

◆ Chapter 7

Jedi Jihadi: Caliphate, True-Crime, and the Military-Entertainment Complex

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Este sobredicho hidalgo, los ratos que estaba ocioso—que eran los más del año—se daba a leer libros de caballerías con tanta afición y gusto [. . .]. (The aforesaid gentleman, during his leisure time—which was most of the year—used to read chivalric romances with such pleasure and enjoyment [. . .])
Miguel de Cervantes,
Don Quijote de la Mancha, (Part One, ch. 1, 71)

“His background is typical to so many others that I have spoken to. He was neither rich nor poor. He was from, basically a, you know, a middle-class background. He loved video games, ‘Star Wars.’”
Rukmini Callimachi, describing Shehroze Chaudhry, aka Abu Huzayfah al-Kanadi

“So, all the news that isn’t fit to print goes into a podcast?”
David S., New York Times reader, commenting on revelation that Chaudhry was an imposter

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In 2018, the *New York Times* released a ten-chapter podcast titled *Caliphate*, in which Romanian-American reporter Rukmini Callimachi investigates ISIS.¹ As will be discussed below, *Caliphate* uses tropes of transparency similar to those employed by true-crime podcasts such as *Serial* to position Callimachi's quest for understanding the inner workings of jihadist groups as the center of interest. Her producer, Andy Mills, interviews her during each episode about her sources, procedures, personal experiences, and emotions, getting her to map out for listeners her evolving knowledge of ISIS. It emerges in these conversations that Callimachi, who had often interviewed victims of terrorism, was eager to talk to someone who had actually committed torture and execution. Then a Pakistani-Canadian who gave his name as Abu Huzayfah al-Kanadi, claiming he had been an ISIS fighter, agreed to talk to her; they met in a Toronto hotel room in December 2016; and the first-person account from that interview became the main story line for chapters 1–6 of the series.²

Caliphate was critically well-received; in 2019 it won a Peabody, the Overseas Press Club's Lowell Thomas award, and was selected as a Pulitzer finalist.³ On 25 September 2020, however, Abu Huzayfah al-Kanadi, whose real name is Shehroze Chaudhry, was arrested by Canadian authorities and charged with "perpetrating a terrorist hoax." The charges would not finally be dropped until October 2021, when Chaudhry admitted publicly that the acts of torture and execution he described in his interview with Callimachi were a complete fabrication (Austen).⁴ The *Times* conducted an internal investigation into what had gone wrong, led by Mark Mazzetti, and also published a scathing critique by Ben Smith, their media columnist, questioning *Caliphate*'s entire strategy of using new media to tell "juicy [. . .] narratives."⁵ Around the same time, other news outlets began pointing out that the problems were deeper than just failing to verify sources; for example, Eric Wemple suggested on 9 Oct 2020 in the *Washington Post*: "While it's scrubbing down *Caliphate* for factual problems, the *New York Times* review team might consider the sensibility that drove the entire enterprise: sensationalism." In December 2020, the *Times* publicly acknowledged that *Caliphate* "did not meet our standards for accuracy," returned the Peabody and other awards, and requested that the Pulitzer Foundation revoke *Caliphate*'s finalist status. Callimachi, her credibility as an investigative journalist ruined, was reassigned away from stories about terrorism.⁶ In the wake of the scandal, while continuing to make the series available online, the *Times* has added a discussion in which Dean Baquet, the executive editor, acknowledges they were "duped" by a "con artist," and that not subjecting the source to greater scrutiny was an "institutional failure." Basically, though, they stick to the disingenuous claim that the problem went no further than insufficient fact-checking. Yet the discrediting of *Caliphate* raises questions not addressed by Baquet and his team. Why would Shehroze

Chaudhry *pretend* to be an ISIS fighter? And why would a star journalist and her producer fall for his act? How are the answers to these questions related to larger issues inherent in the podcast medium itself, and to the credibility of traditional journalism as it moves into the new media landscape? After examining *Caliphate* in more detail, this essay approaches the thorny issues raised by its initial success and subsequent downfall through a comparison with Cervantes's engagement with the Lead Books hoax of the late sixteenth century, viewed in the context of the changing media environment of *his* day. What emerges is a vexing continuity between today's military-entertainment complex and the nexus of chivalry and legend undergirding *Don Quixote*.

At least as he represents himself in chapter 2 of *Caliphate*, Shehroze Chaudhry is an unlikely candidate for jihadist radicalization. He grew up in a comfortable middle-class home in Oakville, a suburb of Toronto. When asked directly whether he felt that he himself or members of his family were discriminated against in Canadian society, he explicitly disavows this:

Callimachi: Did you feel treated badly as a Muslim? Did you feel in your own experience here in Canada that you had been humiliated or treated in some way that slighted you?

Huzayfah: Oh, no, that wasn't — that wasn't it at all. I don't think that was a factor at all, that I was persecuted back here in Canada because of my religion. My sister and my mom, they've always been able to walk the streets safe. Everyone's really nice. My dad gets along with everyone that comes by to his restaurant. And it's just, you know, they're living a pretty good life here. But me, on the other hand, I always wanted something bigger. I've always wanted something — not something simple and boring.

Friends and family have reported Chaudhry was an introverted youth who spent a lot of time online (Balkissoon). Exposed from an early age to the *Star Wars* series ("I'm still a big fan of it," he tells Callimachi), the superhero blockbusters that came after, and video games (undoubtedly among these the popular first-person shooter games), his antidote to the boredom of life in a middle-class suburb was a fantasy world in which he became the kind of action hero most readily available to him as a Muslim-Canadian: a jihadist. Already in high school he created an online avatar on MySpace he named Abu Huzayfah. He began frequenting online chats and reading and listening to sermons by radical clerics like Sayyid Qutb, Muhammad al-Maqdisi, and Anwar Awlaki. Such a retreat into a textually mediated, bellicose fantasy as a

response to the dullness of a routine provincial existence is familiar to readers of *Don Quixote*. The biggest difference, ultimately, is that Cervantes's anti-hero acts out his fantasies, while Chaudhry settles for just posting about his on social media, with photos taken from others' posts and narratives based on his online research into jihadism.

Chaudhry's account of his radicalization provides Callimachi with an authenticating voice to intersperse into her narrative on how disaffected youth from Western, secular societies are recruited to join Islamist groups.⁷ She uses him to emphasize the notion that recruits to Islamist extremism tend to be ordinary middle-class suburbanites. His experience also illustrates her thesis that the War on Terror fueled the arguments of the clerics he was reading and listening to, convincing him and other young Muslims around the world that the West was the enemy of Islam. By the time she met Chaudhry, Callimachi could easily have provided an almost identical account herself; she knew all the names of clerics' he brought up and what their main teachings were. But coming from a young man who presents it as the path that led him from Toronto to Syria makes the narrative seem more credible.⁸

Chaudhry and Callimachi were using similar sources, online chatrooms and social media, to research ISIS during its heyday of 2014–2015. Not surprisingly, they first made contact with one another through Instagram. She gave him a bigger public platform for his jihadi avatar than he could ever have gotten on his own, and in exchange he gave her the first-person account still missing from her pieced-together understanding of ISIS. What happened between them amounts to a bizarre case of *catfishing* (online impersonation).⁹ It could be compared to the plot of Cervantes's *The Deceitful Marriage* (*El casamiento engañoso*), in which a man pretends to be rich to marry a wealthy woman, then learns after they are married that she is just as broke as he is. Each tries to construct a convincing, credible narrative based on the information they have gathered, in his case to persuade her (and us) that he has been to Syria, that he is a real jihadi and not just a fantasist; and in her case to convince us that she understands ISIS better than anyone who has not actually spoken to jihadists. Both are seeking authority, even self-aggrandizement. His desire to be believed mirrors her desire to believe him and make others believe him. His fantasy of being the protagonist of something more important than his humdrum existence dovetails with hers of making her mark as a star reporter by interviewing a real-life ISIS fighter.¹⁰

By March 2018, when the first episode of *Caliphate* was set to air, doubts about Chaudhry's story led veteran editors at the *Times* to try and put on the brakes. Specifically, as Ben Smith explains, when international editor Michael Slackman saw the script:

[He] called the podcast team into the office of another top Times editor, Matt Purdy, a deputy managing editor who often signs off on investigative projects. The editors warned that the whole story seemed to depend on the credibility of a single character, the Canadian, whose vivid stories of executing men while warm blood ‘sprayed everywhere’ were as lurid as they were uncorroborated. (This scene and others were described to me in interviews with more than two dozen people at The Times, many of whom spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitive internal politics.)

A frantic international effort turned up some shreds of possibly corroborating evidence—for example, Chaudhry was on a United States State Department no-fly list as a suspected ISIS fighter—and the *Times* went ahead and aired the podcast. To undercut criticism by anticipating it, concerns about his credibility were introduced into chapter 6 (which would not be released, however, until 20 Sept 2018). Having caught him in a lie about when exactly he was in Syria, they wonder openly whether his whole account could be a fabrication. Callimachi articulates a plausible explanation for his lying which manages to shore up his credibility, but in the end, it is left up to listeners to decide how much of his story to believe. Callimachi would later tweet (on 25 Sept 2020) that this served to build “narrative tension.” But months earlier the *New York Times* had aired Chaudhry as Abu Huzayfah talking about whipping and killing people, and getting their blood splashed all over himself, without giving the least indication that they had any reason to doubt his veracity.

At the time *Caliphate* aired, their approach was considered innovative, a potential path forward in the reconstruction of conventional journalism’s authority within a rapidly shifting digital media landscape.¹¹ In their 2021 study of the way *Caliphate* highlights how news is constructed, Perdomo and Rodrigues-Rouleau argue that “metajournalistic performances of transparency” were inserted as part of a strategy to restore the vertical authority of reporters over their audience that has been eroded due to the increasing role of social media in communicating on newsworthy events.¹² They divide these performances into three categories: revealing the journalistic process, constructing the persona of the journalist, and reaffirming journalist culture. They insist that these gestures were not examples of authentic transparency, but rather of a kind of artificial display intended to impress audiences with how dedicated and courageous reporters are, and how committed to the journalistic integrity on which their authority is based:

Such transparency performances [. . .] suggest a form of self-celebratory transparency that is less about self-critique or public accountability and more about re-establishing boundaries between the journalistic field and its audiences [. . .] creating a glass barrier through which audiences can admire—but not meddle in—the journalistic process. Further, in light of [. . .] how Callimachi went ahead with including her source’s likely false statements in the podcast despite cautionary evidence (Smith, 2020), this verticality seems encapsulated in a paradox: it relies on a form of transparency that reveals as much as it conceals certain elements of the process [. . .]. It is achieved by underplaying typical transparency ideals and omitting elements that may tarnish the authoritative image one wishes to construct. (13)

Perdomo and Rodrigues-Rouleau mention briefly a key antecedent for the narrative strategies adopted by the producers of *Caliphate* in their effort at reconstructing journalists’ vertical authority over audiences: “the internationally famed *Serial* [. . .] showcased how the behind-the-scenes of reporting a crime could be almost as riveting as the story of the crime itself” (2). In fact, it is not hard to see that *Caliphate* amounts to a transferal of conventions of the true-crime podcast to reporting on Islamist terrorism, as Laura Miller already pointed out in *Slate* when only half the series had aired. The *New York Times* in its first venture into long-form podcast narrative essentially borrowed the frame of the true-crime genre, riding on the success four years earlier of *Serial*.

As Clausen and Sikjær argue in their examination of the convergence between the true-crime genre and the podcast medium, it was the hugely successful *Serial* that established the predominant model for the true-crime podcast, inspiring numerous imitations. In fact, *Serial* was so popular that it ushered in a “golden age of podcasting” (140), on-going in the present.¹³ Clausen and Sikjær trace the roots of the new approach to crime writing to *In Cold Blood*, Truman Capote’s classic 1966 non-fiction novel about the murder of the Clutter family in Holcomb, Kansas, in 1959 (143). The two main features of *In Cold Blood* that were to become staples of the true-crime podcast genre are: (1) the focus on the killer, as the active agent of the crime, rather than on the victim(s); and (2) the first-person point of view of the writer-reporter who is investigating the crime (143–48). With regard to the latter, they emphasize the role played in podcasts by the reporter as narrator (171–76). This narrative voice becomes the audience’s sole link to the events and people described, much like the narrator in a work of fiction. In particular, they point out that most listeners play podcasts through headphones, which

establishes a strong affective connection with the reporter's voice. In the case of *Serial*, this reporter is Sara Koenig, a former producer for *This American Life*, who was propelled to stardom by this epoch-making podcast. In each season, episode by episode, Koenig takes the listener on an investigative journey, verbalizing her thought processes, weighing different possibilities, and connecting the thread of the various interview segments and other audio clips by discussion of her own emotions, doubts, perplexities, expectations, and provisional hypotheses.

Once we look at *Caliphate* and its discontents through the lens of the true-crime podcast, several things fall into place. Copying the approach that made *Serial* so popular with audiences, Callimachi plays an identical role to Sara Koenig's: she talks to Andy Mills about her fears, suspicions, theories, personal experiences, misgivings, and, especially, the diligent detective work she has been doing for years, trying to amass enough documentation on ISIS and other jihadist groups to grasp their inner workings. This is intended to enhance the interest of the narrative, as well as her journalistic authority. *Caliphate* was designed, then, to be a star-vehicle for Callimachi in the same way as *Serial* had been (and still is) for Koenig. But the central trope of the genre is that she is on the hunt to catch a killer—and get his gruesome firsthand account on tape. From this angle, if Shehroze Chaudhry had not come along when he did, the podcast team would have had to invent him. Chaudhry's claim to Canadian authorities that Callimachi had impatiently demanded he "talk about the murders" makes perfect sense; he was being fitted up for the role (MacDonald, Kapleo, and Baksh). Though she later spun it differently, the "gift" she told him he had given her in their interview is quite clear in the true-crime context: his confessed execution of a Muslim living under ISIS for drug dealing, stabbing him repeatedly in the chest until "the blood was just—it was warm and it sprayed everywhere" (chapter 5) provides the centerpiece around which to organize her exploration of what motivates jihadists to kill. Chaudhry's isolated, unverified execution of an unknown citizen of the Islamic State is made to stand metonymically for all headline-grabbing murders by Islamic extremists, including those of Western journalists kidnapped in the Middle East, and, ultimately, the victims of Islamist terrorism elsewhere in the world. In this regard, it is telling that in the "Prologue," subtitled "The Mission," audio clips of Chaudhry talking about how he was allegedly trained to kill are juxtaposed with newscasts of the 2014 beheading of James Foley, the 2017 London Bridge van/knife attack, and the 2017 Times Square subway pipe-bomb explosion. The comparison with *Serial* and the true-crime genre in general also helps explain the podcast team's decision to move ahead with airing the series despite doubts concerning the reliability of Chaudhry's confession. In much the same way as Koenig does so deftly in *Serial*, they

pose the questions raised by inconsistencies in his account, leaving the factual truth of what he said for the listener to decide. Callimachi and the *New York Times* appear to have initially thought, before Chaudhry was actually arrested, that they could ride it out because they had inoculated themselves against being discredited through their tropes of transparency. Such strategies had garnered popular success and critical acclaim in the true-crime arena, so why could they not be exploited as a framework for making a compelling narrative out of ISIS? And indeed, the initial response was positive, to judge by the awards and recognition showered on the series. But what works in a true-crime podcast concerning, say, the murder of a teenager in Baltimore fifteen years earlier (the basis for the first season of *Serial*) is not fair game where terrorism is concerned. Criticisms of *Caliphate*'s orientalist bias began almost immediately. Once it became clear Chaudhry was lying, the backlash was swift, and *Caliphate* was widely deemed irresponsible journalism.¹⁴

Looking at *Caliphate* through the true-crime lens also brings into focus, then, what is so disturbing about it, especially in the light of what we now know, that Chaudhry invented the persona of Abu Huzayfah al-Kanadi in much the same way Alonso Quijano invented Don Quixote de la Mancha, out of his reading and spectatorship, combined with his overactive imagination. The true-crime podcast is an infotainment genre, precariously straddling the categories of news and entertainment. Its addictive appeal has not been uncontroversial, as it plays to audiences' baser instincts and fascination with violence, which in the most egregious instances are simply being exploited to get us to listen, i.e., for the purpose of what Castillo and Egginton term, following Tim Wu, "attention harvesting" (*What Would Cervantes Do?* 150–51). The genre has also been defended, however, on the grounds that it can empower the primarily female audience not to succumb to the fear of gender violence.¹⁵ At least part of the trouble with transferring its conventions to the terrorism beat stems from the obvious fact that a genre that sensationalizes isolated acts of violence with no direct political significance is one thing, but appropriating its tropes to explain a geopolitical hot potato like jihadism is quite another. The list of sensitive issues involved is long, including: American imperialism, Islamophobia, freedom of speech and religion, civil liberties, collateral damage, drone attacks, the surveillance state, due process, the torture of prisoners, and anti-colonialism. It is simply a mistake to overgeneralize the true-crime genre and apply it where its inherent exploitation and sensationalizing would interfere inappropriately in a story with too much at stake for such cavalier treatment.

What *Caliphate*'s demise usefully puts on display is how much Callimachi, Chaudhry, and we the listeners have in common. Important here is the particular way we are duped—we think we are listening to a jihadist explaining to a knowledgeable outsider what Islamic State is really

like from within; to our disappointment, it turns out to just be two outsiders sharing their obsessive interest in gory details about executions and torture. Realizing Chaudhry is only a *Star Wars* geek turned ISIS fanboy startlingly holds a mirror up to our own morbid curiosity. As *Caliphate* crosses the line from journalism into fiction, a rare opportunity arises, which we should not squander, to contemplate how the news we consume so avidly is manufactured, along with our appetite for it. Callimachi tries to build Abu Huzayfah up as a true jihadist, but when the flimsy structure collapses, our common ground with both of them is revealed, inadvertently heightening what Castillo and Egginton term our “fictional awareness” (*What Would Cervantes Do?* 21).¹⁶ We are enabled to see ourselves as playthings of the military-entertainment complex, which transforms our inexhaustible desire for violence into profit (Lenoir and Caldwell). Chaudhry’s sickness—and our own—is not really Islamism *per se*, but the transhistoric myth of heroic militarism which, derived from chivalric romance, is perpetuated in everything from video games to the *Star Wars* franchise itself. The Jedi are, after all, an order of knights modeled on medieval crusaders, and the very first film opens with Luke Skywalker receiving a message from a captive princess, held by a dark knight, whose liberation becomes his mission. Chaudhry’s not having really fought for ISIS lets us see that where we part ways with him is further along the road toward jihadism than we think, because the first steps along that road have nothing whatever to do with Islam, and everything to do with the pleasure we take in simulated violence, whose roots lie deep in the collective psyche of our culture—as deep as chivalric romance, the epic tradition, and the beginnings of the Western literary canon. As we are about to see, Cervantes traced this very figure in the medialogy of his day as well.

Turning now to what is known to historians of early modern Spain as the hoax of the Lead Books of Sacromonte, Granada (in Spanish: *Libros plúmbeos*, or *Plomos de Sacromonte*), my hope is that an analogous event from the past will help us understand the full implications of *Caliphate*’s dramatic rise and fall; and to see in Cervantes’s ironic-satiric response a suggestion for how we might frame similar events in our own time. As briefly as possible, for readers unfamiliar with it, the Lead Books constitute a late-sixteenth-century fraud created by a group of Moriscos (descendants of Spanish Muslims who were forced to convert), almost certainly led by two medical doctors from Granada who had served the Crown as translators, Alonso del Castillo and his son-in-law, Miguel de Luna. At a time when Moriscos were under suspicion of being secret Muslims—which some of them undoubtedly were, though no one knows how many—the collaborators created a series of texts written in an unusual Arabic script, initially on a parchment which also included Latin and Castilian Spanish in Gothic script; later, on lead tablets with mystic symbols.

These texts purported to document the activities of a supposed group of Arabic-speaking followers of Christ, led by a certain San Cecilio, supposed to have come to Granada to preach the Gospel in Arabic centuries before Islam. The version of Christianity presented was an ambiguously syncretic blend of Christian and Muslim beliefs. The texts were accompanied by “relics” of the martyred San Cecilio and his companions; they were hidden, first in a lead box left in the foundations of the Torre Turpiana, the minaret of an old mosque undergoing demolition in 1588; then from 1595–1599 on a hill named Valparaíso, which subsequently became known as Sacromonte (the Sacred Mount), due precisely to the “holy” relics and “sacred” texts found there.¹⁷

The ultimate goal of this fraud was to disassociate the Arab presence on the Iberian Peninsula from Islam and instead associate it with early Christianity, creating a basis for integrating the Moriscos as legitimate Spaniards at a time when an emergent national Spanish identity was being forged around ultra-orthodox Catholicism. It is, after all, the time of the Inquisition and the Counter-Reformation. Unbeknownst to the perpetrators of the hoax, the expulsion of the Moriscos was just around the corner—it would begin in 1609. The obvious anachronisms of the Lead Books, which situated Castilian Spanish—and Arabic-speaking Christians on the Iberian Peninsula in the period immediately following the death of Christ, may make it hard for us to understand how anyone could have believed in their authenticity. A number of factors were calculated to weigh in their favor, however. The widespread belief that the Moors had left hidden treasure buried in the landscape made such a discovery seem not altogether improbable. The texts themselves make extensive use of the figure of the Virgin Mary, a bridge between Islam and Christianity, and the authors defend the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, controversial at the time, but favored by local ecclesiastical figures in Granada (Harvey, 273. A. Katie Harris, 137–48). Most importantly, these texts and the relics accompanying them provided Granada with an early Christian past, something it lacked as compared to other Spanish cities. Soon after the discovery of the lead tablets, believers in their authenticity began making pilgrimages to the site. Miracles were said to have occurred, and crosses commemorating them dotted the hillside (Harris 110–26). The archbishop of Granada, Pedro de Castro, was a staunch defender of the authenticity of the lead tablets. He sought out, and succeeded in finding, Moriscos with knowledge of Arabic who could work on accurately translating the books. Naturally Miguel de Luna was among these, as was another Arabic-speaking Morisco named Al-Hajari, who ended up in Tunisia after the expulsion of the Moriscos, and there wrote his memoirs. He gives a fascinating account of how the Lead Books successfully changed the attitude of authorities in Granada toward Arabic language and culture, making it acceptable to cultivate linguistic and literary awareness that only a few short years before had been severely

castigated. Al-Hajari describes a noteworthy encounter with Arabic-speaking Moriscos from his hometown who came to visit Granada:

After greeting them in the customary way, I opened the book. But when they saw that it was written in Arabic they became extremely afraid because of the Christians. I told them: “Do not be afraid. The Christians honor me and respect me for my ability to read Arabic.” But all the people from my town thought that the Christian Inquisitors who used to sentence and burn to death everyone who manifested his adherence to Islam in any way, or was reading the books of the Muslims, would condemn me as well. Driven by this extreme fear, the Andalusians used to be afraid of each other. (Harvey, 280)

The conspirators had certainly achieved their immediate goal, creating a space for integrating Hispano-Arab tradition and identity within the local context of Granada. In the long run, it would not be sufficient to prevent their wholesale expulsion, but the experiment had succeeded.¹⁸

As with Callimachi and the avid listeners of *Caliphate*, the target audience of the Lead Books hoax, the local Old Christian elites of Granada, *wanted* to believe it; moreover, there was a context of mythmaking into which the forged texts naturally fit (like the true-crime genre today). In early modern Spain, seemingly everyone was using real or forged documents to reinvent the past. Noble families commissioned genealogists to write the history of their family crests, and many plebian or converso families hired such *linajudos* to falsify their genealogies.¹⁹ Spanish cities of the period competed fiercely with one another for ecclesiastical *primacía* (that is, to have founded the first Christian church in Spain), for the largest number and most impressive Christian martyrs, for the most ancient and illustrious secular history as well, and the noblest founders. The classical genre of the chorography, a description of a city with its sights and monuments, and a catalogue of its “antiquities,” underwent a major revival (Kagan). A new genre of narrative text emerged combining history and legend, unabashedly playing fast and loose with the facts. These are the texts Godoy Alcántara termed “*falsos cronicones*” (false, hyperbolic chronicles). Sometimes they exploited legends from classical antiquity, such as the columns of Hercules; or Old Testament figures such as Noah’s grandson Tubal, supposed to have founded, among other cities, Cádiz and Toledo; or above all the patron saint of Spain, James the Greater (Santiago), who is said to have founded shrines such as the Virgin of the Pillar in Zaragoza as well as

literally dozens more all over the Iberian Peninsula, before being entombed at the location of the city that bears his name in the extreme northwest corner of Galicia (Godoy Alcántara 133).

The authors of such chronicles, chorographies, and genealogical texts drew on newly available printed editions classical or medieval works, engravings of ancient inscriptions and heraldic blazons, and other products of the new humanistic learning. Yet they freely combined these with brazen falsifications, producing the same hodgepodge of historical and legendary material as so exasperates the Canon of Toledo: “Admirado quedó el canónigo de oír la mezcla que don Quijote hacía de verdades y mentiras” (I.49.582) (The Canon was astonished to hear the way Don Quixote combined the truth with lies). They also took advantage of the libraries and archives recently created by the emerging bureaucratic state apparatus of the Hapsburg dynasty (Castillo Gómez). We are not used to thinking of archival documents as “new media” in this way, but under the pressure of changing structures of power and the increasing litigiousness of Castilian society, new techniques for establishing the “authenticity” of truth claims about the past were as important in the medialogy of the Baroque as the public theater or perspective in painting, to mention two of the aspects emphasized by Castillo and Egginton in *Medialogies*. In their sensationalism, the *falsos cronicones* bear comparison with the true-crime genre, in the sense that they presented themselves as non-fiction, although it is fairly obvious to anyone reading them that they played fast and loose with facts in order to construct a prestigious local or familial identity. As Godoy Alcántara puts it, gaps in their knowledge of the distant past were seen by these chroniclers as opportunities for storytelling: “These mysteries, these uncertainties opened up their imaginations. In the absence of well-established facts, they felt themselves that much freer to invent whatever they chose, or to consider true and proven what they felt *ought* to have happened” (137) (my translation). Whatever bits and pieces of authentic documentation they could come up with were woven into a powerful story—in this sense, the procedure is not that different from storytelling in new media today, especially in podcasts. Though Castillo and Egginton appropriately points the finger at Trump and other lying politicians of our time, terming this “the disinformation age,” there was plenty of disinformation to go around in the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries. Castillo and Egginton’s argument in *Medialogies* that we are living in a *second* age of “inflated media,” and that the Baroque was the first, rings true here. It may be that new media always expand opportunities for storytelling faster than the criteria for distinguishing truth from falsehood can keep up with them. Could today’s disinformation be just the latest version of a cycle? If we do manage to emerge on the other side of this disinformation age, it will be because of efforts to

establish criteria of truth and falsity, based, like *What Would Cervantes Do?*, on similar exertions from a previous iteration of the cycle.

Another important analogy between these early modern falsifications and the *New York Times*'s *Caliphate* podcast is that, sadly in both instances, those who doubted their veracity were discouraged from speaking out publicly through intimidation. Godoy Alcántara provides testimonials concerning the fear of reprisals that kept those who saw through these false histories from voicing their criticisms, commenting, "The popularity of these *cronicones* was incontrovertible, and you just could not oppose them without exposing yourself to prejudices, harassment, and abuse" (257) (my translation). Ben Smith says that he spoke to two dozen people at the *Times*, "many of whom spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitive internal politics." And David Folkenflik has written that Michael Barbaro, co-host of *The Daily*, a Monday-Friday news podcast from the *New York Times* and another new media celebrity, "privately [. . .] pressed at least four journalists [. . .] to temper their critiques of The Times and how they framed what happened," adding, "I know, because I was one of them." Barbaro, who was engaged to be married to one of the *Caliphate* producers, was trying to prevent the word "retract" from being used to refer to the *Times*' response. What was true four hundred years ago is evidently still true today: when it comes to public discourse, power and prestige weigh at least as much as truth in what we are allowed to know. And then as now, new media, precisely because of their volatility, are attractive vehicles to invest with power and prestige.

In addition to his involvement with the Lead Books, Miguel de Luna was the author of "Escrito de Miguel de Luna sobre la conveniencia de restaurar los baños y estufas" (Text by Miguel de Luna on the usefulness of restoring public baths and furnaces) a short treatise on the hygienic value of public baths, which amounts to a scientific defense of the Moorish tradition (reprinted as an appendix in García Arenal and Rodríguez Mediano, "Médico, traductor, inventor" 226–30); and, more importantly, the *Historia verdadera del rey don Rodrigo* (in two parts, 1592 and 1600), a revisionist history of the Muslims in Spain, which he claimed was a translation from a lost Arabic source written by a certain Abulcacim Tarif Abentarique, "of the Arab nation." He was aided in his literary masquerade by the access he had to the Arabic-language section of the royal library at El Escorial. This book, which was quite successful throughout the seventeenth century in Spanish and in translations into English, French, and Italian, turned the prevailing historiography concerning the "disaster" of Tariq ibn Ziyad's invasion of Visigoth Spain on its head, instead presenting Almanzor, who governed Al-Andalus as the chamberlain of Hissham II, as a brilliant military tactician, a prudent statesman, and an idealized, enlightened ruler (Márquez Villanueva).

Luna's book and the *libros plúmbeos* represent the crest of a wave of Maurophilia, that is, enthusiasm for the Hispano-Arabic legacy, which swept the Iberian Peninsula in the late sixteenth century. Other manifestations include the widely practiced *juegos de cañas*, early manifestations of something like festivals of Moors and Christians, and the fad of Moorish ballads, which also led to novels and plays being composed on the same themes. Especially popular was the story of Abendarráez, the last of the Abencerrajes, and his lover Jarifa.²⁰ This cultural trend reversed the established view of Spanish heroism as stemming mainly from the fight against the Moors, who were not usually individualized at all, but just dehumanized enemies for Castilian knights to gain wealth and reputation by killing. For example, in *Nobleza del Andaluzia* (1588), the widely utilized genealogical handbook by historian, genealogist, and medieval scholar Gonzalo Argote de Molina, where all the noble titles of southern Spain are derived from defeating "moros" (Moors) or at most "principes moros" (Moorish princes) who are never named.²¹ Although Miguel de Luna self-identified in Spain circa 1610 as an "Arab Christian from Granada" (*cristiano arabizado de Granada*), documents uncovered by García Arenal and Rodríguez Mediano appear to prove that he was a secret Muslim. He collaborated as a translator for the crypto-Muslim community in Toledo, among whom he was held in esteem as one of the greatest experts in Islam in all of Spain (*Un Oriente español* 192–96). It thereby appears that his various projects amount to ingenious attempts at using the full range of available discourses—prophetic-theological, historiographical, scientific—to harness the rising tide of enthusiasm for Moorishness to serve the interests of the Muslim elite within Spain's Morisco minority. Even more of a fabrication than Chaudhry's Abu Huzayfah al-Kanadi identity, Luna's public persona was a conciliatory mask for a project of cultural infiltration and disguise, resisting Christian dominance while secretly working to sustain a crypto-Islamic identity.

In Part One of *Don Quixote*, published in 1605, Cervantes makes a number of thinly veiled, ironic allusions to literary Maurophilia, Miguel de Luna, and the Lead Books. The anti-hero of this parody of chivalric romance is a member of the petty nobility of New Castile, whose ancestors, like all Spanish noble families from Madrid to the southern coast, would have earned their title fighting the Moors in the twelfth–thirteenth centuries. The armor Alonso Quijano scours and repairs with paper mâché would have been worn in that crusade. And yet, the first of many times he is beaten up, in his delirium he imagines he is none other than Abindarráez, and his lady, Dulcinea, is the beautiful Jarifa. Cervantes, in mocking literary depictions of equestrian heroes, did not leave out the dashing literary Moors so fashionable at the time, and he makes his confused Spanish hero identify indiscriminately with both sides in the millennial Iberian conflict. Indeed, as Frederick de Armas has

shown in a detailed study of the pattern of allusions to Moorish characters in Part One, Don Quixote is chronically unable to disentangle his chivalric identity from nominally Muslim characters, especially those featured in Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*. Nor should we forget the presence, in the Inn that dominates much of the middle section of the book, of Zoraida, an Algerian convert to Christianity, whose upcoming marriage to Ruy Pérez de Viedma, a *cristiano viejo* from the heart of Old Castile, further stresses the inextricable intertwining of Christian and Muslim identities in the Mediterranean region.

From the start, the narrator treats his would-be knight with laconic sarcasm. Soon it is revealed that the book was actually written by an Arab historian named Cide Hamete Benengeli (a near anagram of Miguel de Cervantes) and what we are reading is a translation provided by a Morisco who the narrator turned up at the silk market in Toledo. This Morisco is undeniably a parody of Miguel de Luna, by means of which Cervantes appears to indicate several things simultaneously to the informed reader of his day: 1) he knows perfectly well that Miguel de Luna is the real author of the *Historia verdadera del rey don Rodrigo*, and the "translation" a mere pretext; 2) he has at least heard rumors of Luna's involvement with the Morisco community of Toledo, and may be aware that he is a crypto-Muslim; and 3) he knows that Luna's historiography in the *Historia verdadera* is biased against the Visigoths, as he hints when he playfully declares that the Arab historian who wrote *Don Quixote*, "cuando pudiera y debiera estender la pluma en las alabanzas de tan buen caballero, parece que de industria las pasa en silencio" (I.9.144.) (when he could have and should have elevated his pen in praising the exploits of such a worthy knight, seems to deliberately pass them over in silence) (my translation). Of course, there is nothing in Don Quixote's exploits to praise; by analogy, though Luna may be biased, the Visigoth king Rodrigo does not really deserve better treatment. Just as Cervantes juxtaposes multiple genres (chivalric, pastoral, picaresque, sentimental romance) to allow them to mutually critique one another, so he pits the traditional Christian heroic legends against the newer, fashionable Moorish ones, allowing them each to appear ridiculous in the light of the other.

At the end of Part One, when the narrator announces he has not found any more information about Don Quixote, he tells of a lead box he received from an old doctor, containing a parchment written in Gothic script, recovered from the foundations of an ancient hermitage that was under renovation. This, of course, is an allusion to the lead box found in the Torre Turpiana in Granada in 1588, with a parchment that served as the harbinger of the *libros plúmbeos* discovered a few years later. The old doctor is a reference to Alonso del Castillo, and once more Cervantes is tipping his hand to the reader in the know about the notorious hoax. But the manuscript in this box contains comic-parodic epitaphs for Don Quixote and the other characters, once again

signaling at one and the same time that he knows perfectly well the martyrs of Sacromonte are mere fictions, but that he also sees no real difference between them and the Catholic legendary figures—bellicose or hagiographic—whose parody he has enacted in the figures of Don Quixote, Sancho Panza, and Dulcinea. In fact, exactly as I have suggested we not squander the opportunity Shehroze Chaudhry’s fake jihadism provides us to see the sham element in the construction of “Islamist terrorism,” so Cervantes takes advantage of the obvious fraud of the Lead Books to mock, not Maurophilia alone, but along with it the Catholic nationalist mythologizing it attempted to invert.

The millennial conflict of Christianity and Islam is a significant subtext throughout *Don Quixote*, and this short essay cannot hope to do it justice. As I have argued elsewhere, his treatment of the subject changed dramatically after the expulsions of 1609–1614. It is true, for example, that in Part Two of *Don Quixote*, published in 1615, he uses a strategy Castillo and Egginton term “excessive orthodoxy” to mock officialdom’s justification of the expulsion, “challenging his readers to reflect on the nonsense of the fundamentalist Christian rhetoric and scapegoating politics that had led to the mass deportation of tens of thousands of Spanish citizens in the early 1600s” (*What Would Cervantes Do?* 122–24).²² From this brief review of the theme, however, it is evident that Cervantes understood that Miguel de Luna’s revisions of religious, political, and military history and the more traditional legends of Castilian heroes were rooted in the same underlying soil of heroic fantasy, and that it was impossible to ridicule the one without ridiculing the other. Of course, he saw through the clumsy, anachronistic attempts by Luna and his co-conspirators to reprogram the national imaginary in a way that could integrate bellicose and hagiographic narratives of Hispano-Arabic heroes alongside the medieval Castilian ones. But he was uninterested in exposing the Moriscos to ridicule while leaving the traditional Catholic legends intact. From this point of view, parodying chivalric romance and mocking Maurophilia and the Lead Books go hand in hand, as twin prongs of a larger dismantling of the whole tradition of legendary heroes, whichever side they happen to be defending or attacking.

I return, in closing, to the present. We live in an age of violence, both real and imaginary, though in this our age resembles all other eras of human history. The War on Terror has often been (mis?)perceived by conservatives on both sides as a war against Islam. Yet what makes this war, and all wars, possible is the willingness of men and, less often, women on both sides to participate in acts of violence. For this we are trained, almost from birth. Acceptance of the representation of real or, more often, fictional violence as a part of our everyday lives is a fundamental feature of the current medialogy. For at least two decades Tim Lenoir has theorized this reality under the heading of the “military-entertainment complex,” which includes, of course, video games,

movies, television series, the nightly news, and true-crime podcasts, among other media products. And it includes the War on Terror itself, insofar as it is a media construct as well as a political reality. The military-entertainment complex has at times been critiqued as a conspiracy by the Department of Defense to entice and entrap young men and women by recruiting them through violent simulations; though this view is not entirely false, Lenoir and Caldwell argue, profit is the primary motive for entertainment vehicles' promotion of militarism, not ideology. They accept the "dominant narrative" of other studies, according to which "highly popular military-themed wargames are held to have contributed to the massive increase in the militarization of popular culture in the United States," but they emphasize that this is less a conspiracy by the military than a consequence of "the capitalist entertainment markets of digital media" (25). The important consequence of their argument in the present context is that the "militarization of the popular imagination" (47) brought about by the video game industry and entertainment corporations like Marvel Studios and Netflix, to name two, does not have any consistent ideological message embedded in it. It is less about intellectual argument or even narrative coherence than immediate affect. It proceeds through "immersive interactive experiences" (27) that allow the consumer to "inhabit the skin of the hero" in an epic realism delivering the "ultimate adrenaline rush" (32). Not in the service of the US military, but their own profit margins. What this means, ultimately, is that *Call of Duty* and other hyper-realist first-person shooter games prepare a young man or woman to be an ISIS fighter just as easily as a member of the US armed forces. Being raised on a steady diet of *Star Wars* and video games prepared Shehroze Chaudhry to accept violence, whether in fantasy or reality, as an intrinsic element of his masculinity.

In the *Breaking Bad* chapter of *What Would Cervantes Do?*, Castillo and Egginton acknowledge that the middle-class anti-heroes of recent television series "are a lot of fun" (57), but insist that they are ultimately an illusory middle-class fantasy of rebellion against the one per cent (50–57). Moreover, like the honor plays Cervantes satirically unmasked as "escapist illusions" (69) in *The Stage of Wonders (El retablo de las maravillas)*, and the action-hero genre more broadly, they are "popular forms of entertainment [that] reproduce, reify, and capitalize on spectacular images of 'protective' masculinity that glorify violence" (75). In this sense the debunked *Caliphate* becomes a self-parody showing us how little our own fantasy world of violent heroes differs from Abu Husayfah's. It is just a different flavor of rebellion. As harmless and perhaps as ridiculous as the wannabe knight Don Quixote, the Jedi jihadi Shehroze Chaudhry holds a distorted brown mirror up to the desire of the white middle class male who sits on his sofa indulging in the latest drug lord drama or anarchic car-theft crime spree simulation (Grand Theft

Auto: The Trilogy, anyone?). If we laugh at *Caliphate's* failure, what are we laughing at? Are we not all caught in the web of the military-entertainment complex? Free-market capitalism, preying on our imaginations, creates for us the embodied experience of killing, of narrowly escaping being killed, the adrenaline rush of pursuit, capture, escape . . . in whichever geographical, historical, racial, religious, or political context we find most palatable.

Chaudhry, in spite of what he may believe to the contrary, remains a product of Western secular individualism, manipulated by digital capitalism into fantasizing about killing, as Callimachi was drawn to interview him and beg for graphic details of the murders he said he committed, and as we are drawn to listen or to watch representations of violence done in our names, or against us. In this sense *Caliphate's* failure is its saving grace, since it makes it possible to laugh at jihadism for a moment, and laughing, see through its depiction in a podcast series that never really had anything to teach us about ISIS; it was only a mirror to our own desire. For, as Castillo and Egginton urge us, we must learn to “look in the mirror as we search for the lurking horsemen of the Apocalypse,” however much they “may look like alien invaders, Muslim terrorists, biblical plagues, radiation leaks, planetary chemical saturation, or genetic modifications” (*What Would Cervantes Do?* 42–43).

Notes

1. *Caliphate* ran from 19 April 2018 to 21 June 2018. “An Examination of *Caliphate*” was added on 18 December 2020. The *Caliphate* Web site currently includes 12 episodes (a “Prologue” followed by the 10 “chapters,” one of which is divided into two parts), plus the “Examination,” with transcripts and occasional audience comments.
2. In chapters 7–10, Callimachi arrives in Syria as ISIS has been defeated, and rushes into the war zone in the hope of recovering documents of the jihadists that would reveal how their administration functioned, their finances, etc. She recovers a briefcase and other files, which were brought back to the United States, digitized, translated, and form the basis of an archive of materials that the *New York Times* and Callimachi continue to tout as an important journalistic contribution, even as the credibility of the podcast in which the story of its seizure is told has utterly collapsed. To the extent that she has been able to salvage any shreds of her reputation as a journalist, it is through this cache of documents. In this regard, it is worth noting that the way they were smuggled out of Syria has drawn criticism from scholars of the Middle East Studies Association (Izadhi and Farhi; Tucker and Brand).
3. It also won the International Documentary Associations award for Best Audio Documentary in 2018.

4. In fact, as early as 17 May 2018, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police questioned Chaudhry and submitted him to a lie detector test. On that occasion, he told authorities he did not kill anyone, then came out and bragged, “the polygraph did not work on me” (MacDonald, Kapelos, and Baksh). Essentially, he tried for as long as he could to maintain his involvement for ISIS for the purposes of self-aggrandizement in the press and on social media, while “admitting” to law enforcement that it was just a lie. In fact, James Harkin wrote in *Harper’s* that he received a WhatsApp message from Choudhry in on New Years’ Eve 2020/2021 in which he said “I didn’t lie about anything. The fact is I’ve won, I got away with jihad” (Harkin). What put an end to this game was the pressure of prosecution (Austen). The law under which the Canadians threatened to prosecute him, Revised Statutes of Canada (R.S.C.) Criminal Code 83.231 “Hoax Regarding Terrorist Activity,” on the face of it is really meant for an imminent threat such as a false bomb threat, which could cause a panic among the populace and lead to bodily injury. Incidentally, Callimachi played along with Chaudhry’s duplicitous self-representation for her own interested motives, doubling down in May 2018 on her claim in the veracity of the story, insisting the Chaudhry was only denying it now to avoid going to prison. “He slipped the net and he is going to get off,” she told the CBC (MacDonald, Kapelos, and Baksh).
5. In his 2020 article, Smith portrays the *Times* going all-in on new media. It is interesting in this context to note their executive editor, Dean Baquet, backtracked on social media earlier this month (April 2022), sending a memo to staff to cut down on their time spent on Twitter (Benton). “If your role is to find out important facts and tell them to the world, is that the way you want to spend your day?” he told Joshua Benton in an interview. The bluebird genie may not go gently back into the dark night of his bottle, however.
6. Although Andy Mills, the producer of *Caliphate*, kept his job initially, the fallout from this journalistic failure led to older complaints against him for inappropriate workplace behavior to resurface, and he eventually resigned from the *Times* in February 2021 (Mills).
7. In an interview with the CBC in May 2018, Callimachi acknowledged calling the interview a “gift,” responding to Chaudhry’s saying he felt he had been lured into embellishing his story: “I do feel that he gave us a gift with the story. It’s an eye-opening account of his passage through the Islamic State. If you listen to our interviews, I think you will see very clearly that there was never any entrapment. We made it very clear to him who we were. We set the terms out very clearly” (MacDonald, Kapelos, and Baksh).
8. The criticism has been made of Callimachi that she goes into her reporting with a pre-scripted story and is only looking for confirmation of that idea. As Karam Shoumali told Ben Smith, “I worked for so many reporters, and we were seeking facts. With Rukmini, it felt like the story was pre-reported in her head and she was looking for someone to tell her what she already believed, what she thought would be a great story” (Smith). If this were just an instance of an individual journalist with poor

technique, there would not be much to talk about here. But she was being touted as a rising star in a new form of journalism, suited to the current medialogy. That is why the specific case study of her fall from grace is more than just a cautionary tale. It is a fable about how far investigative reporting has been derailed by crowd sourcing, social media feeds, and the sensationalizing medium of the podcast.

9. After they catch Chaudhry in an outright lie, Callimachi struggles to explain away the inconsistencies in his story, committing the cardinal sin known in journalism as “rooting for the story” (Wemple). It is during Episode 6, when the contradictions in Chaudhry’s story begin to emerge, that Andy Mills raises the possibility that this is “the weirdest case of catfishing.”
10. A lot of the hype surrounding *Caliphate* had to do with the idea of Callimachi as a new kind of star journalist who was helping to bring the *New York Times* into the media landscape of the twenty-first century. As Ben Smith puts it, “Ms. Callimachi’s approach to storytelling aligned with a more profound shift underway at The Times. The paper is in the midst of an evolution from the stodgy paper of record into a juicy collection of great narratives, on the web and streaming services.” Remarkably, she still has 368.2k followers on Twitter, and she still uses as her Twitter banner the split image of her own face and war-torn Syria that was the promotional image for *Caliphate* when it ran four years ago. As far as I have been able to tell, she has not retracted her claim that Chaudhry’s equivocations to Canadian authorities were his strategy for getting away with murder.
11. For example, the citation for the Lowell Thomas Award read in part, “This series [. . .] demystifies the reporting process, transparently showing how reporter Rukmini Callimachi and producer Andy Mills question how they know what they know, who and what they can trust, what more they need to learn and question, and what can still surprise them.” (“Overseas Press Club of America Announces Annual Award Winners”). Consider also, the Peabody Award citation’s praise for *Caliphate*’s “absorbing style, wedding storytelling, reports from Iraq, and interviews [. . .] to produce a wonderful example of what longform audio reporting can and should sound like.” In his acceptance speech, Andy Mills’ praised Callimachi as “one of the most inspiring reporters in the entire world right now” (“Caliphate—78th annual Peabody Awards acceptance speech”). Of course, this rings completely hollow now.
12. In a previous article, “Quixo-Journalism,” I studied the Don Quixote theme in the HBO series *The Newsroom*, created by Aaron Sorkin, as a strategy for recovering a romanticized, heroic view of journalists, precisely in order to shore up their eroding authority in the face of crowdsourcing of events on social media.
13. In the context of this article, it is troubling to note that in 2020 the *New York Times* purchased Serial Productions, the parent company that produces *Serial* (Spangler).
14. Criticism of *Caliphate*’s orientalist assumptions exploded on Twitter on 25 September 2020, the day of Chaudhry’s arrest. See, in particular, threads by Alia Malek (“Not Surprised”) and Hassan I. Hassan (“Wow, super embarrassing!”). Ambereen Dadabhoy’s “Caliphate is ISIS Fan-Fic” also denounced the orientalist bias of the

- series, stating in part that *Caliphate* “relied on Islamophobic and Orientalist framing in order to peddle lies as truth so that it could sell a narrative that fit and corroborated the creators’ own preconceived notions of Islam and Muslims. Callimachi eagerly ingested the fabrications of her native informant because he was telling her what she already knew to be ‘true’ about ISIS.” The constant referent for these and similar denunciations of how Western media handles terrorist violence perpetrated by people who happen to be Muslim is of course Edward Said’s 1981 book *Covering Islam*.
15. This is especially true of *My Favorite Murder*, the other podcast Clausen and Sikjær discuss at length, which uses humor in ways Cervantes might appreciate to downplay the frightening aspects of violence against women. The study of true-crime podcasts and their predominantly female audience is a burgeoning field. In addition to Clausen and Sikjær’s valuable survey, Boling provides a good overview. Pavelko and Myrick defend the genre’s therapeutic value, but Moskowitz strikes an important cautionary note concerning its regressive politics.
 16. In this sense, Chaudhry, by the happy accident of being a bad liar, is good at exposing journalism’s manipulation of its audience. He is the opposite of Trump, if, as Castillo and Egginton argue, “Trump is a well-wrought fictional character that his public has forgotten, or simply no longer cares, is fictional” (21). Abu Huzayfah is a poorly-wrought fictional character who reminds us, almost as if he had been created for that very purpose, just how much of the time we are being fed lies, especially lies about Muslims, Islam, and so-called Islamism.
 17. The bibliography on the Lead Books is large and grew especially rapidly in the first decade of this century, just before the centenary of the expulsion of the Moriscos. Harvey’s chapter offers a good introduction in English (264–90) and Harris’ study contextualizes the hoax in relation to the Christian community of Granada. Hagerty’s edition of the seventeenth-century translation prepared by Adán Centurión, the Marquis of Estepa, is still the only version of the texts that has been published. They were taken to the Vatican for study in 1642, officially condemned as heretical in 1682, and finally returned to Granada in 2000 (Hagerty 53–54; Arias). The two volumes García Arenal co-edited with Manuel Barrios Aguilera constitute an ambitious summation of current knowledge on this fascinating episode in history. She is supposedly working on a transcription and critical edition. Meanwhile, the book she co-authored with Rodríguez Mediano, *Un Oriente español*, gives the fullest account to date of the Morisco community that produced them. Thomas E. Case examines the allusion to the hoax at the end of the 1605 *Don Quixote*, as do I in “Esta hermosa Jarifa.”
 18. Perhaps we should focus on the specific group of the Morisco elite who created the hoax, many of whom did succeed in remaining in Spain because they were able to claim Old Christian status. This issue is raised, for example, by García Arenal and Rodríguez Moñino in *Un Oriente español*, 75–105. See also my “Disappearing Moriscos” and “An Extensive Network of Morisco Merchants Active Circa 1590.”
 19. Enrique Soria Mesa has been researching this topic for decades. On the prevalence of genealogical fraud in general, see *La nobleza en la España moderna*, especially

- 294–321. His recent article on “Genealogy, Jewish Conversos, and Urban Conflict” offers a helpful introduction to the *linajudos*.
20. Barbara Fuchs’ *Exotic Spain* offers a good introduction to this vast subject. My article “Manzanares 1600” is a case study of an interesting popular manifestation of this cultural trend in La Mancha around the time *Don Quixote* was written. For the *juego de cañas* in the context of Maurophilia and the Morisco minority, see Irigoyen García.
 21. In “Esta hermosa Jarifa,” I have previously discussed Argote de Molina’s relevance to our understanding of the Morisco theme in *Don Quixote* Part One.
 22. I have elsewhere argued (“La sierpe en el seno”) that this mockery also takes in the alleged thoroughness of the expulsion, which Cervantes repeatedly describes as having succeeded in ridding Spain *entirely* of Moriscos because of the incorruptible character of the official at the head of it, the Count of Salazar, when it was an open secret that thousands of Moriscos had remained in Spain or returned afterwards.

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