The Manuscript@CSIC portal presents the collections of manuscripts in Hebrew, Arabic, Aljamiado, Persian and Turkish preserved and stored in the network of CSIC libraries, and includes information on their cataloging and digitalization.

The Portal is the result of a joint project carried out by the Institute of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Languages and Cultures (ILC-CSIC), the School of Arabic Studies in Granada (EEA-CSIC) and the Unit of Information Resources for Research (CSIC).

The project intends to make accessible to the public the collections of manuscripts stored in the Tomás Navarro Tomás Library and School of Arabic Studies Library.

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Leaflet designed and photographs by Miriam Font (EEA Library)
The collection of manuscripts in Oriental languages from Tomás Navarro Tomás Library (ILC-CSIC) is composed of 133 documents, 20 of which are Hebrew, 33 Arabic codices, 42 Aljamiados and 3 Persian. The remaining 35 are archives containing loose documents which were used in the binding of codices.

Some of the Hebrew manuscript collection are unique. These include a fifteenth-century Mahzor or Book of Prayers in parchment of Spanish origin, and an Esther scroll from the 18th century with Sephardic text. There are also 7 marriage contracts (one in parchment and decorated with illustrations), 4 amulets and 3 fragments of Biblical scrolls. The rest are complete codices on kabbalah, mystic or miscellaneous subjects. All of these documents arrived at the CSIC Library in the middle years of the last century and are considered highly significant as having been written by Sephardic Jews: most of them are of Italian Sephardic origin or come from the North of Morocco. The collection of Aljamiado manuscripts is composed by 42 Aljamiado codices, out of a total of 75 in all – the rest are in Arabic, in addition to loose leaves. This collection is also the most important since, apart from the ten codices of different origin and dates, the set of 42 Aljamiado manuscripts, 23 Arabic codices and the archives of loose documents together constitute a collection. This unity is due to the origin of their materials, as the original corpus was hidden in the false ceiling of a house in Almonacid de la Sierra (Zaragoza) at the beginning of the 17th century and was found in 1884. The two codices found in the Escuelas Pias de Zaragoza also belonged to this collection. Apart from these, the TNT Library also holds a set of 23 codices in Arabic and Persian dating mainly from the 19th and 20th centuries.

The manuscripts collection in Arabic and Hebrew kept in Escuela de Estudios Árabes Library (CSIC), is composed of 334 works in Arabic distributed over 63 volumes and one miscellaneous codex in Hebrew. Part of the collection goes back to the first years of the Institute, as a section belonging to the University of Granada at time when it was decided to set up a library with the initial collection formerly held in the College Provincial Library and that of the Philosophy and Languages Faculty, as specified in the Ruling published in the Gaceta de Madrid in November 1932. The rest of the manuscripts were acquired later from the center affiliated to the CSIC, either by purchase or donations.

This is the first time that an attempt has been made to catalogue these manuscripts in such a detail, although previous partial inventories did exist, such as that by Antonio Almagro Cárdenas: Catalogue of Arabic manuscripts conserved in the Universidad de Granada (1899), or that by Concepción Castillo Castillo: Arabic manuscripts kept in the School of Arabic Studies in Granada (1984).

There were also some references in the catalogue of the exhibition of Arabic manuscripts and ancient reserves of the School of Arabic Studies: exhibited to celebrate the 75th anniversary of Institute (2007-2008).

The collection contains essentially religious works, although there are also some documents on law, literature, lexicography, grammar and poetry. Some of the documents, such as the Agriculture Treaty of Ibn Luyún (1348) [ms14], have been the subject of research, and are considered to be of immense bibliographic, scientific and patrimonia. Others have also been carried out, mainly by specialists in restoration who have analyzed their bindings and paper and presented the results in conferences and specialized journals.

One important work of this type is ms3: Kitāb al-Wāqm, a grammatical compendium by Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Zubaydī, whose structure reflects a transition between Arabic and Mudejar bindings.

Other noteworthy examples are the copies of Al-‘iqd al-munazzam by Ibn Salmūn [ms31], one of the most significant Andalusi notarial forms, from a fragment of Muqaddima by Ibn Jaldūn [ms6], the Alfiyya of Ibn Mālik [ms28] and Al-durr al-nafis fi uns al-za‘a wa-l-ya‘lis, a reworking of the Futūh al-Sām (Conquest of Syria) attributed to al-Waqīdī.

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