



# Covert Gestures: Crypto-Islamic Literature as Cultural Practice in Early Modern Spain

*Vincent Barletta*

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Forcibly expelled from Spain in the early seventeenth century, the substantial Muslim community known as the moriscos left behind them a hidden yet extremely rich corpus of manuscripts. Copied out in Arabic script and concealed in walls, false floors, and remote caves, these little-known texts now offer modern readers an absorbing look into the cultural life of the moriscos during the hundred years between their forced conversion to Christianity and their eventual expulsion. *Covert Gestures* reveals how the traditional Islamic narratives of the moriscos both shaped and encoded a wide range of covert social activity characterized by a profound and persistent concern with time and temporality. Using a unique blend of literary analysis, linguistic anthropology, and phenomenological philosophy, Barletta explores the narratives as testimonials of past human experiences and discovers in them evidence of community resistance. In its interdisciplinary approach, Vincent Barletta's work is nothing less than a rewriting of the cultural history of Muslim Spain, as well as a replotting of the future course of medieval and early modern literary studies.

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