; it will drop upon you ripe, fresh dates.” So she pointed to him. They said, “How can we speak to one who is in the cradle a child? He [Jesus] said, ‘Indeed, I am the servant of Allah. He has given me the Scripture and made me a prophet’” (Q. 19:25 and 29-30).⁴² The polemic claim that Jesus is merely a prophet is in line with what has been expressed in other sources that circulated among Muslims

from the Christian territories, including the “Gospel of Barnabas,” which was first mentioned by Morisco exiles and later brought to Europe, and of which copies in Italian and Spanish have been preserved.⁴³ The story of al-ʿAbīd could also have belonged to the *Isrāʾīliyyāt* (narratives from Jewish traditions), if the reference at the beginning is to be considered.⁴⁴ The importance of this tale is that it illustrates the use of Muslim narratives and stories of an exemplary character in the Aljamiado version, which could have helped to clarify several points of the Islam to the Mudejars and Moriscos, thereby enhancing their understanding. This fact must be considered together with the fact that the themes of the polemic between Wāṣil and his Christian opponents in the Aljamiado and Arabic accounts seem quite similar, but that there is a simplification of the arguments of *kalām* (e.g., with regard to the nature of the soul of Jesus).⁴⁵ Simplification does not always occur as the discussion of the crucifixion and baptism issues makes clear, as these receive greater attention in the Aljamiado version. Arguably, however, there is less theological refinement, and this seems to be compensated by a greater use of evocative imagery and exemplifying narratives that facilitate, if not the understanding of the arguments, in any case the learning of Islam and proper Muslim conduct. On the other hand, the available body of evidence does not allow us to determine whether these texts might already have been present in the narratives contained in some of the Arabic versions and would have been incorporated into the Aljamiado text.

The key role of Muslim knowledge and learning comes to light in the next scene, which has a dramatic tone. The moment is recorded when first the high priest and then the king ask Wāṣil to enter a main church in which only Christians are allowed, and then to invoke God. The king reasons that “it is only one of the houses of your Lord,”⁴⁶ thus suggesting a very close, or even shared, Muslim and Christian conception of worship space. At this point in the Aljamiado version, the king also recalls the Muslim view that churches

⁴⁰ MS 11 Olim. D (este. p. tab V, Nr. 26), ff. 380r-380v.

⁴¹ MS 11 Olim. D (este. p. tab V, Nr. 26), f. 380v: “yā agüelo-yo-ya me-abía muerto en-el-pozo i después e seído rrevivado con-el poderío de Allah i-ahora yo me tornaré a mi-árbol i no-me verás jamás fasta el-día del-juicio i yo-soy-del-güeso aquel que hallaste en-el-camino i- dudaste en-el poderío-de Allah.” After al-ʿAbīd’s wonderful tale, Wāṣil concludes this point of dispute with a final argument, asserting that, if Christians argue that they worship ʿĪsā (Jesus) because he was born without blemish, the same could be said of the ram of Ibrāhīm (Abraham).

⁴² This scene is developed to greater extent in Islamic literature, as in al-Ṭaʿālabī’s *Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiyāʾ* (Stories of the Prophets). Brinner, *ʿArāʾis al-Majālis fī Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiyāʾ* or “Lives of The Prophets”, p. 643.

⁴³ See Slomp, “The Gospel of Barnabas”, pp. 671-678. For a discussion of the elements of Muslim polemics, see Wiegers, “Muḥammad as the Messiah”, vol. 52, pp. 245-291.

⁴⁴ This is conjecture, however, and I do not know whether the tale can be found in other sources.

⁴⁵ Cf. MS 11 Olim. D (este. p. tab V, Nr. 26), ff. 374r-374v with Griffith, “Bashir/Bēsēr”, p. 317 (p. 316, l. 19-24) and p. 319 (p. 318, l. 1-5).

⁴⁶ Griffith, “Bashir/Bēsēr”, p. 325 (p. 324, l. 6).

are among the houses of the Devil (*al-Šayṭān*).⁴⁷ Wāṣil takes on the challenge and, once in the church, he proclaims the Islamic profession of faith aloud. This causes great annoyance to the Christians, who ask the king to have him killed.⁴⁸ In this passage, the Aljamiado narrative includes an element that endows the incident with even greater force, by rendering the call to prayer in Islam (*aḍān*) that includes the words of the profession of faith (*šahāda*), in Arabic, in boldface, and in a larger pen stroke than the rest of the text. In the absence of the Arabic *vorlage*, we cannot know whether this was a later addition. We could nevertheless make the case that the device served as a wake-up call to Muslim believers. Moreover, having the complete *aḍān* in writing could have been of special use to the Mudejars and Moriscos living in a majority Christian environment, where it might not have been superfluous to insist on the fundamentals of Islam and the adherence to practice.

Along with knowledge of Islam, the praise of Muḥammad is quite present in the literature of Muslim communities, which is full of references to him, in both prose and verse. The Arabic text ends with a reference to the king's iconoclastic policy: "the king [...] gave orders for the destruction of the churches, and they began to destroy them [...] he put his hand to the slaughter of priests and bishops and patricians."⁴⁹ The wording of the Aljamiado account is somewhat different, and it includes a long praise of Muḥammad, which also serves as a defense of his person and mission, in addition to constituting an apology of Islam. The king of the Romans accuses Muḥammad of being a magician (*el-sihrāru*) who is charming the people (*aquel-que asiḥra a las gentes*).⁵⁰ To this, Wāṣil responds that Christians insist that 'Īsā b. Maryam was a magician (*sienpre disistes * que*

era sihereru), even though he had announced his coming.⁵¹ He further argues that Muḥammad obtained power from God to fight and defeat his enemies, and to conquer them with the sword. Christians abhor Muḥammad because he showed them their erroneous belief and the right path to be followed:

And you say that he [Muḥammad] forbids the wine and the meat of the pig on his person, but God forbids it in his Qur'ān, where he says that it is forbidden to you the dead meat and the blood and the meat of the pig and the one that is slaughtered without the name of God. Thus, your sayings are false. That God made five fountains of fresh water grow between his fingers and gave him what he did not give to a prophet or to anyone. God surpassed him over all of them, and brought him closer and sent us with prayer [...]. And declared our belief (*dīn*) to us, with which God Most High had separated us (from other communities), which God said in His honored Qur'ān that from among the beliefs in God is Islam. And God put us above all other peoples, and God created him on His belief and he died on the best of beliefs. Then God put [...] on his grave a sign that can be seen by all visitors, it is a pillar of clarity from the throne of God (*irṣ*) to his grave, the salvation be upon him.⁵²

It would probably not be in error to suppose that the readers in the Mudejar and Morisco communities appreciated this lengthy, elaborate eulogy at the end of the narrative, after which Wāṣil and his companions are released from captivity and set out for Damascus. At that point, we read that they were quite pleased to tell the people (*alḥadītaban a las chentes*) what happened to them, and they became famous because of this.

5. Some Reflections on Retelling Narratives

Let us return to the subject of retelling in the example of the polemics of Wāṣil of Damascus. The only material evidence is available in Arabic, with the exception of one Aljamiado copy, which was read by Moriscos and perhaps circulated among the Mudejars as well. As discussed, the Aljamiado adaptation exhibits a number of characteristic traits. In addition, I suggest that this adaptation is most likely based on a hitherto unidentified source other than the Arabic manuscript from Leiden or the materials used by Ibn 'Asākir in his *Ta'rīḥ*

⁴⁷ MS 11 Olim. D (este. p. tab V, Nr. 26), ff. 382v-383r: "que él es casa de Allah que según-tú-ḡīzes casa es del-aṣayṭān."

⁴⁸ Here it is worth noting the specific significance that the scene may have had for Muslims in the Christian territories by bringing to mind the intense preaching and polemical activity of Christians such as Juan Martín de Figuerola and others inside mosques on Fridays, offering them a powerful counterexample. I am grateful to one anonymous reviewer of this article for this reminder, which adds to the abundant testimonies of the public reading of narratives such as the present one among the Aragonese Muslim communities.

⁴⁹ Griffith, "Bashir/Bēsēr", p. 327 (p. 326, l. 10-11). Here again the version offered by al-Zāhidī differs from the others and, as noted above, ends rightly after the scene in the church and thus it does not include this passage. al-Zāhidī/al-Miṣrī, *al-Risāla*, pp. 60-61.

⁵⁰ MS 11 Olim. D (este. p. tab V, Nr. 26), f. 384r.

⁵¹ MS 11 Olim. D (este. p. tab V, Nr. 26), f. 384v.

⁵² MS 11 Olim. D (este. p. tab V, Nr. 26), ff. 384v-385r.

or by al-Zāhirī. The absence of this link does not undermine the arguments for a certain narrative continuity in the retelling of the story in the West. This follows particularly from the fact that change does occur, but it does so only to a certain extent, so the fundamental structure, as well as the main arguments of the Muslim-Christian polemics, are largely retained in the adaptation. However, these are changes that still allow us to easily read the Aljamiado text as a product of Muslims residing in Christian territories.

The pious stories and the inclusion of the *adān*, the lengthy praise of Muḥammad, together with an emphasis on particular subjects in the defense of Islam, all seem strongly connected to the literary and social universe of the Mudejars and the Moriscos. It could be argued that the story ultimately recalls the period of Islamic splendor, its expansion in the Mediterranean, and the Muslims' fight against and ultimate victory within these regions. The protagonist of the story is a captive, Wāṣil, who is of sufficient age and wisdom, and who has the courage to enter the sacred place of his Christian captors and proclaim the Islamic creed call to prayer aloud. It is easy to see why this could have been an extremely attractive plot for communities who were witnessing the collapse of the world surrounding them, who saw how the territories that had once belonged to Islam were now passing into the hands of the Christians, and who could have also felt as if they were captives in their own land, while practicing Islam in secrecy. Under Christian power, these Muslims had a duty similar to that which Wāṣil took upon himself: to wage a final battle against non-Muslims and to win, even if the victory was merely rhetorical. One cannot but entertain the suggestive thought that the Moriscos would not have seen the convert Baṣīr, but the "king of the Romans" as the polemical figure of King Philip II, who was eventually expected to be defeated by the emerging Muslim (Ottoman) power⁵³.

The available textual evidence and the lack of access to the original Arabic of this adaptation nevertheless require a tempered reading from the textual evidence available to us. It is not possible to determine the extent to which the Aljamiado narrative conformed to the social and religious needs of Muslims residing in Christian territories or the extent to which it closely followed its source (which was not necessarily of peninsular origin).

⁵³ I am grateful to Ana Echevarría Arsuaga for this suggestion.

Only the circulation in Aljamiado provides some evidence of the meaning that the polemics of Wāṣil of Damascus could have had for their religious minority communities. This meaning, however, may not coincide with the one just provided.

I would like to end the discussion on this polemic, which was read on both shores of the Mediterranean, by addressing the issue of change and continuity in storytelling, particularly as it relates to the idea of retelling and recreating narratives (which, as stated in the introduction, are nearly synonymous). Reflection on the subject seems to suggest that, although they are both deeply interconnected, memory (i.e., the collective memory of the group) could arguably have a different weight in each case. To help explain this point, I provide a brief reminder and present an example. The reminder concerns the social dimensions of storytelling. More specifically, in storytelling, it is the storyteller who ultimately decides what to include and what to exclude from a story. Although the storyteller has substantial leeway to do so, there are limits, as the story must be recognized by the audience. For polemical texts such as Wāṣil's, one could say that boundaries straddle the line between the common religious heritage in which the texts are situated, where such materials tend to be seen as universal, on the one hand, and the freedom that the storyteller or copyist grants himself to modify anonymized works, lacking a clear authorship, in order to adapt them to the needs of the intended audiences at any given time, on the other.⁵⁴ The example requires taking an important leap into the present, drawing on a scene from Tarantino's latest film, *Once upon a time in Hollywood*. Tarantino bases the scene on a well-known event: the murder of Roman Polanski's wife, Sharon Tate, by the Manson family. In this scene, however, the Manson family does not enter the Polanskis'

⁵⁴ As one of the anonymous reviewers of this article points out, this can be seen in the changes in narratives. For example, it could be visible in the changes to an Indian tale that has been collected in the *Mahabharata*, in the *Çukasaptati* collection with regard to its displacement to the West, and in its reception among Muslims, Christians, and Jews. Among Muslims, the narrative became known as Moses and Ya' qūb the butcher. See, Menéndez Pidal, "El condenado por desconfiado de Tirso de Molina," pp. 11-23 for the Muslim and Jewish version. The same can be said of texts of polemical works, which modify the originals and include details that could hardly have been found in the latter. See, De Epalza Ferrer, "Notas sobre un nuevo 'falso' en árabe, de moriscos en el exilio, antes de la expulsión general (¿Túnez, 1603?): la pseudo-Tuhfa de Turmeda (3ª parte)." I am grateful for these reading suggestions.

house, but that of their neighbors and, instead of being the killers, the Mansons themselves are killed. The only way to understand how Tarantino succeeds in conveying a meaningful story that can still be recognized in light of the actual events is to recall that the director is overtly appealing to the shared, previous, knowledge of viewers. In other words, he is appealing to the memories of numerous retellings of the episode that they have heard or seen, and these retellings will inevitably cross their minds during the screening of the film.

This example illustrates the possibility of the simultaneous reactivation of retelling and recreating, in which different meanings —sometimes

conflicting— can be attached to the same narrative. This perspective allows us to see recreation as an exercise (not necessarily reflected in the text) that is based on a multiplicity of retellings of a particular narrative, converging along the time axis and being re-enacted in certain circumstances. It also shows that, even without major changes in a particular narrative, the narrative can be transformed, and its transformation can shape community memories. As a final reflection, it can be said that, in the Morisco retelling, Wāsil's polemic is well understood in light of this last aspect: the memory of Islam and its splendor on the part of these minorities, particularly those in the Iberian Peninsula.

Appendix

Wāsil of Damascus

Escuelas Pías de Zaragoza, MS 11 Olim. D (este. p. tab V, Nr. 26), ff. 371v-385v

/f. 371v/esta es-una⁵⁵ declaración muy grande i de mucho aviso para los creyentes-con Allah el señor de todas las cosas * bi-smi Allah al-raḥmān al-raḥīm * wa-ṣalā Allah 'alā sayyidnā Muḥammad al-karīm 'alā ālah wa-ṣḥābihi wa-salamu taslīman * este es el recontamiento de Wāsil de Di- /f. 372r/masco * fue recontado por * Aḥmad * ibn 'Abd Allah por Ibn 'Abbās que él-ḍiso dentro nuestro agüeste de las villas de-al-islam * a las-villas-de los romanos a fazer cavalgada i-ubieron grande ganancia i salieron-salvos i-acaeçió que prendieron entre sus manos un-mançebo muy hermoso y prendiolo-Umar * ibn 'Abd Allah al-'Azīz i-fizolo muslim * i demostrole el-adīn i-a leir del al-Qur'ān * i laora que fue cumblido el moço i-se demostró la-çençia en-él vīnole al-Šayṭān⁵⁶ i-apareçióse a-él * i-trásole en-memoria la-ley-de-la-naṣara i-aḍīn de su-padre i pensó el-moço en-ello i-fuyó de las-villas de al-islam a las-villas de los-romanos i laora que llegó aquello-a su padre envió por-él y ḍisole qué es-que me an llegado de tú yā mançebo qu-as desado tu ley i te-as-puelto a la-ley de e la-naṣara esta nuestra ley i-esto pe[s]codóselo⁵⁷-diciendo que por-qué causa abía desado la-ley i-el adīn de los muçlīmes pues ya ellos tenían entendiço que s-abía fecho creyente i era muçlīm i viendo ellos /f. 372v/ que s-abía huido dentre los muçlīmes a ponerse entre-llos a hazerse naṣaran maravilláronse mucho i por-eso le diseron que por-qué abía desado su al-dīn i creençia i s-abía vuelto a ponerse entre-llos a hazerse naṣaran i-a esto-ḍiso el-mançebo que porque la-ley-de sus-padres i-abuelos era la-ley de-la-naṣara * que por-eso abía quesido volverse otra veç naṣaran i laora plazióle mucho al-rey e hízole muchas merçeçes * i fue del juicio de Allah que los-romanos empresionaron treita onbres de los muçlīmes en-sus villas i-entre-llos abía un-viecho muy-sabio i-él era da Ḍimasco i laora que llegaron en la-çiuadaḍ captivos pusiéronlos delante del-rey Bašir * i mirolos * uno después de otro * fasta que llegó el-viecho i demandó cosas al-viejo i no le volvió rrespuesta demandole segunda vegaḍa i no-le volvió rrespuesta i volvió a dezir al-viejo i no-le habló ḍiso qué es que no-me hablas eres sordo eres muço i no le rrespuso el-viejo ningunas tanto que le mandó el-rey que se fuese en-la-mañana mandolo-venir delante de-l i volvió /f.373r/ el-rrey a pescodarle i no le volvió rrespuesta ninguna i-ubo por-esto el-rey muy grande pesar * i ḍiso el-rey loado es Dios aquel-que hizo siete çielos i siete tierras sin-ayuda ninguna yo-maravillome de vosotros los al-'arabes que deçīs que halláis en puestro al-Qur'ān donde ḍize * in maṭala 'Īsā 'inda Allah ka-amṭala Edam ḥalaqahu min ṭurābin ṭumma qāla lahu kun fa-yakūn que quiere dezir que la-senblança de 'Īsā enta Allah que es-

⁵⁵ Dashes indicate the connections between words, as found in the manuscript copy. Occasionally, however, these connections make it difficult to understand the text properly and have been removed or adapted. Accents have been added for the same purpose but the punctuation is faithful to the original.

⁵⁶ al-Šayṭān: the devil.

⁵⁷ The reading at this point is unclear. A *šin* has been added to the word after “pe” with a thinner *qalām*. I suggest reading “pescodóselo” as stemming from “pescodar,” or “he asked him.”

como la-senblança de Edam * que fue haleqado⁵⁸ de tierra i-dīso a él sé i luego fue * i con todo esto calló el-viejo * i no le rrespondió ninguna cosa laora dīso el-rrey demándote por-el-delitaje⁵⁹ de tu al-dīn i creencia i por-el serviçio-que sirvas-de tu al-dīn * i tu amorio con-tu mensajero Muḥammad * que tú-me rrespondes * laora dīso * el-viecho i cómo-te rresponderé viéndote que eres-rrey tan-pusante i viéndote en-el-estado que estás i-el grande señorío * i yo soy cabtivo entre tus manos aviltado i si-yo-te rrespondiese con cosa-que te diese gusto yo-abría de mentir /f. 373v/ i menospreçiar mi al-dīn i si-te rrespondo * con-lo-que te desplacerá yo-te tengo de rresponder con la-verdad i será aquello muy-fuerte i pesaroso sobre tú i sobre los-tuyos de tu creencia porque vosotros sois enemigos de verdades-i rrespondiéndote con la-verdad aun-tengo-miedo me mandarás matar o hacerme algún-daño * enpero yo-te tornaré rrespuesta si-querrá Allah donde meto la-fe del-Señor de los çielos i de la-tierra i su-omenaje * i lo-que tomaron-los annabīes de la-fe de Allah sobre las al-umas posadas que por-ello no-me mandarás hazer daño ninguno ni ne airarás contra mī el-día de-oy i yo-te daré rrespuesta la-cual nunca la-oīste de ninguna de las gentes dīso el-rey Bašir yo-te la-doy la-fe de Dios i-el-omenaje que tomó Yaqūb sobre sus fijos de la-fe de Dios su-omenaje que si-tú me rrespondes a mí-con-la-verdad * i me viences que yo-no-te mandaré hazer daño-ninguno ni-me ensañaré contigo por-el delitaje que sirvo en-la-fe de Cristo * dīsole laora el viejo plega a de Allah que sea asī como-tú-prometes * pues-sepas yā rey que a lo-que dizes a la semblança de Allah ‘azza wa-ğalla aun-te-daré /f. 374r/ buena rrespuesta i te diré la-verdad empero defiéndome con Allah en-que-yo ubiese de declarar su semblança a tu-seso porque Allah es grande i noble i onrado que no-puede ninguno llegar a figurarlo ni a semblançarlo con-semblança * a cuanto * lo-que es-dīcho de la-senblança de Edam * i de ‘Īsā * yo-te declararé con-ello-si-quiere Allah mi-Señor i Señor de todas-las cosas * i tú-senblança * ellos eran dos ombres que comían i bebían * i dormían * i se despertaban * i orinaban i fentaban esto es verdad dīso el-rey Bašir verdad es todo eso dīso el-viecho pues neçios porque espartīs i los-desigualáis pues que son iguales i de una semblança en poder de Allah i-avantajáis * ‘Īsā más que a Edam * dijo Bašir * porque Edam fue de tierra halaqado * i ‘Īsā tenía dos al-rrūhes un-arrūh que sabía lo entrínstico de las cosas i-otro al-rrūh que sabía lo-que abía en-lo-fondo de-los-mares * i no-se-caía fuja de árbol verde i seca que él no-lo sabíase * dīsole el viecho por Allah nunca vi-onbre que me razonase con-sejante de lo-que tú me razones * que digas que ay onbre que tenga dos al-rrūhes ninguno jamás ni-puede ser eso a ninguna manera en-su cuerpo * i más que dizes que sabía con-él las-cosas /f. 374v/ secretas dīsole Bašir si-a-la-fe * yā viecho enbero qué es lo-que niegas de aquesto * dīso el-viejo yā rey fesme a saber si-sabía de aquellos-dos al-rrūhes cuál-de-llos era el-fuerte o el-flaco dīsole Bašir * mátete Allah yā viecho qué quieres que te diga que si-yo-te digo que yo-lo-sé * ya-me vençerás porque-si-digo que lo-sé es-me forçado darte razón de aquello i por ventura ayudaría a tu-razón * dīso el-viejo si él-sabía cuál-de-los-dos al-rrūhes era más-fuerte pues por-qué no esbiaba de su-persona la-muerte cuan-dezīs vosotros que pasó muerte i pasión por derremir a vosotros * qué neçesidad lo-obligaba por derremir derremir a vosotros morir él * pues-qué es-tu-rrespuesta mátate Allah * i calló el-rrey i-no le-rrespuso-ninguna-cosa * ni-halló-rrespuesta para-él * dīso el-viejo * yā neçio qué es que no-me-rrespondes* por tu torbeza * pues por-qué serviys a la-cruç * pues-que allegáis vosotros que ‘Īsā el-cual-tomáiyis por señor dezīs que fue enforçado en-ella nunca gentes adorar a las forcas como vosotros * i decīdme fue enforçado con-su-voluntad o fue a su-pesar * dīso laora el-rrey * Bašir * mátate Allah yā viejo * qué quies que te diga si yo-te digo que fue enforçado con-su contentaçión vençirme as con tu rra- /f. 375r/ zón i yo-no-sé qué rresponderme dīsole el-viecho destrúgate Allah yā ġahil⁶⁰ que es tan-grande tu-torpeza i tu neçedad * i-a tu çençia si-tú-dizes que fue enforçado con-su-contentaçión e así-sabes que aya ninguno que se contente ni aya plazer que maten su persona por dar contento a ninguno pero dime tú yā rrey abrías plazer que te matasen a tú por auselvar-tus vasallos o te enforcasen dīso Bašir * no a ninguna-manera * dīsole el-viejo pues si es-que fue enforçado a su-despecho por-qué adoráis a señor que no-pudo ni-ubo poder de defenderse ni-desviar de-l la-muerte adónde es puestra çençia * i cómo-se desaba matar quien dezīs que tenía dos-al-rrūhes uno-fuerte i-otro que dezīs que sabía las-cosas intrínsticas * pues aquí-pareçe çer que él-no-tenía poder ninguno dīso a él el-rrey Bašir * por-el-deleitaje de

⁵⁸ haleqado: created.

⁵⁹ Pleasure, rejoicing and right, grade of right. See, Vespertino Rodríguez, Failde Vázquez, & Fuente Cornejo, “Contribución de los textos aljamiado-moriscos al estudio léxico aragonés”, pp. 71-72.

⁶⁰ ġahil (ġāhil): ignorant.

aquel-Señor que yo-adoro no-conviene que semejante que tú vivas en-este mundo solo una-ora porque tú eres viejo de grande çençia i de grande fundamento en-tu-ley * i muy esforçado en tu al-dīn i-yo-soy compañero de la espada i de potencia i no-de çençia mas enpero yā viejo malo yo te verné para mañana con-el-perlado mayor que luego serás ve- /f. 375v/ nçiço entre su-manos i serás atallado de tú-rrazones i-él-te menospreçiará tu adīn * i laora saliose el-viejo de delante el-rrey i-el que dezía el más escojiço de los al-dīnes es el-dīn * de al-islam * i quien-cobðiçara sino-es de al-dīn * de al-islam * otro al-dīn no-será rreçebido de-l i será en-la-otra ad-dunya⁶¹ de los-perdīdos * i cuando fue * fue en-la-mañana mandó llamar el-rrey al-viejo i dontró el-viejo i halló con-él un-pelrrado muy grande i de grande barba de buena-presençia laora dīso el-rrey Bašir al prelado este es-un-onbre de los al-‘arabes que ay en-él seso i-entendimiento sino que agora a perdīdo su seso i caduca de viejo i-es fuera de memoria i-agora cuenta-que lo-pendremos en-nuestra ley i cumplírsele a a él la-buena ventura embañándolo tú * yā belrrado en-el-algua bendita-una vegada laora salrrá de sus-pecados como el-día que naçió del-vientre de su-madre * laora dīso el-viejo por çierto que razones-bien * deziçme agora qué es el-algua bendīta-dīso el-prelado un-agua limbria * dīsole el-viejo i quién bendize el algua más de-lo-que-s-bendīta dīso el-pelrrado yo-la-bendīgo i los-que son-pelrrados como-yo i los-que an-siço antes que-no-yo /f. 376r/ dīso el-viejo yā neçio amuéstrame veamos si-ay a tú pecados ningunos * i-en-aquellos que fueron antes que tú dīso el-belrrado sī que no-ay ningún cuerpo umano que no-aya a-él pecados dīsole el-viejo pues-yā enemigo de Allah cómo * puedes ensanteçer ni-bendezir el-algua quien no puede esbiar de sí los-pecados que ya sabes que no ay ninguno que quiera más para ningu-no que para sí-mismo * dígalo-por razón que quien de-sí no-puede echar los-pecados mal los echará ni-tendrā poder para echarlos ni-de-sviarlos⁶² ni-perdonarlos a ninguno los-pudiese perdonar mejor los-perdonaría a-sí-mismo * i-abía-de querer más el-bien para-él que no-para otro ninguno dīso el-pelrrado fue mandado i-açuñado⁶³ de ‘Īsā ibn Maryam * dīso el-viejo pues-yā torpe * ġahil * fesme a saber a mí-su-rrecontamiento i cómo-lo ensantençió o la bendīso * ‘Īsā ibn Maryam * dīso el-pelrrado ello es que Yahyā ibn Zakariyā bañó a ‘Īsā ibn Maryam * en el-río del-Urdūn una bañada i mashó⁶⁴ sobre su cabeça i rruegó a él con-el al-baraka⁶⁵ i la fuerça * dīsole el-viejo esto es-grande maravilla i qué menester tenía ‘Īsā /f. 376v/ ibn Maryam * i Yahyā ibn Zakariyā * para que-lo-bañase pues-des-a manera ya-pareçe ser Yahyā era más-sabio * i más-adelantado i mayor en-granda que no ‘Īsā pues-que dīzes que rogaba a otro para él con-el-al-baraka-i con la-fuerça luego él no-era señor poderoso para darse al-baraka-i creçerse fuerça * en-sí-mismo * aquí-se parece puestro desyerro pues-vosotros-os-condenáis por vuestras bocas i con puestros-dīcho-s que el-Señor-que yo-sirvo no-ay-otri que ruegue para Él ni-ay quien sobre-l bonga fuerça ni-ay quien ruegue a otro ningu-no que meta al-baraka sobre-l que Él-es poderoso i-Él-es el-que pone las-al-barakas-i-Él-que da los arizques-i-Él-que haze merçedes con la-bendīçión-i-Él-es el-que da la-fuerça-i-Él-es el-fuerte i-Él-es sobre toda cosa poderoso * i como vio el-rrey el-dezir del-viejo i que no-abría el-pelrrado rrespuesta para aquello sonrióse fasta que se lanço sobre su-cara i-púsose su-manga en-su-cabeça i-dīso * al-pelrrado rrespondīle yā belrrado dīsole el-pelrrado yā tan-mala-para tú yā Bašir * i maravillaste de su-dīcho * a tú-ya-te-tendrā luego-vençido i muy-presto-te vol-vería de su-ley según-yo-veo i no-supó el-pelrrado qué rresponderle * ninguna-cosa /f. 377r/ dīze que llegó aquello al-rrey de los-rromanos i que-los-mandó llamar delante de-l * a los-dos i fueron delante del-rrey i-dīsole al-viejo qué es esto yā viejo que me an-dīcho que menospreçias nuestra ley i que tienes en-ello grande atrevimiento cuantra nuestro pelrrado * dīso el-viejo yā rrey por Allah yo-me estaba dello-callaço i no le quería rresponder en-ninguna-cosa i tanto fue su-porfiçiar en-ello que yo-ya-no-lo-pude-çufrir i me fue forçado volver por mi-al-dīn * dīsole el-rrey yā viejo pues-veamos agora si-abrá a tú razón alguna para que nos-vienças dīsole el-viejo si-yā-rrey demanda por lo-que querrás que tú-te rresponderé a ello si-querrá Allah i polveré por mi-adīn * i si-tú-yā rrey me vençerás yo-creeré en-tu-ley i si-yo-te vienço no-quiero de tú-otra cosa sino-que nos-des-liçencia a-mí-i-a-mis compañeros que nos-vamos a nuestra-tierra salvos i seguros pero no-te-ma-l-enconies

⁶¹ dunya (dunyā): world; this world as opposed to the hereafter.

⁶² As it is rendered now, it is unclear whether it should be read as diverting them (“desviarlos”), or atoning for them (“de expiarlos”). In light of the context of use of the same word elsewhere in the text I tend to think that the first is more likely.

⁶³ açuñado: usage sanctioned by tradition.

⁶⁴ mashó: anointed.

⁶⁵ baraka: blessing.

ni-te aires tú-ni-los-presentes por lo-que-yo hable ni-diga en-defiensa-de mi ley * dīsole el-rrey plázeme mas-habla con-verdad que si-tú-me hablas-con verdad yo-te aseguro de enojo-ninguno i laora el-rrey envió-por el-pelrrado mayor aquel que toman de-l los-cristianos su-ley i laora que fue presente delante del-rrey /f. 377v/ cayó el-rrey y los-que allí estaban alrededor de-l-asağedados⁶⁶ al-pelrrado i como esto-vio el-viejo quedó espantado i dīso quién-es este que todos os-asağedáis a él a menos de Allah dīsole el-rrey ese-es el-pelrrado mayor aquel-que tomamos los-cristianos de-l la-ley dīso a él el-viejo tiene-mu-jer o compañía dīsole el-rrey no a la-fe que ya lo apartó dīso⁶⁷ de las mujeres * i cómo-abía de aber a él mujer ni-fijo-s que-l-es [tan]⁶⁸ casto i tan-linbio que no-se ensuziaría su-cuerpo con mujer ninguna ni-le-haze menester * mujer ni-fijos ni-para ello les-fue dado para la-çiençia dīsole el-viejo yā-rrey i cómo-alegas que este pelrrado tan-santo o tan-digno él-os da vuestra ley cuando quiere i-os-la-quita cuando quiere * i-él come i bebe i duerme i-se-sbierta i-orina-i fienta i mue⁶⁹ i puelve al-ğifa⁷⁰ podrīda podiente así-como-yo i tú comen-sus-carnes los-gusanos i no-tiene poder desviar de su persona los-pecados ni-tiene poder de-sviar de su-persona la-muerte ni-los espantos * de la-otra vida ni-los-tormentos de la-fuesa- /f. 378r/ s ni el-espanto de Maliku-l-Mawt * i Malaku el-Mawt es-ħalecado de los ħalecados i después envía a él la-muerte * no-ay a él-poder ni-fuerça para defenderse * ni esviar de-l la-muerte ni-su enbriaguesca fuerte * pues cuál es más-fuerte i más onrrado i más poderoso Malaku el-Mawti * o el-pelrrado mayor * otrosí que allegáis i dezís que el-Señor de todas las-cosas que hizo abitança en-la escuridad del-vientre i-en la estrejura de la-madre de la-mujer i que se ensuzió como se-nsuzia la-criatura en-el-vientre de su madre pues qué menester tenía el-Senior de-todas las-cosas ponerse en-equella estrejura i-engostiura i suziedad siendo Él el-ħalecador de toda cosa i criador de toda cosa i poderoso sobre toda cosa dīso que calló el-viejo i no habló más esperando rres-puesta * i no-rrespondieron ninguna-cosa sino-que se devantó el-rrey i-dīso a los-pelrrados visteis ombre jamás que mejor perteneçia sobre la-muerte que sobre-ste viejo neçio dīso el-pelrrado yā rey la-mue- /f. 378v/ rte no-se le-scusa por ninguna manera * dīsoles el-viejo yā pelrrado denodada fesme a saber por ‘Īsā * ibn Maryam * pues allegá-is que-l-fue Allah poderoso * pues cómo-no-tuvo poder de desviar la-muerte * a su-madre pues-que era cosa-tan-amada i tan-cara en-su-poder * i calló el-pelrrado i no-le rrespuso ninguna cosa dīsole el-viejo qué es que no-me rrespondes estróigate Allah i vosotros serviys por Señor a ‘Īsā ibn Maryam * porque no-tenía padre pues veis aí a Edam ‘alayhi is-salām que no-tuvo-padre ni-madre que fue más-i lo-ħalecó Allah con-su-mano * i sufló en-él-de-su esbirutu i mandó a los-al-malakes que se al-sağedasen a él * i-aquello por engrandeçimiento a él * i no-mandó Allah que se al-sağedasen a ‘Īsā * que según-vosotros dezís i allegáis más-perteneçiente era que al-sağedasen a ‘Īsā que no a Edam * porque Edam * fue ħalecado de-tierra i ‘Īsā * fue ħalecado en-vientre linbio esto es-verdad o no dīso i calló el-pelrrado i no-rrespondió ninguna cosa dīso laora el-viejo pues alled a Edam * i-a ‘Īsā * i serán vuestros dos señores * menos-de Allah porque ya-dīso /f. 379r/ Allah en-el-Qur’ān que la-seblança de ‘Īsā enta Allah es-como-la-senblança de Edam * que fue ħalecado-de tierra después dīso a él * sey i luego fue después dīsoles el-viejo si-vosotros serviys a ‘Īsā porque-l rrevivcaba los muertos pues veis aí a Ĥasqīl⁷¹ * que pasaba un-día por una-l-makabara⁷² i ruego a de Allah que le rrevivcase un-muerto i rrevivcáselo Allah con-su liçençia i no era Ĥasqīl * semejante de Edam * ni-de ‘Īsā porque Ĥaskīl tenía-padre * i madre i rrevivcáselo Allah aquel-muerto sobre sus manos pues allegad a Ĥasqīl i-a Edam * i-a ‘Īsā i serán a vosotros tres-señores * sines-da Allah dīso i calló el-pelrrado i-el-rrey i-no-le-rrespondieron ninguna cosa después dīsoles estróigueos Allah por-el poco de vuestro conoçimiento i por la-poca de vuestra ley i de vuestra creençia si-vosotros serviys a ‘Īsā porque os-dio a ver milagros pues veis aí a Yūša‘a ibn Nun * moço-de Mūsā ibn ‘Imrān que peleaba-un-día con-sus enemigos i hazíasele tar- /f. 379v/ de i ruego a de Allah ġazza (sic) wa-ğalla que rretuviese-l sol un-ora y paró Allah a él el-sol una-ora fasta que vinçió a sus enemigos pues aqueste es milagro muy-grande grande * pues allegad a Yūša‘a ibn Nūn * i-a Edam * i-a ‘Īsā ibn

⁶⁶ asağedados: prostrated.

⁶⁷ I suggest reading it as Dios, i.e. God.

⁶⁸ Word added above the sentence.

⁶⁹ To be read as *muere*.

⁷⁰ ġifa (ğīfa): corpse.

⁷¹ Ĥasqīl: Ezekiel.

⁷² makabara (maqbara): graveyard.

Maryam * i-a Ḥasqīl i serán-a vosotros cuatro señores sines-de a Allah * después dīso a él el-viejo si es-que servíys a ‘Īsā porque lo-subió Allah al-çielo pues veis aí a Edrīs el-al-*nnabī* que lo-puyó Allah al-çielo i-a-çadascuno-de santos ubo a ellos ventaja muy-grande i-milagros muy-maravillosos pues allegađ a Edrīs * i-a Edam * i-a-Ḥasqīl i-a ‘Īsā i-a Yūša‘a ibn Nun * i serán a vosotros çinco-señores a menos-de Allah * i si-vosotros servíys a ‘Īsā porque se carbían a él los-ríos con-liçençia-de Allah pues catadvos aí a Mūsā ibn ‘Imrān * que firió con-su-gayata en-la-biedra fuerte * i se carbieron-a él doze fuentes después tornóse su-cayata culebra con-liçençia de Allah i después-tornóse cayata-otra vegađa con-su-poderío pues-allegađ a Mūsā i-a Edam * i-a ‘Īsā i-a Ḥasqīl i-a Edrīs * i-a Yūša‘a ibn Nun * i se- /f. 380r/ rán vuestros seis señores sines de Allah * i-si-vosotros os-maravisáis de Maryam * binta ‘Imrān * porque parió a ‘Īsā sines-de ser enjendrađo de padre catađaos aí al-annaqa⁷³ de Šāliḥ que salió de la-pena en-el río de al-Qurei * i con-él un potranco i-aquello e no-ne-ora con-el-poderío de Allah i-era que llamaba a las compañas de Tamūd * i deziales yā los-de Tamūd quién querrá de vosotros leche o miel venga a mī i-eran los-de Tamūd * doze al-qabilas⁷⁴ en-conto muy-grande que no-sabía su-conto sino Allah ta‘ala i venían los-de Tamūd * i muy-en leche i miel en-una en un-vasillo i no-se mesclaba partiđa con-partiđa i-era aquello su-proviçión es esto-verdađ o no dīso el-pelrrađo i-el-rrey verdad es-todo aquello dīsole pues allegađ l-anneca de Šāliḥ i su-potranco i todos los sobredīchos i serán a vosotros ocho-señores sines de Allah i si-vosotros os-maravijáis de Maryam binta ‘Imrān * porque parió a ‘Īsā de ocho-meses-i no abía el padre pues veis aí la-fija de-l-al-‘Abid aquel que fue en-la tenporađa de los-de Banī Isrā’ [i]l⁷⁵ por lo-que halló su padre güeso en-el-camino i no sabí- /f. 380v/ a si era de los hijos de Edam * uno i-encontrólo el al-Šayṭān i dīsole e así-sería poderoso tu-Señor de halecar de-ste güeso persona de güeso * i carne i sangre i después el-al-‘Abid echó el-güeso de su-mano en-su-casa i dio Allah a naçer a d-aquel-güeso un-árbol con-su poderío que Él es sobre tođa cosa poderoso muy-grande de verdes fujas il-rramas i-blandas las fuja-s como-manteca i de olor del-misk⁷⁶ i de sabor de miel i comió la-fija de al-‘Abid una-fuja de aquel árbol * i-enpreñóse * de un ficho con-el poderío-de Allah i-pariólo-por-su boca i habló con-su-madre i habló con-su-agüelo i comió-con-ellos i-alḥadiçó⁷⁷ con-ellos en-el mismo-día que naçió después cayó en-el-pozo i murió i después-de aquello vino el-al-‘Abid de su asumu‘a⁷⁸ i llamolo i devantose el-niño linbiando su-cara con su-mano i fizieron a saber a al-‘Abid que él era muerto en-el-pozo i- rrevivcolo Allah con-su poderío después dīsole el niño yā agüelo-yo-ya me-abía muerto en-el-pozo i después e seído rrevivcađo con-el poderío de Allah i-ahora yo me tornaré a mi-árbol i no-me verás jamás fasta el-día del-juicio i yo-soy-del-güeso aquel que hallaste en-el-camino i- dudaste en-el-poderío-de Allah i fuese el-niño i púsose dentro en-el-árbol i volviose güeso así-como era la-primera veç i-es este milagro muy-grande es esto ver- /f. 381r/ dađ o no-dīso a él el-rrey verdađ es todo aquello que ya-lo hemos oído dezir i lo emos conoçido dīso a ellos el-viejo yā rrey neçio i pelrrađo torpe allegađ aquel-güeso i-a Edam * i a ‘Īsā * ibn Maryam * i-a Ḥasqīl i-a Yūša‘a * i-a Edrīs i-a-Mūsā i-al-annaqa de Šāliḥ * i su potranco * i serán-a vosotros nueve-señores sines de Allah * i si-vosotros os-maravijáis de ‘Īsā ibn Maryam * porque naçió sines-de máscula veis aí el-carnero de Ibrāhīm sines-de maruwāq⁷⁹ * tomađlo por señor pues-que tan-poco es puestro seso i puestro entendimiento i como-allegáis sobre Allah las-mentiras i hazéis figuras de palo i servisla-s sines-de Allah que os-nuecen i no os-aprovechan-i su nozimiento es más-que su-provecho * pues cuál-es el-figurador de-llos que sepa-verdađamente hazer la-figura de ‘Īsā ni-de su-madre Maryam * binta ‘Imrān i cómo-seryís a señores que los conpráis-i vendéis i los-mercáis * dezīs que ‘Īsā ibn Maryam * bebió el-vino i mentís en-ello que ‘Īsā nunca lo-bebió jamás ni-quién fue antes-de-l de los-an-nabíyes ni-de-los-me- /f. 381v/ nsajeros i cómo-os-atrevíys i-allegáis i dezīs que-l vino que es la-sangre de Allah i-el pan la-carne de Allah i no es asī que el-vino su-raíz es las-uvras que ya-plantó la-viña Būh⁸⁰ ‘alayhi * il-ssalām * i bebió

⁷³ She-camel. For this rendering, see Suárez, Raquel. *El compendio islámico de Mohammad de Vera*. Oviedo: Universidad de Oviedo, 2016.

⁷⁴ qabilas (qabīla): tribes.

⁷⁵ Reading unclear.

⁷⁶ misk: musk.

⁷⁷ alḥadiçó (Ar. ḥādaṭa): spoke, conversed.

⁷⁸ asumu‘a (samā‘): auditioning.

⁷⁹ Perhaps “the one with horns.”

⁸⁰ Perhaps Burh, the black slave.

del-vino i se enbriagó i fue a la plaça i-escubrió su vergüença * i riöse de-l su-fijo i-encubriolo el-otro fijo i-rruegó a de Allah sobre-aquel-que se abía rreído de-l que fuese negro i fuese cabtivo de-los-blancos i de las tres-leyes * i harramó el-vino sobre su-persona que nunca lo-bebería jamás porque el-vino es caso-de toda perdiçión i desobidençia i-guía-sobre la-mentira i-es llave de todo mal * i vosotros-absolvéis todas las-cosas por causa del-vino i-el-vino lançolo Ġibrīl * de la-l-ġanna⁸¹ * por mandado de Allah * i como-ponéis vosotros el-ban carne de Allah que Allah subhānahu * no-ay a Él * carne ni-sangre ni-güesos ni-manos ni-biesdes ni-llegan con-Él * los-pensamentos que no ay a Él-semblançador ninguno ni-padre ni-madre ni-fijo ni-compañero ninguno ni-aparçero en-su reísmo antes es uno-digno que nunca-ubo a Él igual ninguno i no es hāleqađo antes es hāleqađor * de toda cosa poderoso sobre toda cosa * /f. 382r/ no-ay semejante que Él ninguno en-la-tierra ni en-el-çielo i-Él-es oiđor veđor i vosotros os atrevīs enta-de Allah con-las mentiras i allegáis que sois vosotros de la-criaçión de Maryam * fija de Imrān i no es-ansí que antes sois de la-criazón de Yakūb fijo de Ishaq i-no-os hātenáis i Īsā fue hātenađo i Yaḥyā i Zakariyyā * fueron hātenađos ansimesmo-tođos los-al-nnabīs i mensajeros i como allegáis las mentiras que Allah ta‘ālā si-Él-comiera o bebiera o đurmiera i-andara sobre la-tierra cayéranse los çielos i-la-tierra i-el-al-‘irš⁸² * i-el-al-kursī⁸³ i tornará tođo plubia menuđa * i si-comiera o bebiera de fuerça abía-de morir * pues tođo muerto se detalla su rostro i tođo quien a él ay prençibio a de haber fin * i Allah ‘azza wa ġalla * es el-primero i-el çaguero el-demostrante i-el entrínsico i-Él-es sobre toda cosa sabiđor * i laora calló el-rrey i-el-belrrađo i-maravijáronse del-plađinamiento de su-lengua i de su-grande saber i điseron ellos al-viejo de su-atrevimiento * i đīsoles el-viejo yā menospreçiados qué es /f. 382v/ que no-me rrespondéis máteos a Allah đīso a él el-rrey i-el-pelrrađo yā viejo tú eres ašaytān de los ašaytānes de los al-‘arabes que ta ejado la-mar en-nuestra-villa para que fuelles sobre nosotros nuestra ley que por el-Señor que sirvo tú eres perteneçiente que te maten * đīso el-viejo yā rrey si-tú-me quieres matar poderoso eres para ello * pues que soy cabtivo en-tu-poder * más enpero por Aquel-que el mi alma-es en-su-poder si-llegase tal-cosa al-rrey de los muçlīmes él-đentraría en-tus-villas i destruiría tu-tierra i te đerrocara tu-iglesia i quebrará las figuras i las-ídolas i cruces i quemaría toda tu-tierra i matará con la espada o todo quien-sirve otro señor menos-de Allah i si es-que tú yā rrey i tú-pelrrađo me vencéis con-razón en vuestra ley a vuestra ley me tornaré i si-yo-os-vienço mandadme salir a mí-i-a-mis compañeros salvos a las-villas de los muçlīmes đīsole el-rrey a tú-sea aquello * enbero ves a la-iglesia mayor que no-te hará ninguno-ninguna cosa ni enojo i cuando dentrarás inmiente a tu-Señor i-engrandeçelo * i lóalo que él es casa de Allah que según-tú-đizes casa /f. 383r/ es del-ašaytān đīso el viejo yā rrey yo e miedō sobre mi persona đīso el-rrey no-ay as miedō a ninguna-cosa i fuese el-viejo a la-iglesia i puso su-đedo en su-oreja i đīso a đaltas voces Allahu akbar * Allahu akbar * ašhad an lā ilahu illā Allah * ašhad an lā ilahu illā Allah * ašhad an Muḥammadan rasūl Allah * ašhad an Muḥammadan rasūl Allah * ḥay ‘alā al-šalāt * ḥay ‘alā al-šalāt * ḥay ‘alā al-filāḥ * ḥay ‘alā al-filāḥ * Allahu akbar lā ilahu ilā Allah ** i cuando los-de la-iglesia oyeron aquello-vinieron al-rrey muy-aprisa i-al-pelrrađo gritando de toda parte i lugar i-ansī que por-aquello quisieron-matar al-viejo * i cuando el-rrey oyó aquello hízolo venir delante de-l i đīso yā viejo quién-ta llevađo a hazer lo-que has-fecho đīso el-viejo yā rey tú-no-me-disiste que fuese que-ra casa /f. 383v/ de las casas-de Allah i-que nonbrarse en-ella el-nonbre de Allah i que lo ensenteçiese đīsole el-rrey sī enpero es-porbrađo tu-persona a la-muerte porque abías-de publicar con-mujas palabras đīso el-viejo yā rrey mintros i tú-no-me prometiste que yo-fuese a tu-iglesia i que ensanteçiese en-ella a mi-Señor i lo-loase đīso sī i laora volviöse el-rrey a los-que-staban-alrrededor de-l i đīsoles verdad đīze el-viejo que no-ay camino a vosotros por matarlo * porque él-os-a-vençido con-razón justa * điseron los-rromanos con su-ajuntamiento yā rrey mávalo si-no él te debedará de dentrar en-tu-iglesia i laora đīso el-rrey yā viejo salte tú-i tus compañeros de nuestra tierra đīso el-viejo plazeme yā rrey pero quiero os-demandar porque servīs a lo-que hazéis con-puestras-manos i-aquestas-figuras aquellas que son en-vuestras iglesias vosotros no-las-abéis-hallađo en-el-Evanjelio aquel-que fue deçendīdo sobre Īsā fijo-de-Maryam * ni-Allah ta‘ala no-os-a-mandađo con-aquello * i lo-conpráis i-ađoráis a imájines i cru- /f. 384r/ zes i semejanças falsas i vosotros os atrevéis enta-de Allah con los grandes atevimientos i

⁸¹ ġanna: paradise.

⁸² ‘irš (‘arš): throne (of God).

⁸³ kursī: throne, pedestal (of the throne of God).

vosotros *deztis* que adoráis a lo-que fue devallado a *Īsā* antes no sino-que adoráis al-*ašaytān* que se figura a vosotros en-puestros-coraçones i-os-saca-del-camino-dereçado i-os-guía al-camino desyerrado porque seáis en-su-compañía en-el-fuego i * i-a-daquello os-trairán los-señores que serviys que-os-llevan engañados asī-como engañaron a Edan i lo-sacaron-de la-l-ğanna que su servir a ellos os-nueze i no-os aprovecha i laora *dīso* el-rrey sacadlo de entre nosotros a d-aqueste viecho porque-l es al-*šaytān* de los *ašaytānes* de los al-*arabes* que-l es de las compañías de Muḥammad el-siḥrāru⁸⁴ aquel-que asihra a las gentes i les-hizo desar su-al-dīn i-el-al-dīn de sus padres i-les-mostró otro * al-dīn sines-del-suyo *dīsole* el-viejo por Allah mientes en-toḍo lo-que as-dīcho que antes es Muḥammad ibn *ʿAbd Allah* amigo de Allah i sīllo de los al-*nnabīs* i candela-de las gente- /f. 384v/ s i señor de los mensajeros i mensajero del-Señor del Señor de las-gentes que ya-era *Īsā ibn Maryam* * que os albricio-con-él i sienpre disistes * que era *sihereru* * i laora que lo envió Allah mor (sic) mensajero i le dio-poder i fuerça-sobre sus enemigos los descreyentes i le ayudó sobre-llos-i le dio a conquistar las-partidas con la espada * guiolos Allah i mataron a toḍos aquellos que servían a otro señor sines-de Allah i porque-llo lo-aborreçisteis i lo esmentíys porque os-sacaba de la-descreencia i os guiaba-al-camino dereçado de la-creencia i vosotros *deztis* que él *ḥarrama* el-vino i la-carne del-puerco sobre su-persona antes la *ḥarrama* Allah ta *ʿāla* * en su al-Qurʿān al-*ʿazīm* * donde dize es *ḥaram* * a vosotros la-mortezina * i la-sangre * i la-carne del-puerco * i lo que es-degollado sines del-nombre de Allah pues puestros *dījos* son-falsos * que Allah *subḥānahu* * le hizo crecer entre sus-dedos çinco fuentes de agua dulce i diole Allah lo-que no-dio a da-*nnabī* ni-a ninguno i-avantajolo Allah * /f. 385r/ sobre toḍos ellos i-açercolo Allah a Él i mandonos con-el-açala sobre-l sobre-l sea la salvación-de Allah i sobre los-suyos toḍos i declaró a nosotros nuestro al-dīn aquel-que nos espeçialó Allah ta *ʿāla* con-que *dīso* Allah en su al-Qurʿān * onraḍo que de los al-dīnes de Allah es la-l-islām * i-avantajonos Allah sobre toḍas las gentes i *ḥaleqolo* Allah sobre su al-dīn i murió sobre el-mejor de los al-dīnes * después-puso Allah *ʿazza wa ġalla* sobre su-fuesa señal que lo-vee toḍo quien lo-visita i-es un-pilar de claridad de al-*irš* * fasta su-fuesa la-salvación-de Allah sea sobre-l i laora *dīso* el-rrey no-ay camino en-que este viejo * esté en-mi-tierra solo un-ora porque-l es-loco i se jogó el-*ašaytān* con-él por el-mucho de su-leir en-su al-dīn i mandó sacarlo a él i-a-sus-trenta-caballeros captivos que fuesen a su-tierra i fuéronse i quedaron las gentes-de aquella-çibdaḍ maravillados i mandólos-meter en-lamar i fuéronse i llegaron a-da Dimasco * i-alḥadiḍaban a las chentes con lo-que les abía acaeciḍo con-el-rrey de /f. 385v/ los-rromanos y con-los-pelraḍos-i con-Bašir * i llegaron las nueves de aquello al-rrey de lo-s *muḥlīmes* i-envió por-ellos i tuvo grande plazer con-ellos i-ḍioles mucho-bien i-amaba mucho el-ḥadiḍar con-el-viejo i púsolo en-su-compañía i-en-su-consejo i no-hazía el-rrey ninguna cosa sin-consejo del-viejo * llamaḍo Wašīl de Dīmasco * i-esto es-lo-que nos llegó-del-recontamiento de Wašīl de Dīmasco * wa-l-ḥamdu li-llah rabbi il-*ʿālimīn* wa ṣalā Allah *ʿalā sayyidnā Muḥammad* * al-*karīm* *

⁸⁴ *sihereru* (*sahḥār*): sorcerer.

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