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THE TOURIST PARATRANSLATION OF THE MUDEJAR: TRANSCULTURALITY AND MÉTISSAGE IN THE EIGHT- POINTED STAR

LA PARATRADUCCIÓN TURÍSTICA DEL MUDÉJAR: TRANSCULTURALIDAD Y MESTIZAJE EN LA ESTRELLA DE OCHO PUNTAS

JOSÉ YUSTE FRÍAS

jyuste@uvigo.gal

Universidade de Vigo

Abstract

This article aims to highlight the importance of paratextuality in Translation Studies, with a particular focus on iconic paratexts. These elements become symbols that function as transcultural culturemes, playing a crucial role in tourist paratranslation. This article primarily focuses on the use of the eight-pointed star as a brand symbol for the cities of Teruel and Zaragoza in eastern Spain. This symbol appears both in institutional tourist communication and in the commercial and social communication of local inhabitants, particularly in advertising campaigns to paratranslate the 'Mudejar identity'. The introduction presents the empirical application of paratranslation within urban spaces, demonstrating its effectiveness as a methodological tool for analysing the paratranslational use of traditional symbols in tourist communication. Following a concise paratranslational analysis of the eight-pointed star within Aragones Mudejar imaginary, from Teruel to Zaragoza, this article ultimately presents the eight-pointed star, formed from the interlaced patterns of Islamic art as an outstanding paratranslation of *métissage*.



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Keywords: Paratranslation; Eight-pointed star; Mudejar identity; Transculturality; *Métissage*.

Resumen

El objetivo de este artículo es insistir en los Estudios de Traducción sobre la necesidad de prestar atención a la paratextualidad, en general, y al paratexto icónico, en particular, máxime cuando este resulta ser un símbolo que se convierte en un culturema transcultural esencial en la paratraducción turística. El artículo se centra, concretamente, en el uso del paratexto icónico constituido por el símbolo de la estrella de ocho puntas como imagen de marca por parte de las ciudades de Teruel y Zaragoza tanto en su comunicación turística institucional como en la comunicación comercial y social de sus habitantes a la hora de difundir creaciones publicitarias para-traducir la «identidad mudéjar». En la introducción se presenta la noción de paratraducción aplicada a nivel empírico dentro del espacio urbano como herramienta metodológica idónea para analizar el uso paratraductor de los símbolos tradicionales en la comunicación turística. Tras ofrecer un breve recorrido paratraductor del uso del culturema constituido por la estrella de ocho puntas dentro del imaginario mudéjar aragonés partiendo de la ciudad de Teruel para llegar hasta Zaragoza, el autor presenta, finalmente, la estrella de ocho puntas formada a partir de la lacería del arte islámico como una excelente paratraducción del mestizaje.

Palabras clave: Paratraducción; Estrella de ocho puntas; Identidad mudéjar; Transculturalidad; Mestizaje.

1. Introduction to paratranslation in urban space

The notion of paratranslation, developed within the Translation & Paratranslation (T&P) Research Group of the Universidade de Vigo (Yuste Frías 2022a), has increased awareness among translators and interpreters regarding the significance of paratextual elements in tourist translation and interpreting. Both the paratexts surrounding tourist translations and the non-verbal elements in tourist interpreting constitute essential practices that enhance and support the liminal experience of the threshold in the professional practice of translation and interpreting in the tourism sector. Applying the notion of paratranslation to tourism requires mastering the ability to read, analyse, interpret, and convey the omnipresent

paratextuality in tourism translation and interpretation. For instance, in an attempt to professionally paratranslate tourist spaces, tour guides and, above all, lecturers guide employ a variety of paratextual materials - iconic, textual, textual-iconic, sound, and musical. These elements eventually appear on paper (books, brochures, leaflets, etc.), on screen (websites and social networks) or materialised in some form (posters, signs, stickers, souvenir objects) in the tourist space.

Since its inception, the notion of paratranslation has been conceived to critically examine and deconstruct elements that exist on the margins of the translation process. This article proposes, from a liminal thought cultivated on the threshold of translation –*aux seuils du traduire* (Yuste Frías 2022b)– questioning and deconstructing the reason for the existence of certain symbolic paratextual productions in tourism communication, especially when these constitute important culturemes that are transferred from one culture to another in a symbolic manner – often received without an apparent understanding of its significance.

Beyond encouraging reflection on liminality and the role of the translator-interpreter in the professional translation market, paratranslation constitutes an excellent methodological tool for reading, interpreting, and paratranslating paratextuality in urban spaces - where no formal translation assignment appears to have taken place, when, in fact, yet genuine acts of paratranslation unfold.

Since the creation of the Web-TV programme *Exit*¹, the T&P Group (Yuste Frías 2024) has always considered urban spaces as social communication practices, that is to say, as polymorphous translation zones.

Translation becomes a key to understanding the cultural life of cities when it is used to map out movements across language, to reveal the passages created among communities at specific times. The spatial dimension

1. *Exit* (<https://www.joseyustefrias.com/exit/>) was the second Web-TV programme of the T&P Group. The first one, *Zig-Zag* (<https://www.joseyustefrias.com/zig-zag/>), created in 2008. However, after the plagiarism of the name and even the colours of its letters by TVG, the production of new episodes was stopped in 2010 (Yuste Frías 2020). In 2009, a third Web-TV programme called *Pildoras T&P* (<https://www.joseyustefrias.com/pildoras-tp/>) was created; 44 episodes have been produced since then until the date of this publication.

of these passages is important. It is useful to consider the idea of translation zones-- areas of intense interaction across languages, spaces defined by a relentless to-and-fro, by an acute consciousness of relationships, and by the kinds of polymorphous translation practices characteristic of multilingual milieus. (Simon 2013)

To consider Sherry Simon's *Translational City* from the perspective of paratranslation is to read and interpret the paratexts of any urban space in order to try to translate the text of the city that one wants to present with them. To paratranslate the city from paratranslation implies giving a meaning to every sign and a sign to every meaning. When empirically applying the notion of paratranslation in urban spaces, we work with verbal signs (the linguistic code) and non-verbal signs (other semiotic codes): marks, signs, symbols, and images are elements widely used as paratexts to para-translate the city. Knowing how to read, interpret, translate, and paratranslate the city requires, on the part of the translator, to be willing to become the best paratranslator possible and to practise the reading, interpreting, translating, and paratranslation exercises characteristic of all 'flâneurs,' which is what Sherry Simon so aptly calls the translators who stroll around cities.

The translator emerges as a full participant in the stories of modernity that are enacted across urban space – modernity understood as an awareness of the plurality of codes, a thinking with and through translation, a continual testing of the limits of expression. Translators are flâneurs of a special sort, adding language as another layer of dissonance to the clash of histories and narratives on offer in the streets and passageways. Their trajectories across the city and the circulation of language traffic become the material of cultural history. (Simon 2012: 6)

In short, the T&P Group consider every urban space a surface for translating and paratranslating writing where different sociolinguistic, semiotic, and discursive representations between different languages and cultures are made, expressed, and communicated. From the notion of paratranslation, it can be demonstrated that no everyday aspect in the urban space is a simple perception or pure vision. On the contrary, for those who translate and interpret, any paratextual element of the everyday present in the urban space is always susceptible to receiving the paratranslator's gaze, especially if that paratextual element turns out to be expressed indirectly through a

symbol or an image. Research on the paratranslation of paratextual productions constructed with cultural elements with a strong symbolic charge in tourism communication involves a permanent questioning of how and why a type of paratext is paratranslated.

Thus, this publication stresses the need to pay special attention to paratextuality in general, and to iconic paratexts, in particular, when they turn out to be a symbol and become a cross-cultural cultureme within the framework of the professional practice of tourism translation and interpreting. The article focuses specifically on the image of the symbol of the eight-pointed star used as an identity mark in the cities of Teruel and Zaragoza, both in institutional tourist communication and in the different creative advertisements of the commercial and social communication of their inhabitants in order to translate the 'Mudejar identity'. When considering the tourist translation and paratranslation projects for the numerous 'Mudejar' products that have been created over the years for those who visit the cities of Teruel and Zaragoza in search of Aragonese Mudejar, it is worth asking whether it still makes sense for today's tourists to speak of 'Mudejar identity.' That said 'Mudejar identity' –always symbolically represented by the eight-pointed star– is never applied today to a certain group of people but to the supposed 'soul' itself of cities and a region whose monumental urban spaces are promoted by the cities of Teruel and Zaragoza and Aragon Provincial Government in order to paratranslate the World Heritage of the Mudejar style.

We are dealing with a genuine phenomenon of paratranslation of a symbolic cultureme in which we witness an overexposure of the visual code as opposed to the verbal one and where the paratext (the image of the eight-pointed star) replaces the text itself (the word 'Mudejar') on many occasions. When paratranslating urban space (Yuste Frías 2024: 13-17), the main methodological advantage of the notion of paratranslation lies precisely in the fact that the notion of the Vigo School makes it possible to analyse the research of paratranslation mechanisms that can function perfectly without any original text being translated from one language to another. They can even function without any translation project in the traditional sense of the term because the means used for communication turns out to

be a semiotic code (the paratext of the image of the eight-pointed star) that is far removed from the verbal one (the text where the word 'Mudejar' may or may not appear).

2. Transculturality in the eight-pointed star

The eight-pointed star is recognised as a symbolic cultureme that has undergone significant transcultural adaptation over the centuries. A clear indication of this is that the graphic representation of the octonary symbol has been translated and, consequently, recognised under various names² distinct from the 'eight-pointed star' or 'Mudejar star' across different cultures. For instance, in Spain, the eight-pointed star is also referred to as the Tartessian Star, the Star of Bethlehem, or the Star of Abd al-Rahman I, the first caliph of Al-Andalus, who played a key role in its dissemination during the medieval period.

The eight-pointed star has its origins in the mythology and religious traditions of ancient Mediterranean civilisations, as it appears across many of them, with the earliest known examples found in the Near East. Throughout the period of Muslim rule in Al-Andalus, early coins were minted featuring the Tartessian star as both a political symbol and a decorative element. However, it flourished most prominently in the Nasrid kingdom of Granada, where it adorned buildings, engravings, and jewellery. Mozarabs and Mudejars introduced the star across the northern Iberian Peninsula, while Muslims and moriscos³ disseminated it across the Maghreb and the Middle East.

The term *transculturation*, which inherently conveys the concept of *métissage*, was created in 1940 by Cuban ethnomusicologist Fernando

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2. In an article full of transnational clues to explore the transculturality of the eight-pointed star symbol, Alena Kárpava & Egor Bagrín mention up to 23 names spread across Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, and Oceania to refer to the *eight-pointed star*. We will mention here only the following 8: *Star of Bethlehem*, *Sun Symbol*, *Sun of the Pastures*, *Spica Morning Star*, *Lunar Symbol*, *Venus*, *Star of the Andes*. (Kárpava & Bagrín 2019: 37)
 3. *Moriscos* is the name given to the Muslims who remained in the Iberian Peninsula after the Christian conquest of all the peninsular territories.

Ortiz when he introduced it to Bronislaw Malinowski to describe Cuba's cultural landscape. After rejecting the terms 'acculturation' and 'cultural change' because they imply a one-way influence on the encounter between two cultures, Ortiz defined four phases in all cultural *métissage*: a phase of hostility, a phase of compromise, a phase of adaptation, and a phase of claiming. Transculturation is the synthesis, the last stage in the encounter between two cultures, the first stages being deculturation or exculturation, and acculturation or enculturation.

Entendemos que el vocablo **transculturación** expresa mejor las diferentes fases del proceso transitivo de una cultura a otra, porque éste no consiste solamente en adquirir una distinta cultura, que es lo que en rigor indica la voz inglesa **acculturation**, sino que el proceso implica también necesariamente la pérdida o desarraigo de una cultura precedente, lo que pudiera decirse una **desculturación**, y, además, significa la consiguiente creación de nuevos fenómenos culturales que pudieran denominarse de **neoculturación**. (Ortiz 1940: 142. The bold text is the authors')

Since a constant exercise of *métisse* transition and transaction between one culture and another is always involved, far from being a state, the transculturation of a culture like the symbol of the eight-pointed star always entails a continuous, irreversible, and never-ending creative process. The Mudejar star used in the cities of Teruel and Zaragoza as an identity mark is an act of transculturation since, not denying in any way the Islamic origins of the symbol, it reinterprets the symbol of the eight-pointed star, adapting it to its current cultural idiosyncrasy in order to touristically paratranslate the Mudejar today in the 21st century. However, we are dealing with an institutional tourist paratranslation that completely erases any textual reference to all the ancestral symbolic values of the number eight present in the octonary symbol, both in Islamic and in Christian symbology.

The *Rub al-hizb* is the eight-pointed star used in the Koran to indicate the end of a *surah*, or chapter⁴. In Arabic, *rub* means 'fourth' and *hizb* means 'part' or 'division', so it would mean 'fourth part'. It seems to be a representation of paradise, which, according to Islamic belief, is surrounded by eight mountains. In Muslim geometric decoration, the =eight-point tracery

4. This symbol is defined as U+06DE in the UNICODE alphabet.

pattern is the most widely used and appears in numerous compositional systems for making mosaics. In Islamic numerology, the number eight represents perfection and wholeness, and is considered a sacred number in Islamic culture. Eight angels carry the throne of Allah in heaven. 'The throne that comprises the world rests on eight angels that correspond to the eight divisions of space and the groups of letters of the Arabic alphabet' (Cooper 2000: 129-130).

In Christian iconography, the number eight, either in its representation as an octagon or as an octagonal star, is considered a geometric shape similar to the circle because it is the figure that facilitates the passage from the square to the circle (the famous squaring of the circle). Therefore, in many cathedrals and churches the passage from the square floor plan to the circular dome passes through the octagon formed by the four horns where the four evangelists are usually represented. In short, the number eight in Christian symbology is considered a symbol of passage and regeneration. 'The 8th heaven, the heaven of the fixed stars, is the dwelling place of the souls of the blessed. That is why it was intentionally used in the Middle Ages on the floor plan of baptisteries' (Esteban Lorente 2002: 70).

There are eight beatitudes: the poor in spirit, the meek, those who mourn, those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, those who search for peace, and those who are persecuted for righteousness sake. Eight people were saved from the flood: Noah, his wife, his three sons, and his three daughters-in-law. Eight would also be the number of Christ since, as Jean Claude Bologne mentions, the sum of the numerical values of the letters that make up the Greek name of Jesus is 888: I=10; η=8; σ=200; ο=70; υ=400; ζ=200 (Bologne 1994: 195).

The eighth day in the New Testament is that Easter Sunday that is so special to Christianity: Resurrection Sunday. A cycle ends after seven days and a new era begins with the number eight. Thus, in contrast to the great importance of the number seven in Jewish culture, with its clear representative manifestation in the symbol of the seven-branched candelabrum (the *menorah*), the presence of the number eight in Christian culture can be interpreted as recognising Jesus Christ not as just another prophet, but as the incarnation of God on Earth and thus celebrating the most important

act of Christianity: Christ's Resurrection. The number eight in the Christian tradition would thereby symbolise completion and completeness.

El número siete es conocido generalmente en su amplio simbolismo, mientras que al ocho se le suele prestar menor atención, pero tiene importancia en la exégesis del Nuevo Testamento. Como "octavo día de la Creación" se concibe la resurrección de Jesucristo y el comienzo de la nueva era, por lo cual a menudo se configuran octogonales las pilas bautismales. Tenemos estrellas de ocho puntas en el arte románico, y rosetones de ventana de ocho brazos, y las ocho puntas de la cruz de Malta apuntan en esa dirección. (Biedermann 1993: 327-328)

Quant au Huitième Jour, succédant aux six jours de la création et au sabbat, il est symbole de **résurrection**, de **transfiguration**, annonce de l'ère future **éternelle** : il comporte non seulement la résurrection du Christ, mais celle de l'homme. Si le chiffre 7 est surtout le nombre de l'Ancien Testament, le 8 correspond au Nouveau. Il annonce la béatitude du siècle futur dans un autre monde. (Chevalier & Gheerbrant 1982: 512. The bold text is the authors')

3. Origin and uses of the term 'Mudejar'

Translators approach specialised terminology with particular precision when crafting target texts. Employing precise terminology in the target language based on textual typology, register, and level of specialisation is a fundamental prerequisite for success in any professional translation project. The term *Mudejar*, 'used by various writers as early as the 13th century, originates from the Arabic word *mudayyan*, which is generally interpreted as 'one who has been allowed to stay'. Although Muslims who remained in Christian-controlled territories were commonly referred to as 'Moors' in medieval Spain (Borrás Gualis 1990: 77), the term *Mudejar* specifically designates those who did not emigrate and continued to live as tributary vassals under Christian rule during the period of the Reconquest. As was the case with the *marrano* (converted Jews), the Mudejar was obliged in a certain way to convert to Christianity, but, in reality, he always continued to preserve a large part of his customs and social organisation, above all, practising his religion, either clandestinely or in exchange for a tribute.

The *Mudejar* spoke an Arabic language known as *algarabía*, a term that has since evolved in Spanish to denote a 'brusque and unintelligible language'.

Most scholars consistently emphasise that Mudejar culture is primarily an artistic culture. It is specifically defined as a Muslim-influenced artistic style that extends the Gothic architectural language. Rather than rejecting the aesthetics characteristic of Andalusí Muslim art, Mudejar art preserves and adapts these elements to Christian rule. Even before the triumph of the Catholic Reconquest, many Christian sovereigns were already hiring Muslim artists and craftsmen from Granada to decorate their palaces, in the same way that Mozarabic⁵ artists and craftsmen, i.e. Christians, were hired to work on the construction of the mosque in Córdoba.

El término mudéjar, utilizado para definir una realidad artística, fue acuñado en el siglo XIX por el arqueólogo José Amador de los Ríos, con motivo de su discurso de ingreso en la Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, pronunciado el 19 de junio de 1859 sobre "El estilo mudéjar en arquitectura". A partir de este momento el término mudéjar se constituye en una categoría periodizadora de la historia del arte hispánico, desprendiéndose de su significado etimológico. [...]

El término mudéjar, referido al arte, tiene no sólo otra duración temporal, que desborda ampliamente el momento histórico de los mudéjares, e incluso de los moriscos, sino, lo que es más relevante, otro significado, que se ha desprendido de la ganga etimológica de origen.

En efecto [...] no puede definirse el arte mudéjar como el arte hecho por los mudéjares, porque además de que ello no define nada artísticamente, no fueron sólo exclusivamente mudéjares sus autores, sino también cristianos o judíos. (Borrás Gaulis 1990: 77 and 79)

5. *Mozarabs* is the name given to the Christians who lived in the territories dominated by Muslims after the conquest of the Iberian Peninsula in the year 711. The 'Reconquest' is usually limited to relating only the military history of religious and political confrontations, leaving aside the history of a whole series of cultural contacts between Muslims and Christians that occurred during the eight centuries of powerful presence of Islam in the Iberian Peninsula, from the arrival of the Muslims in the year 711 to the capture of Granada in 1492. At first, communities of Arabised Christians (*Mozarabs*) and Jews lived as taxpayers (*Dhimmi*) under Muslim administration, during the same time that many Christians converted to Islam (*Muladis*) after the Muslim conquest in the year 711.

Mudejar encompasses all artistic manifestations made in Christian territory whenever Islamic traces appear, whether they were made by Mudejars or not. In fact, the majority of the works are anonymous and, therefore, the religion of the authors is unknown. Artistic manifestations accompanied by a person's name are sometimes the work of subjugated Muslims, that is to say, Mudejars, but also, on other occasions, of Spanish Christians who loved Islamic art and, sometimes, even of foreign artists who came to the Iberian Peninsula attracted by its Islamic art (Borrás Gualis 1990: 124-137).

Let us remember that, as Gonazalo Borrás Gualis himself repeatedly stresses, the term 'Mudejar' was coined by José Amador de los Ríos on 19th June 1859, during his acceptance speech as a new full member of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando in Madrid (Borrás Gualis 1990: 13). He delivered a speech entitled *El estilo mudéjar en arquitectura* (The Mudejar style in architecture) within a context of romantic revival of the Middle Ages. It involved a somewhat biased interpretation of Spain's Islamic past for the sake of the Christian construction of the Spanish national identity, in which the Islamic contribution to the Spanish identity of medieval triumphant Christianity was highlighted. In fact, there was a comprehensive identity appropriation of Spain's Muslim past in the 19th century, Christianising it at all levels, with José Amador de los Ríos' own son, Rodrigo Amador de los Ríos, going so far as to almost affirm that 'the Mudejars were Christian'.

Tanto creían ambos [padre e hijo] en la realidad de este desplazamiento cultural hacia el cristianismo que [...] Rodrigo lo comentaba así en un texto: "cual manifestación singularísima del Arte Cristiano el Estilo mudéjar, que nace y vive, se desarrolla y muere dentro de la cultura propiamente cristiana en la Península, al amparo y servicio de la idea cristiana". (Urquizar Herrera 2009-2010: 213)

All this led to the use of the term 'Mudejar' during the 19th century with a strong ethnic connotation, which it is assumed to have been completely emptied in the present day to signify, in art history and since 1984, the artistic phenomenon of the survival of Hispano-Muslim Andalusian art in Christian Spain, after the reconquest of Al-Andalus, characterised 'by

its constructive effectiveness as an alternative system to that of western European art' (Borrás Gualis 2018: 20).

Having overcome the ultraconservative perspective of Spanish nationalism of the 19th century when defining the term 'Mudejar' in order to appropriate and domesticate it with the objective of Christianising it as much as possible, we believe that we must remember that history has taught us that there are no intrinsically pure national essences or cultures, as some visibly and audibly prominent extremist thinkers continue to maintain nowadays, two centuries later. On the contrary, the mosaic of countries that form the European space has been shaped over the centuries (thanks to the paradigm of translation, by the way, understood as a *métissage* of languages and cultures) because every culture is, in the end, the sum total of the influences it has received.

In our opinion, Mudejarism is another example of *métissage* that, as Juan Goytisolo declared, Spain can and should contribute to the common European heritage since it is not limited merely to architecture as art historians would have us believe, but is manifested in other human and social sciences, such as literature. The first three centuries of Castilian literature were Mudejar literature: thanks to Galmés de Fuentes, we know that the sources of *Conde Lucanor* or *Cantar del Mio Cid* were not Visigoth, as dreamt by Menéndez Pidal, but Arabic. Even *Libro de Buen Amor* is a Mudejar book, as Américo Castro discovered. We fully share Juan Goytisolo's opinion when he repeatedly states that 'it is absurd that everyone appreciates Mudejar art but believes that it existed on its own'. Mudejar art existed because there were Mudejar aesthetics that were rooted in a Mudejar society expressed in a Mudejar culture, a Mudejar literature, and even a Mudejar writing (Herrera, Eilenberger & Ástvaldsson 1999).

Writing more than twelve centuries ago, in Arabic and with Kufic letters, the words *al Mulk*, which mean power or glory (we are actually dealing with a Muslim expression of a generic nature to allude to royalty)⁶,

6. Inscription found on the footing, right side, of the fourth brace (left side) of Teruel Cathedral's coffered ceiling https://www.aragonmudejar.com/teruel/pag_catedral/mensu23.htm

together with the first words of the Hail Mary in Latin⁷ appeared at the top of a wooden roof. Specifically, this was within the coffered ceiling of the Roman Catholic church that is the Cathedral of Santa María de Mediavilla in Teruel, considered the Sistine Chapel of the Mudejar period. It constitutes a magnificent paratranslating act of 'Mudejar writing'. Thanks to the use of verbal paratexts (the inscriptions in Arabic and Latin), converted into intertexts of two different cultures, the paratranslating act of 'Mudejar writing' that can be seen in the coffered ceiling of the Cathedral of Teruel turns out to be an act of *métissage* in a sacred place where the language of one coexists with the language of the other without one becoming the other or vice versa.

Having succinctly clarified the etymological origin and after briefly going through the meanings of the term 'Mudejar' in all its artistic manifestations, both in the history of art and in literature, what we are interested in highlighting in this article is that, today, the term 'Mudejar' is used in many of the advertising communications in Aragon when it comes to the tourist promotion of the numerous commercial, artistic, and cultural activities carried out in cities such as Teruel and Zaragoza, constantly and openly brandishing the symbolic image of the eight-pointed star as an identifying brand.

4. Teruel and its Mudejar star

In the 21st century, there is still an emphasis on managing urban brand identity, ensuring that the city's representation continues to incorporate ancestral symbols and images as distinctive symbols of urban identity. Within this municipal branding strategy, priority is given to maximising the publicity of the tourist paratranslation of the city's cultural, historical, and artistic heritage.

7. Inscription found on the footing, right side, of the sixth brace (left side) of Teruel Cathedral's coffered ceiling https://www.aragonmudejar.com/teruel/pag_catedral/mensu35.htm

One of the most prominent examples of traditional symbols used to paratranslate the Mudejar identity of a city in a tourism context is the image of the eight-pointed star (Image 1).



Image 1. Photograph © José Yuste Frías

As a ubiquitous decorative element within tracery patterns composed of four octagons interwoven with crosses, the eight-pointed star features prominently in the Mudejar towers of Teruel's medieval monumental architecture (Image 2). It is institutionally employed to represent both the city of Teruel and its province (Image 3), effectively establishing it as a brand logo for a supposed and eternal 'Mudejar identity', even though its exact meaning remains undefined. Teruel's municipal and provincial governments have consistently utilised the eight-pointed star as a branding element in tourist communication, a practice that has continued since Teruel's designation as a World Heritage Site⁸. However, there has been no apparent effort by these institutions to define what the 'Mudejar identity' entails.

8. The Mudejar ensemble of Teruel formed by the four towers (those of San Martín, San Pedro, El Salvador, and the Cathedral Tower), the cimborio and the roof of the



Image 2. Photograph © José Yuste Frías



Image 3. Photograph © José Yuste Frías

An examination of the Ministry of Culture's website reveals sociocultural aspects related to the definition of Mudejar art (not the 'Mudejar identity') describing it as the 'legacy of the coexistence of three cultures with very different roots: Christian, Islamic, and Jewish'. The full quote below

Cathedral are the elements that UNESCO declared to be World Heritage on 28th November 1986.

highlights the main objective of the international institution devoted to preserving World Heritage: peaceful coexistence between peoples regardless of how different their cultural traditions are.

El arte mudéjar es una manifestación artística única en el mundo, ya que no forma parte ni de la cultura occidental europea ni de la cultura islámica, sino que es el resultado de una situación social, política y cultural determinada, producida en un entorno y en una época concreta. Es el legado de la convivencia de tres culturas de raíces muy diferentes como son la cristiana, islámica y judía, cuyo valor radica en la pacífica convivencia que propició la fusión de elementos de tradición islámica con los lenguajes artísticos occidentales: el Románico, el Gótico, el Renacimiento y más tarde el Barroco. El legado oriental está presente, sobre todo, en la utilización de materiales sencillos como el ladrillo, el yeso, la cerámica y la madera, y en la ornamentación a base de motivos geométricos, vegetales, lazos o arquerías. Así mismo también es un símbolo de integración de la arquitectura, la cerámica, la talla y la pintura. (Ministry of Culture & UNESCO-World Heritage n.d.)

It is worth pointing out that, by mentioning in the previous quote that cultures have 'roots' when indicating that the legacy of Mudejar art comes from different cultural traditions, the government of Spain reveals a perspective of the identity of cultures understood as a root-identity, always associated with the territorialisation of the identity of one against the other, and not as a relationship-identity, which is closer to the conscious and contradictory *métisse* experiences that always arise from the contact between cultures.

5. Aragonese paratranslations of the Mudejar star

There are numerous examples of the use of the iconic paratext of the eight-pointed star in the institutional and commercial communication carried out in the Aragon Region in order to paratranslate the 'Mudejar identity' for advertising and tourism purposes. In this section we are going to take a very brief look, from a paratranslator perspective, at some of the most representative examples of the advertising use of the eight-pointed star, first in the city of Teruel, and then in Zaragoza. What we present below is merely one way of beginning an infinite paratranslating tour of the transculturality of the paratext formed by the octonary symbol in Aragon.

The seven Aragonese paratranslations of the Mudejar star presented in this section come from both institutional and commercial communications, and have been chosen as excellent paratranslation examples of the paratext of the Mudejar octonary symbol in advertising communications within the tourism sector. The first five paratranslations are from Teruel and the last two from Zaragoza, since it must not be forgotten that the Mudejar style is also present in the province of Zaragoza⁹. In 2001, UNESCO approved the extension of the dossier on the Mudejar Architecture of Teruel and renamed it World Heritage Mudejar Architecture of Aragon, expanding the number of buildings (to 10), through which the complex historical-artistic process of Mudejar formation could be understood in its own unique style within the Aragonese territories of the Iberian Peninsula, developed between the 13th and 17th centuries, that is to say, during almost four centuries. In relation to the complete list of Mudejar Architecture of Aragon, we wish to highlight what appears at the end of the entry published on the website of the Ministry of Culture of the Spanish Government:

La Arquitectura Mudéjar de Aragón se incluyó en la Lista del Patrimonio Mundial en 1986 con las torres y la catedral de Teruel, y posteriormente se ampli[ó] en 2001. Los monumentos que integran este bien seriado son: Torre, techumbre y cimborrio de la Catedral de Santa María de Mediavilla de Teruel; Torre e iglesia de San Pedro de Teruel; Torre de la iglesia de San Martín de Teruel; Torre de la iglesia del Salvador de Teruel; Ábside, claustro y torre de la colegiata de Santa María de Calatayud; Iglesia parroquial de Santa Tecla de Cervera de la Cañada; Iglesia de Santa María de Tobed; restos mudéjares del Palacio de la Aljafería de Zaragoza; Torre e iglesia parroquial de San Pablo de Zaragoza y Ábside; parroquieta y cimborrio de la Seo de Zaragoza. Estos diez monumentos fueron seleccionados por ser los más representativos y los que mejor reflejan el fenómeno mudéjar como hecho histórico y cultural que debiera servir de ejemplo de paz y respeto entre los pueblos. (Ministry of Culture & UNESCO-World Heritage n.d.)

9. It is worth reminding the reader here that Mudejar art is not exclusive to Aragón. As Gonzalo Borrás (1990: 157-198) points out, the diversity of Mudejar art within the Iberian Peninsula can be seen in León and 'Old Castile,' in Toledo, in Extremadura, in Andalusia, in the Canary Islands, in Catalonia, in the Balearic Islands, in Valencia, and in Murcia.

‘Peace and respect among people’ is what ‘the Mudejar phenomenon’ could help to build, according to the Ministry of Culture. We will return to these sentences in bold in the last lines of the sixth and penultimate section of this article.

5.1. *The star on the way to Teruel*

The first paratranslation of the ‘Mudejar identity’ is not associated with a person or an architectural monument, but with a road, specifically a motorway. This motorway, the A-23, known as the ‘Mudejar motorway’, has become a vital communication route connecting Levante, Aragon, and France via the Somport tunnel. It is also referred to as the ‘backbone of Aragon’, as it runs through the entire region from north to south, linking its three capitals. It starts at the French border in Somport and ends in Sagunt.

When travelling in a north-south direction along the Mudejar motorway, before reaching Teruel, at kilometre 154 in the vicinity of Singra, we come across, on the right and at the top of a mound, the sculpture by Julio Tapia Gasca from Zaragoza entitled *Mudejar Star* (Image 4), made using corten steel. The piece, which is 15 m high, 45 m wide, and 18 m long, was created in the year 2000.



Image 4. Photograph © José Yuste Frías

In the centre of the *Mudejar Star* sculpture there is a representation of the motorway, featuring a wide strip that narrows as it crosses through the octonary symbol towards the horizon. It is as if this monumental sculpture were intended to announce to the traveller coming from the Pyrenees that, having passed by the city of Teruel, the world capital of Mudejar, which he is about to reach, the Mudejar star will guide him on his way to Sagunt.

In fact, the image of the eight-pointed star as a Mudejar symbol of Teruel can be seen more times along the motorway since, during 2007, sculptures of smaller Mudejar stars were placed under several bridges crossing the motorway (Image 5). These were created by the sculptors José Luis Gracia and Francisco Javier Buen.



Image 5. Photograph © José Yuste Frías

5.2. *The bull and the star*

The bull and the eight-pointed star feature as emblematic figures in the heraldic design of the coat of arms of the Teruel City Council (Image 6) because both elements are linked to the foundation of the city. The foundational origins of the city of Teruel are intertwined with a legend of the bull and the star, forged in 1171 amidst the military context of the Reconquest. At that time, King Alfonso II of Aragon sought to establish a defensive bulwark against Islam. According to tradition, this legend originates from a

period of waiting: the anticipation of a sign that would indicate to Alfonso II of Aragon the exact location where he should establish the new city.



Image 6. © Teruel City Council

Para lo cual tuvo que soportar, mientras tanto, la presión musulmana por la frontera valenciana, como ocurrió con la estratagema de una manada de toros con fuego en la cornamenta que no sorprendió, sin embargo, a los aragoneses, dispersando a los animales y espondiendo mediante al contención de la embestida y la persecución del enemigo que se batió en retirada. Y al amanecer, los cristianos descubrieron a uno de los animales supervivientes de la estampida en lo alto de un cerro con una brillante luz entre las astas, a modo de estrella fulgurante, lo que fue interpretado como la esperada señal para el asentamiento de la villa que el monarca debía organizar y fortalecer como defensa de los límites meridionales de sus dominios. Así, los orígenes de la fundación, organización y aforamiento de esta villa principal iban a quedar asociados al símbolo principal de la ciudad, el toro y la estrella que todavía campean en su escudo. (Sarasa Sánchez & Abad Asensio 2014: 96)

It is worth wondering if that 'blazing star' mentioned in the legend would not be, in fact, the remains of the pitch or the burning branches that the

Muslims had placed on that bull on fire that was left behind. However, the important factor as regards the legend is that it looked like a star. There is no written evidence that this 'blazing star' was eight-pointed; nevertheless, that is how it appears in the coat of arms of Teruel. The bull's horns may remind not so much of a 'star' but of a satellite, which is not usually represented with an eight-pointed geometric shape. We are referring to the moon. Let us remember that, in the astrological symbolism of the zodiac, the bull is a star sign that dominates a domain of time in which Venus has its nocturnal home, 'which makes us think of mythological relations between the bull god and the goddess of love' (Biedermann 1993: 452).

Le taureau est donc généralement considéré comme un animal lunaire, mis en relation avec la nuit. [...] En hébreu, la première lettre de l'alphabet, **alef**, qui signifie **taureau**, est le symbole de la lune à sa première semaine et tout à la fois le nom du signe zodiacal où commence la série des maisons lunaires. Beaucoup de lettres, de hiéroglyphes, de signes sont en rapport simultané avec les phases de la lune et avec les cornes du taureau, souvent comparées au croissant de lune. (Chevalier & Gheerbrant 1982: 931. The bold text is the authors')

From the Christian ideological perspective of the Reconquest, it would be unthinkable to use the crescent moon as a symbol for founding a Christian city such as Teruel. It makes perfect sense, both symbolically and ideologically, to combine the bull with the star, rather than the moon.

A symbol of great strength, there are countless symbolic rites referring to the victory of man over bull and the sacrificing of this animal. 'From the perspective of the history of religions, the role of the bull is extremely important, as evidenced by the cults that revere it' (Biedermann 1993: 51). These ancestral symbolic rites persist today in the bullfighting festivals that take place in Teruel during the 'La Vaquilla del Ángel' Festival (Image 7) in the summer. Hence, the bull and the eight-pointed star are symbolic elements that are repeated in the composition of the monumental sculpture made by José Gonzalvo for the main summer festival of Teruel. Erected in the urban area of Teruel before crossing the viaduct bridge, this iron sculptural ensemble is 6 m tall and is made up of a bull with a rope around its neck, a cowherd that is dodging it as he places an eight-pointed star on its

head and, at the top, a guardian angel that is pulling the rope to prevent the bull from goring him (Image 8).



Image 7. Photo Montage © José Yuste Frías

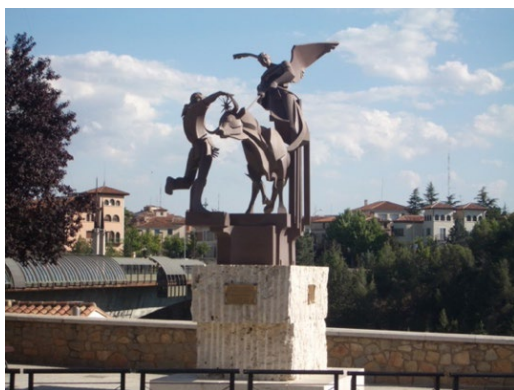


Image 8. Photograph © José Yuste Frías

5.3. Teruel ham's star

The Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) 'Jamón de Teruel' (Teruel Ham) dates back to 1984, when it became the first Spanish emblem used to protect and guarantee the production of hams. This status was ratified in 1985 by the Ministry of Agriculture and in 1997 by the European Union. Since 2014, it also includes 'Paleta de Teruel' (Teruel Pork Shoulder). All

hams and shoulders that comply with the specifications of the Regulatory Council of the Protected Designation of Origin 'Jamón de Teruel' / 'Paleta de Teruel' are branded with an eight-pointed star designed by joining the 8 vertices of a regular octagon (Image 9), which is more like the eight-pointed 'Guñelve' star, a symbol from Mapuche iconography. However, it seems that the butcher's shops in the city of Teruel prefer to use the eight-pointed star designed with the superposition of two concentric squares, with one of them being rotated 45° with respect to the other (Image 10, Image 11, Image 12).



Image 9. Montage of screenshots



Image 10. Photograph © José Yuste Frías

As mentioned in the third section of this article, during the Middle Ages the Mudejar was a Muslim who continued to practise his religion (in a more or less clandestine way) in the territories occupied by Christians during the period of the Reconquest. It is striking that the eight-pointed star, the ‘Mudejar star,’ is used in Teruel to brand a typical food product of the city and its province made from pork, an impure animal in most monotheistic religions.



Image 11. Photograph © José Yuste Frías

It should be remembered that pork consumption is forbidden in the Muslim religion. In the Koran, the pig is considered ‘unclean’ by Muhammad since it feeds on filth, carrion, garbage, and even its own excrement. According to Islam, it is the animal into which the man punished for his disbelief is reincarnated. This Islamic taboo regarding pork is not exclusive to the Muslim religion. In the Jewish religion, not only can the pig not be eaten, but it cannot be touched even after death (the leather of a Jew’s sandals, shoes, or belts cannot be made of pigskin). In his superbly illustrated book, Michel Pastoureau masterfully describes the original medieval legend of the prohibition of pork in Koranic law:



Image 12. Photograph © José Yuste Frías

À l'époque des croisades, plusieurs auteurs ont mis par écrit différentes légendes pour expliquer l'interdit du porc par la loi coranique, et ce aussi bien chez les musulmans eux-mêmes que chez les chrétiens ou les juifs. Une histoire forgée à l'époque des croisades par les Francs de Terre Sainte circulait encore en Occident à la fin du Moyen Âge : Mahomet avait promis aux infidèles auxquels il prêchait pour les convertir, que Dieu leur enverrait une montagne de miel et de gâteaux, preuve de son amour pour les hommes. Le Prophète avait fait placer auparavant du miel et des gâteaux au sommet d'une montagne, dans une fosse dissimulée sous des buissons. Mais quand il y conduisit ses auditeurs, des porcs avaient tout mangé et dormaient dans la fosse repus. Alors, très habilement, Mahomet dit à ceux qui étaient venus avec lui : "Voyez ces porcs qui ont trouvé avant nous ce don du Seigneur ; eh bien ! sachez qu'ils sont tous ennemis de Dieu. Ne mangez pas de leur chair, ne les élevez point, ils sont maudits". (Pastoureau 2009: 86-87)

The use of the Mudejar star, branded into Teruel ham, represents a cultural appropriation of the eight-pointed star. This appropriation manipulates the medieval term 'Mudejar', which originally referred to individuals prohibited from consuming pork. Whether through innocent or unconscious manipulation, the fact remains that the manipulation of the food taboo is present. However, we honestly believe that there is no genuine intent to

disparage an entire community based on religious affiliation. Manipulating the taboo regarding pork to fiercely criticise a certain religious affiliation to the point of denigrating it because it is forbidden to practise it, or simply because it is persecuted, was what was done around the 12th and 13th centuries. That was when medieval Christianity tended to withdraw into itself to reaffirm its religious identity in the face of other neighbouring religions and cultures. Indeed, the emerging medieval anti-Judaism represented the Jews and the Synagogue with the symbolic image of the pig. Using fierce mockery, medieval authors and artists turned the animal forbidden by the Jews into a symbol used to designate them. A practice later resurrected by Nazi propaganda in the 20th century, as Michel Pastoureau points out.

L'iconographie traduit cette attirance supposée des juifs pour le porc par des formules variées, mais une image prend peu à peu le pas sur toutes les autres : celle qui représente des juifs, souvent des enfants, en train de téter une truie et d'en absorber les défécations. Née en Allemagne vers le milieu du XIII^e siècle, cette *Judensau*, d'abord peinte ou sculptée, plus tard gravée et imprimée, se diffusa dans toute l'Europe. Devenue plus rare après le concile de Trente, elle ne disparut cependant pas complètement et resurgit à l'époque contemporaine, notamment dans la propagande nazie. (Pastoureau 2009: 90)

During the Middle Ages, the consumption of dry-cured may have acquired a symbolic meaning, serving to reaffirm Christian identity against the Jewish or Muslim identities. However, nowadays, the consumption of 'Jamón de Teruel' with Denomination of Origin, branded with the eight-pointed Mudejar star, is not usually associated with these connotations. Or is it? Unfortunately, the 21st century is a time of extremism, in which the identity withdrawal of identities in crisis is capable of the most daring atrocities.

5.4. *Where stars are born*

In the recent city branding update presented by the Teruel City Council to the media in May 2024, the term 'Mudejar identity' is not explicitly stated. However, 'the Mudejar' is implicitly referenced through the use of the eight-pointed star, which symbolises not only the city's artistic and monumental heritage but also 'Jamón de Teruel'.

The tourist promotion advertising campaign featuring the new brand image of Teruel also includes a video uploaded to the YouTube channel of Teruel City Council¹⁰, where up to eight close-ups of the eight-pointed star can be spotted. Mere chance or fortunate coincidence? In the new Teruel city brand (Image 13) the tourist attractions of the city have merged with the double use of the image of the eight-pointed star to refer to the Mudejar (Mudejar art) and gastronomy (Teruel ham), but also make use of the image of the heart to refer to Teruel as the city of love (the Lovers of Teruel). The iconic sequence begins with a small, brief, and fleeting blue five-pointed star, referencing the starry sky that is visible in the city and province, free from the light pollution of large cities. This ‘new’ design for Teruel’s city identity that, under the slogan *–Where the stars are born–* links its present to the historical Mudejar past of Teruel once again.



Image 13. Screenshot of YouTube video

5.5. Eight-star banking service

The use of the eight-pointed star is not limited to the city of the Lovers’ tourist communications. On the contrary, there is practically no business sector in Teruel where the octonary shape is not used in one form or

10. The video is 2 min and 22 sec long, featuring a script illustrated with a tourist paratranslation in images that presents the tourist attractions of Teruel onscreen. <https://youtu.be/S4WLjuyW3F0?si=qyA2MnseDpq6kdqr>

another. For instance, even the banking sector has culturally appropriated the symbol of the eight-pointed star to paratranslate its banking services.



Image 14. Screenshot of the Caja Rural de Teruel's website

Indeed, the Caja Rural bank of Teruel launched a campaign in 2023 in which an 8-Star Service (Image 14) was offered to attract customers. The

image of the Mudejar octonary symbol was used by drawing on each of the eight points of the Mudejar star a new, smaller green eight-pointed star, inserting the white logo of Caja Rural bank of Teruel in their centre. Each of these new 8 little stars is linked to 8 texts detailing the 8 promises made by the bank.

5.6. *The star tapa*

Such is the strength of the ‘Mudejar identity’ displayed by the city overlooked by the Public Administration of Teruel, with its eight-pointed star, that the regional capital of Aragon, Zaragoza, also uses. By means of a kind of perfect communion between provinces, a gastronomic route featuring the ‘Mudejar tapa’ was created: the Mudejar route of Cafés and Bars of Zaragoza, which was held for the fourth time in 2024. The eight-pointed star is also featured among the entries, as is the case of the dish by Bar Central, which was photographed by the *Heraldo de Aragón* newspaper (Image 15).



Image 15. Website of *Heraldo de Aragón* newspaper

With the paratranslation of the eight-pointed star, the ‘Mudejar identity’ of Zaragoza reaches both the plate and the palate.

La mezcla telúrica de tierra, agua, aire y fuego, para edificar iglesias y torres Patrimonio de la Humanidad podría tener su equivalente culinario en el arte de comer de los musulmanes españoles, que vivieron y crearon cultura en el mundo cristiano aragonés. (Beltrán 2002: 354)

If there was an Aragonese Mudejar cuisine during the Middle Ages that adapted the local produce of Aragon to the peculiar taste of Islamic gastronomy, always subject to the precepts of the Koran, it seems that the tradition of this ‘Mudejar gastronomy’ is still alive today, adapting to the tastes of the 21st century.

5.7. *The ‘Territorio Mudéjar’ star and Aragonese identity*

‘Territorio Mudéjar’ is a network of 37 towns promoted in 2018 by Zaragoza Provincial Council to preserve and promote Mudejar art. Events, research stays, and projects based on Mudejar are among their activities. Since one of the main characteristics of the Mudejar art is the presence of geometries, epigraphs, and arabesques, it made perfect sense for the eight-pointed star to be the recognisable symbol selected to identify the ‘Territorio Mudéjar’ network.



Image 16. Screenshot of the website of *AraInfo* newspaper

Hence, when the *Diario Libre d'Aragón AraInfo* newspaper reported that 'Territorio Mudéjar' was awarding research stays endowed with 6,000 euros, there was no doubt about pairing the news with an illustration in which, to doubly reinforce the 'Mudejar identity' of Aragon, a Mudejar in medieval attire is depicted. He is working by candlelight, a starry night in the background, to make the same eight-pointed Mudejar star of Teruel, in glazed green and white ceramics, with which we began our brief tour of the paratranslations of the Mudejar in Aragonese imagery (Image 16).

6. *Métissage* in the eight-pointed star

As seen from the third section of this article onwards, Aragonese Mudejar art is proof of how, throughout the Middle Ages, Aragon became an open door to Islam and, consequently, a space where cultural *métissage* between Muslim and Christian cultures was possible. During the Middle Ages 'the Mudejar identity was a frontier identity', a *métisse* identity halfway between the Islamic and the Christian. The Mudejar people could not 'detach themselves from the Islamic faith' they professed. 'Nor from their collective organisation in *aljamas* governed by their own authorities and by Koranic laws' (Rebollo Bote 2019: 121 and 129) nor from the collective organisation of the Christian sphere in which they had been 'allowed to stay'.

Given the enormous lack of rigour regarding the usage of *métissage* in human and social sciences, it should be reminded, once again, that the term *métissage* does not mean 'mixture', 'fusion', 'cohesion', or 'osmosis', but rather, it means 'confrontation' or 'dialogue'. That is to say, two crucial moments in the encounter between two cultures, between the one and the other. *Métissage* is always imbalance, doubt, oscillation, because the future development is unpredictable, unstable, and never definitive since the *métisse* identity is forged with all the senses of belonging to one culture and another. In short, a *métisse* identity, as is the case of 'Mudejar identity' culturally speaking, implies an unorthodox type of arithmetic. The medieval Mudejar was someone of Muslim origin who also lived the customs and way of life of the Christian sphere where they had been allowed to stay after the Reconquest. The medieval Mudejar was not half Muslim, half Christian, just as today's young man of Maghreb origin, born and raised in Spain, is

neither half Spanish nor half Maghreb, 50% Spanish and 50% Maghreb, as intercultural uniformity or multicultural differentialism would like him to be. None of that and quite the opposite because, in *métisse* arithmetic, he is 100% Spanish and 100% Maghreb. He lives at 200% because his bicultural richness enables him to do so.

We will never tire of repeating that the conceptions of identity conveyed by intercultural and multicultural aspects reveal an ideology of exacerbated individualism. By rejecting the category of otherness, it points to living a person's identity under a single egocentric vision of both their interests and their affections that keeps them in a permanent state of sad withdrawal into themselves. By mistaking identity with a single sense of belonging, the notion of identity, conceived under the theoretical perspectives of the intercultural and the multicultural, is opposed to the sensations that seek to experience multiple senses of belonging.

The prefix 'inter-' in the word 'intercultural' suggests that cultures can be in contact, but barely touching, brushing against each other so that they remain what they are, living their 'cultural identity', in their own home, neighbourhood, city, province, region, or country.

By means of the prefix 'multi-', the word 'multiculturalism' uses and abuses the concept of difference to reach an identity essentialism omnipresent in the political discourses of both the extreme right and the extreme left.

By conceiving 'cultural identity' as a homogeneous whole, the intercultural and the multicultural constantly territorialise any verbal or non-verbal production of 'cultural identity': any theme or subject that manifests a certain 'cultural identity' is circumscribed and reduced to a certain territory, always well-defined and delimited by borders.

The prefix 'trans-' in the term 'transcultural' suggests the idea of an acceptance to be transformed into a fruitful dialogue between cultures that, by de-territorialising themes and subjects, breaks linguistic and cultural boundaries to enable the existence of identities formed by multiple senses of belonging in the public space.

In Islamic art, tracery designates a geometric ornamentation that consists of an interlacing composed of a series of intersecting lines placed

alternately on top of each other. They create various star-shaped and polygonal figures starting from a matrix that develops a drawing that is repeated indefinitely in a regular polygon with eight sides (there are also four-sided and six-sided polygons) to form the eight-pointed star.

Para el artista musulmán o, lo que viene a ser lo mismo, para el artesano que ha de decorar una superficie, el entrelazado geométrico es sin duda la forma que más le satisface en el plano intelectual, pues se trata de una expresión muy directa de la Unidad divina que está tras la variedad inagotable del mundo. Ciertamente es que la Unidad divina como tal está más allá de cualquier representación, pues su naturaleza que es absoluta, no deja nada por fuera de sí misma, nada la ‘acompaña’. Sin embargo, se refleja en el mundo a través de la armonía, que no es otra cosa que la ‘unidad de la multiplicidad’ (*al-uahdah fi’l-katrah*), equivalente a la ‘multiplicidad en la unidad’ (*al-katrah fi’l-uahdah*). El entrelazado expresa tanto un aspecto como el otro. Mas tiene todavía otra faceta que evoca la unidad que existe tras todas las cosas; el entrelazado suele tener un solo elemento: una sola cinta o una línea única, que vuelve incesantemente sobre sí misma. (Burckhardt 1988: 6)

‘The unity of multiplicity, equivalent to multiplicity in unity’ is perhaps the best definition of the *métisse* identity of medieval Mudejar, culturally speaking. Since, according to Juan Eduardo Cirlot, the figure consisting of the superposition of two concentric squares, one of which has been rotated 45 degrees, symbolises ‘material generation by the action of two antagonists’ (Cirlot 1985: 223), the eight-pointed star is a *métisse* star that represents, starting in the Middle Ages, the union of opposites: two cultures confronted, at first, but engaged in dialogue later on, exchanging life experiences within a common public space: the cities of Teruel and Zaragoza. Naturally, the everyday coexistence between Muslim and Christian cultures was not idyllic. Thinking about *métissage* requires breaking with the stereotypes of eternally positive thinking that only finds benefits in any encounter between cultures, overlooking the contradictions and conflicts that can be generated if the one does not translate and paratranslate each of the senses of belonging of the other’s identity and vice versa. If there was always an exchange of services and goods among Muslims, Christians, and Jews in, for instance, medieval Teruel, then it is worth asking why that would not be the case with the Mudejars, even if it was also for convenience.

Es cierto que [los musulmanes] se intercambiaban servicios y mercancías con cristianos y judíos y que se prestaba dinero (casi siempre eran los moros quienes se endeudaban), pero unos y otros lo hacían por conveniencia. La pretendida convivencia idílica entre mudéjares, judíos y cristianos dista bastante de la realidad, porque concretamente los mudéjares debían vestir y cortarse el pelo de forma especial y ser comedidos a la hora de llamar a la oración; no podían contraer matrimonio ni tener relaciones sexuales con cristianas o judías, y si alguna vez lo hicieron, fueron severamente castigados: en 1440, un moro turolense fue quemado por haber tenido relaciones con una prostituta cristiana. (Blasco Martínez 2014: 242)

The day-to-day coexistence between different cultures was, is, and always will be difficult, but not impossible. When managing cultural diversity, *métissage* and the transculturality implicitly present in the culture of the symbol of the Mudejar star make the tourist paratranslation of the Mudejar phenomenon a historical and cultural fact that, going back to the aforementioned quote from the Ministry of Culture of the Spanish Government, 'should serve as an example of peace and respect among people'.

7. Conclusions

The eight-pointed star symbol is used as a means of expression in the tourist communication of the cities of Teruel and Zaragoza, forming a complete paratextual element with high symbolic value. It is a crucial cultureme for translating the 'Mudejar identity' not only in the margins of the texts that it accompanies, surrounds, envelops, introduces, and presents, but also beyond the text, extending it into the Aragonese urban space and even into the audiovisual advertising communication of the Teruel corporation.

The paratext of the cultureme of the symbol of the eight-pointed star has a very strong and specific cultural and heritage significance that, through various institutional and commercial paratranslations, comes into contact with other cultures in any tourist paratranslation project. However, paratranslating a paratextual element such as the semiotic unit made up of the 'Mudejar star' is not an easy task. The absence of a clear institutional definition of what constitutes or not 'Mudejar identity' today not only does not facilitate the task of tourist paratranslation of the Mudejar, but it can

even lead to misunderstandings in the interpretation of the eight-pointed star symbol.

For a potentially correct paratranslation of the eight-pointed star symbol in its cross-cultural journey within future tourism translation and paratranslation projects, we have tried to point out some clues for interpreting the two implicit symbolisms of the number eight, coming from two cultures that, since the Middle Ages, have participated in the construction of the *métisse* identity of the Aragonese Mudejar: Muslim culture on the one hand, and Christian culture on the other.

The presence of the semiotic unity of the cultureme constructed by the eight-pointed star symbol is an iconic paratextual production that not only embellishes, illustrates, or accompanies a text in tourist communication in the cities of Teruel and Zaragoza; it also makes possible the existence of symbolic structures on which to build new tourist discourses. These interweave new meanings around the most important iconic paratext within any Mudejar tourist translation and paratranslation project: the image of the octonary figure.

The *métisse* process of perpetual transculturation of the eight-pointed star symbol gives it a great vitality that allows its presence to this day. We have seen how omnipresent it is not only in the urban space in the cities of Teruel and Zaragoza, but also throughout the 'Mudejar territory' of Aragon. The motivated figuration of the eight-pointed star, as an essential paratextual element, allows for the translation of the 'Mudejar identity' to the point that the mere presence of this iconic paratext constantly paratranslates the artistic heritage of the Mudejar style, both in the tourist-institutional communication carried out in the urban space of Aragon Community and in the tourist-commercial communication of the advertising productions carried out by its inhabitants.

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BIONOTE / NOTA BIOGRÁFICA

JOSÉ YUSTE FRÍAS is the Principal Investigator of the Research Group Translation & Paratranslation (T&P) at the Universidade de Vigo. He leads, manages, and coordinates the Master's in Translation for International Communication (MTCI), the Specialisation Degree in Translation for the Video Game Industry (ETIV), and the International PhD in Translation & Paratranslation (T&P) at the Universidade de Vigo. He is an associate member of the Instituto de Investigación Lingua (iLingua) at UVigo, as well as the creator and director of three Web-TV programmes dedicated to the scientific dissemination of translation: *Zig-Zag*, *EXIT*, and *Píldoras T&P*. As a translation theorist, his research on paratextuality has led him to publish pioneering reflections on the utmost importance of paratextual details in the final edition of translations and on the liminal space occupied by every respectable professional translator and interpreter. He initiated the Vigo School's translation theory current by creating a new translation term, the notion of paratranslation.

JOSÉ YUSTE FRÍAS es el Investigador Principal (IP) del Grupo de Investigación Traducción & Paratraducción (T&P) de la Universidade de Vigo que dirige, gestiona y coordina tanto el Máster en Traducción para la Comunicación Internacional (MTCI) como el Título Propio de Especialista en Traducción para la Industria del Videojuego (ETIV) y el Doctorado Internacional en Traducción & Paratraducción (T&P) de la Universidade de Vigo. Es miembro vinculado del Instituto de Investigación Lingua (iLingua) de la UVigo, así como el creador y director de tres programas de Web-TV dedicados a la divulgación científica de la traducción: *Zig-Zag*, *EXIT* y *Píldoras T&P*. Teórico de la traducción, sus investigaciones sobre la paratextualidad le han llevado a publicar pioneras reflexiones sobre la importancia suma de cualquier detalle paratextual en la edición final de las traducciones y sobre el espacio liminar que ocupa, siempre, todo profesional de la traducción y

la interpretación que se precie, habiendo iniciado, en la teoría de la traducción, la corriente traductológica de la Escuela de Vigo con la creación de la noción de paratraducción.