

# Open Iberia/América: Teaching Anthology

<https://openiberiaamerica.hcommons.org/>

## Omar Patón, *Memoir of the journey to and from Mecca* (*Memorial de ida y venida hasta Meka*) (Castile, 15<sup>th</sup> c.)

Pablo Roza Candás, *Università degli Studi di Napoli "L'Orientale"* (2021)

English translation by David Wacks, *University of Oregon* (2021)

### Introduction

#### The author and his times

Until the end of the 15th century, the Mudéjars—Muslims of Castile, who were subject to Christian rule—enjoyed a certain freedom in the exercise of their religious practice, which allowed them to fulfill, among other precepts, that of the pilgrimage to Mecca. From the early years of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the community now called Moriscos (Muslims baptized as Christians who often continued to practice Islam clandestinely) experienced a tightening of restrictions, such as the prohibition of performing rites and ceremonies, wearing traditional dress, and speaking Arabic. As a consequence, their freedom of movement within and without the Iberian Peninsula was similarly restricted, including complying with the *hajj* or pilgrimage to Mecca, one of the five fundamental pillars of Islam.

Omar Paton was one of the last Castilian Muslims to fulfill this precept, and so, at the end of the fifteenth century undertook the much-longed for pilgrimage to Mecca from his home city of Ávila. Upon his return from the East, Paton depicted the experiences and emotions he lived during his long and dangerous pious expedition in his *Memoir of the Journey to and from Mecca*.

Beyond the testimony of this work, we know very little about the Mudéjar from Ávila who lived between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. Thanks to Christian administrative documentation, we know that he worked as a builder in the Duero River valley, as had his father, Alicaro Patón, and we find him in 1490, one year before his departure for Mecca, working on the city walls of Medina del Campo. Therefore, we can imagine an individual who, by virtue of his profession, belonged to a relatively well-positioned family in Ávila's Mudéjar community, with contacts in other towns of Castile, and with a certain measure of mobility and economic independence.

Christian administrative documentation of the time offers us some information regarding Patón's journey as well. The exact date of his departure to the East is registered in the *guiatge* (safe passage) books of the Valencian royal tax administration, which mention a permit granted to Patón for the journey to Tunis from the port of Valencia (November 12, 1491), together with his pilgrimage companions: Muḥammad del Corral (from Extremadura) and a cousin of Patón named Abdallah the Morisco (also from Ávila).

We know less, however, about the date of return to Castile, which must have been between 1497 and 1499, the year when Patón is mentioned again in notarial documents from Ávila.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/). You are free to download, share, adapt and republish, provided you attribute the source and do not use for commercial purposes.

## The work: Memoir of the Journey to and from Mecca

The most significant manuscripts in the *aljamiado* corpus<sup>1</sup> describe Muslim practices and rituals. Given the increasing acculturation and assimilation of Castilian and Aragonese Muslim minorities into the dominant Christian society, *aljamiado* texts play a fundamental role in safeguarding the religious identity of the Mudéjars, and later, the Moriscos. In this sense, Patón's *Memoir of the Journey to and from Mecca* contains one of the last references to the obligation of the *hajj* among Castilian Muslims; it stands as an exceptional contribution of *aljamiado* literature to our knowledge of late Spanish Islam.

While Patón's original manuscript, possibly written in Latin characters, has not survived, we do have two *aljamiado* copies (ms. L771-4 of the Fondo Documental Histórico de las Cortes de Aragón and ms. 11 of the Escuelas Pías de Zaragoza), both composed in Aragonese territory during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. By comparing the two, we note two different revisions in the transmission of the work: a longer one, more faithful to the original, and another, shorter, copied into the codex from the Courts of Aragon. This all points to both a notable diffusion of Patón's work at the time and a fluid connection between the Muslim communities of Aragon and Castile.

Belonging to the Classical Arabo-Islamic genre of the *rihla*, though influenced by Christian travel literature, the *Memoir* is above all a pragmatic work that allows the Morisco reader for whom it is impossible to fulfill the obligation of the *hajj*, to feel the emotions generated during this pious journey. The autor, in plain and simple language devoid of any literary baggage, offers detailed references and descriptions, intertwined with quite a few anecdotes from all along the journey. All this allows Patón to let us experience, in a kind of interior pilgrimage, the vision of unknown places and realities, or the surprise and fascination of contemplating the unique and the marvelous.

Omar Patón conceived his work as an autobiographical account combining narrative and expository styles in a linear progression, temporal as well as spatial. Similar to a captain's log, the author describes the itinerary, providing precise chronological details about the time elapsed between the various points along the journey. On the other hand, the narration is enriched with expository elements, such as descriptions of places, or historical, economic, religious, and socio-cultural notes. With all this, the accuracy and precision of his information let us imagine a creative process based on notes taken during the journey, from which the author composes his account once he returns to Castile.

The selection here is formed from fragments relating to the visit of Omar Patón and his companion Muḥammad del Corral to Damascus, Jerusalem, and Alexandria. In some of these episodes we see references to places of Muslim religious interest, but he also mentions a number of Christian enclaves that were not unfamiliar for them as Castilians. The most significant is the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, where our pilgrims encounter a guardian who happens to be a friar also from Ávila and later arranges a letter of safe conduct for their return to Spain.

It is precisely their hybrid identity as both Muslims and Castilians, as well as their own language, none other than Castilian, that attracts quite a bit of suspicion in Palestine, to the point where they are imprisoned for a time and accused of being non-Muslims. Here we have a paradox: in the eyes of their fellow Muslims the pilgrims are seen first as Castilians and then as Muslims, which lands them in prison, while for the friar from Ávila at the Holy Sepulchre, their religion is not that important, but rather the fact that they are countrymen, which results in their favorable treatment.

---

<sup>1</sup> An *aljamiado* text uses the Arabic alphabet (instead of Roman alphabet) to represent a Romance language (usually Castilian or Aragonese).

## **Omar Patón, *Memoir of the journey to and from Mecca*<sup>2</sup>**

[*Damasco*]

A diez días de la luna de aramađán, entramos depués de pascua, en la çiuđað d-Adimasco. Bien dize que la clamaban paraíso terranal. Esta es una gran çiuđað, mayor que la çiuđad de Hālaba i más rica i muy viçiosa i de muchas frutas de diversas maneras. I por [fol. 322 r] tođa la çiuđað ay caños de awa dulçe.

En međio d-ella está una meçquida muy rica i grande que tiene seysçientos i noventa pieđes de ancho en cuadra. La meçquida de Túneç međi i tenía ðozientos i sesenta pieđes. La meçquida de Hālaba međi i tenía cuatrozientos pieđes. Jamás emos visto tan rica meçquida como esta de Ađomasco, que se clama la meçquida de Banī Umayya<sup>ta</sup> porque la hizieron los de Banu Umayya<sup>ta</sup>. Tiene tres torres: en la mayor i más antiga es ðonđe á de bařar 'Içà, 'alayhi i'ççalām, antes ðel día del Judiçio. Aquí está la fuesa de Yaħya fijo de Zacarías.

Dos leguas más adelante pasamos por ðonđe mataron al que cortó la cabeça a Yaħya. Aquí está la fuesa de Hūd l-annabī, 'alayhi ççalām. Diřieron que estaban aquí enterrađos más de onze mīl annabīes. A muchos d-ellos vesitemos i conoçimos muchas de aquellas fuestas de quién era cađaguno porque tenían escritos sus lonbres

[*Damascus*]

Ten days after the Ramadan moon, after Easter,<sup>3</sup> we entered the city of Damascus. With good reason is it called an earthly Paradise.<sup>4</sup> It is a large city, bigger than Aleppo, and richer, and very fertile and with many different kinds of fruit. And throughout the whole city there are fountains of drinking water.

In the center there is a large, richly decorated mosque, that is six hundred ninety feet wide square, while mosque of Tunis, that I also measured, is two hundred sixty feet wide, and the mosque of Aleppo is four hundred feet. We had never seen a mosque as fancy as that of Damascus, that they call the Umayyad mosque because the Umayyads built it. It has three towers: the tallest and oldest<sup>5</sup> is where Jesus, 'alayhi as-salām,<sup>6</sup> will come down before the Day of Judgement. Here is the tomb of John,<sup>7</sup> son of Zachary.

Two leagues further we passed by where they killed the man who beheaded John. There also is the tomb of the Prophet Hud, 'alayhi as-salām.<sup>8</sup> They told us that once there were eleven thousand prophets buried there. We visited many of the tombs and learned who was buried in each because their names were written on them. During

---

<sup>2</sup> Source: Pablo Roza Candás, 2018. *Memorial de ida i venida hasta Maka. La peregrinación de 'Omar Pađon*. Oviedo: Servicio de Publicaciones, págs. 290-291; 296-302 and 323-324. The fragments dealing with Damascus, Jerusalem and Palestine correspond to the version found in ms. 11 of Escuelas Pías de Zaragoza (fols. 321v-322v; 325v-328v; 328v-330r, respectively), while that dealing with Alexandria comes from ms. L771-4 of the Fondo Documental Histórico de las Cortes de Aragón (fols. 22r - 22v).

<sup>3</sup> 'Eid al-fītr, celebrated at the close of Ramadan.

<sup>4</sup> Patón here refers to the vision of Damascus as Heaven on Earth, a recurring theme found in geographers as well as Muslim travelers (al-Muqaddasī, Ibn Jubayr, Ibn Bađūta) and Jewish authors (Rabbi Petahiyah of Regensburg).

<sup>5</sup> The reference is to the minaret of Jesus, or al-Manāra al-Sharqiyya, on the left side of the Umayyad Mosque, through which, according to Muslim tradition, Jesus will come to earth on Judgement Day.

<sup>6</sup> "Peace be upon him," a traditional formula accompanying the name of Muhammad or other prophets of Islam.

<sup>7</sup> The reference is not to the tomb of John the Baptist, but rather to the shrine that contains his head in the same Umayyad Mosque.

<sup>8</sup> "Peace be upon him."

ençima de sus fuesas. En-aquel tiempo toços los más morían a los pieçes de sus caballos en guerra.

Aquí vesitamos el [fol. 322 v] lugar donde cortaron la cabeça al ficho de ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, raḍiya Allahu ‘anhu. Dišieron que mataron en-aquella batalla trenta caballeros del-aṣiḥaba del-annabī Muḥammad ṣ‘m porque lo querían alçar por rey. Están aquí en-esta meçquida de Banu ‘Umaya<sup>ta</sup> dos alquranes, el-uno de la una parte del-almihrāb, el-otro de la otra parte del-alminbara, escritos en ços pabellones de la mano de ‘Uzmān ibnu ‘Affān, raḍiya Allahu ‘anhu.

## [Jerusalén]

Otro día llegamos a la çiudad de Jesusalem, i traíamos por conpañero de Adimasco un caballero de l-Andaluzia que abía seido cristiano que se llamaba l-alcayde Marfūz, de quien reçebimos mucha onra con-él. I con la fortuna del tiempo [fol. 326 r] del-ivierno, de los fríos grandes que hizo depués que sallimos de Adimasco, cayeron malos mi conpañero i el-alcayde Marfūz, que harto trabajo pasaba en servir a ellos i-a sus caballos. Estuvimos en-esta çiudad dende la vispara de Navidaç fasta ços días dentro en janero.

that time most of them died in battle, in the line of fire.

Here we visited the place where they beheaded the son of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib,<sup>9</sup> *raḍiya Allahu ‘anhu*.<sup>10</sup> They say that in that battle<sup>11</sup> they killed thirty knights from among the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad, *ṣallā-llāhu ‘alayhī wa-sallam*,<sup>12</sup> because they wanted to crown him king. Here in the mosque of the Umayyads there are two Qur’ans,<sup>13</sup> one in the mihrab,<sup>14</sup> and the other in the minbar,<sup>15</sup> written on two alcoves<sup>16</sup> by the hand of ‘Uzmān b. ‘Affān,<sup>17</sup> *raḍiya Allahu ‘anhu*.<sup>18</sup>

## [Jerusalem]

The next day we arrived at the city of Jerusalem. Accompanying us was a knight from Andalusia who used to be a Christian, named Marfus, the *alcaide*<sup>19</sup> who treated us very well. With the winter weather and intense cold upon leaving Damascus, my companion and the alcaide Marfus fell ill, and it was rough going attending to them and their horses as well. We were in that city from Christmas Eve until January 2<sup>nd</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> Husayn, second son of ‘Alī bnu Abī Ṭālib and grandson of Muhammad, martyred in the famous Battle of Karbala (680), his head was taken to the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus. It is not, however, the place where he was beheaded, as Patón suggests, but rather the so-called Mašhad ar-Ra’s, where it was later kept.

<sup>10</sup> “May Allah be pleased with him.”

<sup>11</sup> The reference is to the abovementioned battle of Karbala.

<sup>12</sup> “Blessings of God be upon him as well as peace.”

<sup>13</sup> Somewhat erroneous reference, given that said mosque has only a single copy of the Qur’an of Uthman.

<sup>14</sup> *Mihrab*, niche of the mosque facing the direction of Mecca.

<sup>15</sup> Minbar, pulpit of the mosque.

<sup>16</sup> In mosques, a tent or curtained-off area.

<sup>17</sup> ‘Uzmān b. ‘Affān, one of the Banū Ummaya of Mecca. Grandson of ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib and son-in-law of the Prophet, married to Ruqāya or Umm Kulzūm. Third Caliph (644-656).

<sup>18</sup> “May Allah be pleased with him.”

<sup>19</sup> From Andalusī Arabic *alqāyid*, in turn from Classical Arabic *qā’id* ‘leader [of troops]’, in late medieval usage ‘one charged with the defense of a fortress or castle,’ (i.e. castellan) (Diccionario de la Real Academia Española).

Vesitamos esta casa santa i los lugares donde servían los a<sup>1</sup>nnabíes a<sup>1</sup>da Allah ta<sup>1</sup>ālā i l-alquba de Şahra, donde llaman los muçlímes Casa Santa i los cristianos lo llaman el Santo Santórun, donde está la peña la que dizen Alşahra, que tiene setenta *pieðes* de largo i cuarenta de ancho. Junto con-esta alquba está el tenplo de la Cadena donde hazía justiçia el rey Dāwūd, ‘alayhi i<sup>1</sup>ççalām. A la otra parte del tenplo de Dawūd, ‘alayhi i<sup>1</sup>ççalām, está l-alqubba i l-almihrab de donde subió nuestro a<sup>1</sup>nnabī Muḥammad ş m a los çielos.

A la otra parte, d-enta donde sale el sol, está Ğāmi‘u Ālāqşā que es una meçquida muy rica i muy grande, en donde se ajuntaban los a<sup>1</sup>nnabíes en su tienpo a hazer a<sup>1</sup>şşala, que la claman esta meçquida los cristianos el tenplo de Santa María. Agora hazen to<sup>1</sup>dos los de la çiuada a<sup>1</sup>şşala en-ella. [fol. 326 v] Estaba delante del-almihrāb un-alqur’ān de los mayores que yo nunca vi. Yo lo medí i tenía seis palmos i-una mano de largo i cuatro palmos i medio de alto.

A la otra parte, enta donde se pone el sol, vī qu-estaba la balsa de Banī Içrā’ila, que la llaman los cristianos la Puerta de Ramos, donde salió ‘Içā, ‘alayhi ççalām, el día de Ramos. Esta puerta estaba çerrada de par de fuera de cantería fasta las dos partes en-alto, i por de dentro estaban chapa<sup>1</sup>das de fierro i de plomo, con çerraduras muy fuertes, que me dişeron que no se an de obrir fasta el día del Judiçio, que las á de obrir ‘Içā, ‘alayhi ççalām.

We visited that holy city and the places where the Prophets served Allah *ta‘ālā*,<sup>20</sup> and the *al-qubba* of Sahra,<sup>21</sup> that the Muslims call the Holy House and the Christians the Sanctum Sanctorum,<sup>22</sup> near the boulder that they call al-Sahra, that is seventy feet long and forty feet wide. Next to it is the temple of the Chain,<sup>23</sup> where King David, ‘*alayhi as-salām*,<sup>24</sup> would hold court. On the other side of the temple of David, ‘*alayhi as-salām*,<sup>25</sup> is the dome and the mihrab where our Prophet Muhammad, *şallā-llāhu ‘alayhī wa-sallam*,<sup>26</sup> ascended to Heaven.

On the other side, where the sun rises, is the Mosque of al-Aqsa, which is a very fancy, very large mosque, where the Prophets in their time would gather to pray, and the Christians call this mosque the temple of Saint Mary.<sup>27</sup> Now all those who live in the city pray in it. In front of the mihrab is one of the largest Qur’ans that I have ever seen. I measured it and it was six palms and a hand long and four and a half palms high.

On the other side, where the sun sets, I saw the cistern of the Banu Isra’il,<sup>28</sup> that the Christians call the Gate of Palms, where Jesus, ‘*alayhi as-salām*,<sup>29</sup> appeared, on Palm Sunday. This gate was closed from the outside with carved stone two thirds of the way up, and inside it was covered in iron and lead, with heavy locks, that —according to what they told me— shall not be opened until the Day of Judgment, and it will be Jesus, ‘*alayhi as-salām*,<sup>30</sup> who shall open them.

<sup>20</sup> “God, may he be exalted”

<sup>21</sup> That is, the Dome of the Rock.

<sup>22</sup> The Sanctum Sanctorum (Holy of Holies), the sacred area of the Tabernacle and Temple of Jerusalem.

<sup>23</sup> The Dome of the Chain, on the Temple Mount.

<sup>24</sup> “Peace be upon him.”

<sup>25</sup> “Peace be upon him.”

<sup>26</sup> “Blessings of God be upon him as well as peace”

<sup>27</sup> The reference is to the old church of Saint Mary, where the al-Aqsa Mosque currently stands.

<sup>28</sup> Birket Israel (Birket Banī Içrā’il), a Roman-era cistern on the Temple Mount.

<sup>29</sup> “Peace be upon him.”

<sup>30</sup> “Peace be upon him.”

En-esta casa santa hazen a<sup>l</sup>ṣṣala to<sup>d</sup>as cuatro reglas de mu<sup>ç</sup>limes. En la me<sup>ç</sup>quid<sup>a</sup> que está enta la parte de poniente fazen a<sup>l</sup>ṣṣala los de la regla de Malik. En la me<sup>ç</sup>quid<sup>a</sup> de Ġāmi<sup>ʿ</sup>u Āqṣ<sup>a</sup> hazen a<sup>l</sup>ṣṣala los de la regla de Šāfi. En l-alqubba donde está la peña que se llama Baytu Almaqadi<sup>ç</sup> hazen a<sup>l</sup>ṣṣala los de la regla de Ḥanafī. En l-alqubba del rey i a<sup>l</sup>nnabī Çulaymān, <sup>ʿ</sup>alayhi <sup>ç</sup>çalām, hazen [fol. 327 r] a<sup>l</sup>ṣṣala los de la regla de Ḥanbalī.

I to<sup>d</sup>as cuatro reglas están dentro del patio de la Casa Santa, que abéys de saber que esta casa es una de las mayores casas que pueden ser en-el mundo, que yo me<sup>d</sup>í en-el patio d-ella, de un cabo al-otro i-abía en-él dos mil i çiento i doze p<sup>i</sup>edes. Ella está en cuadra, que poco más tiene de largo que de ancho. Me<sup>d</sup>í en-el almuṣāla, que está alto, donde está l-alqubba mayor. Tenía seis çientos i veyte i çinco p<sup>i</sup>edes en cuadra. Era to<sup>d</sup>o solado de alabastro.

Suben a este almuṣāla por to<sup>d</sup>as cuatro partes, que tiene siete escaleras i tienes cada escalera setenta i dos p<sup>i</sup>edes de ancho. I tiene cada escalera çinquenta escalerones, to<sup>d</sup>os de alabastro. En-el-aqubba mayor me<sup>d</sup>í trezientos i sesenta p<sup>i</sup>edes. En l-alqubba re<sup>d</sup>onda que está de par de dentro, donde está la peña que se llama Baytu Almaqadi<sup>ç</sup> me<sup>d</sup>í i tenía noventa p<sup>i</sup>edes. Deba<sup>ç</sup>o de la dicha peña la llaman los mu<sup>ç</sup>limes [fol. 327 v] Almaqadi<sup>ç</sup>, i los cristianos el Santo Santórun, i los judíos Milallā Banī. Aquí vesitamos la fuesa del rey Çulaymān. En l-alqubba donde está este rey no pueden entrar ningún cristiano ni judío.

I de aquí fuemos al val de Josafat i di<sup>ç</sup>éronme que en-este val á de ser el día de Josafat el Juicio. I entramos donde estan las fuesas de Maryam, i de <sup>ʿ</sup>Imārān i de Ḥanna, padre i madre de Maryyam. I están enterrados en-una cueva muy fonda, que

In this holy house all four schools of Muslims pray.<sup>31</sup> The Mālikīs pray in mosque that is on the western side. The Šafi<sup>ʿ</sup>īs pray in the al-Aqsa Mosque. The Hanafīs pray in the Dome of the Rock, called the Holy House,<sup>32</sup> and the Hanbalīs pray in the Dome of the King and Prophet Solomon,<sup>33</sup> <sup>ʿ</sup>alayhi as-salām.<sup>34</sup>

The four schools are inside the patio of the Holy House, and you must know that this house is one of the largest in the world, for I measured the patio from one side to another, and it was two thousand one hundred and twelve feet. It is a rectangle, slightly longer than it is wide. I measured the outdoor prayer space,<sup>35</sup> that is very high, where the largest dome is. It was six hundred and twenty-five feet on each side, all tiled in alabaster.

They go up to this prayer space in four entrances, that have seven staircases, each with fifty steps, all covered in alabaster. The largest dome measured three hundred sixty feet wide. The round dome in the interior, where they rock is that they call the Holy House, measured ninety feet wide. The Muslims call the part below this rock the Maqdis, the Christians Sanctum Sanctorum, and the Jews the *Millala Bani*.<sup>36</sup> Here we visited the tomb of King Solomon. In the dome where this king is buried no Christian or Jew may enter.

From there we went to the Valley of Jehosaphat, and they told me the Judgment will happen there.

<sup>31</sup> That is, the *maqāhib* or schools of Islamic law: Hanafī, Mālikī, Šafi<sup>ʿ</sup>ī, and Hanbalī.

<sup>32</sup> Literally, ‘Sacred House’ or ‘Holy House,’ referring to the city of Jerusalem.

<sup>33</sup> The reference is to the Qubbat Sulaymān (Dome of Solomon) mentioned by some authors of the time such as al-Suyuti (Egypt, c. 1445–1505 CE) and Mujir al-Din (Palestine, 1456–1522 CE).

<sup>34</sup> “Peace be upon him.”

<sup>35</sup> Open air prayer area inside a mosque.

<sup>36</sup> Appears to refer to the cornerstone of the Temple of Jerusalem.

pasamos a visitarlos donde estaban por-una escalera cavada en la misma peña, que tenía cuarenta i ocho escalerones. Alunbraban a estas fuesas de día i de noche. En el dicho valle vimos el-alqubba del Trasoro Encantado de Fir'un.

Subimos al monte Olivet a visitar el-alqubba de donde fue subido al cielo 'Īçà, 'alayhi ççalām. Aquí deşo señalado su pieđ el đerecho en-una piedra. En-el mesmo monte, çerca de esta alqubba está enterrada Rabiya, ficha de nuestro padre Ibrāhīm, 'alayhi ççalām.

Fuemos a la otra parte de la çiuadađ de Jerusalem [fol. 328 r] a visitar el tenplo de Dawūd, 'alayhi i'ççalām, que está debaşo de la iglesia de monte Sion. Aquí hallamos cuatro frayres, i el-uno era d-España, del reyno de Cataluña, que l-entendíamos muy bien la lengua. I abriéronnos la iglesia i entramos en-ella, y-era muy pequeña, como una ermita, i tenía la puerta chapađa de fierro. I demostráronnos donde lavó 'Īçà, 'alayhi ççalām, los pieđes a los apóstoles i demostráronnos en donde comió con-ellos.

I fueron con nosotros a la casa de Ānaç y Gayfás, que está una çerca de otra. I vimos la cámara i el lugar donde açotaron a 'Īçà, 'alayhi ççalām. Esto đigo asegún ellos me dişeron. I demostráronnos la

We went in where the tombs of Mary<sup>37</sup> and her parents, Imran<sup>38</sup> and Anna, are. They are buried in a very deep cave, that in order to visit we had to go down a staircase carved into the rock itself that had forty-eight steps. These tombs were illuminated day and night. In the same valley we saw the dome of the Enchanted Treasure of Pharaoh.<sup>39</sup>

We went up the Mount of Olives to visit the dome from which Jesus,<sup>40</sup> 'alayhi as-salām,<sup>41</sup> ascended to heaven. Here he left the imprint of his right foot on a stone. In the same mountain, near the dome, Rabi'a, daughter of our father Abraham, 'alayhi as-salām,<sup>42</sup> is buried.

We went to the other side of the city of Jerusalem to visit the Temple of David, 'alayhi as-salām,<sup>43</sup> that is beneath the Church of Mount Zion. Here we found four friars, and one was from Spain, from the Kingdom of Catalonia, and we understood his language very well. They opened the Church for us, and we went in and it was very small, like a chapel, and the door was reinforced with iron. Then they showed us where Jesus, 'alayhi as-salām,<sup>44</sup> washed the feet of the apostles and where he ate with them.<sup>45</sup>

They went with us to the houses of Annas and Caiaphas, that are near one another. And we saw the room and the place where they whipped Jesus, 'alayhi as-salām,<sup>46</sup> as they told us. Then they

<sup>37</sup> The tomb of Mary, in the Valley of Kidron, to the northwest of Jerusalem, known in Arabic as the *Wadi al-Joz* (Walnut Valley) and *Wadi al-Nar* (Fire Valley), mentioned by Christian writers of the times such as Friar Diego de Mérida (ca. 1510) or the Marquis of Tarifa (ca. 1520).

<sup>38</sup> 'Imrān, father of Mary according to Muslim tradition.

<sup>39</sup> Appears to refer to the Monolith of Silwan, or Tomb of the Daughter of Pharaoh, in the Silwan district of Jerusalem.

<sup>40</sup> Refers to the Church of the Ascension, or *Kanīsat as-Saliq*, in which, according to tradition, is found the footprint of the right foot of Christ (*al-Qadam*) the moment he ascended to heaven. The place was a shared site of worship for Christians and Muslims, as writers of the time such as Friar Diego de Mérida report.

<sup>41</sup> "Peace be upon him."

<sup>42</sup> "Peace be upon him."

<sup>43</sup> "Peace be upon him."

<sup>44</sup> "Peace be upon him."

<sup>45</sup> That is, the site of the Last Supper.

<sup>46</sup> "Peace be upon him."

pedra donde se asentó Maryam del desmayo que le vino cuando vió levar a su fícho preso. Vimos las casas de Pilatos donde lo levaron i entramos en-ellas. Más nos demostraron: donde moró Maryam treze años i el-altar donde dezía misa San Juan i la piedra donde hizieron apóstol a Santa Matía. Otro día fuemos [fol. 328 v] a Galilea, que está a la otra parte del monte Olivet, donde dizen que se juntó 'Içà con sus apóstoles.

En medio de la çiuðad de Jesusalem está la iglesia mayor del monte Calvario, donde está el sepulcro debajo de su monumento. Están las puertas çerradas i sobre las çerraduras sus sillos. I dentro están los frayles. I llamamos a la puerta i salieron a obrir i hallamos por guardián de la puerta un frayre castellano de la villa de Arévalo, que lo llamaban Fray Agustín, de la orden de San Francisco, hicho de García de la Cárçel. Él nos demostró el lugar donde crucifiquaron 'Içà, 'alayhi ççalām, i la capilla donde lo sepultaron, según ellos dizen i creyen. Este frayle nos dio cartas para las tierras i señoríos de cristianos, que pudiésemos pasar seguros a Castilla.

[Palestina]

El día segundo de janero partimos para Ḥalil A<sup>1</sup>rraḥmān, que se clama el Val d-Ebrón. En medio de la çiuðad está una meçquida muy rica donde ay muchos a<sup>1</sup>nnabíes enterraços i es[fol. 329 r]tán puestos en bóvedas i tienen muy ricas alqubas con puertas de fierro fuerte. Son siete fuesas. Las que suben sus alqubas más arriba que las otras i más ricas son la de Ibrāhīm i la de Içḥāq i la de su mujer. I la de Ya'qūb i la de su mujer, i la de Yūçuf, 'alayhi i'ççalām. La fuesa de Yūçuf está en medio de la meçquida. Delante del-

showed us the stone where Mary sat, dejected, when she saw them take her son away prisoner. We visited the houses of Pilates, where they brought him, and went into them. They showed us even more: where Mary lived for thirty years, the altar where Saint John said mass, and the stone where they made Saint Matthew an apostle. The next day we went to Galilee,<sup>47</sup> which is on the other side of the Mount of Olives, where they say Jesus<sup>48</sup> gathered with his apostles.

In the middle of the city of Jerusalem is the Church of Mount Calvary, with the tomb beneath the monument. The doors are locked and sealed. Inside are the friars. We called to them from the door, and they came out to open it and as it turned out, one of the guardians of the door was a Castilian friar from the town of Arévalo called Fray Agustín, of the Order of Saint Francis, son of García de la Cárçel. He showed us the place where they crucified Jesus, 'alayhi as-salām,<sup>49</sup> and the chapel where they buried him, according to what they [the Christians] say and believe. This friar gave us letters of safe passage through the lands of the Christians so that we might return safely to Castile.

[Palestine]

On the second day of January we left for al-Ḥalil Al-Raḥmān, which is also called the Valley of Hebron. In the middle of the city there is a very lavish mosque<sup>50</sup> where many prophets are buried. They are placed under stone ceilings and have very ornate domes with gates of thick iron. There are seven tombs: the ones whose domes are higher and more ornate than the others are those of Abraham,<sup>51</sup> of Isaac and his wife,<sup>52</sup> that of Jacob and his wife, and that of Joseph, 'alayhi as-salām.<sup>53</sup> The tomb of Joseph is in the middle of

<sup>47</sup> The village of Galilee or Betania and not the Galilee region, with which it should not be confused. Christians and Muslims came here to visit the tomb of Lazarus, not mentioned by Patón.

<sup>48</sup> This would be the site of Gethsemane, so Patón's coordinates are correct

<sup>49</sup> "Peace be upon him."

<sup>50</sup> Refers to *al-Haram al-Ibrāhīmī* or the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron.

<sup>51</sup> Also that of his wife, Sarah.

<sup>52</sup> Rebecca.

<sup>53</sup> "Peace be upon him."



alminbbara están las fuesas de Ya' qūb i de su mujer.

Aquí se reparten una gran aṣadaqa todos los días, cuanto pueden cozer dos hornos grandes i más doze onbres de día i de noche – ¡tanto se gasta! – i no falta a ninguno su raçión, ora sea de la çiudad o de fuera. I dan a qaḍa uno dos panes i-una escudilla de cozina de harina con azeyte, que tienen de contino cuatro calderas grandes como de teñir sobre el fuego con sus cozineros i rapartiḍores. Estuvimos aquí medio día.

Queríamos ir a la çiudad de Gaza i diéronnos que no fué[fol. 329 v]semos allá, que no era seguro el camino, que abía muchos ladrones, i ubimos de tornar a la Casa Santa. I por-enḍicias de un malón<sup>54</sup> onbre nos echaron presos ḍiziendo que éramos cristianos i que no teníamos lengua 'arabī, que íbamos por-engañarlos. Pusiéronnos presos a todos tres, a cada uno en su cárçel, i yo demandé que me diesen trujamán, i que me llevasen delante del qaḍī mālekī, porque nosotros éramos de la regla de Mālekī. Demandé por alqaḍī mālik porque en-esta çiudad de Jesusalem ay cuatro alqaḍīs, cada uno de su regla i un corregidor sobre todos. Leváronme delante del-alqaḍī i tomó de mí su información de cómo éramos muçlimes de tierras de cristianos, que no sabíamos la lengua arábiga, que veníamos en romería a la casa santa de Jesusalem i a la Val de Ebrón i que abíamos de subir a la onraḍa casa de Maka. I oyendo esto mandonos soltar luego.

I ya que estábamos para partimos, vinieron nieves luego tan grandes i fuertes que dos días i dos noches no çesó de nevar. Es[fol. 330 r]tuvimos aquí treinta i dos días que nunca se abrió puerto de buen camino para caminar. Ubimos de tornar a la çiudad de La Ranbla, i nosotros que íbamos descuydados en nuestro camino de las malas gentes, saliéronnos los ladrones i robáronnos cuanto levamos, que no nos deşaron ninguna cosa, salvo a mī que me deşaron un mal sayo i-a mi

the mosque and in front of the minbar are the tombs of Jacob and his wife.

Here every day they give out a great amount of alms: as much as more than twelve men working day and night can cook in the large ovens—that's how much they give away! Nobody is left without a meal, whether they are from the city or from elsewhere. Each person gets two loaves of bread and a small plate of mush. They have four large cauldrons, like those used to dye cloth, cooking continuously and attended by cooks and servers. We were there half the day.

We wanted to go to the city of Gaza and they told us not to go because the road was not safe and that there were many bandits, so we had to return to Jerusalem. Owing to the accusation of a bad man, they arrested us and put us in prison, saying that we were Christians, that we did not speak Arabic and that we were trying to deceive them. They locked all three of us up, each one in a cell, and I asked that they give us an interpreter and that they bring me before a Māliki qāḍi, because we were from the Māliki school. I asked to see the Māliki qāḍi because in the city of Jerusalem there are four qadis, one from each school, and a magistrate above them. They brought me before the qāḍi and took my statement that we were Muslims from Christian lands, that we did not know Arabic, that we had come on pilgrimage to the Holy House of Jerusalem and to the Valley of Hebron, and to the Honored House of Mecca. Upon hearing this, they ordered that we be released immediately.

When we were ready to leave, it began to snow so hard that it did not stop after two days and their nights. We were there for thirty-two days, during which no pass opened through which one might travel. We had to return to the city of Ramla,<sup>55</sup> and those of us who were less careful on our road of suffering were beset by thieves who robbed us of everything we carried, and left us with nothing, except in my case a shabby robe and my companion a shabby shirt. And so, we arrived in

<sup>54</sup> Form known in aljamiado texts based on the Arabic *mal'ūn* 'damned,' and not cognate with Spanish *malo* ('bad').

<sup>55</sup> The city of Ramla, in present-day Israel. At the time it was a requisite stop on the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem, with a number of hostels.

compañero una mala camisa. I así llegamos con harta fortuna i gran frío a la çiudad de La Ranbla. Llevábamos un-asno i ubímoslo de vender por fuerça, con el cual nos reparamos miserablemente. I de aquí fuemos a la çiudad de Gaza. Estuvimos aquí quatro días reposando, porque abíamos de pasar doze jornadas, todo lo más desierto de muy fuertes i grandes arenas, i no teníamos dineros.

[Alejandría]<sup>56</sup>

Otro día entramos en-Ališandría qu-es Aleçcandría de Du Alqarnayn. Esta está armada sobre agua, nunca yo vi çibdad tan perfūmada e muy grande e á en-ella dos mil tahōnes e dos mil hornos. (...). E vesitamos a Dū Alqarnayn en Ğāmi 'a Al'arbiyuna. I vīmos donde *echaron* a Ibrāhim en-el fuego con-el engāño. Aquí están dos pieças de piedras, las mayōres que yo vī, la una en mármol, donde estaba ell-espejo escantado del rey Ališandre. Yo medī en la basa donde estaba asentado i tenía este mármol vinte i-ún palmo in cuadra, i tenía el mármol de largo setenta *pies*. I la otra *pieça* dizen que (...)del rey Fir'aun, que tiene ocho *pies* en cuadra e çinquenta *pies* d-alto. Aquí nos mostraron una gran vesitaçión que hazen los cristianos en la calle donde fue justiciado Santo Marqos. Vīmos las columnas donde asentaron la rōda donde martilizaron a Santa Qatalīna. I vīmos la cárcel donde la tenía el-enperador presa.

poor fortunes and great cold to the city of Ramla. We had with us a donkey, which we were forced to sell, given how little we had to eat. From there we went to the city of Gaza. We were there resting for four days, because we had to walk for twelve days, most of them through massive and abrupt dunes in the desert, and besides we had no money.

[Alexandria]

The next day we entered Alexandria, which is Alexandria of Alexander the Great.<sup>57</sup> The city is built on top of the water,<sup>58</sup> and I have never seen a city so fragrant and so large. In it there are a thousand bakeries and two thousand ovens. (...) Then we visited the tomb of Alexander the Great in the al-Arbiyyuna Mosque.<sup>59</sup> We saw where they wickedly cast Abraham into the fire.<sup>60</sup> There are two stones, the largest I have seen, one marble, where the enchanted mirror of King Alexander was.<sup>61</sup> I measured its base and the marble was 21 feet and a palm wide, and seventy feet wide. They say that the other piece<sup>62</sup> was (...) <sup>63</sup> of the Pharaoh, is eight feet wide and fifty feet tall. There they showed us a great ceremony that the Christians have in the street where Saint Mark was judged. We also saw the columns where they put the wheel on which Saint Catharine was martyred, and the prison where they held the emperor.

<sup>56</sup> The following fragments correspond to ms. L771-4 of the Fondo Documental Histórico de las Cortes de Aragón, fols. 22r - 22v.

<sup>57</sup> Alexander the Great, known in Islamic tradition as *Dū l-Qarnayn* 'he of the two horns.'

<sup>58</sup> Patón here refers to the underground system of canals of the Nile river.

<sup>59</sup> References to the putative tomb of Alexander in one of the city's mosques, although rare among travelers of the time, are known from at least the 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> centuries in the works of 'Abd al-Ḥakam (Egypt, ca. 803-871 CE) and al-Mas'udi (Baghdad, 896-956 CE). In the first half of the sixteenth century was also have the testimony of Leo Africanus, who refers to the site of said tomb in a "small house (...) greatly revered by Muslims."

<sup>60</sup> Qur'an 21: 68-70.

<sup>61</sup> Refers to the lighthouse of Alexandria and to the mirror mounted in it that allowed one to see the ships at several days' distance and even, according to tradition, set fire to them using the reflected rays of the sun. Actually, what Patón most likely saw was the tower built in 1477 by order of the Sultan Qaitbay (Burji Mamluk, Sultan of Egypt, 1468-1496), replacing the ancient lighthouse, destroyed by an earthquake in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>62</sup> Likely reference to the Theater of Pompei, built in the Forum of Rome in 55 CE.

<sup>63</sup> Word illegible due to a tear in the manuscript folio.

Estuvimos aquí un mes esperando que cargasen las galeras i hizimos bastimento por dos meses fasta Albuñduqiya<sup>64</sup>, qu-era dos mil milas, que son quinientas leguas. Allí embarcamos con muy poco dinero según el camino teníamos largo. Ya que nos quiriámos partir tuvieron enbaraço los veniçianos con los señores de ll-aduana que nos detuvieron çinco días a su despesar i con-este-inojo mandó pergonar el capitán de las galeras con tronpetas que ningún patrón fuese osado de levar mōro en las galeras so pena de tantos duqados. Sacáronos de las galeras i dejáronos en tierra.

We were there a month while we waited for them to load the galleys; we gathered provisions for the two-month trip to Venice, that is two thousand miles away, or five hundred leagues. Near there we embarked<sup>65</sup> with very little money for a long journey. When we were getting ready to leave, the Venetians has some problems with the customs officials, who had kept us waiting for five days, to the great annoyance of the captain of the galleys, who ordered that no ship take any Muslim or be subject to a fine. They took us off the ships and left us on dry land.

### **Bibliography**

- Casassas Canals, Xavier et al., editors. *De Ávila a La Meca. El relato del viaje de Omar Patún (1491 –1495)*. U de Valladolid, 2017.
- Catlos, Brian A. *Kingdoms of Faith: A New History of Islamic Spain*. Basic Books, 2018.
- Galmés de Fuentes, Alvaro. *Estudios sobre literatura española aljamiado-morisca*. Fundación Menéndez Pidal, 2004.
- Harvey, L. P. *Islamic Spain 1250-1500*. U of Chicago, 1990.
- Jones, Joseph R. *Viajeros españoles a Tierra Santa (siglos XVI y XVII)*. Miraguano / Polifemo, 1998.
- Pano y Ruata, Mariano. *Las coplas del peregrino de Puey Monçón. Viaje a La Meca en el siglo XVI*. Comas Hermanos, 1897.
- Roza Candás, Pablo. *Memorial de ida i venida hasta Maka. La peregrinación de `Omar Paṭōn*. U de Oviedo, 2018.

---

<sup>64</sup> That is, Venice.

<sup>65</sup> Possible reference to the new port of Alexandria, already functioning at the time, and not to the old port located to the west, from which Christians were forbidden.