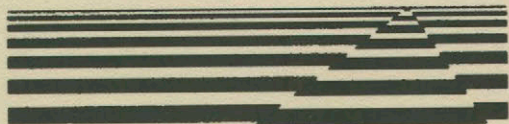


# SCRIPTA MEDITERRANEA



Volumes XIX - XX 1998-1999

CANADIAN INSTITUTE  
FOR MEDITERRANEAN STUDIES  
INSTITUT CANADIEN  
D'ÉTUDES MÉDITERRANÉENNES



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The Editors,  
*Scripta Mediterranea*,  
Canadian Institute for Mediterranean Studies,  
c/o Department of Spanish and Portuguese,  
University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M5S 1A1.

Cover by: Vinicio Scarci

Produced by: Legas, 68 Kamloops Ave.,  
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, K1V 7C9.

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ISSN 0226 8418

# Scripta Mediterranea

Volumes XIX-XX, 1998-1999

Guest Editors: Brian Catlos, Karla Mallette

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## Acknowledgements

The editors would like to thank the following individuals for their encouragement and advice in putting together this issue of *Scripta Mediterranea*:

Dr. Dionysius Agius (University of Leeds),  
Dr. Jane McAuliffe (University of Toronto),  
Dr. Thomas Glick (Boston University),  
Dr. Elena Lourie (Ben Gurion University of the Negev).

The publication of this issue would not have been possible without the generous financial support of the following organisations:

Dr. Mariano Alonso-Burón,  
El Consul General de España (Toronto),  
The Istituto Italiano di Cultura (Toronto) and  
The following departments of the University of Toronto:

The Centre for Medieval Studies,  
Comparative Religion, History, Italian Studies,  
Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies (now  
Near and Middle Eastern Civilisations).

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## INTRODUCTION

The study of Muslims in Europe is, in academic terms, a growth industry. From the foundations of the work of the nineteenth century “orientalist” philologists the edifice of Middle Eastern and Islamic studies has taken shape over the last century. The literary historians of the first half of this century introduced the Arabic literatures of medieval Europe to a western audience, and established the methodological and literary-historical guidelines that are still largely accepted by European scholars. As the century progressed, some scholars began to explore strictly historical questions which were inspired by the work of those pioneers. They began to utilise non-literary sources and approaches, and the European study of Islamic history took on an identity which gradually came to distinguish itself from literary studies. Today more than ever, as Western society grows more conscious of its own plurality and perceptions of the Muslim world become more sophisticated, not only are new questions being posed, but old issues and approaches are being re-appraised. As more scholars are being drawn to the field, they bring with them a set of new methodologies and analytical and comparative approaches, and incorporate perspectives drawn from a wide range of disciplines: post-colonial critiques, new trends in archaeological research, uses of different written sources, anthropological approaches, new readings of the figure of the Muslim in Western literature and of the Arabic literature written in Europe.

This volume presents a range of Western scholarly readings of Islamic society in the European Mediterranean and of Muslim contributions to the formation of European culture and history. Suzanne Conklin Akbari works with Western literary texts, using new literary critical methodologies to read responses to Islam in Christian works often written at a historical and geographic distance from the Muslim world. Patrizia Onesta’s rigorously philological readings of Arabic, Occitan, and Latin lyric reopen the question of Arabic influence on Provençal courtly culture. Karla Mallette parallels the revolutionary vernacular poetic traditions that emerged in the Arabic — and Romance-speaking worlds, demonstrating the similarity of the fundamental urges that inspired and shaped those literary movements. In his examination of Andalusí *kharjas*, Otto Zwartjes questions the relation between courtly poetic styles and popular traditions. Maria Rosa Menocal has produced

some of the most provocative and vital work on the question of literary connections between Muslims and Christians in southern Europe; her article in this volume reflects on the changes in perceptions of that question during the years between her first interventions in the field and the present. In the "review" of her most recent book, four scholars working in different disciplines respond to the challenges her work poses to literary-historical tradition. Arnold Cassola and Oliver Friggieri explore a literary tradition that represents, in purest form, the legacy of the cohabitation of Muslims and Christians in medieval Europe—the literature of Malta, whose language combines Semitic and Romance elements—and follow the evolution of Maltese cultural self-awareness through the modern, post-colonial period. Antonio Pellitteri re-reads the Sicilian historians of the nineteenth century, exploring the influence of continental philosophical developments on Sicilians' conception of Sicilian history.

Among the articles which can be most strictly termed as historical studies are two contributions based on unedited archival material. Such sources are instrumental in our understanding of Muslim minorities living in Christian lands, and there is a wealth of such documentation for medieval Iberia. Maria Teresa Ferrer i Mallol gives a preliminary sketch of the institutions and administration of the Muslim community of Christian Tortosa (Catalonia) from its origins in the twelfth century through to the fifteenth. Brian Catlos, looking at documents from around the whole of the Crown of Aragon, studies cases of the abduction of Christian children and attempts to underscore the importance of understanding the Muslim minority as *part of* Christian society rather than *apart from* Christian society. Thomas Burman, by examining twelfth-century Latin translations of the Quran, investigates the ways by which contemporary Christian Europeans strove to understand their neighbours across the religious divide; and Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, in her reading of an early modern translation of the Qur'an into Hebrew, considers a Jewish European response to Islam. A similar approach is taken by Michael Weber who uses al-Farabi's "Mathematical Sciences," a scientific rather than a religious text, as the basis of his study. Charles Burnett's investigation of the Arabic roots of the Latin *Sortes regi Amalrici*, takes the comparative approach to the far East of the European Mediterranean, the Crusader Kingdoms of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, forcing us to reconsider the traditional scholarly canon that the Holy Land was not a region where cultural exchange took place. The independent society of Islamic Spain is the setting for Manuela Marin's work, and she demonstrates how a well-known source, the Islamic biographical dictionary, may be used in an innovative manner as an exciting new tool for social history. Focusing on



a single historical narrative, William Granara uses the biography of the eighth-century political/religious figure Ibn al-Furat to explore the socio-religious values of early Islamic society in the Mediterranean. Finally, Harry T. Norris takes us to a often neglected corner of the Islamic Mediterranean — the Balkans, and beyond to the Caucasus in his work on early Islamic folk epic.

The work of these eighteen contributors illustrates a wide range of possibilities for exploring and evaluating this significant and integral component of Mediterranean culture and society. The various methodologies and approaches taken help us to re-appraise traditional scholarship in the field, and suggest new directions and departures for future research.

Brian Catlos, *University of Toronto*

Karla Mallette, *University of Toronto*



## IMAGINING ISLAM: The Role of Images in Medieval Depictions of Muslims

On the edges of medieval Europe, there was real contact between Christians and Muslims. Multicultural, multi-religious societies existed in al-Andalus and Sicily, while cultural contact of a more contentious sort took place in the Near East. In most parts of medieval Europe, however, Muslims were seen rarely or not at all, and Islam was known only at second — or third-hand. Western European accounts written during the Middle Ages invariably misrepresent Islam; they vary only to the degree with which they parody the religion and its adherents. One might imagine that such misrepresentation is simply due to the limited information available to the medieval European curious about Islam and the Prophet. If such were the case, one would expect to find a linear progression in medieval accounts of Islam, moving from extremely fanciful depictions to more straightforward, factual chronicles. Instead, one finds accurate, even rather compassionate accounts of Islamic theology side by side with bizarre, antagonistic, and even hateful depictions of Muslims and their belief. During the twelfth century, the French abbot of Cluny, Peter the Venerable, engaged several translators and went to Muslim Spain to produce a translation of the Qurʾān and to learn about Islam in order to effect the conversion of Muslims to Christianity by means of rational persuasion, approaching them, as Peter himself put it, “not in hatred, but in love.”<sup>1</sup>

During the same century, however, the *chanson de geste* tradition flourished in France and began to be exported into the literatures of England and Germany.<sup>2</sup> In these twelfth-century epics glorifying war and chivalric heroism, Muslims are depicted as basically similar to Christians: the structure of their armies, their kings, and their martial techniques are essentially the same. The main thing that sets them apart is their religion. While the Christian knights appeal to their God and their saints verbally, without recourse to the veneration of

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<sup>1</sup>James Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam* (Princeton, 1964), 231, 161.

<sup>2</sup>See Jessie Crosland, *The Old French Epic* (1951; reprint: New York, 1971), 230-70 (“The Old French Epic Outside France”).

images, the Muslims of the *chansons de geste* are polytheistic idolaters who worship graven images of Mahum (or Muḥammad), Apolin, Tervagan, and sometimes others as well. These idols are frequently mentioned in the *chansons de geste* as well as in the numerous Middle English romances based upon them. They serve as a signal of the waning power of the Muslims, who turn upon their gods whenever they suffer a military defeat.

The most famous example of this behaviour occurs in the *Chanson de Roland* where, following a disastrous battle, the Muslims attack an image of Apolin:

Tencent a lui, laidement le desperunent:  
 "E! malvais deus, por quei nus fais tel hunte?  
 Cest nostre rei por quei lessas cunfundre?  
 Ki mult te sert, malvais luër l'en dunes!"  
 Puis si li tolent ses ceptre e sa curune.

Par mains le pendent sur une culumbe,  
 Entre lur piez a tere le tresturnent,  
 A granz bastuns le batent e defruisent.  
 E Tervagan tolent sun escarbuncle  
 E Mahumet enz en un fosset butent  
 E porc e chen le mordent e defulent.

They rail at it, they abuse it in vile fashion:  
 "Oh, evil god, why do you cover us with such shame?  
 Why have you allowed this King of ours to be brought to ruin?  
 You pay out poor wages to anyone who serves you well!"  
 They tie it by the hands to a column.  
 Then they tear away the idol's sceptre and its crown.

They topple it to the ground at their feet,  
 They beat it and smash it to pieces with big sticks.  
 They snatch Tervagant's carbuncle,  
 Throw the idol of Mohammed into a ditch,  
 And pigs and dogs bite and trample it.<sup>3</sup>

vv. 2581-91

Interestingly, this is a scene not of idolatry, but of iconoclasm: the Muslims' idols are seen not when being worshipped, but when their disappointed followers smash their idols in anger. This act of literal iconoclasm serves to emphasise the impotence of the gods even while drawing attention to the idolatrous nature of the Muslims. Comparable pas-

<sup>3</sup> All quotations from the *Chanson de Roland* are from Gerald J. Brault, ed. and trans., *The Song of Roland: An Analytical Edition* (University Park and London, 1978), and are cited in the text by line number.

sages appear through the *chansons de geste*, the Middle English romances loosely based on them, and medieval mystery plays.

In the following pages, I will describe four medieval texts in which the depiction of the clash of Christianity and Islam centres on the role of images in worship. That is not to say that medieval texts concerning Islam focus only on the role of images: on the contrary, there are other important aspects to be noted as well, including the role of the Muslim convert to Christianity; the demonisation of Muslims as grotesque monsters or giants; the role of the Muslim woman as mediator between pagan and Christian; and the Muslims' supposed licentiousness and flamboyant display of wealth.<sup>4</sup> The use of images, however, offers a good starting point for an exploration of Christian attitudes toward Islam in the Middle Ages, both because Muslim idolatry is so ubiquitous in medieval texts, appearing in various genres and vernaculars, and appearing because it is prominent throughout the period, found in early medieval texts as well as later ones.

I will not attempt to offer a complete survey of medieval texts which depict Muslims as idolaters, mainly because the tradition is so widespread that one could do little more than describe the context of each in a few words.<sup>5</sup> Instead, I will juxtapose two pairs of texts in which Muslim idolatry is prominent, not in order to argue that a diachronic progression appears in these texts, moving from less accurate depictions of Islam to more accurate ones, or vice versa; but rather to illustrate the range of depictions of Islamic idolatry, and suggest how one might interpret these depictions in the context of the cultures that produced them. I will begin with an account of the role of images in the *Chanson de Roland*, written down at the end of the eleventh or beginning of the twelfth century, and in the *Jeu de saint Nicolas*, composed by Jean Bodel around the year 1200. I will then go on to describe two texts written in English during the fifteenth century: the romance of the *Sowdone of Babylone*, based on the *chansons de geste* centred on the deeds of Charlemagne, and the Digby *Mary Magdalen* play. Although they are written in different vernaculars and various genres, these texts illustrate a certain consistency in the depiction of Muslim polytheistic

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<sup>4</sup>On the association of licentiousness and wealth with the rise of Islam, see Suzanne Conklin Akbari, "The Rhetoric of Antichrist in Western Lives of Muhammad," *Journal of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 8 (1997): 297-307.

<sup>5</sup>Numerous cases of the attribution of idolatry to Muslims in medieval texts can be found in Norman Daniel, *Heroes and Saracens: An Interpretation of the Chansons de Geste* (Edinburgh, 1984); Paul Bancourt, *Les Musulmans dans les chansons de geste du cycle du roi* (Aix-en-Provence, 1982); and Dorothee Metlitzki, *The Matter of Araby in Medieval England* (New Haven, 1977).

idolatry; at the same time, different aspects of idolatrous practice are highlighted in each text, showing what function these accusations against the Muslims serve for the community that produced and enjoyed each text.

It is often assumed that idolatry is ascribed to Muslims in order to emphasise the basic similarity of Islam to other kinds of paganism, including the veneration of classical deities by the Romans and the Greeks as well as the adoration of images described in Old Testament accounts. In other words, a pagan is a pagan is a pagan: they are all fundamentally the same, because they are all non-Christian. This tendency to see pagans as all alike is evident in the variety of Muslim gods named in medieval texts: Muḥammad, called "Mahum" or "Mahound," appears, but he is accompanied by such classical-sounding deities as "Apolin" and "Jubitere" (that is, Apollo and Jupiter) or even "Platon."<sup>6</sup> The continuity of ancient and modern idolatry is underlined by the frequent emphasis on the opulent gold of the Muslim idols, recalling the golden calf adored by the Israelites in the prototypical episode of idolatry recounted in Exodus 32. The conflation of classical, biblical, and Muslim false gods is also evident when, for example, a biblical figure such as Herod is found swearing "by Mahound" despite the fact that the prophetic mission of Muḥammad began almost six hundred years after Herod's death.

Yet while there is certainly a conflation of various kinds of paganism, the extraordinarily detailed accounts of Muslim idolatry found in a variety of literary genres reveal much about medieval views of the Islamic empire to the south and east, especially when contrasted with the relatively realistic accounts of Islam written during the same period.<sup>7</sup> They show not only how medieval Christians saw Muslims, but also how they saw themselves, because Christians used their own theology in order to imagine Islam. For example, the Muslims' abuse of their own images, recounted in the passage from the *Chanson de Roland* quoted above, is not the bizarre anomaly it may seem: it resembles the punishment of images practised by medieval Christians, when an image of a saint or of the Virgin Mary would be displaced or even verbally abused until the saint once again displayed the efficacy expected by

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<sup>6</sup>On the names of the gods, see C. and Y. Pellat, "L'idée de Dieu chez les Sarrasins des chansons de geste," *Studia Islamica* 22 (1965): 5-42.

<sup>7</sup>See the numerous essays on this subject by Marie-Thérèse d'Alverny, reprinted in *La connaissance de l'Islam dans l'Occident médiéval*, ed. Charles Burnett (Aldershot, Hampshire and Brookfield VT, 1994); and also Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (1960. Revised edition, Oxford, 1993).

the supplicant.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, medieval texts refer to the Muslims having "bisshopes"<sup>9</sup> as the Christians do, even though Islam has no such established clergy. The habit of using one's own religious practice in order to imagine the religious practice of another is not peculiarly medieval: until fairly recently, Westerners referred to Muslims as "Mohammedans," indicating that they assumed that the position of Muhammad for the Muslim is comparable to that of Christ for the Christian. The depiction of Muslims as polytheistic idolaters is a similar projection of expectations based on Christian theology onto an imperfectly understood enemy.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the *Chanson de Roland*, in which the Christian Trinity is mirrored by a corresponding pagan anti-trinity of Apolin, Mahum, and Tervagan. In almost all respects, the Christian force led by Charlemagne resembles the pagan force led by Marsilie: each has an elite corps of twelve knights, each king is depicted surrounded by retainers and seated on a sumptuous throne, each side includes warriors distinguished by their bravery. The two sides differ, it seems, only with regard to their leadership: Charlemagne's men owe allegiance to "Deus," or God, while Marsilie's men follow "Mahum" (e.g. 3641). The deities, both Christian and pagan, are seen as military leaders, whose success or failure is measured on the battlefield. Marsilie's queen, Bramimonde, laments the Muslims' losses, saying "Cist nostre deu sunt en recreantise. /... / Noz chevalers i unt lesset ocire. / Cest mien seignur en bataille faillirent" ["Those gods of ours have given up the fight. /... / They allowed our knights to get killed. / They failed my lord in battle" (2715-18)]. Conversely, when Charlemagne weakens in the midst of battle, God sends the angel Gabriel to encourage him (3608-11; cf. 2526-68 and 2458-59). Gods participate actively on both sides of this holy war.

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<sup>8</sup>Patrick Geary describes how, through the physical debasement of the saints' images, "the saints themselves were humiliated, punished in order to force them to carry out their duties" (135); such behaviour typified "an earlier sort of Christianity, one in which both men and saints could honour or humiliate, reward or punish each other, depending on how well each did his part in a mutually beneficial relationship" (138). See his "Humiliation of Saints," in Stephen Wilson, ed., *Saints and their Cults: Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore, and History* (Cambridge and New York, 1983), 123-140; and cf. Patrick Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1978), 23. An illustration of the humiliation of Mary in response to a military setback appears in the fourteenth-century romance the *Sege of Melayne*, in *Three Middle English Charlemagne Romances*, ed. Alan Lupack (Kalamazoo, MI, 1990), lines 547-64.

<sup>9</sup>See, for example, the *Sowdone of Babylone*, in *Three Middle English Charlemagne Romances*, ed. Alan Lupack (Kalamazoo, MI, 1990), lines 2511 and 2775.

In the *Chanson de Roland*, Muslims resemble Christians in every way except in the gods they follow: as the redactor of the poem puts it, "Païen unt tort e chrestiens unt dreit" ["Pagans are in the wrong and Christians are in the right" (1015)]. Pagans are "wrong" because they are a "gent averse" (2630, 3295), that is, a people who have turned away from the right. The battle of pagan and Christian can only end, says the redactor, when "li uns sun tort i reconuisset" ["one of them admits he is in the wrong" (3588)]. Since "Pagans are in the wrong," only they can come to realize their own error. Thus when the pagan emir Baligant sees the standard of Muḥammad brought low in battle, signifying the god's military defeat, he "s'en aperceit / Que il ad tort e Carlemagnes dreit" ["begins to realise / That he is in the wrong and Charlemagne is in the right" (3553-54)]. Baligant's realisation, however, does not move him to convert and join his righteous enemy: unlike some later *chansons de geste* and Middle English romances, the *Chanson de Roland* does not include valiant pagan heroes who willingly convert when they observe the superior power of the God of the Christian knights. Instead, in the *Chanson de Roland*, conversion takes place by the sword. After the conquest of Saragossa, Charlemagne orders that baptismal water be prepared, and that any who wish to remain Muslim "fait prendre o ardeir ou ocire" ["be taken prisoner, burned, or put to death"]. In order to escape this fate, writes the redactor, "Baptizet sunt asez plus de .C. milie" ["Well over a hundred thousand are baptised" (3670-71)]. Only the queen, Bramimonde, is taken to France, because Charlemagne wishes her conversion to be "par amur" (3674), that is, motivated by true conviction rather than by force.

The conversion of "over a hundred thousand" Muslims at Saragossa is simultaneously accompanied by the destruction of pagan idols. Unlike the abasement of Mahum, Apolin, and Tervagan by the disappointed Muslims themselves which takes place earlier in the poem, this episode of iconoclasm has as its purpose the erasure of any memory of image-worship at Saragossa:

A mil Franceis funt ben cercer la vile,  
 Les sinagoges e les mahumeries.  
 A mailz de fer e a cuhnees qu'il tindrent  
 Fruissent les ymagenes e trestutes les ydeles,  
 N'i remeindrat ne sorz ne falserie.

Orders are given for a thousand Frenchmen to search the city,  
 The synagogues and the mosques.  
 Holding iron hammers and axes,  
 They smash the statues and all the idols,  
 No sorcery or false cult will remain there. (3661-65)



This passage differs interestingly from the earlier episode of iconoclasm practised by the Muslims themselves. There, the redactor emphasises the humiliation of the gods themselves rather than the physical destruction of the graven image. This is more evident in the original Old French text than in the modern translation, because the translator has three times inserted the word “idol” to describe what is being abused, while the original text implies instead that the god himself is abused. A more literal translation of the text would read:

They run to Apollo, in a crypt,  
They rail at him, they abuse him in a vile fashion:

.....

Then they tear away his sceptre and his crown.  
They hang him by the hands on a column,

.....

From Tervagan they wrench his jewel,  
And throw Muḥammad into a ditch,  
And pigs and dogs bite and trample him.

(2580-91; my translation)

The punishments enacted on the gods sound less like the smashing of stone, metal, or wood than like the torture and humiliation that might be enacted on a living prisoner, hung up by his hands, his body gnawed by animals. In fact, this last fate is one which Charlemagne’s men fear that they themselves will suffer if the Christian army does not come to their aid in time: Bishop Turpin hopes that their bodies will be retrieved and buried in hallowed ground, where “N’en mangerunt ne lu ne porc ne chen” [“Neither wolves, nor pigs, nor dogs will devour us” (1751)]. In this scene, the gods worshipped by the Muslims are conceived of as more than just idols. They have an independent existence, although they are ultimately impotent and “wrong.”<sup>10</sup>

Conversely, the scene of iconoclasm practised by the Christians, recounted near the end of the *Chanson de Roland*, emphasises not the independent existence of the Muslim gods but their status as material objects which must be destroyed in order to wipe out any memory of what they once represented. What this accomplishes is not only the extermination of the rival religion, but also the destruction of any evidence that idol-worship was practised. To put it another way, the fact that

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<sup>10</sup> Norman Daniel notes that, often in the *chansons de geste*, “the god is conceived as having a separate existence from his idol”; see *Heroes and Saracens* 149-50. This is evident in the Middle English romances as well; for example, in the *Sowdone of Babylone*, the deceased pagan Lucafere is said to be with “his god Mahoun” (2017), while at the death of the pagan Estragot, “Mahounde toke his soule to him / And broght it to his blis” (447-48).

there are no pagan images at Saragossa, no evidence of Muslim idolatry, is perfectly understandable: they were all systematically destroyed by Charlemagne's victorious army. Charlemagne's victory is designed as an erasure of the Muslim culture that previously ruled Saragossa: thousands of Muslims are compelled to convert; those who decline to do so are burned; and the images that might otherwise remain as mute testimony to earlier practice are reduced to dust.

Jehan Bodel's *Jeu de saint Nicolas*, written about 1200, maintains many of the conventions regarding Muslims seen in the *Chanson de Roland*. The earlier poem's declaration that "Pagans are in the wrong and Christians are in the right" is echoed in the later play when a Christian on the battlefield states "Paradys sera nostres et eus sera ynfers" ["Paradise will be ours and hell will be theirs" (406)].<sup>11</sup> As in the *Chanson de Roland*, Muslims worship a pagan anti-trinity composed of Apolin, Mahum, and Tervagan. They swear by the names of these deities and, like the Muslim knights of the *Roland*, express their allegiance to the gods in terms of fealty or military command, declaring "a Mahommet soions nous commandé" ["Let us be commanded by Muḥammad!" (395)]. When the Muslim king decides to convert to Christianity, he makes what amounts to an oath of fealty, offering himself up "de mains et de cuer" ["with hand and heart" (1451)] to Saint Nicholas and telling the saint "Sire, chi devieng jou vostre hom" ["Sire, here and now I become your man" (1459)].

Yet, in the Saint Nicholas play, the symmetry of the Christian and Muslim gods is more fully elaborated than in the *Chanson de Roland*. The central deity in the Muslim pantheon is not Muhammad but Tervagan, who appears in the play as a large golden statue in a "mahomerie" or mosque adjoining the palace of the king. Like the Muslims of the *Roland*, the king abuses his idol, rebuking it for their lack of military success and mocking the statue's "lait visage et ... lait cors" ["ugly face and ... ugly body" (137)]. Tervagan is not the only statue in the play, however; his power is countered by that transmitted through a simple "home de fust" (1200; cf. 31), a wooden statue of Saint Nicholas.<sup>12</sup> It has been suggested that the symmetry of the two

<sup>11</sup> Jehan Bodel, *Le Jeu de saint Nicolas*, ed. Albert Henry (Geneva, 1981). Quotations are cited in the text by line number; translations are my own, though a somewhat idiomatic English translation is available in *Medieval French Plays*, trans. Richard Axton and John Stevens (New York, 1971).

<sup>12</sup> In *The Gothic Idol: Ideology and Image-Making in Medieval Art* (Cambridge and New York, 1989), Michael Camille argues that the image of Saint Nicholas in this play is "a two-dimensional picture ... an icon rather than an idol" (127; cf. 133). He is able to make this point only by focusing on the identification of the saint's representation as an "ymage"

deities, one pagan and one Christian, would have been heightened during the staging of the play, with the golden idol of Tervagan placed opposite to the wooden image of Saint Nicholas.<sup>13</sup> The symmetry is also underlined by the Muslims' repeated reference to the image of Nicholas as a "mahommet cornu" (458); to them, an image of Nicholas is fundamentally just like an image of Muhammad.

As one might expect, the image of Saint Nicholas proves to be efficacious, because the saint performs miracles wherever the image is present; conversely, the image of Tervagan repeatedly fails the Muslims. Finally, at the end of the play, persuaded by the power of Saint Nicholas and repelled by the impotence of his own god, the Muslim king converts to Christianity and has the golden statue of Tervagan thrown down from its place. Yet this episode differs from the Muslims' abuse of their statues of Mahum, Tervagan, and Apolin in the *Chanson de Roland*. In the earlier work, the gods survive after being thrown into the ditch: the Muslims continue to swear by Muḥammad, and idols of the gods must continue to exist since they are said, at the end of the poem, to be destroyed utterly by the victorious Christians. Conversely, in the Saint Nicholas play, the destruction of Tervagan is final: when the Muslim king goes beyond humiliation of his idol and destroys it, the two episodes of iconoclasm recounted in the *Roland* are conflated, and the credit for the act of destruction is assigned not to the Christian forces of military conquest but to the saint who effects a far-reaching spiritual conquest.

It is striking that, even though Tervagan is ultimately rejected by his followers as an ineffectual deity, he is not simply an inanimate golden statue. When his former worshippers are on the verge of converting to Christianity, Tervagan comes alive and speaks several lines in an incomprehensible tongue. But the words that appear to be gibberish to the Christian audience are actually in a foreign language and are subsequently translated by the Muslim king (1512-19). When the Christian man present asks what Tervagan is saying, the king replies "il muert de duel et d'ire / De che c'a Dieu me sui turkiés; / Mais n'ai mais soing de son prologe" ["he is dying from sorrow and anger / because God has converted me. / But I don't care anymore what he says" (1517-19)].

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and disregarding the numerous times that the representation of Nicholas is referred to as a "mahommet" (458; cf. 465, 513, 585, 779), a term which in Old French texts invariably refers to a free-standing statue. Camille himself notes that the Middle English term "maumet" ... signified any pagan idol" – not a two-dimensional image (135).

<sup>13</sup> Henri Rey-Flaud, *Pour une dramaturgie du Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1980), 44. See also pp. 572-73 in his article "Le sentiment religieux dans *Le Jeu de saint Nicolas*," *Mélanges de langue et littérature françaises du motan âge offerts à Pierre Jonin* (Aix-en-Provence, 1979), 571-77.

Tervagan's "language" is bizarre, creating an effect partly comic, partly frightening.<sup>14</sup> But it also serves to reiterate the correspondence of Christian and pagan religions, for Tervagan's dying words are almost immediately followed by words from the Christian liturgy, spoken in a language only imperfectly understood by the majority of those who used it in worship: the *Te Deum laudamus* concludes the play, supplanting Tervagan's now obsolete foreign tongue with the language of the Christian church.

The *Chanson de Roland* and the Saint Nicholas play differ in genre, in dialect, and in other particulars. But they share a common context: both were written for a French-speaking audience during a period when the notion of a crusade to the Holy Land had assumed great importance in the popular imagination. The surviving redaction of the *Roland* was composed around the time of the First Crusade, which was preached at Clermont in 1095.<sup>15</sup> Jehan Bodel wrote the *Jeu de saint Nicolas* in or about 1200, at just the time when he himself took up the Cross to join the Fourth Crusade.<sup>16</sup> In each case, the enemy portrayed in the literary work—whether it be those who oppose Charlemagne in Spain or those who persecute the followers of Saint Nicholas—is coloured by the contemporary conflict between European Christians and the Muslims of the Middle East. Both the conquest of Saragossa and the conversion of the king by Saint Nicholas are expressions of the desire on the part of western Christians to regain the sacred space of the Holy Land.

It is fruitful to juxtapose these two texts, different in literary form yet similar in language and historical context, with another pair of texts drawn from a different place and time. The *Sowdone of Babylone* and the Digby *Mary Magdalen* play were both written in Middle English during the fifteenth century.<sup>17</sup> Each has something in common

<sup>14</sup> A comparable passage of pagan gibberish (with "Englysh" translation) appears in the account of Richard II's military victories in the Holy Land which concludes the *Romaunce of Richard Coeur de Lion* (lines 6829-34). *Der mitttelenglische Versroman über Richard Löwenherz*, ed. Karl Brunner (Wien, 1913).

<sup>15</sup> See "Date et manuscrits de la chanson" in *La Chanson de Roland: Edition établie d'après le manuscrit d'Oxford*, ed. Luis Cortes (Mayenne, 1994), 142-46, esp. 144.

<sup>16</sup> Bodel became ill before he could embark upon the Crusade. See the biographical note in Albert Henry, ed., *Le Jeu de saint Nicolas* 21-26. As Rey-Flaud puts it, "Le *Jeu de saint Nicolas* est d'abord l'histoire d'une croisade" (*Dramaturgie* 139).

<sup>17</sup> The *Sowdone of Babylone* is dated at the end of the fourteenth century or the beginning of the fifteenth century on the basis on some echoes of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. See Lupack's Introduction to the *Sowdone of Babylone* in *Three Middle English Charlemagne Romances* 1. The Digby *Mary Magdalen* play is dated at the end of the fifteenth century by Donald C. Baker, John L. Murphy, and Louis B. Hall, Jr., in *The Late Medieval Religious*

with the Old French texts described above: like the *Chanson de Roland*, the *Sowdone of Babylone* concerns the deeds of Charlemagne and his men, and centres on the martial conflict of Muslim and Christian; like the Saint Nicholas play, the *Digby Mary Magdalen* focuses on the efficacy of saints in the lives of believers, and on their ability to convert the unbeliever and destroy the idols he worshipped before. By exploring how these varied yet comparable texts represent the function of images in worship, it is possible to get a sense of how the depiction of Muslims changed during the years from 1100 to 1500. Four texts are hardly enough to offer a comprehensive picture of how the representation of Islam changed; but they do offer some reference points on which to base a fuller understanding.

The *Sowdone of Babylone*, like the *Chanson de Roland*, concerns the deeds of Charlemagne and his men as they attempt to beat back the advance of the Muslim armies in Spain. It follows the *chanson de geste Fierabras*, however, in extending its narrative beyond the events at Saragossa, telling the story of the sultan's son, Ferumbras, who converts to Christianity and becomes a knight on the side of "right." Like other Middle English romances, the *Sowdone of Babylone* restates and emphasises motifs found in the Old French epic. While the *Roland* alludes only briefly to the dark skin of the Muslims,<sup>18</sup> the *Sowdone of Babylone* repeatedly characterises them as not only black but deformed and even chimerical, having leopard's heads and boar's tusks (e.g. 2191-98; 346-57; 1005-6). The anti-trinity of Mahum, Apolin, and Ter-vagan worshipped by the Muslims of the *Roland* is in the *Sowdone of Babylone* expanded into a wider pantheon, including not just Mahounde, Apolyne, and Termagaunte but "Jubiter, Ascarot and Alcaron also" (2762).<sup>19</sup> As in the *Jeu de saint Nicolas*, the Muslim idols are said to be made of gold; but in the *Sowdone of Babylone*, the luxuriousness both of the idols and of the sacrificial materials offered up to them is emphasised even more. The Sultan orders his men to burn frankincense before the idols, to blow brass horns in their honour, and to offer them milk, honey, oil, gold, and silver (677-86, 2449; cf. 1020-30, 2519-22, 2787-89). The abuse of the Muslim gods by their worshippers, occurring once in

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*Plays of Bodleian MSS Digby 133 and E Museo 160* (Oxford, 1982), xl. Quotations from the *Mary Magdalen* play are from this edition and are cited in the text by line number.

<sup>18</sup> "Rollant veit la contredite gent / Ki plus sunt neirs que nen est arrement, / Ne n'unt de blanc ne mais que sul les denz" ["Roland sees the accursed people, / Who are blacker than ink / And whose teeth alone are white" (1932-34; cf. 1917-18, 1631-35)].

<sup>19</sup> It is interesting to note that this identification of "Alcaron" as a god is not precluded by the more accurate identification of the Qur'an earlier in the poem: after a funeral, the Muslim mourners "songe the Dirige of Alkaron, / That Bibill is of here laye" (2271-72).

the *Chanson de Roland* and twice in the Saint Nicholas play, appears four times in the *Sowdone of Babylone*. But what in the *Roland* was tragedy appears in the *Sowdone of Babylone* as farce. The Sultan never goes through with his threat to burn his idols, but instead becomes remorseful and renews his sacrificial offerings. The repeated deferral has a comic effect as the same reaction of fury and repentance appears again and again following each defeat in battle (2431-56, 2495-2526, 2761-90; cf. 276-77).

One aspect that remains constant in the Middle English adaptations of the *chansons de geste*, however, is the fundamental reality of the gods represented by the image, their continuing presence. In the *Chanson de Roland*, the gods are still invoked even after their images are thrown into a ditch while, in the *Jeu de saint Nicolas*, the statue of Tervagan weeps in sorrow and speaks aloud even as the Muslim king renounces him. Similarly, in the *Sowdone of Babylone*, the gods preserve an independent existence beyond the image that embodies them. When the Muslim giant Estragot is killed in battle, "Mahounde toke his soule to him / And broght it to his blis" (447-48; cf. 2017). The pagan gods, like the Christian God, take part in the battle, though sometimes, as the poem puts it, they "come to late" (410) or "holpe us not todaye" (898; cf. 913-17). They are, as in the epic, still martial leaders, which is why the vow to convert is also a vow of fealty. The Muslim Ferumbras tells the victorious Oliver, "I yelde me to the, / And here I become thy man. / ... / To Jhesu Crist I wole me take / ... / And alle my goddes forsake" (1353-54, 1360-62). When Ferumbras takes Oliver as his lord, he becomes the vassal of Oliver's divine Lord as well. The king in the Saint Nicholas play takes this vow of fealty even more explicitly, telling the saint "here I become your man / And leave Apolin and Mahom / And that bastard [pautonnier] Tervagan" (1459-61).

In broad terms, the depiction of Muslims in western European texts is designed to hold up a mirror to medieval Christian practice, showing the readers of those texts what they are *not* so that they may understand what they *are*. It is a startling inversion: Muslims, whose devotion is centred on the unity of God are seen as polytheists, while Christians, who venerate a triune God, are represented as monotheists; Muslims, who reject the use of images, are seen as idolaters, while Christians, who use images in worship, communicate with the divine more directly. It is striking that, in the works depicting Muslims as idolaters, Christians are almost always shown appealing to their God and saints directly, without the intervening medium of any image. The one exception to this appears in the Saint Nicholas play, in which Jehan Bodel directly confronts the distinction between idolatry and the right use of images in worship. He counters the golden statue of Tervagan

with the simple wooden statue of Nicholas, and shows how strongly the saint's power outweighs that of his pagan rival. More frequently, however, texts depicting Muslim idols show the Christian protagonists using an alternative mediator between the world of spirit and the material world, one which functions like the image of the saint but which more readily evades the charge of idolatry.

I refer, of course, to the relic, which plays an important part in both the *Sowdone of Babylone* and the *Digby Mary Magdalen* play. Although the relic appears more frequently in later medieval depictions of the conflict of Christians and Muslims, it appears in earlier works as well. For example, in the *Chanson de Roland*, Durendal, the sword wielded by Roland in battle against the pagans, has embedded in its handle "La dent seint Perre e del sanc seint Basilie / E des chevels mun seignor seint Denise, / Del vestement i ad seint Marie" ["Saint Peter's tooth, some of Saint Basil's blood, / Some of my lord Saint Denis's hair, / Some of Saint Mary's clothing" (2346-48)]. Charlemagne's sword, Joyeuse, is similarly endowed: its pommel contains "la lance ... / Dunt Nostre Sire fut en la cruiz nasfret" ["the Lance ... / With which Our Lord was wounded on the Cross" (2503-04)]. In these weapons, the union of religious and national goals is epitomised: a military victory represents conquest both by France and by Christ.

In later medieval depictions of Islam, the depiction of relics serves a slightly different purpose, perhaps due to the changing status of the relic in religious practice during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.<sup>20</sup> Relics come to seem valuable not only to the Christians, but to the pagans as well. In the *Chanson de Roland*, the Muslims' interest in acquiring Durendal was based on its status as the sword wielded by Roland (2281-82); conversely, in the *Sowdone of Babylone*, the Muslims seize "alle the relekes ... / The Crosse, the Crown, the Nailes bente" even before they "dispoile al the cite / Both of tresoure and of golde" (664-68). The theft of the relics is referred to repeatedly (716, 748), highlighting their importance and creating anticipation of their return to their proper place following the Christians' victory in war.

The recovery of the relics is indeed an important part of the climax of the narrative (3137-50); but they are not replaced in "Seinte Petris" (663), from where they came. Instead, Charlemagne donates the Cross to Notre Dame de Paris, the Crown to Saint Denis, and the Nails to Boulogne (3235-38). Charlemagne redistributes these relics in order to

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<sup>20</sup> Geary observes that, during the ninth through eleventh centuries, relics "assumed their broadest and most essential roles.... After this period, they faced increasingly stiff competition from other sources of mundane and celestial power" (*Furta Sacra* 17).

make their spiritual power available not in their traditional home, Rome, but in various places distributed throughout his newly formed Empire. Charlemagne's donation is a manifestation of *translatio imperii*, or the transfer of empire from ancient Rome to the medieval Holy Roman Empire. A similar transfer is enacted through different means in the *Chanson de Roland*, where Charlemagne's army is said to bear a marvellous battle standard: "Seinte Piere fut, si aveit num Romaine, / Mais de Munjoie iloeec out pris eschange" ["It once belonged to Saint Peter and its name was 'Romaine,' / But it had taken the new name Monjoie there" (3094-95)].<sup>21</sup> In the *Roland*, what formerly belonged to Peter now belongs to Charlemagne, and the name evoking Rome has been replaced by the battle cry of the Emperor's men. The movement of the relics described in the *Sowdone of Babylone* is also a transfer from Peter to Charlemagne, from Rome to Holy Roman Empire. But here the transfer is expressed not through a symbol or emblem, but through a tangible remnant of the presence of the divine on earth. More powerfully than in the *Roland*, the movement of the relics in the *Sowdone of Babylone* displaces the centre of the empire—Rome—to what was formerly the periphery—France.

Relics play an important part in the Digby *Mary Magdalen* play as well; but, startlingly, they are used not in Christian worship but in the pagan worship practised by the King of Marseilles. The Digby *Mary Magdalen* play is not a typical case of the representation of Muslims in medieval literature, for it is clearly anachronistic to find Muslims in the life of a saint contemporary with Christ. Yet the King of Marseilles, whom Mary visits in an effort to convert him and his people, sounds very much like the Muslim rulers found in the *Sowdone of Babylone* and other Middle English romances. Like them, he makes sacrifices to his god "Mahownd" (1210; cf. 1140) and, like the Muslim king in the *Jeu de saint Nicolas*, he is in the end persuaded to convert by the miracles performed by the Christian saint.

The scene of sacrifice is expanded, however, in the Digby *Mary Magdalen*: the offerings are accompanied by song and an elaborate liturgy performed by the king's "Prysbytyr" and his young altarboy. The climax of this religious ritual is the display of sacred relics: the Muslim presbyter displays "relykys brygth," including "Mahowndys own nekke bon" (1232-33). He allows the worshippers to kiss the bone, along with another relic: "Mahowndys own yeelyd" (1237). The eyelid is a particularly appropriate relic for the Muslims of the Digby *Mary*

<sup>21</sup> See the discussion of *translatio imperii* in Gerard J. Brault, *The Song of Roland: An Analytical Edition. I. Introduction and Commentary* (University Park and London, 1978), 289-90.



*Magdalen*, because the closed eye symbolises the pagans' inability to perceive the light of God. They have eyes, but do not see; as the Muslim presbyter observes, the relic of Muhammad's eyelid "woll make yow blynd for ewyrmore" (1240). The centrality of relics in Muslim worship, as depicted in the play, is emphasised by such repeated exclamations as "be Mahondys bonys" (142) and "Mahovndys blod" (1175).

There is no question that the literary texts described above misrepresent Islam: they suggest that Muslims practice polytheism and idolatry, that they have an established clergy, and so on. Yet the Digby *Mary Magdalen* is unusual in also suggesting that Muslims use relics in worship, thus showing how closely the author modelled his notion of Muslim religious practice on his experience of Christian ritual. The pagan worship displayed in the Digby *Mary Magdalen* is, in sum, a parody of Christian worship: it employs images, song liturgy, and ritual sacrifice in the veneration of "Sentt Mahownde" (1205). This parody is pronounced in the holy text, called the "Leccyo mahowndys," read by the Muslim presbyter's altarboy (1186-1201). This "lesson" is gibberish, like the sounds uttered by the dying Tervagan at the end of the Saint Nicholas play; but unlike Tervagan's words, which sound imposing and rather frightening, the words uttered by the altarboy have a comic effect. The Latinate endings of "cownthtys fulcatum" and "fartum cardiacolorum" (1189, 1191) thinly conceal scatological language which could only have titillated the play's audience.

In the Digby *Mary Magdalen*, as in the *Sowdone of Babylone*, comic parody is evident in the depiction of Muslims to an extent not seen in the *Chanson de Roland* or the *Jeu de saint Nicolas*. In both of these early works, the depictions of Muslims can be described as parodic in a very general sense. Etymologically, the parody is "para odê," beside the song or a parallel to it. So too the Muslim of the *Roland* is "fiers" (897) as any Christian knight, while in the *Jeu de saint Nicolas*, Christian and Muslim each venerate a "mahomet." But the aspect of ridicule integral to parody is not in evidence in these earlier depictions of Islam; conversely, in the *Sowdone of Babylone* and the Digby *Mary Magdalen*, comic parody is clearly at the fore. The increasingly exotic descriptions of Muslims in the Middle English romances as giants having the faces of animals, "Some bloo, some yolowe, some blake" (*Sowdone of Babylone* 1005), show that the elements of comedy and fantasy became increasingly important in representations of the east produced during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Yet the use of relics by the pagans of the Digby *Mary Magdalen* fulfills more than a merely comic function. The repeated reference to the different parts of the body of "Seyntt Mahownde" —the "nekke bon," the "yeelyd," "bonys" and "blod"— invites the reader to see pagan

practice as characterised by fragmentation, as being of an essentially partial and decaying nature. The degenerate language of the “Leccyo mahowndys” reinforces this message, reminding the hearer of the medieval identification of Babylon, home of the great sultan, with Babel, the place where pride caused the confusion of tongues.<sup>22</sup> In a recent study, Caroline Walker Bynum has eloquently described how central the notion of fragmentation was to medieval conceptions of the self, and points out how thirteenth-century hagiography reveals the “tendency to assert wholeness,” a triumph of the saint—and of the saint’s community—over the decay and degeneration endemic in a post-lapsarian world: “What is underlined repeatedly is either a reassembling of body parts for burial or ... the victory of intactness over division.”<sup>23</sup> The scattered parts of “Seyntt Mahownde” are more than parody; they illustrate the degenerate nature of the religious practice he represents.<sup>24</sup> The body of Muhammad in the Digby *Mary Magdalen* manifests the lack of unity which, for the medieval Christian, lay at the heart of Islam. The relics in the hilts of Durendal and Joyeuse unify the community of the *Chanson de Roland*; the rallying cry “Monjoie,” derived from the name of Charlemagne’s sword, continually renews the solidarity of the group, and guarantees their victory (2503-11). Conversely, “Mahowndys own yeelyd” secures for his people only spiritual blindness and failure.

Images remain central to popular medieval depictions of Islam, whether written during the twelfth century or the fifteenth. Many readers have commented on the absurdity of suggesting that Muslims worship idols in view of Islam’s absolute condemnation of any veneration of images. Interestingly, however, the accusation of idolatry has played a part in polemics against Islam written as early as the eighth and ninth centuries. Kathleen Corrigan has recently shown that the ninth-century Byzantine psalters created in the wake of the Iconoclas-

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<sup>22</sup> See, for example, the false etymology of Babylon in the closing lines of the thirteenth-century *Roman de Mahomet*: “Babylon, c’est confusions: / Pour chou li fu donnés li nons / Que on i fist la tour jadis / Pour monter haut em paradys, / Par grant orgueil et par grant rage, / Mais dex lor mua lor langage” [“Babylon, that is, ‘confusion’; / it was given the name because / the tower was built there long ago / in order to climb up as high as paradise, / out of great pride and great passion; / but God then transformed their language”]. *Le roman de Mahomet de Alexandre du Pont (1258)*, ed. Yvan G. Lepage (Paris, 1977), lines 1978-83.

<sup>23</sup> Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200-1336* (New York, 1995), 309; 312.

<sup>24</sup> In her description of the *Legenda Aurea* of James of Voragine, Bynum notes that “the good are intact when divided, while the evil fragment or decay even without violence” (313).

tic Controversy associated Islam with idolatry. They did so, Corrigan argues, in order to defend their Christian belief in the efficacy of images in worship against the accusations of idolatry levelled at them by Muslims and Jews. Christians thus turned the accusation of idolatry back upon their accusers.<sup>25</sup>

A similar approach was taken even earlier by the eighth-century Byzantine theologian John of Damascus, famous for his defence of the use of images in worship during the Iconoclastic Controversy. John concludes his *De haeresibus* with a refutation of Islam in which he accuses Muslims of idolatry. "Why then," he says, "do you rub yourselves against that stone at your Ka'ba, and love that stone to the point of embracing it?" Not content with suggesting that Muslims' veneration of the Black Stone at Mecca is idolatrous, John goes on to associate it with classical paganism: "It is said that this stone is the head of Aphrodite, before which they prostrate themselves.... And to this day, the traces of the carving appear to those who stare at it intently."<sup>26</sup> By claiming that the Black Stone is Aphrodite's head, John suggests that the spiritual centre of Islam is contaminated in two ways: it is both an expression of idolatry and a focus of worship polluted by the presence of feminine sexuality.

The examples above illustrate the ubiquity of the claim that Muslims are idolaters: they range from the eighth to the fifteenth century, and include writings not only by people whom one might assume were truly ignorant of Islam, whose knowledge of Muslims was at best second- or third-hand, but by people living in close proximity to the Muslim world, removed from the Hegira only by a few generations. In the case of descriptions of Islam produced in the west, it is easy for the modern reader to laugh at the apparent ignorance of the medieval writer and his audience, and to suppose that Muslim idolatry is nothing more than a playful fantasy. Yet several medieval texts written for a wide audience give a more realistic account of Islam and make it clear that idolatry plays no part in Muslims' worship: these include James of Voragine's *Legenda Aurea*, Higden's *Polychronicon* (also available in the Middle English translation by Trevisa), and even Langland's *Piers*

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<sup>25</sup> Kathleen Corrigan, *Visual Polemics in the Ninth-Century Byzantine Psalters* (Cambridge, 1992), 35-37, 91-94.

<sup>26</sup> *De haeresibus* chap. 100, para. 5, pp. 218-21 in Jean Damascène. *Écrits sur l'Islam*, ed. and trans. Raymond Le Coz (Paris, 1992). English translation is based on Le Coz's French translation with emendations to render the text more literal. See also Daniel J. Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam: The "Heresy of the Ishmaelites"* (Leiden, 1972).

*Plowman*.<sup>27</sup> The ready availability of such texts makes it hard to deny that the popular depiction of Muslims as idolaters was not the product of ignorance, but was instead deliberately constructed.

It is striking that John of Damascus, a man who knew a good deal about Islamic theology, who spoke Arabic and worked at the court of the Damascene caliph, similarly associates Islam with idolatry. He does so in part to protect his fellow Christians from the charge of idolatry in their use of images in worship, turning the accuser's charge back against him as Corrigan suggests. In part, however, John levels that charge in order to understand what it is that lies at the centre of Muslim worship. Just as medieval Christians used their own experience of religious ritual to imagine what Muslim ritual might be like, so too perhaps John of Damascus brought his own experience of the veneration of images to his depiction of Islam. This may help to explain why it is John specifies that it is necessary to "stare ... intently" at the Black Stone in order to make out the form of Aphrodite. The intent gaze actively projects an image of what the Christian viewer longs to see at the centre of Islam.

In the *Chanson de Roland*, the final act of Charlemagne in the newly Christian city of Saragossa is to convert the population by force and smash the idols in the synagogues and mosques (3662). This act both exterminates non-Christian worship in Saragossa and guarantees that no evidence of idolatry will survive. In other words, it is not necessary to produce an idol in order to prove that Muslims are idolaters; there is no evidence because the idols were destroyed. It is easy to imagine Christian knights entering the mosques of a conquered city and finding only the empty *miḥrāb* or prayer niche.<sup>28</sup> The *miḥrāb* looks like a niche for the display of an image, but it is always empty since its purpose is

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<sup>27</sup> On the popularity of the *Legenda aurea*, see Brenda Dunn-Lardeau, ed., *Legenda Aurea: Sept siècles de diffusion: Actes du colloque international ... à l'Université du Québec à Montréal, 11-12 mai 1983* (Montréal and Paris, 1986), and Konrad Kunze, "Jacobus a (de) Voragine," *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters: Verfasserlexicon* (Berlin, 1983), vol. 4, col. 454. Higden's *Polychronicon* also circulated in the Middle English translation by Trevisa; see *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden Monachi Cestrensis together with the translations of John Trevisa and of an unknown writer of the fifteenth century*, ed. Joseph Rawson Lumby (London, 1876).

<sup>28</sup> "Within a century of the Revelation, the main components which make up a mosque ... [including themiḥrāb] had all become generally accepted....No fixed forms were prescribed for any of these components, although the *miḥrāb* was a niche (243)." Oleg Grabar, "The Mosque in Islamic Society Today," *The Mosque: History, Architectural Development and Regional Diversity*, ed. Martin Frishman and Hasanuddin Khan (London, 1994), 242-45. On the recessed *miḥrāb* in the oldest Near Eastern mosques, see Do» an Kuban, "The Central Arab Lands," *The Mosque 77-99*, esp. 89-91.

simply to point out the direction of Mecca.<sup>29</sup> The Christians may have seen the empty space, and imagined what had been there. This was certainly the experience of certain crusaders to the Holy Land who reported finding mosques in Jerusalem resplendent with idols.<sup>30</sup> The empty space that Christians see at the centre of Islam becomes for them a richly elaborated fantasy of luxuriousness, gold, and images that speak in a language they cannot understand.

University of Toronto

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<sup>29</sup> It is fascinating to note that, even today, scholars are divided with regard to the purpose of the *mihrāb*: a recent colloquium on the history and function of the *mihrāb* concluded with a rather impassioned debate in which several Muslim panelists (Rachid Bourouiba, Abdelaziz Daoulati, and Abdel Majid Wafi) maintained that "la niche indique toujours l'orientation" (177), while Alexandre Papadopoulo, the organizer of the colloquium, stoutly maintained that the *mihrāb* instead represents "une 'absence' du Prophète qui suggère sa présence" (179). *Le Mihrab dans l'architecture et la religion musulmanes. Actes du colloque international tenu à Paris en mai 1980 publiés et pourvus d'une étude d'introduction générale*, ed. Alexandre Papadopoulo (Leiden and New York, 1988).

<sup>30</sup> The *Gesta Tancredi*, written after 1131 by Raoul de Caen, describes the Christian Crusaders' discovery of a monumental statue of Muhammad on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem (the site of the al-Aqsa mosque). See Xenia Muratova, "Western Chronicles of the First Crusade as Sources for the History of Art in the Holy Land," *Crusader Art in the Twelfth Century*, ed. Jaroslav Folda (Oxford, 1982), 47-69. Fulcher of Chartres states that the image of Muhammad is in fact located in the *Templum Domini* (the site of the Dome of the Rock), as does a fourteenth-century pilgrims' guide to the Holy Land. See H. Omont, "Un guide du pèlerin en Terre Sainte au XIVe siècle," *Mélanges offerts à M. Gustav Schlumberger* (Paris, 1924).



## THE IDEA OF VERNACULAR CULTURE IN THE ARABIC-AND ROMANCE-SPEAKING WORLD DURING THE MIDDLE AGES<sup>1</sup>

### 1. *Erich Auerbach and the Idea of Vernacular Culture*

In his essay "The Western Public and Its Language,"<sup>2</sup> Auerbach traces the development of the literary language in Western Europe between late Antiquity and the late Middle Ages, following the decline of Latin as the single medium for literary composition, and the rise of the Romance vernaculars. He describes the enervation of the Latin literary tradition as the result of the disjuncture between Latin and the spoken languages of the literary public. The Carolingian reform elevated the Latin of antiquity as the model for literary composition. "The consequence," he writes, "was an irrevocable cleavage between written Latin and the popular tongues. Latin lived on as an international organ of cultural life, as a language without any corresponding popular idiom from which to draw new life" (254). With the vernacular revolutions of the later Middle Ages, new literary languages were created out of the raw materials of the various spoken languages. Auerbach's essay traces the development of these languages as vehicles for literary composition, as "little by little they rose to maturity and in the end fashioned a literary public of their own" (277).

Auerbach's formulation in "The Western Public and Its Language" is designed to account for a binary opposition between a formal, written language and the spoken language of daily life. He uses this formulation to construct dynamic readings of the major literary developments of the Middle Ages, and it has become a crucial tool for medieval literary historians. However, more recent developments in literary-historical scholarship suggest that — though the opposition between written and

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<sup>1</sup> All translations are my own. However, I have included page number references to the published English translation of *al-Muqaddima* corresponding to the passages I have translated for this essay.

<sup>2</sup> In *Literary Language and Its Public in Late Latin Antiquity and in the Middle Ages*, trans. Ralph Manheim (London, 1965), 237-338.

spoken tongues which Auerbach describes was central to literary development—in fact the medieval literary scene was more complex. A dimension must be added to the binary model that Auerbach describes in order to account for the competition between diverse literary-linguistic paradigms typical, in particular, of southern Europe during key eras.

In al-Andalus, in Provence, and in Sicily, between the tenth and the thirteenth centuries, poets drew on local spoken vernaculars to invent new literary languages. The new poetic traditions which emerged in these regions—Andalusian *muwashshah* poetry, the troubadour lyric of Provence, the courtly love poetry written in the Sicilian dialect—had a decisive impact on subsequent literary development. After an initial period of literary innovation, others wrote accounts of the poets' works, in the form of literary histories, poetic manuals, or grammars. These treatises document the stages by which later generations sifted through the innovations introduced by the earlier poets, and strove to preserve and develop further those which seemed to have a lasting relevance and efficacy. In this essay, I will read two such literary-historical studies—Ibn Khaldūn's description of Andalusian poetry and Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia*—in order to gauge the broader cultural response to the poets' linguistic experiments. Both Ibn Khaldūn and Dante analyse linguistically innovative poetry not by opposing it to a single, formal literary language, but by describing the regional uniqueness of each form, and contrasting the various forms to each other. That is, their discussions do not focus on a binary opposition between the written language and the vernacular, but attempt to characterise the particular by opposing it to a plurality of variants. Auerbach's narrative—the alienation of a literary language from the language spoken by its public; the invention of a new literary language, incorporating elements of the spoken tongue, to replace it—remains relevant to these accounts. But they add a new dimension to Auerbach's formulation, demonstrating the importance of interaction and, more importantly, competition between diverse literary/linguistic paradigms in the development of new literary languages during the late Middle Ages. And a parallel reading of the two works demonstrates that they do share certain common concerns, that they both strive to define and to react to an emerging literary concept: the idea of vernacular culture.

## 2. Arabic "vernacular" culture

The idea of vernacular culture outlined in Auerbach's essay is, of course, anomalous in the Arabic context. To the present day, the division between the formal written language and the spoken languages of daily



life is maintained in the Arabic-speaking world: colloquial Arabic is not written, and the written language is not spoken, except in formal situations.<sup>3</sup> Given this fundamental difference between the Arabic and Romance vernacular paradigms, it is tantalising to consider the parallels between the emergence of the Romance vernacular literary cultures, and the development of new Arabic poetic forms incorporating elements of colloquial Arabic or of a language other than Arabic—that is, the *muwashshaḥ* and the *zajal*—in al-Andalus.

The questions of origin or influence that often inform *muwashshaḥ*-scholarship will not interest me in this study; instead, I will focus on broader, comparative issues, using the account of the *muwashshaḥ* and related poetic forms given in *al-Muqaddima* (*The Introduction to History*) by Ibn Khaldūn (1332-82 C.E.). Perhaps because he was not a literary historian, unlike the authors of the other early descriptions of the *muwashshaḥ*, and perhaps because he wrote from a greater historical distance than those authors,<sup>4</sup> Ibn Khaldūn gives us the fullest account of the environment in which the *muwashshaḥ* and the *zajal* developed. The picture of the new Andalusian poetic forms that emerges from his description, and of their reception in the Arabic-speaking world, mirror the earliest Romance vernacular lyric movements and the impact they made on Latin literary culture in a number of crucial ways: It seems reasonable to assert, despite all the uncertainties that still cloud our understanding of the *muwashshaḥ*, that it was perceived by those who wrote about it as different in important ways from conventional Arabic poetry. It was identified with a certain kind of linguistic experimentation. It was originally perceived as a regional literary form. And certain of the innovations that it introduced were ultimately absorbed by the larger Arabic-speaking world.

Ibn Khaldūn begins his account of the *muwashshaḥ* by identifying it as the chief poetic achievement for which the Andalusians were

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<sup>3</sup> The exception to this generalisation, arguably, is the literature of Malta. Maltese is an Arabic dialect with a large number of Italian loan-words. Though certainly anomalous—it is written in the Latin alphabet, and modern Malta is a Christian state—a case may be made for Maltese language and literature as being the only colloquial Arabic literary tradition.

<sup>4</sup> I am thinking of Ibn Bassām (d. 1147 C.E.), who compiled a four-volume collection of poetry from his native al-Andalus (*Al-Dhakhīz* [A treasure-trove of the beauties of the people of al-Andalus]); Averroes (1126-1198 C.E.), who touches on the poetic forms in a passage from his commentary on Aristotle's *Poetics*; and Ibn Sanā' al-Mulūk (1155-1211 C.E.), who wrote an *ars poetica* of the form (*Dār al-Ṭirāz* [The House of Embroidery]) which remains a valuable, though problematic, resource for scholars of Andalusian *muwashshaḥ*.

known in the greater Arabic-speaking world, and by hailing it as a significant poetic innovation:

In al-Andalus, poetry developed, and its forms and varieties were refined. Elaborate composition reached an apogee among the Andalusians. Modern [poets] among them invented a new form which they call the *muwashshaḥ*<sup>5</sup>

In this brief statement, Ibn Khaldūn confirms the regional specificity associated with the *muwashshaḥ*: he identifies it as an Andalusian form. And he indicates that it constitutes a noteworthy formal innovation, an *invention*, significant for its difference from conventional Arabic poetic forms. He will use the same verb (*istaḥadatha*) later in this chapter to characterise the appearance of the *zajal*, stating that Andalusian poets “invented” these new forms. The standard meaning of the adjective that Ibn Khaldūn uses to describe the *muwashshaḥ* poets (*al-mutaʾakkkhīr ūna*), which I have translated as “modern,” is “recent.” Clearly, when Ibn Khaldūn uses the word in this context, he is not drawing on its narrow temporal significance. He will go on to identify the inventor of the new form as Muqaddam Ibn Muʿāfir al-Qabrīrī, who lived some four and a half centuries earlier (Arabic text 767; English translation 440). In a literary context, the word Ibn Khaldūn uses to describe the *muwashshaḥ* poets can evoke a contrast, expressed or implied, with the term *al-mutaqaddim ūna* (“preceding” or “ante-cedent”); in this usage it denotes “post-classical” authors. In this first mention of the *muwashshaḥ*, Ibn Khaldūn identifies it as an Andalusian invention; he attributes to the form a sense of modernity and of regional specificity.

The characteristic that Ibn Khaldūn most celebrates in the *muwashshaḥ* is its “ease,” its lack of “artificiality.” He records a charming statement, attributed to the *muwashshaḥ* poet Ibn Ḥazmun, describing the primary importance of ease of diction in the composition of the *muwashshaḥ*: “A *muwashshaḥ* is not a *muwashshaḥ* until it is free of artificiality (or mannerism)” (Arabic text 772; English translation 448). When his companion asks for an elucidation of this statement, Ibn Ḥazmun responds by quoting verses from a *muwashshaḥ* he has writtun. Ibn Khaldūn considers the notion of “ease” so essential to

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<sup>5</sup> Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima* (Tunis, 1984; hereafter cited as “Arabic text”) 767; *The Muqaddimah*; An Introduction to History, trans. Franz Rosenthal (Princeton, 1967; hereafter cited as “English translation”) 440.

the *muwashshaḥ* that he introduces it at the very beginning of his chapter on Andalusian poetry. Here he is discussing the early development of the form in al-Andalus:

They strove with each other for excellence in this [poetry], and all the people found it charming, both the upper classes and the common people, because it was limpid and easy to grasp. (Arabic text 767; English translation 440)

The precise nature of the “ease” to which Ibn Khaldūn alludes is difficult to pin down. He, like Ibn Ḥazmun, resorts to quotation in order to illustrate it for his readers. Despite the ambiguity of this notion, however, Ibn Khaldūn suggests that it constitutes for him an essential aspect of the innovation initiated by the poets of al-Andalus: the modern poetic form he describes became popular because the literary public responded with enthusiasm to its “ease.”

When Ibn Khaldūn discusses the *zajal*, he will again take up the idea of “ease.” He will again state that Andalusian poets produced remarkable and innovative works by striving to attain eloquence using the accessible new medium they have developed. And he will introduce a theme that will occupy him for the rest of his discussion, an explicit focus on the language used by these modern poets. This passage marks the transition between Ibn Khaldūn’s treatments of the *muwashshaḥ* and the *zajal*:

This *muwashshaḥ*-craft spread among the people of al-Andalus. The common people took it up, because of its ease and the elegance of its vocabulary and its ornamentation. The common people in the towns followed in their footsteps, and composed poetry in this manner in their city-dialects, without adhering to the declensional endings [of classical Arabic]. They invented a form which they called the *zajal*, and they continue to compose in this form to the present day. They have achieved marvels in this form, and have produced works of great eloquence, using their non-Arabic tongues. (Arabic text 778; English translation 454)

The *zajal*, in his telling, constitutes both a departure from and a continuation of the innovations introduced by the *muwashshaḥ*. As the *muwashshaḥ* poets invented a “modern” literary form that distinguished their works from traditional Arabic poetry, so the *zajal* poets departed from the conventions established by the *muwashshaḥ* poets. The aspect of the *zajal* that most interests Ibn Khaldūn is its linguistic innovation. He states that the *zajal* poets developed a new form of poetry by adapting the *muwashshaḥ* to accommodate elements of their

spoken dialects, and that they then strove successfully to produce eloquent works in the genre they invented.

Ibn Khaldūn will go on from his discussion of the *zajal* to talk about poetry written in other parts of the Arabic-speaking world that incorporates elements of local, colloquial language. After discussing and citing *muwashshah*-like poetry written by poets from the Maghrib and from Baghdad, he concludes the chapter with a comment that affirms his keen interest in the *muwashshah*-poets' linguistic experimentation:

It should be known that literary taste, regarding the recognition of eloquence, comes to one who is immersed in the language in question, and who uses it constantly, and has spoken it amongst its people, until he acquires mastery of it, as we said in the case of the Arabic language. (Arabic text 790; English translation 479)

Ibn Khaldūn had begun this chapter of *al-Muqaddima* with the phrase *wa-amma ahl al-Andalus* (literally, "and as for the people of al-Andalus...."), implying that his subject matter will be the poets of al-Andalus. By the time the chapter closes, however, his focus has shifted significantly: his essay has become a survey of linguistic experimentation by poets throughout the Arabic-speaking world.

In order to follow the development of Ibn Khaldūn's argument, it will be helpful to retrace his steps. He introduces the first literary innovation inaugurated by modern Andalusian poets, the *muwashshah*, and identifies it with a new sense of "ease" and accessibility, in the opening sentences of the chapter. His discussion of the *muwashshah*, however, includes examples of the genre written by non-Andalusian poets; the topic has been silently expanded to include responses to the Andalusian innovation produced by poets from other parts of the Arabic-speaking world. When he turns to the *zajal*, he returns to al-Andalus, repeats the themes of innovation and ease, and introduces a new theme: linguistic experimentation. The remainder of the chapter surveys parallel forms of linguistic experimentation written by Andalusian, Baghdadi, and Maghribi poets. In his concluding remarks, he celebrates vernacular eloquence in its discrete, regional forms. The development of his argument suggests that his primary concern is not to produce a *précis* of Andalusian poetry, nor even of a particular, innovative Andalusian poetic form. Rather, his intent is to discuss the emergence of modern poetic forms, which appeared first in al-Andalus and then spread to other parts of the Arabic-speaking world, and are associated with accessibility and with a specific linguistic innovation, the incorporation of elements of local colloquial tongues.

Auerbach, in his discussion of the rise of the vernacular literatures in medieval Europe, describes a situation that is in many regards similar to the development outlined by Ibn Khaldūn. Vernacular poets produced works that were "easier" and more accessible. These works were marked by a focus on new subject matter (most notably, the courtly love theme) and by the invention of new stanzaic forms. But the most revolutionary innovation introduced in this poetry was the use of the spoken tongue, rather than Latin, as a vehicle for formal literary composition. The modern poets vied, in competition with each other and with literary history, to achieve eloquence in the genres they invented. Ibn Khaldūn writes that the first composers of *muwashshaḥs* "strove with each other for excellence in this [poetry]" (quoted above). And he states with approval that the *zajal* poets "have achieved marvels in this form, and have produced works of great eloquence" (quoted above). James Monroe, in an essay on the *muwashshaḥ*, speculates that "the cultural and political rivalry existing between East and West probably was one of the important factors which led Andalusian poets to invent a formal innovation such as the *muwashshaḥ*, thus freeing themselves from the burden of Oriental traditionalism in poetry."<sup>6</sup> In a similar way, according to Auerbach, Dante when writing the *Divine Comedy* strove to produce a monument that could surpass the works of other regional vernacular poets, and stand alongside the literary works of Latin antiquity. Such competition is, of course, common to all authors, wherever and whenever they write. The parallel between the medieval Arabic and medieval Romance writers, however, is striking because of the similarity of the traditions against which the modern writers were pitted. Both groups wrote innovative poetry which addressed the disjuncture between the language of literature and the language of daily life; both used the spoken language to give their poetry a new vitality. And both strove to produce works, using these new languages and poetic forms, which could be deemed as eloquent as more linguistically conventional poetry.

If there are structural similarities between medieval Arabic and Romance literary experimentation, however, there is one definitive difference between the two traditions. The regional languages which were first used as a literary vehicle by the Romance vernacular poets were to evolve into the languages of modern Europe. After the Renaissance, Latin literary culture would survive only in very limited environments: as a language of convenience for scientists and other intellectuals; as the language of the Roman church. The linguistic experimen-

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<sup>6</sup> James T. Monroe, *The Muwashshahat* (Oxford, 1965) 21.

tation of the *muwashshaḥ* poets, however, was to remain a discrete event, without revolutionary impact on Arabic literary culture. The *muwashshaḥ* survives to the present day as a form of popular song. But formal, written Arabic remains a vital, living literary language in the Arabic-speaking world.

Ibn Khaldūn's chapter on the *muwashshaḥ* and related poetic forms is the last of his monumental work *al-Muqaddima*. Reading over the comment with which he concludes that final chapter, one is struck by its open-endedness, the sense of possibility that it conveys. I give those concluding comments here in full:

It should be known that literary taste, regarding the recognition of eloquence, comes to one who is immersed in the language in question, and who uses it constantly, and has spoken it amongst its people, until he acquires mastery of it, as we said in the case of the Arabic language. The Andalusian does not understand the eloquence of the poetry of the people of the Maghrib; and the Maghribi does not understand the eloquence of the poetry of the people of al-Andalus or of the East; and the Easterner does not understand the eloquence of the poetry of the people of al-Andalus or of the Maghrib. Rather, the local languages and their [literary] composition differ one from the other, and each person is aware of the eloquence of his own language and has a taste for the beauty of the poetry of his own people. "In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the differences of your languages and your colours, there are signs for those who understand." [Qur'ān 30:22] (Arabic text 790; English translation 479-80)

This extraordinary passage, with which Ibn Khaldūn closes the body of his work, is perhaps most remarkable for its lack of closure. It would be a mistake to overread Ibn Khaldūn's treatment of the discrete literary voices emerging within the Arabic tradition, to suggest that he is describing a literary/linguistic revolution parallel in its conception and intentions to the Romance vernacular revolution, one which differed only in its failure to transform Arabic literature. However, I would like to close this discussion of Ibn Khaldūn's treatment of the *muwashshaḥ* and related literary forms by pointing out two of the themes that this passage opens up: first, his suggestion, simply stated but profound in its implications, that "vernacular eloquence" is comparable to eloquence in formal, literary Arabic. And secondly, his attention to regional difference, his attempt to define the regional voices that in their totality constitute the Arabic-speaking world by pointing out their difference from each other.

### 3. *The De vulgari eloquentia and the Romance vernacular traditions*

The literary critic Gianfranco Contini has argued, persuasively and influentially, that the works of Dante embody a sense of *plurality* that would subsequently disappear from Italian literature. In one of the essays in which he addresses this issue, he states: "Of the most visible and summary attributes that pertain to Dante, the first is plurilingualism."<sup>7</sup> Contini's notion of plurilingualism is broadly defined; he specifies that he refers not only to the fact that Dante wrote both in Latin and in Italian, but also to the wide range of literary styles and literary genres represented in his works. Dante's eclecticism, in Contini's reading of him, is a result of his life-long project of self-examination, which itself is the result of his struggle to define himself and his poetics against the plurality of possibilities which he recognised in his environment and in literary history. "There is no peace in him," Contini writes in another essay, "but the torment of the dialectic" (320). Throughout his life, in both his literary and literary-critical works, Dante engaged in a dialogue with Latin and Romance vernacular authors, seeking to understand what others had written before him and to define and defend the potential that he perceived for vernacular literature. The "dialectic" to which Contini refers is this constant interrogation of literary tradition, Dante's ongoing analysis and contextualisation of his own work.

Auerbach's reading of Dante in his essay "The Western Public and Its Language" focuses on the struggle between Latin literary history and the new Italian vernacular literature witnessed in Dante's work. Dante's *Comedy* is singled out by Auerbach as a monument in the development of the Romance vernaculars. In it, Auerbach asserts, Dante demonstrated that the Italian language, no less than Latin, was able to express lofty ideas and to achieve sublime literary effects. Indeed, the tension between Latin tradition and Romance innovation is central to the *Comedy*, and to Dante's works in general. In this essay, however, I will consider Dante's work in a different perspective, as a response not to the problem of Latin/vernacular *bilingualism*, but to the problem of *plurilingualism*. Thus, I take a cue from Contini; but I will understand "plurilingualism" more literally than Contini did. In the century before him, Italian literature was written in Franco-Veneto, in Occitan, and in the Sicilian dialect. These Italian literatures —Italian because they were written on the Italian peninsula, not because they were written in Italian— were produced by writers who were aware of, and engaged, the new literary traditions established in the Occitan and French

<sup>7</sup> Gianfranco Contini, *Varianti e altra linguistica* (Turin, 1970) 171.

works of the troubadours and the *trouvères*. Dante's idea of literary Italian is articulated in response to these other languages, as well as to the Latin tradition. In addition to attempting to produce a *modern* language as eloquent as the Latin of antiquity—the aspect of his work on which Auerbach's reading is focused—Dante also strove to define a *regional* language able to compete with the other regional literary languages of the Europe of his time. And the work in which he most explicitly addresses European plurilingualism, and the problem of language in general, is his most focused and technical treatment of language and literature, the *De vulgari eloquentia*.

At the beginning of the *De vulgari*, Dante defines the language that will be the subject of his work first by characterising it as “natural,” and then by contrasting it with Latin, which is learned only through formal study. In this passage he introduces his conception of the vernacular:

vulgarem locutionem appellamus eam qua infantes assuefiunt ab assistentibus cum primitus distinguere voces incipiunt; vel, quod brevius dici potest, vulgarem locutionem asserimus quam sine omni regula nutricem imitantes accipimus. Est et inde alia locutio secundaria nobis, quam Romani gramaticam vocaverunt; hanc quidem secundariam Greci habent et alii, sed non omnes.<sup>8</sup> Ad habitum vero huius pauci perveniunt, quia non nisi per spatium temporis et studii assiduitatem regulamur et doctrinamur in illa.<sup>9</sup>

We call “vernacular speech” that which infants become accustomed to from those around them when they first begin to distinguish words; or, more briefly stated, we assert that vernacular speech is that which we acquire by imitating our nurse, without any training. We also have another, secondary language, which the Romans called the *gramatica*; this secondary language the Greeks possess, and others, but not all [peoples]. Few come to the possession of this language, however, because we are trained and schooled in it only by means of a lengthy and assiduous study.

The vernacular is our mother tongue, the language that we learn “sine omni regula”—literally, *without any rule*—as infants. In addition to this first language, we possess “another, secondary language,” one

<sup>8</sup> Mengaldo places a period after “vocaverunt” and a colon after “omnes.” I have revised his punctuation, in order to better reflect the sense of the passage: Dante is arguing, first, that certain nations possess a vernacular and a *gramatica*; and secondly, that among the peoples who do possess a *gramatica*, there are few individuals who manage to learn it well.

<sup>9</sup> *De vulgari eloquentia*, ed. Pier Vincenzo Mengaldo; in *Opere minori*, Vol. 2, pp. 26-237 (Milan and Naples, 1979; hereafter cited as “DVE”), I, 1, 2 (p. 30).



which is acquired only by those who undergo a demanding program of study in order to master it. His choice of words is judicious. The Latin word *secundarius*, like the English word "secondary," can mean both "subsequent" and "second-rate." Dante goes on to argue that of these two languages, the vernacular is the more noble, in part "because it is natural to us" ("quia naturalis est nobis"; DVE I, i, 4 [pp. 30-32]).

In this introduction of the subject of his study, the comparative nature of Dante's argument is already evident. Dante specifies that the dual linguistic tradition he describes—the opposition of "natural" spoken language and learned formal language—is possessed by the Romans, the Greeks, "and others." Mengaldo, editor of the *De vulgari eloquentia*, indicates in his footnote to this passage that modern scholars believe that Dante is probably thinking of the Hebrew and Arabic traditions, and quotes Roger Bacon, who parallels the *gramatica* of the Greeks, the Hebrews, and the Arabs (DVE, 31, note 7). This urge to initiate a linguistic or literary analysis by balancing the tradition to be treated against other, parallel traditions is echoed in a pair of Occitan grammatical works that predate the *De vulgari eloquentia*. Mallorcan Berenguer d'Anoia wrote his *Mirall de trobar* during the closing years of the thirteenth century or the first quarter of the fourteenth century.<sup>10</sup> He begins the work with an account of the origins of the alphabet, relating that it was invented by a nymph who lived on an island in the sea of Sicily (82/83); in this, as in other details of his linguistic history, he is following Isidore. He then goes on to describe the history of the word "alphabet":

I aixi' s'anomena alfabet, que procedeix o es pres del grec, i en hebraic es diu alfabet, i en arabic es diu alifbet.<sup>11</sup>

Therefore it is called "alphabet," which comes from or is close to the Greek, and in Hebrew it is called "alfabet," and in Arabic it is called "alifbet."

Berenguer will not go into further detail regarding the Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic traditions. He uses them to provide a context for his discussion of Occitan literature: he traces the Latinate tradition he will describe back to an origin that has parallels in the Greek-, Hebrew-, and Arabic-speaking worlds. Raimon Vidal's *Razos de trobar*, composed between 1190-1213,<sup>12</sup> was the first grammatical work composed in or

<sup>10</sup>Elena Landoni's dating (Landoni, *La teoria letteraria dei provenzali* [Florence, 1989] 126).

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>12</sup>Marshall's dating (J.H. Marshall, *The Razos de Trobar of Raimon Vidal and Associated Texts* [London, 1972] lxx).

about a Romance vernacular language. Near the beginning of this work, we find a similar comparatist formula:

Totas genz cristianas, iusieuas et sarazinas, emperador, princeps, rei, duc, conte ... clergue, borgues, vilans, paucs et granz, meton totz iorns lor entendiment en trobar et en chantar . . . <sup>13</sup>

All people, Christians, Jews, and Saracens, emperor, prince, king, duke, count ... clergyman, burger, peasant, great or small, think every day about the composition and singing [of songs]...

Like Berenguer, Raimon begins by sketching a broad panorama, in order to provide a context for the particular matter he will discuss. He is not interested in the songs of the Jews or the Saracens. Their relevance is exhausted once he has used them to demonstrate that the Occitan tradition which he will describe is but one among a number of like traditions.

The Jews, the Arabs, and the Greeks share with the Latins a common concept of the alphabet; Berenguer traces the Occitan literary tradition he will describe to a Greco-Latin source. Christians, Jews, and Saracens sing songs; Raimon will discuss one of the lyric traditions of the Christians. The Romans, the Greeks, "and others" possess a formal written language and a vernacular; Dante will be concerned with the Latinate tradition. Despite the differences between the specific subject matters they treat, each of these writers uses a similar strategy in order to attain a comparable goal. Each, at the outset of his work, evokes a plurilingual backdrop against which he will set the particular literary or linguistic tradition he will treat. This backdrop, in each case, is roughly defined. None of the writers displays any keen interest in or knowledge of the other traditions he mentions. Each will proceed rapidly from the plural to the particular: from the comparatist formulas with which they begin their works, to a discussion of a particular Romance vernacular literary/linguistic tradition.

Dante's project in the *De vulgari* is more ambitious than Raimon's or Berenguer's, and he must pass through several intermediary stages before reaching his goal: he will parallel a number of literary/linguistic traditions, the scope of his comparison gradually narrowing until he focuses on the Italian literary and linguistic situation. He cites the Biblical story of the tower of Babel in order to account for the diversity of human tongues (I, vii). He gives a brief list of the languages of Europe, encompassing both Germanic and Romance families (I, viii, 3). He divides the Romance languages into three primary groups,

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

French, Occitan, and Italian, and cites poetry in order to illustrate the distinct achievements of poets writing in these languages (I, viii-ix). He then subdivides the third item on this list still further: he points out that the Italian language is not monolithic, but is spoken differently in different parts of the Italian peninsula. He surveys the varieties of Italian in both its spoken and written forms; he analyses the differences between the Italian dialects, and judges their individual merits and shortcomings (I, xi-xv). Throughout this discussion of the languages and literatures of contemporary Europe, the methodology of Dante's analysis is comparative: he strives to define the particular in opposition to the plural.

Auerbach's discussion of Dante in "The Western Public and Its Language" focuses on an agonistic, binary struggle between a modern vernacular writer and the authors of Latin antiquity. The reading that I offer here is intended not to challenge but to augment Auerbach's reading. Dante begins his linguistic analysis, in the passage quoted above, by evoking an opposition between a learned language and a spoken vernacular; and certainly, if we read the *De vulgari eloquentia* with an awareness of his other works and of the literary issues that concerned him throughout his life, we must acknowledge the centrality of Latin literary history to his conception of contemporary literature in general, and his own works in particular. The details of the project he undertakes in the *De vulgari*, however, encourage us to read his competition with the Latin heritage as only one facet of his attempt to define a literary identity. Opposition to parallel contemporary traditions was crucial to Dante's project of self-definition (and other early vernacular writers demonstrate a similar urge to define their literary identity by listing and distinguishing parallel traditions).

The "plurilingualism" which Contini perceives in the figure of Dante provides a point of departure for understanding and describing the comparative nature of these writers' approach to self-definition. Contini places Dante in a medieval environment where the boundaries between Latin and the vernacular, between literary genres and literary styles, were not yet distinctly drawn. Dante's (and Raimon's and Berenguer's) comparatist gestures draw our attention to another ambiguous borderland: the march between languages — between the Italian dialects; between the Romance tongues; between the languages of Christian Europe; between the literary and linguistic practices of Christian, Muslim, and Jew — where fences must be erected and territories defined before the literary historian's argument can proceed.

#### 4. The vernacular “avant gardes” of the Middle Ages

In “The Literary Language of the Western Public,” Auerbach provides a narrative for understanding the emergence of vernacular cultures in medieval Europe. The readings of Ibn Khaldūn and Dante above suggest that the contest that Auerbach described in the context of Latin Europe constituted a part of a broader attempt to use language in new ways in order to define and articulate a unique sense of regional and historical identity. Ibn Khaldūn’s description of the *muwashshah* demonstrates that Arabic poets’ use of the spoken vernaculars of al-Andalus was perceived as a regional, modernising innovation, much as the vernacular Romance poets’ works were perceived as a regionally and historically specific challenge to Latin tradition. Furthermore, Dante’s argument in the *De vulgari eloquentia* indicates that Romance vernacular poets defined their work in opposition to other, parallel literary/linguistic traditions, and to contemporary poetry in other Romance vernaculars, as well as to Latin literary history. Auerbach’s binary opposition between a monolithic literary tradition and a series of discrete neo-traditions is opened up, to accommodate a complex set of communications and competitions, in both Christian and Muslim Europe, between local voices and the literary traditions of other eras and other lands.

Such linguistic complexity is not limited to the Muslim-Christian borderlands of the Iberian and Italian peninsulas; students of other literatures may recognise parallels between developments in southern Europe and the competition in other regions between Germanic, Celtic, Anglo-Saxon, and Romance traditions. But when scholars of European literary history acknowledge these dramas, they often consider them to be marginal to the greater narrative of literary development in the Christian West, which is characterised by the disintegration of the Latin literary tradition and the subsequent emergence of the vernacular literatures. Auerbach discusses literary development on the Iberian peninsula in this passage:

From the very start the Iberian peninsula was in a special situation, for there the Romance popular idioms had to contend not with the unchallenged domination of Latin but with several languages which served both for spoken and written expression and had developed in a variety of ways. In Andalusia, with its elegant and colourful popular culture, Mozarabic Spanish came into contact with other languages; the Arabs and Jews adopted it, employing it, for purposes of entertainment, in the poetic forms of their own languages, and it seems likely that Romance poetry was nowhere committed to writing so soon as here, within the frame of the Arabic and Hebrew *muwassas*. In the Spanish Middle Ages Latin was not the uncontested written language... (320)

Auerbach's goal is to follow a thread of literary development from Latin Antiquity to the emergence of the Indo-European vernacular literatures in late medieval Europe. In this context, the literary culture of al-Andalus functions as an occlusion, or an interruption, of another literary history. Auerbach will not discuss literary development in al-Andalus further, except to mention the evidence the Romance-language *kharijas* provide regarding the development of a Romance vernacular lyric tradition in the Iberian peninsula (340).

The readings of Ibn Khaldūn and Dante above demonstrate the need to augment the basic narrative of Auerbach's influential essay, in order to produce a more comprehensive reading of medieval literary history. Some of the innovative ideas sketched in these works would be fundamental to subsequent literary development. But others would disappear without having a lasting impact on literary or cultural history. The *muwashshah* poets of al-Andalus, the Occitan poets of Provence, Sicilian and Tuscan poets used new linguistic forms to express a new content. Subsequent generations would evaluate those poets' innovations, preserving and building on some of them and rejecting others. In most of these cases, a regionally specific linguistic difference would disappear while the innovative form or content of the poetry would serve as the basis for further development. Thus the Occitan lyrics of the troubadours would find French and Sicilian imitators; a Sicilian poetic revolution would inspire a distinctly Tuscan poetic movement; *muwashshahs* would be written in other parts of the Arabic-speaking world. Like the modernist avant gardes of the early twentieth century, the Andalusian and Occitan poets transformed contemporary cultural practice, in response to radical political and intellectual upheavals. And as in the case of the modernists, the experimentation of these medieval poets generated an "avant garde excess," innovations which could not be accommodated by mainstream artists and thinkers, and would be rejected or normalised by subsequent literary history.

Two shifts in the basic narrative structure of Auerbach's essay — from a triumphalist narrative, designed to describe the emergence of the literary languages of modern Europe, to an avant garde model, focused on experimentalism as an end in itself; from a binary opposition between a written language and a spoken tongue to a plural opposition of diverse literary/linguistic paradigms — allow us to see medieval literary history in a new light. The poets whose works Ibn Khaldūn and Dante read were not only concerned with inventing a single literary language which could challenge the authority of the single language of literary history. They strove, as well, to invent a particular voice that they could use to represent themselves to a plurilingual, international poetic audience. Their experimentation would be observed, evaluated,

and contained by subsequent poets and literary historians; the studies written by Ibn Khaldūn and Dante represent part of this process. Most intriguing is the light that Ibn Khaldūn's and Dante's literary histories shed on the parallel articulation, in the Arabic and Romance literary environments, of an idea of vernacular culture: the use of fluid and expressive new linguistic registers as poetic vehicles, and the perception of them as a challenge to literary tradition, and as a representation of local cultural identity, a response to similar literary constructions emanating from the other regions with which local writers perceived themselves to be in competition.

*University of Toronto*

## THE ANDALUSI KHARJAS: A Courtly Counterpoint to Popular Tradition?<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Introduction

The subject of this article is the interaction or interference of popular and courtly or 'learned elements' in Andalusī strophic poetry. Since many scholars have considered the *kharjas* to be manifestations of popular lyric, the first objective of this article is to determine to what degree we can classify these texts as 'popular'. The second objective is to relate these texts to the 'courtly' context where they were performed. The multicultural and multilingual character of Andalusī society is reflected in Andalusī strophic poetry, as well as the rivalry between Berber and Arabic-Andalusī culture. Languages and alphabets of the Muslim, Christian, and Jewish populations were used in the final lines, the *kharjas*. We notice a great discrepancy in the aesthetic judgments of Andalusī Arabic strophic poetry and in its popularity in different periods. These non-classical genres are usually not included in the anthologies of prestigious literature. During the Berber dynasties this literary tradition reached the status of 'court literature' and we see that 'innovation' became a new 'tradition'. Later, we see even that this 'popular' poetry became the 'classical' Maghribi musical tradition. The higher esteem these poems earned in al-Andalus contributed to their wide diffusion in the Maghrib and other regions of the Islamic world.

### 2. Andalusī strophic poetry

In al-Andalus two new forms of poetry, the strophic *muwashshah* and the *zajal*, developed within Arabic literature. The *muwashshah* is

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1 This text is an elaborated version of my lecture at the 31st International Congress on Medieval Studies. Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo (May, 1996). The lecture was based on my then forthcoming monograph, *Love Songs from al-Andalus: History, Structure and Meaning of the Kharja*, (Leiden: Brill, 1997). Some of the data presented here also appeared in my article "Berbers in al-Andalus and Andalus in the Maghrib as reflected in *tawshih* Poetry," in *Poetry, Politics and Polemics: Cultural Transfer between the Iberian Peninsula and North Africa*, ed. O. Zwartjes, G. J. van Gelder and E. de Moor (Amsterdam: Rodolpi, 1996).

written in classical Arabic and closes with a *kharja* which can be written in classical, colloquial Arabic or in 'non-Arabic' diction, in most cases in Romance or in a mixture of Romance and colloquial Arabic. The *zajal* is mainly written in one of the Hispano-Arabic dialects. The 'inventor' of the *muwashshais*, according to Ibn Bassām's *Kitāb al-dhakhīra*,<sup>2</sup> the blind poet Muqaddam b. Mu'āfa al-Qabrī who lived at the end of the ninth century in the period of the Umayyad Cordoban *amīr* 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Marwānī (888 to 912). This literary innovation is posterior to the musical innovations introduced by Ziryāb, who immigrated from the East to al-Andalus where he founded a 'conservatory'. It is probable that these strophic compositions infiltrated the repertoire of poets and musicians of the 'school of Ziryāb', so that soon a musico-poetical 'tradition' was born. We still can hear remnants of this tradition in the Maghribi-Andalusi *nawbas* where *tawshīḥ* poetry (*muwashshaḥand zajal*) form the most essential component of the texts and their musico-rhythmical structures.

The earliest sources of the region, both Andalusi and Maghribi, do not leave any room for doubt in their evaluation of these non-classical compositions. Abū l-Ḥasan b. Bassām al-Shantarīnī (Ibn Bassām), who was born during the Banū l-Aftās in the Taifa period, did not include *muwashshaḥāt* in his anthology. In the Maghrib we see the same: 'Abd al-Wāhid b. 'Alī al-Tamīmī al-Marrākushī (1185-1249), although admiring the poet Ibn Zuhr, apologised for not including *muwashshaḥāt* in his work, because it was not customary to do so in such sizeable respectable works. Al-Faṭḥ b. Khāqān, a literary historian and also a *kātib* of the Almoravid governor of Granada Abū Yūsuf Tāshufīn b. 'Ālī, wrote his *Qalā'id* excluding the *muwashshaḥāt*. Some of the great *aficionados* and theoreticians of the genre are not Andalusis. Ibn Khaldūn lived in Tunisia (fourteenth century), Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk in Egypt (end of the twelfth and the first decade of the thirteenth century) and Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Hillī (fourteenth century) lived in Iraq (fourteenth century). These literary historians admired the Andalusis and through their sources we know that these Andalusi compositions were very popular in the East already in the twelfth century. The Hispano-Hebrew poets imitated their Hispano-Arabic colleagues and brought their Hebrew imitations (*mu'araḍāt*) also to the East.

2 Ibn Bassām, *Al-Dhakhīra fī Maḥāsīn ahl al-Jazīra*, ed. Ihsān 'Abbās (Beirut, 1979) 469.



3. *Andalusī strophic poetry under the Taifa rulers, the Almoravids and the Almohads, and its diffusion in North Africa*

In the Taifa period, poets worked at the numerous courts of the 'petty' kings who belonged to different ethnicities. The dynasty of Taifa Toledo, the Banū dhī-l-Nū n were of Berber origin, and the *washshāh* Ibn Arfa' Rā'suh worked for them. Some courts were more interested in poetry than others. For example, the court of Saragossa under the Banū Hūd was more a scholarly than a poetic centre, but we find nevertheless some authors of *muwashshahāt* in the North, such as al-Aṣbāhī al-Lāridī (Lérida),<sup>3</sup> or al-Jāzār from Saragossa. The Taifa kingdom of Granada, where the Ṣinhāja Berbers ruled, was an important centre of poetic activities, in particular of Hebrew poetry. The Jewish vizier Shemū'el b. Naghreyā (or: Naghrillah) is one of these celebrated poets. The main poetic centres were the former capital of the Caliphate of Cordoba, Badajoz under the Banū al-Aṭas, Almería under the Banū Ṣumādīh, Murcia, first under the slave-dynasty Khayrān, but later annexed by Valencia under the Banū 'Abd al-'Azīz, and of course Seville under the Banū 'Abbād.

Andalusī Arabic urban secular culture in al-Andalus was menaced by the puritan orthodox Islamic culture of the Almoravids. The King of Seville, al-Mu'tamid b. 'Abbād, requested their assistance against the expansion of the Christians from the North. When the Almoravids came to al-Andalus, they defeated the armies of King Alfonso VI at Zallāqa (Sagrajas) and they immediately deposed all the Taifa Kings, except the Taifa of the Banū Hūd of Saragossa. The new Berber rulers from the Sahara tried to 'purge' Andalusī culture and exiled al-Mu'tamid to Aghmāt in Southern Morocco. Al-Mu'tamid of Seville spent the rest of his life in jail there and wrote nostalgic poems, his so-called *aghmātiyyāt*. Others followed him, voluntarily or not, and settled in North Africa. Among the most important, I mention the poets Ibn al-Labbāna and Ibn Ḥamdīs. Ibn al-Labbāna, who wrote earlier panegyrics to the 'Abbādid of Seville in al-Andalus, visited the de-throned king in the Sahara (Aghmāt) and he continued to compose panegyrics in the manner of the *muwashshah* praising the Banū Hammād in Algeria;<sup>4</sup> he died in Mallorca. The second poet is Ibn Ḥamdīs, who is

3 We must be aware of the fact that we cannot ascertain the real background from the *nisba* only; the person in question may be a member of a family which migrated many generations earlier from Lérida.

4 Jaysh al-Tawshīh, no. 41.

mentioned as a composer of *muwashshaḥāt* by al-Ṣafadī.<sup>5</sup> He was born in Sicily in 1056<sup>6</sup> and emigrated to Seville in 1078 where he was 'rediscovered' by King al-Mu'tamid. Ibn Ḥamdis followed the King to the Maghrib after the fall of Taifa Seville, where he dedicated panegyrics to the prisoner, elegiac and consolatory compositions. He passed his last years at the court of the Ḥammūdids of Bijāya (Bougie). He died as a blind poet in 1133 in Mallorca or in Bijāya.<sup>7</sup>

The unification of Maghribi and Andalusi territories undoubtedly favoured the diffusion of *tawshīḥ* poetry. This appears to be a contradiction, since we know that the Almoravids rejected Andalusi-Arabic secular cultural products. Poets complained that they could not find a *maecenas*, whereas Almoravids complained that they could not find poets who were willing to compose panegyric compositions for them.<sup>8</sup> Here, a considerable discrepancy is felt between two different cultures. When the Almohads replaced the Almoravids, many poets had no problems in continuing to write panegyrics for their new rulers.<sup>9</sup>

I have examined Andalusi strophic poetry in general and the *kharja* in particular. My central concern now is whether the Romance and/or the bilingual *kharjas* are representations of poetry 'at the crossroads of two systems'. I shall attempt to answer the following question: Are these *kharjas* invented texts by Andalusi poets who wrote according to the Arabic system, or did the poets reproduce or imitate *primitiva lírica temprana*?

#### 4. Structure

Many scholars have compared the structure of the Hispano-Arabic *zajal* and *muwashshaḥ* with Romance poems with identical or similar structure. In the Romance tradition a generic term as *zajal* is missing and we find *zajal*-like features in *strambotto*, *estribote*, the *lauda* and the *ballata*, the *villancico*, the *cantigas*, etc. The criteria for making such a comparison are generally speaking the existence of a tripartite section of the strophe with monorhyme, preceded or followed by a section with

5 *Tawshī 'al-tawshīḥ*, ed. A.H. Muṭlaq (Beirut, 1966).

6 Al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-Tīb*, ed. Ihsān 'Abbās (Beirut, 1968), I, pp. 345 and 357.

7 Schack, Adolf Friedrich, *Poesia y arte de los árabes en España y Sicilia*, trans. Juan Valera (1988). Trans. of *Poesie und Kunst der Araber in Spanien und Sicilien* (Stuttgart, (1877) 239.

8 Pérès, Henri, 'La poésie à Fès sous les Almoravides et les Almohades.' *Hespéris* 18(1934): 19.

9 For instance, Ibn Óabʿs wrote panegyrics for the Almoravid rulers (*Lamtʿna*) and later for the Almohads. He was called the official poet of the new dynasty (*shāʿir al-khilāfa l-mahdiyya*, Pérès 1934: 22 and 32).

a common rhyme. The prelude normally has the function of the refrain, which can be omitted. This does not always mean that the composition is refrain-less, since the refrain can be written at the end. There are also differences between the Andalusī *muwashshahāt* and the Romance *zajal*-like compositions. The use of more elaborate rhyme schemes is more common in Andalusī poetry than it is in the Romance tradition. Although Romance *zajal*-like poems are found in all regions of Europe, this is not *a priori* proof of the fact that Andalusīs were inspired by such non-Arabic Iberian substrate, nor that poets from Occitania were inspired by Andalusī poetry. If Occitanian poets were influenced by the Andalusīs, they probably borrowed the *zajal*-form. The fact that the *musammaṭ* and the *zajal*-type is found much more frequently than the *muwashshaḥ*-type makes it probable that, if influence occurred, *azjāl* were in existence much earlier than the extant manuscripts demonstrate; but we do not have any evidence for this assumption. The *tasmīṭ* theory which explains the origins of the *muwashshaḥ* as a direct evolution from the *qaṣīda simṭiyya* is based on firmer soil, because it is better documented. A serious problem is that very few *musammaṭāt* have been handed down which are earlier than the oldest *muwashshahāt*. The fact that Hebrew poets already used the *musammaṭ*-form frequently in the tenth century makes the existence of Arabic parallels likely. The *muwashshaḥ* was recorded first, because these texts were more prestigious than the *zajal*, since they are written in classical Arabic. This does not explain why there are so few surviving *musammaṭāt* from this early period, since these poems were also written in classical Arabic.

The *kharja* as the final unit of the *muwashshaḥ* has many parallels in later Romance lyricism. The *finida* and other similar units share some features of the *kharja*, but the exact analogous form of the *kharja* is non-existent. The *finida* and the *tornade* can share with the *kharja* the recurring rhyme scheme of the prelude, although the *finida* can be an entire strophe of the poem, and not only the section with common rhyme. The consequence is that the *finida* must rhyme with the preceding strophe, while the *kharja* rhymes with the lines with common rhyme. Romance literary tradition does not have an exact analogous form of the *muwashshaḥ* with its *kharja*, which allows us to consider this form as culture-specific.

### 5. Prosody and rhyme

Quantitative patterns form the basis of all Arabic *muwashshahāt* and *azjāl*, although not all of these patterns are pure Khalilian metres. Iso-

syllabism does not mean that Romance versification is involved; anisosyllabism does not mean that the Arabic system is used.

Romance poetry can be anisosyllabic and the Arabic system can be isosyllabic. As long as 'arūḍ-patterns can be found in the Romance, or partly Romance *kharjas*, we can assume that this system predominates, since 'arūḍ-patterns can be compatible with the Romance system, whereas Romance poetry is not always explained by *carūḍ*-patterns. The fact that 'arūḍ-patterns are used even in the Romance texts implies that these texts are either new creations by the Andalusī poets, or adaptations of real Romance fragments of poetry, rebuilt and remoulded according to Arabic conventions. For Romance *kharjas* from the Hebrew series, the situation is not basically different, except for those texts which are written in the *mishqā l ha-t<sup>n</sup>û'ot* which is impossible in the Arabic system, since the opposition between long and short syllables has disappeared. In some cases, the Arabic system provides an inadequate explanation of the metrical system of the *kharjas*, namely when too many *ziḥāfāt* or *ʿilal* have to be posited. Nevertheless, this does not constitute proof of the application of a Romance system. Musical practice might be an explanation for all irregularities, but this cannot be supported by evidence.

In my examination of rhyme, I came to the conclusion that all Romance rules for rhyme are compatible with the Arabic rules, except the existence in Romance literature of assonant rhyme. In my thesis, I have demonstrated that all the *kharjas* with assonant rhyme are compatible with the Arabic licence of *ikfāʿ*. *Luzūm mā lā yalzam* ("requiring what is not compulsory") is an Arabic technique which explains the rhyme-practice of the *muwashshaḥāt* and their *kharjas*. To sum up, prosodically the Romance *kharjas* are not situated at the 'cross-roads of two systems'. These texts have been composed in perfect agreement with the Arabic prosodic system of 'arūḍ-patterns and rhyme-techniques and their licences.

## 6. Thematic features

The *muwashshaḥ* is used, like the *qaṣīda*, for erotic and laudatory poetry. Like the *qaṣīda*, many *muwashshaḥāt* are polythematic, as is attested by Ibn Sanāʿ al-Mulk. According to the prescriptions of the theoreticians, the panegyric *muwashshaḥ* must start with a *nasīb*, and the transition to the next section, the *madīḥ*, must be realised abruptly. The poet then made a transition to the final section in the *tamhīd*, the penultimate unit in which we find the transitional and introductory

formulas preparing the shift of focus (style, register, *dramatis personae*). The technique of constructing the *muwashshaḥ* with its particular accumulation of topics and themes can be explained from intra-Arabic features and is inherited directly from the pre-Islamic period and the urban Umayyad and ‘Abbāsid *qaṣīda*,

The Hebrew *corpus* has been better documented than the Arabic *corpus*. We know almost all authors of Hebrew poems by name, whereas anonymous compositions form the major part of the *‘Uddat*. In other Arabic collections the number of anonymous compositions is high. We can reconstruct with more precise details the socio-historical background of the Hebrew *corpus* than we can that of the Arabic collection. The names of the individuals who are honoured in encomiastic poetry are normally mentioned by name, whereas many panegyrics of the Arabic series cannot be traced exactly.

In my description of thematic typology of these *kharjas* I observed that:

- Some *kharjas* indeed conform to the lyrical tradition of the Arabs. Even pre-Islamic themes are recorded in the *kharjas*. Since the *kharja* is usually a quotation or a semi-quotation of older examples, it does not surprise us that the Andalusī poets took their examples from their own stock-imagery.
- The earliest *canciones de confidente* are recorded in both series. The earliest Romance example is written by Ibn Labbūn, who was Lord of Murviedro in the Taifa-period (second half of the eleventh century). The oldest Arabic example of a *canción de confidente* has been written by Ibn Sharaf, who wrote in Almería for al-Mu‘taṣim. It is impossible to determine who imitated whom.
- The invocation to the mother is never expressed in Arabic (*ummī*) in the Hebrew *corpus* and only exceptionally in the Arabic series, whereas the word *mamma* is used frequently in both series.
- Poets of *muwashshaḥāt* with Romance or bilingual *kharjas* introduce more frequently a female voice than in the *muwash-shaḥāt* with Hispano-Arabic endings. This is an important difference, but we must restrain ourselves from jumping to conclusions by considering these Hispano-Romance as genuine Iberian *Frauenlieder*, alien to Arabic tradition: although in the *muwashshaḥāt* with Hispano-Arabic endings the female voice is an exception, still the woman’s voice *has* been recorded in the Arabic tradition.

- Many expressions in Romance have Arabic translations or vice versa from the same period. One example is the expression 'come, my lord come', which has been recorded in Romance (*ben, sydy ben*) in a composition written by Y<sup>e</sup>hū dā h ha-Lēbī, and in the Arabic language in an eleventh century composition written by al-Jazzār. This may also reflect one lyrical tradition that was present in two languages.
- The expression *¿Qué farey?* has been recorded more frequently in Romance *kharjas* from Hebrew *muwashshaḥāt* than in Arabic *muwashshaḥāt* with Romance or bilingual endings. However, it is surprising that Yehūdāh ha-Leḥī does not use the Romance expression '*¿Qué farey?*' as do his later Hebrew and Arabic colleagues such as Ibn Ruḥaym (Almoravid), Aḥrāhām b. 'Ezrā (Almoravid) in Romance; and al-Manīshī and Ibn 'Isā (Almohad) in Arabic. Yehūdāh ha-Leḥī opted for either the Arabic expression *fā-yā rabb mā aṣna<sup>c</sup>* or, when he composed in Romance, *ya rabb, como viveré yo*.
- There is no Romance equivalent for *ḥabībī* recorded, such as *amigo*.
- The *raqīb* has been recorded in all series, but more frequently in the Romance *kharjas*. The watcher, however, also has parallels in Romance poetry (*gardador*). The word *gilós*, which recalls the Provençal *cançón de gilós*, cannot be supported in the palaeographical edition of Jones (1988).
- The most specific Arabic metaphors, which we saw in the Arabic *corpus*, are not to be found in the Romance *corpus*. This is a strong argument for the theory that the Romance texts are not a mere translation of Arabic examples.
- The concept of *buen amor* has no equivalent in Arabic.
- The expression *filyól alyéno* ('someone else's child') is only recorded in Romance and does not have Arabic parallels.

The Romance and bilingual *kharjas* do not form an isolated *corpus*, which is clearly distinguishable from the Arabic *corpus*. Most themes, which in earlier studies are supposed to be 'Romance', 'Iberian', 'Hispanic', or even 'Spanish', have been recorded also in the Arabic *kharjas*. There are some exceptions, since some Romance words or themes have not been recorded in the Arabic *corpus*. In reproducing or imitating the voices of Romance speaking or singing girls—often Christian girls—the Andalusī authors incorporated in some cases extra-Arabic realities. But these cannot be regarded as genuine Romance thematic features. The Romance material shares the features of the Hispano-Arabic *kharjas*; there are no significant thematic differences be-

tween the Romance and the Hispano-Arabic *kharjas*, with few exceptions. The only important difference between the two series is the language. It would probably be impossible to tell the two collections apart if they were translated into a third language.

The *muwashshaḥ* shares many thematic features with the *qasīda*. There are no Romance parallels of *zajal*-like poems with the same tripartite structure and with its specific themes. Some *kharjas* apparently conform to the lyrical tradition of the Arabs, in particular those where pre-Islamic themes are used. As Fish has demonstrated, even taking into account the 'new material' of Ibn Bishrī, *muwashshaḥāt* with Romance or bilingual *kharjas* are more often expressed by a female than in the Arabic *kharjas*. Nevertheless, the female voice is no evidence for extra-Arabic theories.

### 7. Stylistic features

The Arabic rhetorical system is an adequate model for the description of the rhetorical devices which occur in the *kharjas*. This means that Andalusis used, whether deliberately or not, their knowledge from their education. Arabic rhetorical devices, such as *tajnīs*, are even used in the Romance *kharjas*. The functions of code-switching in natural speech, as described in modern linguistics, such as reiteration, opposition, emphasis, focalisation are also used as stylistic features in the *kharjas*. This means that Andalusī poets, Arabs and Jews, tried to represent the style and register of non-prestigious speech, adapting it in accordance with the high prestigious techniques. The frequent use of Arabic and Romance diminutives, the use of onomatopoeias, 'Ibn Quzman-like' or even thieves' slang (*luḡhat al-dāṣṣa*) reflects non-official language. Rhetorical embellishment made such expressions more acceptable for the literate courtly audience.

### 8. Conclusion

Most *muwashshaḥāt* date from the Taifa-period, the Almoravid and Almohad period. Arabic and Hebrew poets described the Taifa-period as the literary apogee of al-Andalus and later poets imitated the poets from this age. Many scholars, for example Ibn Bassām, mentioned this type of poetry, but yet they did not include them in their anthologies; they despised strophic poetry, for being non-classical. When the *muwashshaḥa* had found its way into court-literature the situation changed. One of the main factors which contributed to its success and popularity is the great number of courts and the cultural prestige of the

Taifa-Kings. Many poets competed in verse with their colleagues and they were surrounded by learned musicians and professional poets. When the Almoravids supplanted these little Kingdoms, many poets were forced to leave the country or to choose other jobs. It has been stated that the Almoravids did not have a thorough knowledge of Arabic language and culture and in many studies since Dozy there is an emphasis on the intolerance of their politics. Their book burnings have been often compared to the Spanish Inquisition. This image must be corrected, because we know in the first place that these Berbers were arabised very quickly and had a great admiration of Arabic-Andalusi culture. The *muwashshaḥāt* continued to be popular during the Berber dynasties and for the first time the *zajal*, which is probably older than the *muwashshaḥ*, as I tried to demonstrate, entered court literature. Ibn Quzmān and Madghallis are the most representative composers of *azjāl* during these Berber dynasties. The Andalusi poets tried to demonstrate that they were perfectly able to compose both *‘āmmMī* and *‘ajamī*-utterances, while using the model they were familiar with. To summarise, Andalusian strophic poetry and the *kharja* are a further development of conventional techniques. The poets probably tried to reproduce the vernaculars as best as they could, except in those cases where they deliberately misrepresented the original speech for humoristic purposes.

*University of Oslo*



## TEN YEARS AFTER: THE VIRTUES OF EXILE<sup>1</sup>

*"Finally, a foreign soil is proposed, since it, too, gives a man practice. All the world is a foreign soil to those who philosophise.... The man who finds his homeland sweet is still a tender beginner; he to whom every soil is as his native land is already strong; but he is perfect to whom the entire world is a foreign land...."*

Hugh of St. Victor

*The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History* first came out in 1987, almost exactly ten years ago as I write this, although it is a book that had its beginnings more than a decade before. I recount part of the story in the "Preface" of the book itself, because it struck me at the time, as it still does, as emblematic: the story of a graduate student in medieval Romance languages more or less accidentally coming upon the Arabic verb *ṭaraba* in a first-year Arabic class, and figuring out, bit by bit, the very long story of the tortured scholarly quarrels over the etymology of Provençal *trobar*, and thus of the word "troubadour" as well as the entire cultural complex that word evokes. It is, of course, not just any word, nor any random one of the thousands of disputed etymologies in our languages. Instead it is the evocation of an unusually powerful set of cultural features that lies at the heart, as Nietzsche had said, of the West's most profound and romantic notions of what it is, of its very essence. Even when we, as a culture, have pretty much forgotten what Provençal is, as we almost have, we retain a strong sense (as well we should) of the distinctiveness of that culture, and it is a vexing issue to deal with the "origins" —by which we really mean the "identity"— of that culture when it might appear that some significant and central aspect of it lies in a cultural complex that we are habituated, acculturated, to see as quintessentially "Other," in Said's vastly influential articulation of it.

*SCRIPTA MEDITERRANEA*, Vols XIX-XX 1998-1999, 55

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<sup>1</sup> Editor's note: This essay, translated into Arabic, will appear as the introduction to the Arabic translation of Prof. Menocal's *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History*.

Ten years later, I believe more than ever that it is all about the question of identity, and that the intellectual challenge is to have a working model, a language, of cultural identity that can account for the powerful hybridness of European cultural identity in its formative period. Ten years ago, I saw the principal impediment to the development of such a vision as a rather crude, albeit powerful, prejudice “that Westerners —Europeans— have great difficulties in considering the possibility that they are in some way seriously indebted to the Arab world, or that the Arabs were central to the making of medieval Europe” (xiii). But during this past decade, in the American academic universe as well as in the wider world, the problem is subtly different, and perhaps more intractable: “identity” has become ever more narrowly and rigidly defined, and the point seems all too often not to be the *dissolution* of the dichotomous conceits of Self and Other (Christian and Muslim, European and Arab, and so forth) but its *hardening*. Edward Said’s extraordinarily influential *Orientalism* (which appeared in 1978) radically altered the intellectual landscape in ways not only I but many others believed would help clarify how we think about cultures and their identities, and alert us to the kind of prejudice vis-à-vis Arab culture I had seen as the principal culprit. But I believe many of its premises have instead been almost perversely understood and absorbed as arguments for a greater, rather than a lesser, degree of cultural and scholarly “purity.”

As with many seminal insights in intellectual history (one thinks immediately of “the anxiety of influence” or “the structures of scientific revolutions”) Said’s key concepts have suffered reductive simplification and, in my opinion, damaging misapplication, although it would be dangerous and unfair to necessarily attribute any of these views to Said himself. The brilliance of the original work lay in its setting out the ways in which disciplines are rooted principally in ideologies, in cultural constructs that define one culture’s view of itself vis-à-vis another.<sup>2</sup> But among the many ironies that abound in the institutionalisation of Said’s analyses is that the thrust of the argument has become that any student (reader, interpreter, speaker) of another’s language

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<sup>2</sup> The huge proof-text at hand for Said is of course “Orientalism,” a term that existed before as a more or less neutral designation of the study of cultures of the Middle East principally, but which became, in the aftermath, a term so powerfully tainted by Said’s often compelling denunciation of it as an instrument of imperial domination and as a mode of reductive analysis of a whole culture that was diminishing rather than celebratory, that it is scarcely useable any more except as a negative, an accusation. Many universities’ departments, including what was the Department of Oriental Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, where I studied Arabic, have in fact changed their names as a result.

(literature, culture) is virtually by definition indulging in a species of "orientalism" and is per force treating the other as an "Other." The widespread acceptance of this sophistry dovetailed perfectly with what I perceive as the most damaging institutional development in literary and cultural studies: nationalisation. This division into discrete national languages —of not just our departments but of our visions of cultures and our ways of reading literatures— has become the sad hallmark of our times, and it has rendered the problem of understanding and appreciating complex cultural entities, even more difficult, I think, than "mere" prejudice ever did. Our fractured visions are more fractured than they were ten and twenty years ago and are now overtly hostile to notions of cultural empires and seems to be mostly seeking to identify and champion the most discrete and least ambiguous "identities."

And it is, to say the least, ironic, that all of this has happened at precisely the historical moment at which we should, if anything, see clearly the absurd premises and tragic consequences of these urges to so neatly define "identity." The recent tragedy of the destruction of the last iteration of the Ottoman Empire, the mutilation of Yugoslavia into "national" sectors, with its attendant denials (including genocidal ones) of religious and cultural tolerances and admixtures and kinships must be seen —although it rarely is— as a lamentable repetition of the end of the medieval era so powerfully marked by the year 1492. That year that does best represent *not* merely simple hatred of "others" — it is all too easy, and fundamentally false, to see it as the simple expulsion of "Jews" and the repression of "Islam" which will lead to the expulsion of "Arabs." What 1492 best represents (and I have written about this at some length in *Shards of Love*, a book that I think of as a "sequel" to *The Arabic Role*) is the utter fallacy of such reductive notions of identities, notions based on the false belief that there really are (or were) such essentially pure identities and that they should be "understood" as such: in political reality by the (often bloody) assertion of their sectors of dominance, and in the intellectual realm by the elevation of such divisions as the principal paradigms and divisions of our expertise and interest. And whether the impetus and justification for these assertions of essentially uncontaminated identity come from "old-fashioned" prejudice or newly-chic identity politics —from anti-Semitism, in other words, or from the current practice of studying "Jewish" literature (or some diabolical combination of the two)— the results are disastrous and blinding.

They blind us to the fact that, at least in the history of "the West," which we are still writing, cultural achievements of transcendent value are rarely "pure." And that even when political realities "successfully" impose such divisions into clear-cut identities — when Spain in

1492 expels its Jews and in 1609 its Muslims, when Israel is defined as a Jewish state, when Yugoslavia is carved up as it has been — the “success” is dependent on the radical falsification of history, the denial of the fact that Jews had been Spaniards for a millennium and were native Arabic speakers, or the denial of the fact that Arabs may be Christian and speak Hebrew as a native tongue, or the denial of the fact that Europe today (not to speak of America) is peopled with Muslims who are originally of every conceivable ethnicity, some of them, indeed, originally and “authentically” as European as any Christian. The “success” of orthodoxies of all sorts must always be read against the far more complex and tragic truths that sometimes only literature reflects. When Cervantes publishes part I of the *Quixote*, in 1605 — it is at a moment in Spanish history (called the “Siglo de Oro” or “Golden Age” by Hispanists) when Spain is theoretically the monolingual and religiously uniform modern nation — he begins that greatest of the novels of the European tradition by revealing that the book is actually a “translation.” But even the lovely conceit of the translation, which at first sight we think is rather simply executed from “Arabic” to “Spanish” by a Morisco (what we call sixteenth-century Spaniards who clung to the Islamic faith of their ancestors even though most of them did not, in fact, know Arabic) is as much more complex as the realities that are every day denied. The subtler truth, which remains half-veiled in that most subtle of literary texts, is that the “original” text is itself impossibly corrupt: it is no doubt an “aljamiado” text, written in the noble but soon to be forgotten Arabic script, in a language that is the apocalyptic Spanish-laced-with-Arabic language that was one of Spain’s very real languages, even when its existence was officially forbidden — and then finally expelled in 1609. But exiles have a way of being the condition of literature — and past and future exiles lie at the very beginning and at the heart of the adventures of the wandering Don Quixote. And it is perhaps in the full embracing of the revelations and virtues of exile, and of the rejection of the nationalisms and other illusory orthodoxies of identity that have taken over literary and cultural studies in these last several decades, that we can read the past more truthfully.

The best work that has been done in the past decade, and that is likely to be done in the near future, on “Muslims” and “Arabic culture” in medieval (or, for that matter, modern) Europe, must be either implicitly or explicitly rooted in the rejection of the simplicities and isolations of its own categories and terms, in an appreciation of the profound ambivalences of such readily nameable identities, and of the necessary interconnectedness with other (equally ambivalent) identities. Among the most important recent publications are a series of translations and

reprintings of very old works that reflect and dwell on the complexities of religious-literary identities: the republication in post-Franco Spain of Miguel Asín Palacios' controversial masterpiece *La escatología musulmana en la Divina Comedia*, which first appeared in 1919, followed close-on by its first translation into Italian, and translations, for the first time in both modern Spanish and modern Italian, of the Arabic *mi'rāj* text which existed, in Dante's lifetime, in Latin and vernacular translation, and which Asín posits played a pivotal role in Dante's thinking and writing on the imaginative structure of the afterlife.<sup>3</sup>

The translations of this remarkable and central text, after some five hundred years of widespread inaccessibility, reveal the other virtue that must be cultivated, a virtue clearly championed by Hugh of St. Victor: translation of every sort, and languages that explicitly speak intelligibly to others. And it is in that spirit (and in the rejection of the orthodoxies of national-language departments that claim that we can only know and read in "original" languages, as well as the disciplinary orthodoxy that makes scholars write in languages that are only readable to the minuscule clan of which they are a part) that the other most important development in this decade has been the publication of translations of the multifaceted "Jewish" poetry of al-Andalus. These volumes of translations with invaluable introductions, as well as a limited number of important studies stand in stark (and rebuking) contrast to those of the Arabic-Romance *muwashshahāt* with which they are inextricably linked.

While "kharja" studies became a wasteland of ever more specialised and unreadable technical minutia, turned ever further inwards and a prudish mockery of the original spirit of poetic and linguistic promiscuity that bred that exquisitely hybrid poetry, a handful of scholars and translators (Pagis, Scheindlin, Brann, Cole) who openly embraced the virtues of exile that permeate the culture of the Andalusian Jewish community have produced a growing body of work that is opened outwards instead.<sup>4</sup> Among the many benefits of these marvelously door-opening studies—and among the delicious ironies—is that the non-specialist (which means anyone who has not done a decade's training as an Arabist) is far more likely to get a sense of the richness and openness of Arabic poetry and culture in al-Andalus from those vol-

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3 *Il Libro della scala di Maometto*, trans. Roberto Rossi Testa (Milan, 1991), and *Libro de la escala de Mahoma*, trans. José Luis Oliver Domingo (Madrid, 1996). For full bibliography and a history of the reprintings of the work of Asín Palacios see my review article "An Andalusianist's Last Sigh," *La Corónica* 24.2: 179-189.

4 For a full discussion of all these works see my review article "More Sighs," *La Corónica* 25:1.

umes than from most of the work done by mainstream "Andalusianists" (Spaniards, Arabs and Americans alike), who principally write out of that belated and purifying notion of "Arabism" that so distorts most aspects of European-Arab culture. Al-Andalus produced a culture so "corrupt," in all directions, that its literature even includes iterations as unexpected and complexly veiled as the *Divine Comedy's* relation to the *mi'rāj* tradition, or the varieties of "polymorphism" that are revealed in the poetries of Ibn 'Arabī or Ramon Llull or Judah Halevi.

Indeed, all the other principal fine examples of criticism and scholarship recently published (or that I am aware are being written) are all, like that of Asín and like those revealing the infinite complexities of Sefarad's poetry, centred on the most corrupt and impure texts, and guided by exilic principles: the studies and editions of Luce López Baralt, especially the book-length study of the thoroughly "Islamised" and "Arabised" Catholic saint, San Juan de la Cruz, and her edition of the Morisco "Kama Sutra español"; L. Patrick Harvey's magnificent history of Islamic Spain between 1250 and 1500, which for the first time treats the fate of the Muslim populations of that period as a continuum, regardless of whether they lived in Christian states or Muslim states, as well as his forthcoming sequel, the history of the Moriscos themselves; and the study and edition that Consuelo López-Morillas has recently begun of the only complete Qur'ān translated into Spanish, written in that same *aljamiado* that is the "authentic" original of the Quixote within no more than a few years of Cervantes' text.

In the destruction of the whole of the magnificent library of Sarajevo several years ago, it now appears only one significant book was rescued, the famous manuscript called the "Sarajevo Haggada." A Haggada is of course a prayer book that is, appropriately, the collection of prayers to be said on Passover, the eve of exodus, but despite its name this gorgeous and elaborately illuminated manuscript, considered the best of its kind anywhere in the world, and much treasured by Jews everywhere, is not "Sarajevan" at all, nor "merely" Jewish, but rather "Spanish." And what can "Spanish" possibly mean, what do I mean it to be that is so different from what it seems to be in most other uses of this and other "identity" tags? Made in Spain in the late thirteenth century, it is, to put it most reductively, one of the many reflections of a Jewish culture that flourished and had its Golden Age, the Golden Age, precisely because it adopted the virtues of exile, and found its distinctly impure voice within an Arabic culture that was itself expansive and promiscuous and often exilic itself. It was thus altogether fitting that the precious object, the book that inscribes the story of the exile from Egypt, was carried out of Spain by members of the exiled Sephardic community in 1492 and remained, for the better part of the

subsequent five hundred years, well-protected and cherished inside the Ottoman Empire, itself a remarkable example of the great good of empires, which learn how to absorb and tolerate and intermarry "identities," and which became, after 1492, the place of refuge of most Sephardic Jews and of many Andalusian Muslims. But the manuscript had to be rescued once again, during World War II, and it was when a Muslim curator in Sarajevo, as attached as most Muslims are to the memory of Spain, saved that Spanish Haggada from Nazi butchers.

Surely, the morals of the story are perfectly clear: to understand the richness of our heritage we must be the guardians of the Haggada, the Muslim librarian who was not an Arab, of course, but who in saving the manuscript was fulfilling the best of the promises of Islamic Spain and Europe, and we must be the translators who reveal the exquisite ambivalence and sometimes painful conflict of identity of Judah Halevi, whose poetry is sung in so heavy an Arabic accent, and we must be the guardians and defenders of the interfaith marriage between the Christian girls who sang in corrupt Romance and the refined poets of the Arab courts, which is left inscribed, as a passionate and great love, in the *muwash-shaḥāt*. We must, in other words, reject the falsehoods of nations in our work, and reveal, with the exquisite Ibn 'Arabī, the virtues of what he more simply calls love. "My heart can take on any form," he tells us, and then he simply names those temples at which he prays, the temples that inhabit him: the gazelle's meadow, the monks' cloister, the Torah, the Ka'ba. These are the temples whose priests we need to be, if we are to understand what any of this history is about, and it is only there that there can be any future understanding of the complex "identity" of Europe in the Middle Ages, and almost undoubtedly in its present and future as well.

Yale University





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**FOUR RESPONSES TO MARIA ROSA MENOCAI,**  
*Shards of Love: Exile and the Origins of the Lyric*  
(Durham, N.C., 1994)

*Triumph of a "Failed Medievalist":  
Menocal's Fresh Perspective on the Middle Ages*

When first urged to review *Shards of Love: Exile and the Origins of the Lyric*, I scoffed at the thought that an armchair philologist could offer any notes of value on as complicated a set of topics as María Rosa Menocal confronts in her 1994 study. I had said that it was best to leave appraisals to the specialists, yet on a trip to the library a few days later I decided to leaf through *Shards* and, if not pique, at least test my interest. I was more than a little surprised to see, reproduced on the frontispiece, the flirtatious face from the cover of Eric Clapton's famous album, *Layla and Other Assorted Love Songs*. By the time I arrived at the poem by James Douglas Morrison (the preferred *nom de plume* of the former lead singer and lyricist for the Doors), I had reconsidered my refusal to read *Shards*. I could hardly wait to write about it after finding the Prelude's epigraph, lines transcribed from a song by Celia Cruz. I suspect that Menocal employed this combination of highbrow and pop culture not only to illustrate some of the ideas about cultural hierarchy she later elaborates (and that, incidentally, refute the dichotomy) but also to attract readers whose love of lyricism and investment in detonating the literary canon would not necessarily recommend them to a volume on the medieval. A fellow *Cubana*, her sense of medley intrigued me. I began to read *Shards* more as bricolage than literary theory, yet it soon became clear that Menocal had produced a feat of both.

*Shards of Love* begins as the Middle Ages end. Long celebrated as the birth date of modernity, 1492 recalls not only the nativity of the New World, but also the beating death of an old one; in Europe alone, it witnessed the final banishment of the Jews from Spain as well as the definitive Reconquest of Morisco lands on the Iberian peninsula and the first publication of a Castilian grammar. The fact that all three events occurred within the same year, and the commencement of Discovery and Diaspora probably on the same day, has not penetrated the Western consciousness except, perhaps, as apocrypha. The evocative locution used as the title of Part I, "the horse latitudes," signifies those still

spots on the high seas where crews threw overboard all cargo—even invaluable horses—that threatened to weigh down the ship. Menocal uses “horse latitude” to signify those climacteric historical moments that lie outside federal memory, the dialects flung as slang from the official tongue. “Good and smooth paper is made from the pulp of the illiterate and undisciplined,” she reminds us. “Order is made from chaos, and we call it History.” Menocal deftly addresses the purported cultural dimness of the medieval era, an obscurity that lends credence to the term ‘Enlightenment’; the retrogressive character of the Middle Ages as caricatured by even the most eminent historians, and that serves to elevate modern times by frequent comparison, comes under her close scrutiny.

At the beginning of “The Horse Latitudes,” Menocal submits that both medieval historiography and the postmodern resist the pretence of objectivity that modern historians value. A central motif, the notion that historical perspective has fostered a cruel estrangement between us and the culture of the present, as well as that of the distant past, probably provided Menocal with the main impetus to write *Shards*. For those who would accuse Menocal of sentimental anachronism, she points out that the concept has little significance to those intimate with the historical synchronicities of the Middle Ages. She would reply, as *Shards* asserts, that we need not accept the linear, diachronic mode of history as the only one, and that applying a historiographical paradigm derived from the Renaissance to the medieval appears incongruous at best. Through *Shards*, she struggles with the burden of the *grands récits*, the “big stories” of modernity, that purport to account for diverse cultural phenomena. Articulated by a narrative that regards progress as the protagonist, lyrical episodes that disrupt the historian’s sense of a logical plot are ignored or worse, made to fit the theme. *Shards* here implicitly deals with the contradictions of a postmodern philology, at a time when, among others following Nietzsche, Foucault has derided the quest for origins in themselves as a misguided pursuit. His model of genealogy, or “effective history,” comes closest to describing what Menocal offers us.<sup>1</sup> In her hands, history, its coherence, seamlessness, and naturalness, gives way to genealogy: cacophonous, polyvocal, dissonant. And true to life.

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<sup>1</sup> “‘Descent’ (*Herkunft*), as opposed to ‘origin’ (*Ursprung*), does not posit ‘an original identity’ but destabilises the very notion of the ‘origin.’ Genealogy, or ‘effective history,’ refuses to search out ‘origins,’ because an ‘origin,’ a ‘genesis,’ always involves a Fall.” Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, and History,” in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, tr. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca, 1980) 142.

This "failed Arabist" has gone far to honour the Jewish and Moorish influences in what we term "Spanish" literature, and figures such as Ibn Rushd not only as collaborators in but creators of Western culture. In so doing, she copes with the difficulty of ascribing influence, the delicacy that her attempts to name precursors entails. Menocal also draws suggestive parallels between contemporary Latin American and medieval Arabic literature as sites of productive, if often disconcerting, hybridity. The *muwashshaḥa*, a song composed in grammatical Arabic and framed by refrains in the vernacular, becomes a symbol of the Middle Ages itself as well as its literary dynamism (in form, content, and—that most neglected of attributes—function). Menocal puts Salman Rushdie forward as the sort of medieval (as opposed to Renaissance) man whose prototypes, the cosmopolitan Arabs of al-Andalus, flourished before the fall of Granada. Although she mentions Jorge Luis Borges only in passing, we could summon the large Argentine writer as the latter day counterpart of Ramon Llull: called the first postmodern author, he nonetheless admired as well as wrote about Averroës and incorporated elements of medieval Jewish mysticism into short stories located in *film noir* Rio de Janeiro. His was not the historians' fatal misstep, to hold only the times and songs of another age as worthy of embraces.

She tellingly entitles two essays of her volume "Scandal" and "Desire." In the first she sees the amatory language between "lover" and "beloved," a staple of mystical literature, with new, open eyes. Most would say that the language of worship merely borrows tropes from the suitor and that courtly poetry stole its metaphors from matins; Menocal resists the distinction between the profane and the sacred. She does not only aim to blur those boundaries but to show that both Ramon Llull and Ibn 'Arabī (whose image posterity has tried to rehabilitate, not entirely successfully) believed quite the opposite. She goes on to lament the betrayal of the lyric by the criticism that would elucidate it: paraphrase its poetry in prose, reduce its conundrums to reason, and later, assimilate the radical into the establishment. Menocal masterfully charts the horse latitudes of literary criticism, but now the animals cast overboard are those inimical to convention. The very hermeticism of certain verse becomes a political act, by defying those prosaic institutions that would absorb even poetry into itself. She answers the question of how to read mystical poetry, what hermeneutic to impose on it, with a response startlingly similar to her advice on how to "read" the Middle Ages: indulge the poet at least until the end of the verse. Dante emerges as a model reader and hence the inventor of Romance philology, whose elevation of the vernaculars to the level of the classical languages, and beyond, made this discourse possible. Born of

exile, his efforts to advance the cause of the vulgar lyric reveal the profound ideological and political implications of any canonical project. The contribution made by *Shards* towards the recognition of this truth (despite hypocritical complaints from academe to the contrary) has urgency and profound consequence for students of cultural studies, history, comparative literature, and any number of other disciplines.

Menocal also offers an alternative to the reams of endnotes that any enterprise of her scope would normally generate. "Readings and Sources" cites not only the other writers and *œuvres* that have influenced *Shards*, but also discusses where it and other seminal studies part company. Menocal warns that these commentaries are aimed at a narrower audience than the rest of *Shards*, yet I welcomed the anecdotes and documentation as an added resource; nowhere does her erudition give way to pedantry. Although I must admit that here some of her best critical salvos went over my head, they did seem rather compelling soaring past. Indeed, after reading "Readings and Sources," I could no more confirm the accuracy of comparisons between a musical superstar and "the first modern man" than before, but I appreciated the ingenuity of this and other controversial claims. Since Menocal has the highest regard for those poets that wrote analyses of their own poems in prose, as a concession to the lamentable primacy of secondary sources over the primary, it seems fitting that *Shards* should conclude with a similar gesture. The word that best describes it, and the volume as a whole, is "fresh": breathless, original, defiant of its elders, and ripe. Any scholar aspiring to freshness would do well to read *Shards of Love*. For some, of course, the epigraph from Celia Cruz may be inducement enough.

Elizabeth Pérez  
*University of Chicago Divinity School*

### *Return from Exile*

The fire of your abandon is to the Lover like the flames of hell; but union with  
 You, if You come, is like the garden of paradise . . .

It is as though a full moon carries the wine and breezes, and the two hands of the  
 drinker are a halo . . .

Fantasy draws near to the Desired One, far away from daily concerns, and  
 fantasies burst forth . . .

The phantom serves drink for a second time—the heart of a destiny of permanent  
 bewitchment by him— and the soul is left with longing.

Perhaps if the anguish of the night returns to my reproach, the culmination of  
 desire will be achieved,

Until the excellence of the spectre flees with it, and perhaps You believed in these  
 fantasies.

Abū al-Faḥlibn Ḥasday, eleventh century<sup>2</sup>

On reading *Shards of Love* for the second time, I was reminded of Alberto Moravia's Mario di Sio, who dozed fitfully through his flight to Rome clutching a volume of poems by Apollinaire. Mario the poet has not yet written (and may never write) a single poem: Apollinaire, as he explains to the amused and ironic Jeanne, has already written the poems he would like to write. What to say after Apollinaire?

I also felt vindicated: I, too, draw the map of the Middle Ages à la Braudel, and its upper limits barely reach above the Poitiers so staunchly defended against the Other by a very Christian Charlemagne (who, by the way, not only made it into the "Great Narrative" but became one of the figures it most lovingly mythicises). His Muslim adversary, tellingly, remains nameless in the *chansons de geste* which rewrite the battle in epic proportions.

Menocal's invitation to reconsider our ideas concerning the "medieval" should be accepted with alacrity by all scholars of European and/or Mediterranean history and culture, whether "Byzantinists," "Islamicists," or ... "Medievalists." And we should all, perhaps, feel a little embarrassed by the incongruencies of the arbitrary taxonomy in which we, often unthinkingly, participate. Her eloquent pleas for a remodelling of the pedagogical House that Nationalism Built on the none-too-steady foundations of the Great Narrative should also be heeded. Menocal encourages us to reconsider our location of centres, to remember that al-Andalus was very much in the medieval mainstream (as were Palermo and Jerusalem), while the Île-de-France only came into its own as "centre" riding the blood-tipped crests of waves of thirteenth-century repressions and exorcisms. Even in the most recent editions of texts which introduce students to the History of Art (and let it be said that editors, bending under the pressure of post-modern multiculturalism, have hastened to include chapters which embrace the Islamic/African/Hindu/Far Eastern Other) unconsciously defer to the Narrative's designation of Centres. The Civilisations of Greece and Rome are accorded generous portions of paper, while their "neighbours" must subdivide the already-cramped quarters of one slim

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<sup>2</sup> Al-Maqqarī, *Analectes sur la histoire et la littérature des arabes d'Espagne*, ed. R. Dozy et al. (Reprint: Amsterdam, 1967), vol. I, pp. 422-423. My translation from the Arabic.

chapter. This teleology of the classical-into-classicising feeds seamlessly into the climactic achievements of *The Romanesque* and *The Gothic*. These phenomena (the canonising of those two terms is yet another issue that Menocal's book demands we reconsider) are explored in exhaustive and caressing detail, while Islam and its visual culture are dispatched neatly and forthwith in a few (very) economic (not to say reductive) pages ... All this without even going into the issue of why chapter divisions, regardless of contemporaneity and interaction of the material they contain, are neatly cut along the lines of national frontiers.

Students whose induction into the History of Art has been guided by such texts enter into deeper examination of the "Medieval" with their perception of this epoch's centres coloured by the Great Narrative's nostalgia for Things Classical. Faces expressed hesitation when, in a survey class I taught recently, I asked if everyone understood why, in a course listed under the History of Art, we were reading *Shards of Love*. There were several seconds of cumbersome silence before a few heads nodded affirmatively; no comment was offered. Halfway through the course, however, during the first round of class presentations, Menocal's exploration of the meanings attached to (and the limitations placed on) the term "medieval," as well as her arguments concerning the enlightened tolerance of eleventh-century "fragmentation," were invoked more than once as students presented their impressions of pseudo-Kufic lettering employed to decorate the exteriors of churches in Greece, or wooden panels from a Coptic convent which so exactly resemble elements from a Fatimid palace as to be indistinguishable from their secular counterparts.

I also feel grateful for Menocal's justification of my own choice of research topics: the Taifa kingdoms provide one of the most eloquent examples of her culturally fertile "fragmentation," of a lyrical tear in the painstakingly woven, coloured-silk Narrative of the History of al-Andalus. For Andalusian studies, although unremittingly marginalised by both Europeanists and Islamicists, has not been spared its *own* version of the Great Narrative: al-Andalus achieves its cultural zenith in the form of Cordoban Glory (nestled intimately against an inherent preference for the cohesion of Empire over the chaos of non-Empire) of the Cordoban Caliphate, the Islamic political institution which managed to spread itself the thinnest and farthest over the soil of the Iberian peninsula. With the demise of the Cordoban Caliphate and Its Culture, these two become the unattainable Beloveds courted ever after (unsuccessfully, of course) by a moribund al-Andalus which, to paraphrase a colleague's somewhat unflattering characterisation of Taifa culture, was so depleted by internecine strife between kingdoms (the

adjective “petty” is often trotted out here) and against the Other that it was scarcely equal to the task of clinging desperately to Cordoban Grandeur, let alone capable of inventing anything new.

The Great Narrative diligently woven for al-Andalus (thus allowing its students to feel themselves the true kith and kin of those at the Romanesque, Gothic, or Eastern Islamic Centres of Things) is rendered seamless by the widely-accepted assumption that Andalusian Islam was always an Orthodox (i.e., Sunni, and usually Maliki) one: an assumption which certainly appears to be true if one considers the Caliphal, Almoravid, Almohad, or Nasrid cases. The orthodox Narrative reads smoothly indeed if we take an especially deep breath before reeling off that list, and if we slur the word “Taifa,” which should come between “Caliphal” and “Almoravid” (well, you can’t do it if you use the Arabic “*mulūk al-ṭawāʾif*,” but everyone uses the Spanish word anyway).

If we want to maintain the comfortable (and righteous) association of al-Andalus with the Sunna, it doesn’t pay to look too closely at the *mulūk al-ṭawāʾif*. For the *mulūk al-ṭawāʾif* represent Menocal’s rupture in the smooth Narrative of al-Andalus’ history. Heresy, in the lyrical form of the *muʿtazila*, and even the *shīʿa*, entered port cities such as Malaga and, once the detaining hand of Empire had been banished, spread northward on lazy waves of economic prosperity and the surprised ease of running things on a regional, rather than a peninsular, scope.

It was perhaps because I had recently finished reading *Shards of Love* for the first time that I caught my breath when I found a statement in al-Maqqarī’s *Analectes* concerning the father of one of the Hammudi “caliphs,” a dynasty centred in Malaga during the first decades of the eleventh century: *kāna ab ūhu maʿrūfan bi-tashshīʿihi* — “his father was known for his Shiʿism.” My puzzlement over the seemingly unfair ganging-up of a number of larger Taifa states on the petite Malaga was suddenly jarred into coherence: nobody wanted to have to answer to a Shiʿi caliph. The sober fabric of the Narrative had been ripped, and through that tiny but elastic opening entered all manner of Menocalian, lyrical voices. The *badīʿ* style of poetry, based on a hermetic assumption of the transformational powers of metaphor and firmly associated with sundry heresies successfully banished from public view in a newly reactionary Baghdad some two centuries earlier, was favoured — indeed, flouted — by the self-styled Hammudi imams. Taifa kings of post-1050 threw down their swords and settled themselves to quaff wine with boon companions, ruby-red wine poured by the effeminate hand, the delicately curved wrist, of a nubile male cup-

bearer, gazelle in the king's garden of delights, *houri* in the arcane paradise reserved for the fortunate few. And the mystical (lyrical, unorthodox, anarchistic, anti-Narrative) implications of this scenario are not coincidental. More than one poet enthusiastically penned the word *fanā'* ("mystical annihilation of the self") in an effort to describe—often, as in Menocal's reading of Ibn 'Arabī, in terms of confusing opposites against whose facile exegesis we must vigilantly guard—the indescribable (and here, Menocal's pointing out of unmistakable Qur'anic associations bolstered my confidence in the puzzle I was slowly piecing together), to render the unrenderable, to tell of the untellable (Paradisiac) pleasures to be had in the presence of the Beloved (King).

Taifa reality was indeed a fractured one, a fragmented one, a plural one, a Menocalian one: not one Narrative History was produced under the patronage of Taifa sovereigns, and no one requested the spinning of a Seamless Story. Drunken requests for "descriptions" such as that found in the opening passage of this essay, however, were plentiful. Taifa history is told in the raucous voice of the drinking song, in the heart-rending signs of unrequited love, and in the sweet tongues of fantasy in which, as Abū al-Faḥl intimates in a seductive whisper in the final *bait* of his *khamriyya*, "perhaps You have believed."

It is to be hoped that *Shards of Love* will make its way onto the list of required reading for every course whose title contains the word "medieval," and that Menocal's brilliant and lyrical study will encourage the fragmentation of our laboriously constructed reading of the "medieval" material we study.

Cynthia Robinson  
*University of Pennsylvania*

### *Romance, Lyric, Exile: Picking up the Pieces*

Part of the glory of comparative literature is the list of things it does without. It has "no set languages or texts, no necessary borders, no temporal constraints or narrative shapes" (*Shards of Love*, p. 137), no permanent theoretical base, and a lineage mostly composed of maverick and unrepeatable characters. The discipline may be defined through comparison, but the practitioners are by and large "Incomparables" fit to perform in Raymond Roussel's *Impressions d'Afrique*. To adopt the rules and limitations of an existing piece of comparative work for a new book would be to miss the point, rather as if athletes were to re-enact the great sports records rather than surpassing them. "Hopelessly idiosyncratic and inherently lyric in its structures, as well as aggressively



contingent" (ibid.), comparative literature is really the sum of its occasions. If you seek a continuous history, an epic enchainment of causes and effects, look to other disciplines.

María Menocal's *Shards of Love* acknowledges this condition and defies it by constructing—and I do mean constructing—an origin myth that turns its back on origins and causes. The story she tells about the emergence of comparative literature is always compounded out of the conflict of two rival origin myths. There is, for example, Curtius, whose scholarly project was to record "the good tradition that has survived all along and that has provided—like an underground river—a unity and a continuum that will survive" the splintering of Europe into mutually unintelligible dialects and ideologies (135). Curtius needed to revive Latin, and of course Rome, where all roads lead, even as a merely virtual common ground; and because he saw his project as historical, he needed to grant Latin and its empire the causal priority of a determining fact. And then there is Auerbach—or for that matter Dante, Pound, or Spitzer, the portrait is composite anyway—whose attention is all focused on the lyrical instants into which the Latinate epic shatters as it gives way to the vulgar tongues, the heretical doctrines, the solipsisms of courtly love. Romance philology is a knowledge of the lyrical, through the lyrical, and brought on by the singular experience of exile. For Menocal, the revival of Latin (or of any other unifying project) always threatens to transpose itself into the Reconquista, with its consequences in the banishing of the Moors and the Jews. Auerbach's exile is multiple. It is also Eric Clapton's, Nizami's, Dante's, and (had Petrarch only understood vernacular song better) Petrarch's. It is the exclusion whereby the lyric separates from the epic and, if it is ambitious and *revanchard* enough, begins to assume new hybrid narrative shapes.

Menocal's book is yet another attempt to discover the shape whereby the lyrical can represent the public, inheritable, continuous logic of epic narration without being crushed. (On this shape-shifting, see p. 147.) In its persistent dualism, in its restlessness, and also in its repetitions, it recalls Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*. The occasional references to the history and passions of its author and the asserted "scandal" of discussing rock and roll side by side with the *trobar clus* may be intended to set up another of those lyric coincidences whereby Nietzsche/Auerbach/Menocal will find his/her Wilamowitz/Curtius.

Romance philology and its recent offshoot, comparative literature, repeat in their intellectual gestures those of the medieval poets they are always returning to study; even to tell the story is to reinstantiate the form that the story has always taken. The origin story is a repetitive and discontinuous myth, and in that its properly mythic character

comes forth: it doesn't hold up as an explanation, only as a pattern. If the claim is that the lyric emerges from exile, does this necessarily amount to Platonising the concepts of Lyric and Exile? Is that the cost of lining up Nizami, Dante, the Jews of 1492, Auerbach, and Clapton? A theory of the lyric genre (on which Plato would cast his inevitable shadow) is the last thing on Menocal's mind: Greek lyric, Chinese personal poetry and other supposed comparables are absent from the book. And one important pivot category, orality, does its work here with hardly any discussion: it seems that apart from serving as a rebuff to the permanent univocity desired by a bookish culture, orality needs no special definition. Without consideration of these questions, of course, Menocal keeps her argument suspended, sometimes delightfully, sometimes bothersomely, between rule and contingency. Is it lyric or Lyric, Exile or exiles? Facing up to the need to choose would have given us all more to argue about — lyrically, but not solipsistically.

Haun Saussy  
Stanford University

### Endnote

One evening, half asleep on a banquette in a bar, just for fun I tried to enumerate all the languages within earshot: music, conversations, the sounds of chairs, glasses, a whole stereophony of which a square in Tangiers (as described by Severo Sarduy) is the exemplary site. That too spoke within me, and this so-called "interior" speech was very like the noise of the square, like that amassing of minor voices coming to me from the outside: I myself was a public square, a *sook*; through me passed words, tiny syntagms, bits of formulae, and *no sentence formed*, as though that were the law of such a language.

*The Pleasure of the Text*,<sup>3</sup> p. 49

Roland Barthes, describing an experience of language divorced from the hermeneutic urge to analyse and interpret, uses "a square in Tangiers" as the emblem of that experience. The cacophony of the square is central to the vignette: the simultaneous perception of a number of different "languages," some of them linguistically or culturally specific ("music, conversations"), some not ("the sounds of chairs, glasses"). The writer perceives these "languages" without making any effort to translate

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<sup>3</sup> Trans. Richard Miller, (New York, 1975).

them; he does not repeat the utterances he hears, nor interpret their content for his own benefit or for ours. This "speech" —he goes on to characterise it as "at once very cultural and very savage"— exists outside syntactic order, "*outside the sentence*": not mediated by the rules of "linguistics which believes only in the sentence" (*Pleasure of the Text*, 49), untranslated, it is experienced as pure physical sensation.

Barthes' Tangiers seems a particularly appropriate place to stand in order to respond to *Shards of Love*. Barthes invokes the "square in Tangiers" as exemplary of a confusion of linguistic orders so pitched that it evades the hierarchy of the sentence. His choice is suggestive: no fortuitous convergence of languages and cultures occurs in Tangiers, but rather the jarring juxtaposition of the Muslim and Christian worlds, of the French and Arabic tongues, legacy of the colonial activities of the French in North Africa (and this detail would not escape Barthes, who taught French in Egypt). A closer reading of the passage, however, reveals an additional layer of complexity. Barthes does not necessarily locate himself in Tangiers. He sits "on a banquette in a bar," but does not tell us where. Severo Sarduy, the Cuban novelist who lived for most of his life in Paris, takes us to Tangiers; and Sarduy's written, fictional account of the Moroccan square echoes through Barthes' consciousness, along with the music, the conversations, the sounds of chairs and glasses (did he remember Sarduy's description in Spanish, or in French translation?). This encounter of oral text and written, of Muslim world and Christian, of Old World and New, stands *outside the sentence*, the emblem of an exhilarating, an isolate and unrepeatable, escape from the hierarchy of grammar.

The world that Menocal describes in *Shards of Love* is in the neighbourhood of Barthes' Tangiers: polyvocal, polylingual, her *al-Andalus* is a place where languages encounter each other; though she describes (and participates in) a constant and restless effort to translate between them, their encounters produce an excess of meaning which continues to elude the normative domestications of translation, the "hierarchy of grammar." Thus it seemed appropriate, rather than commission a single respondent to produce a single, totalising review of her book, to invite a series of responses, in order to explore the work from multiple perspectives. Two of the foregoing responses to *Shards of Love* were written by scholars who do not work on medieval topics; two of them were written by scholars whose concentration is not literary. And each respondent is at a different stage in his or her career, and thus brings a different level of experience and a different set of expectations to his or her reading of the book. Elizabeth Pérez is a graduate student of religious history at the University of Chicago Divinity School, familiar with the rigors of comparatist study, though accustomed to a different

disciplinary approach; Cynthia Robinson is Adjunct Professor of Art History at the University of Pennsylvania, and has written on and taught medieval Andalusian cultural history; and Haun Saussy, author of *The Problem of a Chinese Aesthetic* (Stanford University Press, 1993) and Professor of modern Chinese and Comparative Literature at Stanford University, has written on the problems and possibilities that arise when radically disparate literary traditions are paralleled.

This plural response to Menocal's book, by virtue of its very plurality, throws into greater relief one of the difficulties her project encounters, and one that is noted by the respondents. Menocal problematises the "*grands récits*" of medieval literary and cultural history, and in particular the narrative that tells us that "European" literature rose from the ashes of the Latin literary tradition. In its place she works to piece together an account of medieval literary history reflecting the contribution of the Arabs who inhabited the Iberian peninsula and Sicily to the cultural traditions that would use the nascent Romance vernaculars as their medium and, indeed, the banners of their identity. Haun Saussy points out a potential difficulty inherent in Menocal's project: she dismantles one Grand Narrative in order to replace it with another, and in so doing runs the risk of a different, but no less pernicious, sort of essentialism. It is a problem that postmodern critics working in the most disparate of disciplines have encountered, repeatedly: we can evoke isolate and unrepeatably moments of "bliss" — what Menocal characterises as lyric temporality; what Pérez, in her response above, connects to Nietzsche's concept of genealogy; what Barthes calls "Tangiers"— but we cannot *do anything* with them without implicating them in the very hierarchies which we treasure them for evading.

It has become a convention, in writing about the discipline of Medieval Studies, to note that the Middle Ages lay forgotten —or, more precisely, half-remembered— for many centuries. When scholars began to think and write systematically about the period, producing the monumental nineteenth-century studies of medieval history, literature, and languages, they worked under the influence of the Romantic nationalisms. During the diaspora of the Holocaust era, European scholars in North America (and in Istanbul) laboured to define and codify the discipline and its methodologies, and, inevitably, recreated Europe from a distance, an ideal Europe healed of the terrible wounds inflicted by Nazism and World War II. As schematic and reductive as this *grand récit* is, it is surprisingly accurate and helps to account for some of the habits and assumptions that have defined (and, some would say, hobbled) the discipline — what Robinson, in her response above, terms "the House that Nationalism Built." Scholars who work on the cultural history of the borderlands of southern Europe inhabit a landscape

dominated by crumbling monuments and ghosts: the half-remembered Middle Ages (Charlemagne's Muslim adversaries, immortalised in the *chansons de geste*, mentioned above by Robinson [and see also Suzanne Conklin Akbari's article in this issue]), the reconstructed Middle Ages (Auerbach's beautiful, triumphalist account of the emergence of the Romance vernaculars from the desiccated Latin tradition, for instance). Is it possible to reinscribe the figure of "the Muslim" in this landscape without participating in the essentialisms of a totalising *grand récit*?

Robinson mentions Moravia's fictional character, whose poetry has already been written by Apollinaire. Pérez cites Borges, the great cultural recycler, as the modern counterpart of Menocal's Ramon Llull; certainly Borges offers an intriguing alternative to Moravia's Mario di Sio in his Pierre Menard, who counters di Sio's exhaustion with optimism: he sets out on the monumental and, arguably, futile project of re-writing the *Don Quixote*, striving to recreate Cervantes' masterpiece word for word. We may find yet another literary model for our situation vis-à-vis the past—our compulsion to contain, describe, and repeat it—in the figure of Scheherazade, who retells the stories she has heard, but within the containing structure of a frame story which invests her repeated tales with a difference: she repeats in order to seduce. Relating her bedtime tales to her sister, with her husband as "casual" auditor—we imagine him, that first night, waking to the rhythms of the opening tale, half-awake and half-listening, passing from dreamtime to storytime so imperceptibly that he does not begrudge the sleep he misses—she understands that repetition is never innocent; she tells the old stories one more time in order to put the beast to sleep, and waken the moribund city.

When Barthes writes "I myself was a public square, a *sook*," he does not imitate a single, transcendent and culturally neutral space: the reader imagines him as a kind of palimpsest, in which the grand, rational architectural rhythms of a French square and the fluid functionality of a *sūq* are layered. We, as cultural historians, must repeat the past; and where it has been so wilfully misunderstood, it seems that we have a responsibility to seduce (as Menocal understands very well), in order to demonstrate the possibility of translation between cultural traditions long thought of as mutually incomprehensible. We should also, of course, recognise our accounts, our "translations" of historical text and event, as contingent: the seduction always occurs between two individuals—between Muslim and Christian; between *sūq* and square; between orality and literacy; between Middle Ages and modernity—and the personal and cultural predilections of the players leave their traces in the script of the seduction. The poem by Abū al-Faḥl ibn Hasday quoted above by Robinson memorialises such a seduction, one that

blinds us momentarily to the boundary between the secular order and the mystical, and is interrupted (like Scheherazade's tales) when light dispels the shadows. The poet himself does us the service of reminding us, gently, that we have been seduced, of pointing out the context (and thus the contingencies) of the seduction, when he concludes his performance with a stage-whispered farewell that serves, also, as a wake-up call: *and perhaps you —drowsy reader— have believed in these fantasies.*

Karla Mallette  
*University of Toronto*

## THE VISION OF THE MUSLIM IN EARLY MALTESE POETRY (EIGHTEENTH-NINETEENTH CENTURIES)

### *The Maltese language*

The Maltese language is the only national language in Europe of Semitic origin. It was formed during the Arab occupation of the island (870-1091 AD), even though recently discovered sources state that the island was completely abandoned by the Arabs until 1049 (Brincat 1995). If these sources were to be confirmed, that would mean that the genesis of the Maltese language could be backdated to the year 1049 AD.

With the re-romanisation of the island from 1091 AD, due to the arrival of the Normans from Sicily (Cassola 1992a: 861), the original Semitic basis of the Maltese language was enriched by the addition of lexes of Romance origin, in particular Sicilian. The Romance element was further strengthened from 1530 onwards, when Charles V ceded the Maltese archipelago to the Knights of the Order of St John of Jerusalem, who had adopted Tuscan Italian as their common language of communication and administration. The peaceful co-habitation of the Semitic and Romance components in the Maltese language makes it possible for the latter to adapt, in some cases, to the morphological mechanisms typical of Semitic (Cassola 1993: 235-236).

When the British occupied Malta in 1800, the local vernacular had already asserted its own peculiar identity. The long period of British domination (1800-1964 AD) was to contribute further to the development of the Maltese language. In fact, as the years went by, but especially during the latter part of this century, the Maltese language was further enriched with a third component, the Anglo-Saxon one, especially in the technical and scientific fields. For its unique tri-dimensional and tri-cultural features, the Maltese language has been defined a *mixed language* (Aquilina 1970).

The process of evolution and transformation of the Maltese language has been so intense that it would seem that today the number of words of non-Semitic origin has actually surpassed those of Arabic origin (Brincat 1996).

### *Early Maltese Literature*

Apart from two notable exceptions, the Maltese language was not used as a medium for the writing of literature until well into the eighteenth century. In fact, after the fall of the Roman Empire in the West, the languages which the Maltese adopted in order to write their literature were Arabic, Latin, Sicilian and Tuscan Italian.

The first writers of the "modern" period who are known to have been born in Malta actually utilised Arabic as the linguistic medium for their literary production. These were 'Abd Allāh Ibn as-Samantī al-Māliti, 'Uthmān Ibn 'Abd ar-Raḥmān, nicknamed Ibn as-Sūsī, and Abū al-Qāsim Ibn Ramadān al-Māliti. The Sicilian historian Michele Amari, who has reproduced their verse in Italian translation, groups them together with their contemporary writers who were born in Sicily, since they all wrote and recited their Arabic verses around the year 1150 AD, in Roger II's Palermitan court (Cassola 1991: 57-59).

With the arrival of the Normans in 1091 AD, Latin was reintroduced in the island as the language of administration and, from the fifteenth century onwards, Sicilian became the second language of administration. These administrative decisions were to leave their mark also in the field of literature. It is a well-known fact that at the beginning of the sixteenth century the Maltese notary Giacomo Bondin used to write epigrams in Latin (Wettinger-Fsadni 1968: 28). We also have a poem, entitled *O Melita Infelix* and written in Latin by Luca de Armenia, which deals with the woes and sorrows of the Maltese during the famous 1565 Siege of Malta (Cassar 1981). Such works are indicative of literary activity in the Latin language, which must have been quite productive amongst the cultured classes of the island.

As regards the use of Sicilian as a literary language, it is thought that the *Vita di San Cono*, a work written in 1371 which has gone lost, was written in Sicilian. The author of this work, Giovanni Aragona, is believed by some to be Maltese and by others to be Sicilian (Cassola 1991: 59). In the seventeenth century, one comes across *Parenti certu si di tali pasta*, a sonnet written entirely in Sicilian by Marcello Attardo de Vagnoli. This sonnet forms part of Attardo's *Canzoniere*, which has only recently been published (Attardo de Vagnoli 1994: 133).

However, the real language of early Maltese literature is Tuscan Italian. From 1530, year of the arrival in Malta of the Knights of the Order of St John of Jerusalem, Tuscan was adopted as the language of the administration, and this was to bear a strong influence on literary circles too, since Italian basically became the language of all literary genres: from lyric poetry to historiography; from pastoral poetry to



travel memoirs, from the picaresque novel to the theatre. This situation was to persist until late in the nineteenth century.

As already stated, the Maltese language appears only twice in the linguistic-literary context just drawn up. The first document in the Maltese language is a poem of twenty verses, the *Cantilena* by P. Caxaro, which dates back to the last decades of the fifteenth century, but has come down to us in an early sixteenth-century copy (Wettinger-Fsadni 1968). Apart from its immense historical and linguistic value, the reference to the Maltese language in the *Cantilena* manuscript (*quam lingua melitea hic subicio*), confirms that a certain number of cultured Maltese of the period were quite conscious of their vernacular being a *language*. One has to then wait for nearly another two hundred years for the second literary text in Maltese: the sixteen verse *Sonetto* by G.F. Bonamico, which was to be the prelude to an eighteenth-century literary tradition, albeit a weak one, in the Maltese language.

### *L-Għarusa tal-Mosta*

The ballad entitled *L-Għarusatal-Mosta* (*The Maiden of Mosta*. See Friggieri 1987: 151-152; Cassar Pullicino 1964: 16-17) was first published by the Italian linguist Luigi Bonelli in 1897. However, the general theme of the ballad, which deals with the kidnapping of a young Maltese maiden by the Turks; the fact that the episode is related in an eighteenth-century manuscript conserved at the National Library of Malta (Ms. 1146, vol. I, p. 256) and mentioned by Count Ciantar in his 1725 Latin translation of G. F. Abela's *Descrittione di Malta*; the fact that various authors, such as the Italian Michelangelo Bottari and the Maltese Nicola Zammit and Ġużè Muscat Azzopardi, published historical novels in Italian and Maltese which were based on the same episode (respectively, *La sposa della Musta* [published between 1856-60]; *Angelica, o la sposa della Mosta* [1862] and *L-Għarusa tal-Mosta* [1878]); and the fact that Cassar Pullicino (1964: 15) manages to trace different variants of this legend right up to the middle of this century indicates that, at least in oral tradition, this ballad must have been one of the oldest non-religious texts in Maltese.

Indeed, something quite similar to what is lamented in the *Gharusa tal-Mosta* actually really happened during the 1565 Great Siege, when the powerful Turkish armada was sent by Süleyman to conquer Malta.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On the 1565 Great Siege of Malta, cf. Balbi di Correggio 1961, Cassola 1995, and Cassola-Bostan-Scheben 1998.

The Italian soldier Francisco Balbi di Correggio, who was fighting on the side of the Christians during this siege, describes the episode quite vividly in his account of the 1565 events:

When the (Turkish) fleet came upon Malta, sixty Maltese, men and women, of all conditions, having fled from their village, took refuge in a cavern by the sea, and there they continued to live. Among these women was a maiden of great beauty. These refugees were discovered by the Turks who overran the Island. They left them unmolested but they reported their find to the Sanjaz-Bey, who, as we came to know, went to the cavern and, enamoured with the maiden, took her apart while the other Turks conversed with the rest of the Maltese.... (Later), the Sanjaz-Bey, despairing of escape, cut off the maiden's head with one stroke of his scimitar (Balbi di Correggio 1961: 91-92).

This historical episode inspired quite a number of Maltese works during the nineteenth century, such as *Catarina* (1847) by Luigi Rosato and *Toni Bajada* (1878) and *Ix-Xbejba tar-Rdum (The Maiden of the Cliffs)* (1878) by Ġużè Muscat Azzopardi.

In *L-Għarusa tal-Mosta*, the Turks do not act in such a cruel way towards the poor Maltese maiden: it is true that they capture her on a Monday when the girl, totally unprepared for such kidnapping, is actually getting ready for her marriage. However, despite the fact that they are described as "ħaljin" ('wasteful'), they do not really maltreat her. What they are really intent on doing is make her give up her Western clothes and traditions and take up the Muslim ones. The Pasha to whom she is offered gives her beautiful clothes and rich food. But the girl refuses to eat unless she is sent back to her native village.

The Maltese maiden is then made an offer which no normal person would refuse: if she complies with the demands of her captors, she is to be declared the Queen of Jerba ("Nagħmluk sultana ta' Ġirba"). But the girl continues in her obstinacy: in her perception the Turks are nothing but berbers ("ibirba") and therefore she can never accept to be their Queen! Here, we encounter a *cliché* of Maltese literature: any Muslim, whether coming from North Africa or any other area, is normally called a *Turk*. This fact is to be attributed to the multi-secular rivalry between the Knights of Malta and the Ottoman Empire. And the automatic identification of Muslims with Turks is also reflected at linguistic level. So much so, that in the oldest dictionary of the Maltese language, which dates to the seventeenth century, the corresponding Italian word given for Maltese *meselem* is 'turco', and not 'musulmano' (Cassola 1992b: M 2131).

In another variant of *L-Għarusa tal-Mosta*, she is offered the opportunity to become Queen of the cities of the Levant ("sultana ta' l-ib-

liet"). But the Turks are here perceived by her to be "klieb" ('dogs') and therefore she again refuses to give in. For her, the consequences of her kidnapping are extremely tragic: she has not only lost her promised husband, but she was also to remain a slave for the rest of her life ("Jien ilsira kelli nsir għal dejjem!").

All in all, however, this variant ends with quite a happy finale: the girl is eventually ransomed by her fiancé, though not before she goes through some very trying moments. In fact, what strikes the reader in a negative way is the mean and unchristian attitude of the closest relatives of the maiden, since both her mother and aunt refuse to part with the sum of 700 (the type of currency is not specified in the ballad), a sum which each one of them does have at home, in exchange, respectively, for their daughter and niece. Had it not been for her loving spouse, the maiden would certainly have never seen her homeland again.

The end result is that one really cannot decide who the real "baddies" are in this ballad: the cruel Turks who treat her more or less kindly or her Christian mother and aunt, who really behave in an unchristian way!

### *The Muslim in an eighteenth-century poem written in Maltese*

One of the first poems written in Maltese where Muslims play a prominent part is *Fuqek nit'kaddet Malta* (I shall talk about you Malta) (Friggieri 1987a: 43-44), which was written around 1749 by an anonymous author. The poem is about a planned slave uprising in Malta, organised by Mustapha, the Pasha of Rhodes. Luckily for the Maltese, this uprising failed to materialise.<sup>2</sup>

This poem is made up of nineteen quatrains. The mind behind the uprising, Mustapha, is presented in the third quatrain in four or five words, as "Bassà ta' Rodi l-kiefer" ('the cruel Pasha of Rhodes'). What stands out is the adjective "cruel". However, the contemporary Maltese reader of the poem would not be surprised at all to read that the Pasha was cruel. Cruelty was to become the hallmark of any Muslim in Maltese poetry and therefore a Maltese reader expected the Muslim to be cruel. Of course, one does come across certain exceptions, as in the case of the rhyme published in 1909 by the German scholars Bertha Ilg and Hans Stumme. In this rhyme (Friggieri 1987a: 161), we again find a Muslim from the Barbary states described as a Turk from Barbary ("Donnok Tork ta' Barbarija"). This time, however, he is not

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<sup>2</sup> On the 1749 planned uprising, cf. Wettinger: in preparation.

employed in menacing attitudes but in an activity which is rather more peaceful in nature, i.e., selling dates in a wicker basket (“bil-kannestru jbig<sup>h</sup> it-tamar!”). This scene must have certainly reflected daily reality in Malta, where Muslim slaves selling wares were quite a common occurrence.

However, because of the historical friction between Maltese and Muslims, prejudices embedded themselves in Maltese society and normally Muslims could not be considered anything but cruel! In the same stanza, it is said that many Turks had to come to Malta and others were to sail from the Barbary states (“Barbarija”). Here again all Muslims, whatever their provenance, are associated with being Turks.

The third to the ninth quatrains of this poem are built in such a way as to form a crescendo which highlights the cruel and pitiless manner in which the slaves and their liberators intended to act vis-à-vis the Maltese and their rulers, the Knights of Malta.

In a poem portraying a planned uprising and its expected consequences it is only natural to come across scenes of misery, suffering, and death. But in this poem the author is not content in presenting us with all this imagery: his representation of death and suffering has to be a very morbid one. Therefore, the Knights of St John were not only to be killed, but they had to be torn to pieces and their blood was to be sprinkled in the streets (“Tbiċċru riedu u jqattgħu / Il-Kavallieri lkoll, / Kellhom idewwu demmhom / Ġottriqat ta’ Malta wkoll”). This violent and insensitive attitude was not only reserved for the political leaders of the Maltese islands; it was also to be inflicted on the spiritual mentors of the Maltese, i.e., the Catholic ecclesiastics. These were to suffer a dramatic death by being burnt alive until they were all reduced to ashes (“Bil-qassisin u l-irħieb / Xtiequ jagħmlu l-ħgejjeġ, / U n-nar ma kiex jieqaf / Sa ma jaraw ‘il kulħadd mejjet”).

One would expect innocent creatures, such as children, to be spared such a fate. But in this poem, this was not to be so. While Maltese adults were to be chopped to pieces, babies and infants were not only to be killed but they were to be deliberately trampled upon. The anonymous author wants to be sure that the disrespect of any form of human dignity on the part of the uprising infidels is clearly highlighted (“Hasbu joqtlu t-trabi / U minn fuqhom jgħaddu b’riġlejh, / U lill-Maltin jaħsra/Bis-sjuf iqattgħu f’idejhom”).

This hatred towards Christians is also manifested in the spiteful way in which the Christian places of worship were meant to be desecrated by the invading Muslims. Consecrated churches were to be invaded by horses and donkeys, whose dung was to be deposited all over the place! Moreover, what are considered to be the *sancta sanctorum* for

all practising Catholics, the altars, were to be turned into mangers by the invading infidels from the Levant. And this was certainly not meant to be symbolic imagery representing the birth of Christ (“Knejjes imberkin / Isimgħu biex kellha tiżżejjen, / (Jidħlu) biż-żwiemel u l-ħ mir / U jqiegħdu d-demen fir-rkejjen. / Fl-altari konsagrati/Riedu jagħ mlu l-maxturi, / Fejnu ġmielek Malta / Li raw fikom kien dija juri.”)!

The lesson to be learnt by the Maltese from this planned uprising, whose failure to materialise is attributed by the author to divine intervention, is that the Maltese were never to trust the Muslim slaves. These are considered to be perpetually wicked people (“ħżiena”), for whom no pity should ever be shown and who should always be kept in chains (“Ixgħof darba o Malti / U mil-lsiera ma jkollok ħniena, / Żommhom dejjem fil-ktajjen / Għall-qlub tagħhom il-ħżiena). The pattern in Maltese poetry is therefore definitely set: the sentiment of hatred and resentment between Muslims and Maltese becomes reciprocal and a quasi-permanent one.

### *Nineteenth-Century Poetry in Maltese*

The Turks are protagonists not only in poems dealing with fighting and warfare; they can also appear in verse with different themes. In the anonymous poem with a religious theme written around 1813, the inhabitants of the town of *Isla* invoke various saints, who are asked to keep the plague which was infesting Malta away from their town (Cassar Pullicino 1964: 43-45). Amongst others, the *Isla* inhabitants plead to the Virgin Mary to protect their town from the infectious disease, and to keep it away in the same way she had kept the Turks away from the Maltese islands for two hundred and fifty years (“O Marija, it-twelid tiegħek / It-Torok keċċ u minn Malta bieghed / Għal mitejn ilu u ħamsin sena”).

In another poem by Annibale Preca (1832-1901), the author refers to the image of a Muslim in order to convey the negative impression of a stingy person. In this poem, *Il-Ħaggieg* (*The Pilgrim to Mecca*) (Friggieri 1987b: 156), the Muslim, or the ‘unbaptised one’ (“wieħed mhux imgħammed”) promises Mohammed half the goods he was to find on his way to Mecca, if God granted him the grace of getting there. What he does, however, is very far from what one could call real sharing: he eats a whole bunch of dates ... but keeps the bones for the Prophet; and he gobbles up a whole casket of chestnuts ... and conserves the remains for his Lord! By ending his poem with the following saying: “Darba smajt li min hu xħiħ, / Li kien jista’, ‘l Alla jbighħ” (‘Once I heard that those called misers, / If they could, they’d sell their God’),

the author is trying to give a didactic and moral significance to his poetical work. This notwithstanding, it remains quite interesting to note that the author did not cite a Christian example to prove his point.

The 1852 poem *Lill-Maltin (To the Maltese)* (Friggieri 1987a: 84-85), which is attributed to Luigi Bellisario but which is most probably the work of Luigi Rosato, is meant to be a tribute by a foreigner to the Maltese people. Malta is described as the most beautiful place in the world. Amongst other things, it is praised for its ideal geographical location in the middle of the Mediterranean sea, for the perfect configuration of its natural port, for the bounty of its inhabitants and for its might in warfare, despite its minute size. Despite the fact that through the centuries Malta had been involved in various wars and had therefore always encountered quite a "respectable" amount of enemies, amongst them the Carthaginians, the Arabs and the French, it is again the Turks who are identified with the many killers ("qattelin") who roamed through the surrounding seas. Malta is lauded by the author for shedding the blood of thousands of Turks and for keeping them enslaved in chains ("Int dal-baħar indukrajt / Minn kemm resqu qattelin, (Int ċarċart l-eluf tat-Torok / Qalb il-ħdejjed imjassrin").

*Lilek Malta fl-aħjar sena (To Malta, in your prime)* (Friggieri 1997: 120-122), a poem which is to be found in Pietru Pawl Castagna's 1865 historical account of the Maltese archipelago, more or less runs on the same lines as *Lill-Maltin*, albeit in more detail. Malta, personified as a beautiful maiden in her prime, is endowed with all the highest qualities: beauty, strength, and wealth. She is praised for her loyalty to her foreign dominators and for her steadfastness in sticking to the Catholic religion. The picture presented of Malta is such an idyllic and idealistic one, that there is not a single defect to her demerit! Thus, the Maltese bastions are to be considered the most powerful ones; the Maltese climate is of the most benign nature; the products of the Maltese soil are of the sweetest kind; the craftiness of the people in commerce has no par at all elsewhere; while the courage of the Maltese is the envy of one and all!

It is in the context of such courage, typical of the Maltese, that the usual image of the "Gran Tork" appears. Here again the Turk, this time qualified as "grand," is presented in despicable terms since the representative of the half moon ("qamar") is depicted as a dog ("kelb"). *Kelb*, in the Maltese language, has the metaphorical meaning of 'cruel'. The contrast between the positive adjective "gran", which serves to introduce the enemy and to highlight his stature at the same time, and the totally negative noun "kelb" highly contributes to presenting a disparaging picture of the Muslim. This impression is further reinforced in the next two verses, which reiterate that despite the

Turks' many attempts to conquer the island, it was always the Maltese who turned out to be victorious. Thus the "Gran Tork" always had to retreat to his country, a defeated loser ("Tal-Gran Tork iggib b'tifkira / F'halq il-kelb il-qamar tiegħu, / Kemm-il darba riedek g'zira / Min-nekġie mighdum tellief").

In his 1847 historical tragedy, *Catarina* (Friggieri 1987b: 51-54), set during the 1565 Siege of Malta and based on the account of Balbi di Correggio (1961: 91-92), Luigi Rosato (1795-1872) introduces an aspect which we had not yet encountered up to now: the vision of the Christian as seen through the eyes of a Muslim. The Muslim in question is the Turkish general Assan who, being deeply intent on capturing Malta and its people, is not able to get any rest or to experience any happiness until he succeeds in his quest. His feelings for the Christians are a spitting image of the Christians' perception of the Muslim. For Assan, the Christians are nothing but cruel people ("kiefier"), who have always been opposed to the Muslims, both those young in age and the old ones, and are therefore worthy only of the appellation of "kelb" ('dog').

Therefore, Assan urges his men to capture the Maltese and to chop their liver to bits. No mercy is to be shown towards them and they are to be annihilated and torn to pieces ("Fwiedhom trietaq irrid nagħmel / ... Xejn titbeżżgħu, bic'ru, temmu, / Ħniena magħhom la turux"). In his thirst for vengeance, Rosato presents to us the Turkish assailant in a really "vampiresque" mood: his is, in fact, an insatiable thirst for Christian blood ("Għandi għatx għal demm l-insara"), a thirst that can only be quenched with the death of the Maltese "klieb". Assan's hatred for the Christians is the fruit of their previous acts of cruelty towards his people. In fact, according to Assan, the Knights of Malta had always been taking booty from and making slaves of his fellow Muslims. Now the time had arrived for the final reckoning and Assan was confident that the famous Turkish Armada would prove its mettle and settle the account with the Maltese ("Jaraw ftit il-qilla tagħna, / Għandna armata bliet kbar twahħħax, / Ħadd ma jista' lllum jilqagh na"). Obviously, the facts of history have proven otherwise.

The automatic identification of the Muslim with Turks in the perception of the Maltese people stands out even more in *Katrin ta' l-Imdina* (Catherine from Mdina) (Friggieri 1987b: 223-225), which was written by Dwardu Cachia (1858-1907). This ballad is set in the Middle Ages, prior to the arrival of the Knights of St John in Malta (1530). The story is about the marriage of a Maltese girl, Katrin, to the anonymous ruler ("Ħakem") of Malta. The initial part of the ballad is a festival of colours, music and joy. The whole local population turns out to witness this memorable event, when a young Maltese maiden is going to

marry the ruler of the country, thus obtaining not only a literal social promotion for herself but also a metaphorical one for the whole Maltese people. The marriage bond is here sealed in the most Christian of ways by the monk Bennard in front of all the Maltese, who are exalted at being able to participate in this special event.

The tragedy unfolds in the latter part of the ballad, thus bringing about a total contrast with the initial scene. Ten galleys belonging to enemy raiders land their men in the northern part of the island, *Pwales*, shrouded in total silence. However, the Maltese coast guards identify the invading troops and thus sound out the alarm. Church bells start pealing to warn the population, but the people gathered at Katrin's wedding in the capital town of Malta, *Mdina*, mistake the bells' warning for joyful rejoicing at Katrin's marriage. However, the "Hakem", Katrin's newly acquired husband, is warned of the impending danger and, as leader of the Maltese, he immediately decides to take to the roads to check the invaders.

Up to now, the latter had always been apostrophised as "egħewwa" ('enemies'). Now, instead, the "Hakem" identifies them as Turks who will destroy the village houses ("għaliex it-Torok / S'er iħ'arbtu d-djar fir-rħula"). This is, of course, an anachronism, since in the fifteenth century the Ottoman Empire had not yet reached its apex and therefore it only stands to reason that the raiders of the Maltese islands could only have been North African Muslims. But in nineteenth century Malta, Muslims were so much identified spontaneously with Turks, that no reader would have noticed the anachronism.

Once the infidels have been identified, the type of imagery usually associated with them comes up. They are described as "kefrin" ('cruel people'), who destroyed whatever they found in the villages ("Ill ħarbtu kulma sabu / F'kemm irħula bdew deħlin"). In the ensuing skirmishes which lasted around half a day, the Maltese, ably led by their "Hakem", get the better of the enemy and send off to Mdina, by means of an advance party, the trophies which confirm and seal their victory. These are none other than the chopped off heads of the defeated Turks ("Rjus it-Torok bħal rebħa / Quddiem bagħtu għall-aħbar"), trophies which seemed to be very common whenever the Maltese and the Turks clashed during the course of history!

Despite the victory, the ballad ends tragically since the "Hakem" is knifed in a treacherous way by a couple of the runaway enemies who, being 'Turks', are obviously again described as deceivers and cruel hearted people ("Qarrieqa u kefrin"). Thus Katrin, just married earlier the same morning, ends up being a wife and a widow on the same day.



This heart rending situation would certainly contribute to creating an even more ominous picture of the Muslim in the perception of the readers of the time.

### *Giovanni Antonio Vassallo*

Giovanni Antonio Vassallo (1817-1868) is undoubtedly the first great writer in the history of Maltese literature. Despite having been brought up in a totally Italianate cultural environment, as was normal with people of culture and those forming part of the professional classes right up to the early decades of this century, he was actually one of the first people to realise that in order to communicate with the man in the street he had to adopt the common language, Maltese, and not the cultural one, Italian (Cassola 1983; Friggieri 1986: 128). Therefore, apart from writing various works in Italian, such as his *Scherzi satirici*, he also wrote various other works in the Maltese language. These ranged from light verse, such as *Hrejjeff u ciat bil-Malti* (*Tales and jokes in Maltese*) (1863), to other tales, with a moral ending, such as *Hrejjeff ovvero Saggio di favole morali in verso scritti in lingua maltese* (1861), to a veritable epic poem—the first one ever in the Maltese language—*Il Gifen Torc* (*The Turkish Galley*) (1853). Vassallo's great intuition was that Maltese was a suitable literary language, not only for popular poetry with a light theme but also for the highest of genres, i.e., epic poetry.

Vassallo, however, is also to be remembered for his innovative treatment of the Muslim in some of his writings. In fact, he is one of the first Maltese poets, if not the very first, to look upon the so-called infidels with a humane eye. This new point of view is undoubtedly the result of a fruitful combination: Vassallo's open mentality and the relatively recent historical events which Malta had been through. In fact, Napoleon Bonaparte had conquered Malta and ousted the Knights of St John in 1798. One of his first measures was to abolish slavery on the island, even though cases of slaves bought from abroad were still registered until at least 1812 (Wettinger: in preparation). These new local measures, together with Vassallo's democratic disposition which was the result of the romantic ideas of the period, must have certainly helped to bring about the change in the local perception of the Muslim. Indeed, the author already explicitly declares his openness towards the Muslim world in his preface to *Ghal chitarra ossia Collezione di nuove poesie maltesi sul gusto delle popolari*, published in 1851, where he states that in olden times heroic odes were composed in Malta to celebrate the capture of booty from the Barbary states by local galleys. 'Thank God', Vassallo comments, 'peace has been definitely been made

with the Turks, and therefore the heroic times are over!' (Cassar Pullicino 1964: 11).

Of course, there are still many instances in Vassallo's poetry where he follows the pattern already established. A case in point is the epic poem *Il-Gifen Torc*. This poem is based on a true episode, i.e., when during the times of Grand Master Manoel Pinto de Fonseca, in the eighteenth century, Maltese galley slaves first managed to overcome their tyrannical masters on board the Turkish galley *La Corona Ottomana* and then to escape to Malta. The epic is divided into three parts. In the first part we are presented with the Maltese slaves who, unable to stand the oppression of their wicked masters, pray to the Virgin Mary to help them in their plight and plan out a way of liberating themselves; the second part is concerned with the fighting on the galley between the Maltese and their oppressors, with the former coming out victors; in the third part we find the freed slaves on a pilgrimage from the capital town of Malta to the Sanctuary of Mellieħa, in the northern part of the island, where they fulfil their vow to the Virgin Mary, who had helped them to free themselves from their ordeal (Cassar Pullicino 1964: 109).

In *Il-Gifen Torc* the Knights of Malta, introduced as 'the sons of St. John' ("ulied San Ġwann"), and the Turks, called 'the sons of Mohammed' ("ulied l-Imħammed"), are presented as traditional enemies ("miksura ... għal dejjem kienu"). The cruelty of the Turks stands out in the way they treat their Maltese slaves. These are suffering under the yoke of slavery and harshness ("taħt il-madmad tal-jasar u l-ħ'ruxija") and are maltreated ("maħqura") and beaten up ("msawta") by the Muslims. In order to reflect their collective heartlessness and lack of humanity, even individual Turks are given an abominable physical appearance. The repelling external appearance is meant to reflect their immoral and inhuman inner feelings, as in the case of the Commander of the Turkish galley, Xerin, who is presented as an old man, ugly as the devil and very harsh in his behaviour. His way of pleasing his Sultan was by grabbing a Christian and having him crucified ("Meta da kien irid ihenni 'l qalbu, / Jaqbad nisrani u fuq salib isallbu")!

These same Turks become really shocked when the tables are turned against them by the Maltese, who had become veritable furies, thus changing the galley they had been slaves in into a proper blood bath ("U f'daqqa waħda nżebagħ kollox demm"). Faced by the wrath of the Maltese, the notoriously cruel Turks now turn into fearful ("imbezzgħ-ħa") and trembling ("imriegħħda") lesser beings. Some of them try and squeeze into some minute hiding place ("trekknu x'uħud"), others jump into the sea ("oħrajn il-baħar xte ħtu"), they all cry, swear and

shake their teeth ("Jibki, jidgħi kulhadd, u jhezhe" snienu"). The image of the Muslim the author is trying to convey is certainly not a positive one!

The same message comes out in *Is-Sultan La Valette lill-Belt Valletta* (*Grand Master La Valette addressing Valletta*; see Friggieri 1987b: 77-79), which was published in 1843. The sons of Mohammed tried to take Malta over a hundred times ("ulied l-Im-hammed / Li mitt darba gew għalik"), but every time they encountered La Valette's sword they had no choice but to face sure death or run for their lives ("Ħadu l-mewt u grew għall-ħarba"). The interest of the Muslims in Malta is considered by Vassallo to be not so much of a political nature, but more of a religious one. In fact, the Ottomans — here represented by the 'Half Moon' ("Nofs Qamar") — wanted to enslave Malta in order to convert it to Islam and to replace the Bible with the Qur'an ("Mma n-Nofs Qamar ried ijassrek / U l-Quran go fik igib"). La Valette boasts openly that the cruel Turks ("kiefra") were dispelled by him time and again ("Jien gerrejthom qtajja' qtajja'") and that the 'Half Moon' was thus compelled to mourn its many dead left on the battlefield ("Ahna rbaħna u n-Nofs Qamar / Beka d-demm u mar jistrieh"). Again, the negative vision of the Muslim is clear enough for all to see.

The change in Vassallo's attitude towards the Muslims can be seen in the ballad *Almanzor u Marija* (*Almanzor and Marija*) (Cassar Pullicino 1964: 98-101), which I consider to be a transitional step towards the full emancipation of the Muslim in the eyes of the author. The ballad is about the love between Almanzor, a "Turk" from Syria, and the Catholic Maltese maiden, Marija. The young Syrian falls madly in love with Marija and, in order to have the opportunity to speak to her and to declare his love, he dresses up the Christian way and stops her on her way to mass ("Almanzor darba / Fil-għodu kmieni / Stennieha sejra / Tisma' l-quddies; / Biex lilha jkellew / U jibqa' hieni / Hu ta' Nisrani / libes l-ilbies").

Marija's first reaction is to reject his love. The fact that he is a Muslim acts as an immediate deterrent since she considers him to be on a par with any other Muslim, and thus addresses him as "għadu" ('enemy') and "kiefra" ('cruel person') ("Xi trid minni, ja għadu? ja kiefra?"). Almanzor, however, does not lose heart and insists on declaring his love for Marija. The latter seems to be unperturbed and tells him not to bother her again. Yet, in doing so she hints at a solution that could be acceptable to her: if Almanzor renounces his faith and takes up the Catholic religion by being baptised, then she would be willing to speak to him ("Ma tarġa' le quddiemni / Jekk ma taqlibx id-din; / 'K int qalbek trid taġħtini / Iżżejjen bit-twemmin"). This makes it quite clear

that the real motive behind Marija's refusal, and also behind the generalised prejudice of the Maltese against the Muslims, is a religious one: the Maltese in general, and here Marija, were totally averse to Muslims because they perceived Islam as a threat to Christianity.

In the end, Almanzor does convert to Christianity and is thus accepted by Marija and her parents as her spouse. Both the baptism and the wedding ceremony take place on the same day in church, in front of a happy group of guests. It is interesting to note what transformation Almanzor goes through as soon as he is baptised. First of all, he takes on the new name of Pawlu, a name that is emblematic of Catholicism in Malta since Paul of Tarsus had converted the islanders to Christianity in 60 AD and has, henceforth, been the patron saint of the Maltese. But the greatest transformation is in the author's —and the listener's— perception of him: the Muslim Almanzor who, initially, had been apostrophised by Marija as 'enemy' and 'cruel person', now is acclaimed by all as 'full of saintliness' ("qđusija wera"). The metamorphosis is complete: now that he has converted to Christianity, the diffidence vis-à-vis the Muslim has turned into full acceptance, since he has become 'one of us'!

The concept of acceptance, or at least tolerance, of the Muslim is cemented in Vassallo's 1843 work, *Mannarino* (Friggieri 1987b: 71-77), which celebrates and exalts the Maltese priest Gaetano Mannarino, who was the ringleader in a failed uprising against Grand Master Ximenes towards the latter part of the eighteenth century. In this poem, Mannarino, who has been languishing in jail for many years, is freed by Napoleon Bonaparte himself, who has just taken Malta. In the dialogue between the two, Mannarino criticises the Knights of Malta because they are no longer fulfilling their role of defenders of the faith against the Muslim. On the other hand, however, he has pity on and shows extreme solidarity with the latter when he describes to Napoleon what the Knights used to do. Basically, according to Mannarino, the Knights' few incursions consisted in capturing some *xebec* plying in the Levant ("lvant") or the barbary states ("Barbarija") and taking the Arabs ("Gharab") in them as slaves.

Vassallo sympathises totally with the victims, since he makes Mannarino describe them as 'poor Arabs' ("Gharab imsejknin"). He also comes up with his own views, when he condemns the selling of the Arabs as slaves. This time the adjective "kefrin" ('cruel') is no longer used to describe the Muslim, as has normally been the case up to now, but to indicate the behaviour of the Christian Knights of Malta ("u jbegħuhom, / Ghax tbegħuhom, o kefrin?..."). The description of the Knights as "kefrin" is even more effective since it is not a Muslim who is pronouncing this judgement, but Mannarino himself, a Catholic

priest. Of course, Mannarino is only voicing Vassallo's total aversion to the concept of slavery.

The author, using Mannarino as a mouthpiece, then goes on to give a 'divine' motivation to his beliefs: people should never be sold as slaves because God never had it written anywhere that human beings were the property of others. The greatest black mark on Europe was, according to Mannarino voicing Vassallo's views, that slavery was still being practised by and large ("Illi bniedem ibighinhehor / Fejnhallih Alla mik-tub? / General, dan fuq l-Ewropa / Narah jiena l-akbar dnuv").

Considering that Vassallo expressed these innovative views on the Muslim as early as 1843, he is to be considered a real precursor, a man who was well ahead of his times. In fact, his voice was to remain a lonely cry in the desert since most Maltese authors up to the attainment of Independence (1964) still continued to represent the Muslim according to the traditional negative bias.<sup>3</sup>

It is only now, in recent years, that a culture of tolerance and respect for 'otherness' and 'the others' has asserted itself in contemporary Maltese literature. Hopefully, the efforts of present-day Maltese writers to present in their literary works all peoples as the dignified and equal fruit of the same act of creation will contribute to instil in the Maltese people a better understanding of the ideal of *unity in diversity*, something which theoretically everybody seems to agree upon but which in real everyday life is still so far from materialising.

University of Malta

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<sup>3</sup> Even one of the most avantgardist and progressive figures in Maltese literature, Manwel Dimech (1860-1921), who fought for the emancipation of the Maltese from the darkness and ignorance which engulfed them, continued to describe the Muslims as "cruel sons of Mohammed" ("kefrin ulied Mohammed") in *It-tiörija tad-dgħajjes* (*The boat race*; Friggieri 1987b: 248-249) or 'the great enemy of Christ' ("Il-kbir għadu tal-Mis-lub") in *Sliema għalik, O Malta tagħna!* (*Hail to you, Malta!*; Friggieri 1987b: 245-246).

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## POINTS OF CONTACT BETWEEN ITALIAN ROMANTICISM AND MALTESE LITERATURE : The Maltese literary background

A history of Maltese culture may be said to reflect in various ways the history of the whole community. Since, much more than in the case of larger countries, Malta could never do without foreign contacts, necessarily causative of a complex process of influences, adaptations and reactions (and consequently only through a study of a set of assimilations can the scholar arrive at a true definition of a Maltese identity), such a history, be it political, social, or cultural, is bound to assume a comparative character. This may be all the more so owing to the fact that what one may euphemistically call foreign contacts were nothing less than foreign occupations. The conditions which characterise and modify the process of, say, a political history of subordination may boil down to be the inalienable causes of analogous conditions in the cultural field.

The basic distinction is linguistic and not necessarily cultural or psychological. Two major languages assumed, contemporarily or subsequently, the role of primary media for the elaborate expression of a community's feelings, experiences and ambitions: Italian and Maltese. The presence of English is relatively too recent to be defined as another proper channel through which Maltese literature could seek new bearings.<sup>1</sup> English-Maltese literary interaction can be traced back directly to the modern poets and novelists who effected a radical transformation in the sixties of this century. The dialectical relationship between Italian and Maltese has been looked at, up to a few years ago, as controversial, or worse still, as the unhappy and not easily reconcilable intercourse between a Latin culture, the presence of which in

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<sup>1</sup>One of the earliest indications of an English-Maltese interaction is provided by Richard Taylor's translation of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, *Il-Ħajja u l-Vinturi ta' Robinson Crusoe to York*, published in 1846 and in 1852. However, all the other works of Taylor (1818-1868), both as a popular poet and a staunchly patriotic journalist, place him easily within the Italian tradition of the island.

the island goes back many centuries, and a Semitic one, characterised mainly by the basic Arabic structure of the popular language which, owing to the island's uninterrupted contacts with the outer world, adopted a Romance superstructure. One has to define the nature of the apparently contradictory dialectic Italian-Maltese from a purely linguistic point of view. After getting a clear perspective of the language question, which constituted one of the major political preoccupations between 1880 and 1939,<sup>2</sup> one may proceed to deal exclusively with the literary question, since languages, which find themselves in interaction within the borders of the same community, are also bound to develop cultural and particularly literary cross-currents.

When one considers the life of both languages in Malta, the first conclusion to be drawn is that Maltese is prior to Italian as a spoken language,<sup>3</sup> whilst there is hardly any proof that Italian was ever adopted as the habitual speech medium by any local section of the population. When Maltese started to be written in the seventeenth century and then on a much wider scale in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Italian had already established itself as the only and unquestionable cultural language of the island and had a respectable literary tradition of its own.<sup>4</sup> Maltese men of letters developed an uninterrupted local "Italian" literary movement which went on up to about four decades ago, whereas Maltese as a literary idiom started to co-exist on a wide scale in the last decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>5</sup> This considerable deposit of literary output throughout the

<sup>2</sup> H. Frendo, "Language and Nationality in an Island Colony: Malta," *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism*, vol. 1, no. 3 (1975): 25. The language question, forming a central part of the island's romantic experience, owes its origins to the active presence of Italian exiled rebels in Malta during the *Risorgimento*, on the one hand, and to the constant British efforts to introduce English and eradicate the traditional cultural language, on the other.

<sup>3</sup> The Arabs conquered Malta in 870 AD and thus laid the foundations for the language we now call Maltese. With the Norman conquest in 1090 AD, the language of the island started to find itself open to extra-Arabic influences, a process which has widened the lexical stock and the syntactic patterns and which is still active nowadays. O. Aquilina, *Papers in Maltese Linguistics* (Malta, 1961), 42-62.

<sup>4</sup> One of the earliest documents in Italian dates back to 1409 (Cathedral Archives, ms. A, ff. 171-176. also A. Mifsud, "Malta al Sovrano nel 1409," *La Diocesi* 2 (7/1/1918), 243-248 and "La cattedrale e l'università, ossia Il comune e la chiesa in Malta," *La Diocesi* 2 (7/7/1917), 39-40; U. Biscottini, "Il volgare a Malta ed una questione dantesca," *Il giornale di politica e di letteratura*, Nov.-Dec. 1934, 665-670.

<sup>5</sup> O. Friggieri, *La cultura italiana a Malta — Storia e influenza letteraria e stilistica attraverso l'opera di Dun Karm* (Florence, 1978), 11-32.



centuries, a large section of which is still in manuscript form at the National Library of Malta, is the work of both Maltese and foreign writers (who happened to live or spend a period of their life on the island) alike.<sup>6</sup> Thus, whilst Maltese has the historical priority on the level of the spoken language, Italian has the priority of being the almost exclusive written medium, for official and socio-cultural affairs, for the longest period. The native language had only to wait for the arrival of a new mentality that could integrate an unwritten popular tradition with a written, academically respectable one.

On the other hand, if one seeks to identify the literary spirit of the Maltese throughout the centuries one must include and give causative prominence to, the said Italian-oriented Maltese production, rendering it as the first, or preliminary, phase of the whole spectrum. This approach would seek to establish the extra-literary motives which debarred Maltese from all cultural manifestations, and ask why it was socially dishonourable to use it. Alongside this dichotomy — which resulted in the co-presence of two distinct social stratifications — one should also seek to define the proper character of the Italian tradition, something which can be done through a comparative analysis of the peninsular literature and of its forms of assimilative participation in the island during a series of cultural epochs: the Renaissance, Baroque, Illuminism and then the first glimmerings of Romanticism.

Romanticism, both Latin and Germanic, revalued the Illuminist concept of cultural diffusion and while questioning and negating the true significance and practicability of cosmopolitanism, fostered the cult of national languages. This epoch, fundamentally based on the discovery of a sense of personal and national individuality, coincides with the first serious efforts towards the rediscovery of Maltese as one

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<sup>6</sup>Among the earliest works it is worth mentioning *La historia di Malta nuovamente composta in ottava rima, per Antonio Pugliese, l'anno 1565 delli 10 di maggio*, published in Venice in 1585 and preserved at the National Library of Malta, ms. II, fol. 498-519, and included in Ignazio Saverio Mifsud's collection of the *Stromati Melitensium*. The list of later works written and published in Malta by Italian writers includes *San Paolo a Malta*, an epic which Vincenzo Belloni (1839-1878) issued in 1875 after having spent five years (1870-75) on the island (G. A. Vassallo, *Il-hĠifen Tork* (The Turkish Galley), ed. O. Friggieri [Malta, 1975] 5-6). With regard to published books, since the appearance of the first one printed locally — *I natali delle religiose militiae de' cavalieri* (1642) by Geronimo Marulli — Malta has seen the constant development of Italian publications, mainly historical and literary. This tradition was interrupted only a few decades ago, that is, more than a century after the real birth of a literary tradition in the vernacular.

of the most ancient patrimonies, as Mikiel Anton Vassalli (1764-1829) calls it,<sup>7</sup> of the new emerging nation. One of the more important results of Vassalli's political and scholarly contributions is the embryonic development of a nationalistic way of thinking which centred around two basic aspects of nineteenth-century philosophy and aesthetics: (i) the affirmation of the singular and collective identity (an experience emanating from the Romantics' absolute devotion to sentiment and passion, as opposed to the old and undisputed right enjoyed by the "goddess Reason" [as evinced in almost all poetics since Aristotle] informing the artworks of a previous age, modelled with architectural precision and in a state of psychological equilibrium); and (ii) the cultivation and diffusion of the national speech medium as the most sacred component in the definition of the *patria*, and as the most effective justification both for a dominated community's claiming to be a nation and for the subsequent struggle against foreign rulers.

This new national religion promulgated by romantic Italy pervaded Malta during the period of the *Risorgimento* as writers, journalists, and political rebels sought refuge on the island. Alongside their activity in favour of a united and independent homeland, the Italians engaged themselves in an analogous mission: that of inviting the Maltese themselves to fight for their own political and cultural rights against British colonial domination. This initiated an ever wider utilisation of the native language and the gradual growth of an indigenous literature fully aware of the political, social, and cultural rights of the community.

The two genres in which the fullest development of Maltese literature is expressed are poetry and narrative prose. Theatre as a definitely aesthetic experience in the modern sense is only a recent achievement. Consequently, in providing a panoramic picture, any basic assessment is bound to focus on the work of the poets and the novelists, with the particular contribution of the dramatists dovetailing into this mainstream.

### *Prose: History as a national mythology*

The historical novel, based on a subjective compromise between objective data and a personal disposition to recast them according to one's

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<sup>7</sup> M.A. Vassalli, *Discorso preliminare, Vocabolario maltese* (Rome, 1796), vii. The antiquity of a popular language featured very significantly in the concept of nationalism which European Romanticism sought to form and preach.

political commitment, flourished most during the *Risorgimento*. In recalling the heroic achievements of past generations, the novelist sought to revitalise forgotten myths and give dignity to the contemporary national cause. The idealised depiction of remote historical experiences is emotionally transformed into a vision where past and present are projected towards an immediate future. The objective representation of facts, characters, and environments is simply a pretext for rendering history as an epic in which the martyrdom of the individual and the national family is the only valid contribution.

In his search for an identification of the *patria* the novelist is only concerned with translating the glories of the past into a spectacular scenery which is being repeated in the present. Structurally, his work tends to assume the form of an alternation between the depiction of creatively exalted historical events and the passionate exhortation of his fellow citizens towards national unity and redemption. The logical progression of facts, which constitute a plot, is coupled with the formation of a patriotic philosophy based on a local mythology full of well-known heroes and an anonymous multitude of faithful, and equally valorous, forefathers. The Mazzinian dialectic "right-duty" is translated into a pragmatic religion: God has given to every citizen the right to a homeland, but it is the citizen's own duty to build it up.

This set of thematic components synthesises the main character both of the Italian historical novel of the *Risorgimento* period and of the Maltese one, written in Italian and then in Maltese, of the late decades of the nineteenth century and of the first half of the twentieth. The reasons for this harmonious assimilation, already hinted at in broader terms, are essentially two: (i) local writers had an exclusively Italian education and consequently they either wrote in the island's (incidentally Italian) cultural language according to the prevalent "foreign" criteria or sought to translate them into their early Maltese experiments. As a matter of fact, the more important writers, such as Ġan Anton Vassallo (1817-1868), Ġuzè Muscat Azzopardi (1853-1927), Anton Manwel Caruana (1838-1907) and later Anastasju Cuschieri (1876-1962), Dun Karm (1871-1961), and Ninu Cremona (1880-1972) started their literary careers in Italian; and (ii) the island's political situation easily presented itself as analogous to—even as the direct side-effect of—the peninsula's unification movement. This was enhanced all the more by the active presence of such prominent exiles as Gabriele Rossetti, Francesco Orioli, Luigi Settem-

brini, Francesco Crispi, Rosalino Pilo, Tommaso Zauli Sajani, Francesco de Sanctis, and many others.<sup>8</sup>

The Maltese historical novelists writing in Italian, such as Ġan Anton Vassallo (*Alessandro Inguaniez*, 1861, and *Wignacourt*, 1862), Ferdinando Giglio (*La Bella Maltea ossia Caterina Desguanez*, 1872), Ramiro Barbaro di San Giorgio (*Un martire*, 1878), and Gaetano Gauci (*Il condannato al supplizio del rogo*, 1905; *L'ultimo assalto del Forte San Michele*, 1907; *Maria Valdes*, 1909; and *Notte di dolore*, 1915) were creating a socio-literary atmosphere which, in the long run, made them realise that the national cause could be expressed effectively only through the language of the people, adequately handled according to the people's own aptitudes. The new dimension which Maltese, as the traditionally neglected idiom of the masses, profoundly needed was now provided by the modern aesthetic which conceived the popular speech medium as the best one for expressing the heightened emotion of a whole nation and as the only one which could suit the new content of art: the construction of a national identity in terms of its differentiating factors, the first of which was the language itself.

The process of local political emancipation and the history of the earlier stages of literature in the vernacular amply testify that this modern conception owes its dynamic presence in Malta, and particularly within the literary circles, to the island's complex participation in the *Risorgimento*, an involvement which immediately suggested an inherent contradiction with regard to Maltese nationalistic literature written in Italian. It was now up to open-minded writers to employ the uncultivated dialect in order to express congruently this vision which concerned literature, politics, and society in an equal manner. On the other hand, the Maltese novelist, like any other colleague, was faced with an added challenge, since he was simultaneously expected not

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<sup>8</sup> B. Fiorentini, *Malta rifugio di esuli e focolare ardente di cospirazione durante il Risorgimento Italiano* (Malta, 1966); L. Schiavone, *Esuli italiani a Malta durante il Risorgimento* (Malta, 1963). Regarding the journalistic and literary activity of the rebels in Malta, as well as the way in which they diffused the concept of a literature fully committed with the national cause, O. Friggieri, *Risorgimento italiano e movimento politico-letterario maltese 1800-1921* (Milan, 1979). On the other hand, numerous non-Italian writers visited Malta from time to time and recalled such experiences in their memoirs. The list includes prominently the names of George Sandys (1611), Patrick Brydon (1770), Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1804), Lord Byron (1809, 1811), Sir Walter Scott (1831), Hans Christian Andersen (1841), William Makepeace Thackeray (1844), D.H. Lawrence (1920), and Rupert Brooke (1915).

only to interpret a national experience in Maltese but also to make the dialect assume a respectable literary character.

This double programme was decidedly pursued by Anton Manwel Caruans whose *Ineġ Farruō* (1889), considered to be the first literary novel in Maltese, succeeded in fusing stylistic ambition with patriotic involvement, thus initiating a movement of language—*cum*—literature revival which lasted until about two decades ago, when a new crop of writers reacted against traditional obsolete patterns in order to come to terms with a thoroughly different reading public.

The structure of the Italian historical novel assumed a twofold nature: the author could either derive his central plot from known history and set it within a fictitious surrounding or peripheral plot (e.g. Massimo d'Azeglio's *Niccolò de' Lapi*), or create a central plot himself and insert it harmoniously within the limits of a historically authentic, although partially transformed, background. This second structure, popularised mainly by Manzoni's *I promessi sposi*, was chosen by Caruana, whose primary aim was to establish a constant parallelism between a (fictitious) family problem and a (historical) national crisis. A structural analysis of the plot scheme would show that the parallelism is so meticulously built up that it ultimately reduces the private affair (or central story) to an allegory of the population's unfortunate condition under foreign rule (the outer plot). A synthesis of the two narrative models was attempted by Ġużè Muscat Azzopardi, whose *Toni Bajada* (1878), *Viku Mason* (1881), *Susanna* (1883), *Čejlu Tonna* (1886), *Čensu Barbara* (1893), and *Nazju Ellul* (1909), revolve around the figure of an artistically modified "historical" protagonist who comes to life against a similarly reconstructed historical setting. This compromise reached further stages of development through Ġużè Aquilina's *Taħt tliet saltniet* (Under Three Reigns, 1938), and Ġużè Galea's *Żmien I Ispanjoli* (The Time of the Spaniards, 1938), *San Ġwann* (Saint John, 1939), and others.<sup>9</sup> These novelists' constant preference for protagonists chosen from amongst the well-known national patriots is another major step in the romantic direction. The almost religious cult of heroes (the more important being Mikiel Anton Vassalli and Dun Mikiel Xerri) was enormously fostered through their aes-

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<sup>9</sup>Other novels of minor creative value which fall within the general outlines of this category are G. Vassallo's *Mannarino* (1888), C.A. Micallef's *Sander Inguanez* (1892), S. Frenedo De Mannarino's *Il-Barunissa maltija* (The Maltese Baroness, 1893), and L. Vella's *Bernard Dupuó* (1898), *Isolda* (1902), *Bint il-Hakem* (The Hakem's Daughter, 1907), and *Nikol Gh abdul* (1907-8).

thetic reincarnation, and furnished the hitherto submissive community with another unifying emblem and with a fundamental justification for the claim of ethnic distinction and ancestral dignity.

The main line of progression, however, seems to be the way in which later novelists have gradually moved away from Caruana's elegiac *leit motiv* and arrived at a vision of victory. This passage from the negative to the positive, from the elegy to the epic, not only implies a radical shift of emphasis (the future instead of the past) but also proves that the narrator was abandoning his former role of dignified chronicler and assuming that of a prophet or leader. This transformation is to be accounted for psychologically, rather than artistically, due to relatively advanced political emancipation achieved in the first decades of this century.

Together with the formative discovery of a hitherto neglected epos, this narrative tradition recognised the fundamental poetic and creative value of popular heritage. Following the footsteps of Herder, the brothers Schlegel, Tommaseo, Berchet and other famous theorists of cultural democracy, Romanticism had long declared its deep respect for folklore, the oral and written traditions of the lower classes, and the more primitive, or less urbanised, cultural traditions of the people. The instinctive artist inspired by the spirit of his nation, as opposed to the tempered academic artificer, became the truest poet. (This aesthetic dialectic assumed locally the nature of a parallelism with the socio-cultural distinction between Italian, the vehicle of the restricted elite, and Maltese, the spontaneous means of expression of the less educated masses.) Within this context, these writers' insistent elevation of the local patrimony — the language, the popular traditions, the physical beauty of the average young countryman and countrywoman, the landscape — acquires an aesthetic, as well as political, justification.

Alongside this group of democratically oriented literary novelists, another movement of popular writers, appealing more directly to the less educated category of society, was contributing in an analogous manner to the fusion of narrative pattern, socio-political involvement and newly-born awareness of the intrinsically creative value of folk traditions. In addition to the extra-literary implications of the said Italian-Maltese dialectic, the distinction between the literary historical and the popular historical novels implies another class stratification within the restricted spectrum of readers of Maltese (as opposed to those of Italian). However, the basis for their difference is, apart from literary intentions, rather a question of varying emphasis on related aspects of social themes: the literary type stresses collective po-

litical and patriotic involvement, whereas the popular type dwells extensively on the socio-familiar condition, thus giving ample room for the consideration of non-political private and public events, mainly unfortunate and tragic. Whilst the literary type foregoes a central plot, focusing instead on an idealised content, the popular novel treats plot on a purely narrative level. Exclusively concerned with arousing pathos as a personal experience, the popular novelist does not attempt to conduce the reader to conceive his acquired emotion as something he is sharing in common with other fellow citizens and which he should dutifully translate into action.

This category of historical novel, although not strictly literary, has an indirectly aesthetic dimension inasmuch as its thematic content is immediately derived from the romantic vision of life. Formally, however, it is openly geared to the less sophisticated tastes of the majority.

### *Poetry: A cultural dualism*

The aesthetic myth of the people as the truest poet—which determined the real character of romantic art—is the primary motive of the revival of Maltese as a means of literary, and especially poetic, expression. The European movement, largely inspired and determined by the democratic spirit of great liberal thinkers, may be said to have revolved around Herder's fundamental distinction between *Kunst poesie* (poetry of art) and *Naturpoesie* (poetry of nature). Latin Romanticism subsequently started to adopt this dialectic as its creed and to see in the first component the poetry of the traditional and outdated past, and in the second one the authentically inspired expression of a new emerging generation endowed with the right to translate its own genuinely primitive feelings into poetry which was necessarily uncultivated, spontaneous, and instinctive in form and content.

This dualistic conception of poetry, and of art in general, amounted to the distinction between Classicism, now looked at as an elitist and socially barren culture, and Romanticism, a movement fully aware of contemporary political and social features and problems which the modern artist had to interpret according to the dictates of a whole native milieu. Whereas in the major European literatures (such as the Italian, in which the heredity of the Renaissance was still alive) this new conception sought to assume an anti-classical identity, in the case of a small island like Malta, where the traditional Italian literature of the Maltese proved to be the concern of a numerically restricted and

socially privileged class, it implied not only a radical reaction against a worn-out aesthetic vision but also the hitherto unprecedented formation of a national awareness, which inevitably had to be both political and linguistic.

### *Ġan Anton Vassallo's triple contribution*

Ġan Anton Vassallo (1817-1868) effected the earliest traces of development in that direction. Fully equipped with an Italian academic education, he soon started to participate in the new aesthetic vision and to form a poetics totally oriented towards democratic experience. The people were to inspire the poet and to suggest to him the lexical, structural, and thematic components of his art.<sup>10</sup>

Vassallo's contribution has a triple character. He introduced into Maltese the pathetic or sentimental attitude which represents man as an emotional creature in search of self-attainment through love. The dialogue with nature which surrounds human sensibility is transformed into an intimate document of man's psychological journey. Alongside this subject-object relationship the poet presents a fresh awareness of the troubled soul as the central unit within the texture of all human experiences. The second component of Vassallo's poetry is satirical. Man is not only conceived as a victim of superior forces which are continuously exerting their influence on his sensibility—thus motivating a type of poetry which is thematically negative and pessimistic, stylistically delicate and melodious, and rhetorically direct—but also as an active protagonist of a social environment. His romantic fables seek to caricature a set of public aspects and to turn stale folkloristic material into a spectacular panorama of what actually underlies the truest identity of a humble class-ridden society. Animal psychology, class conscience, personified animate and inanimate entities, dramatised traditions, dictions and situations of particular sectors of society are fused into one whole in order to create a colourfully critical interpretation of contemporary life.

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<sup>10</sup>Of all the instances in which Ġan Anton Vassallo dwells on this democratic interpretation of culture, and of poetry in particular, the following are the most important: *A chi legge, F' rejjef u Ċajt bil-Malti* (Fables and Jokes in Maltese; Malta, 1895), 3-4, 7; "Lettera al Prof. Dott. Stefano Zerafa," *L'ordine* 28/6/1861, 3; *Moghħajja taz-żmien fil-Lsien Malti* (Pasttime in the Maltese Language; Malta, 1843), 3-4; *Prolusione al Corso di letteratura italiana nella R. Università degli Studi* (Malta, 1864), 3, 17, 20-22.



Vassallo was trying to do in Malta what Fiacchi, Perego, Gozzi, Casti, Passeroni, Batacchi, Pignotti and many others were doing in Italy. Thematically and structurally, his fables are an integral part of the movement. This pedagogical aspect of Romanticism flourished enormously in the island and may be said to be one of the major means by which the native idiom acquired a nation-wide justification for its popular-literary cultivation.

But the poet's focal conception of man is essentially nationalistic. It is man the citizen, as opposed to man the disillusioned lover or man the social animal, that determines to the greatest extent the character of his poetic vision. The heroic past is brought back to life through a dramatic re-elaboration which puts people, events, and environments on an equal footing and which looks at history as an uninterruptedly evolving present, thus suggesting that the idealised *patria* of the Romantics is potentially on the verge of being actualised in definite political terms. Through this elimination of any mental barrier between past and future, the poet — in a manner analogous to that of the all-seeing prophet — brings to life the new image of the nation.

This three-fold character of Vassallo's contribution to Maltese poetry marks the initial phase of a relatively long period of effort conducted along the same lines by subsequent poets. Minor authors like Ludovico Mifsud Tommasi (1795-1879), Richard Taylor (1818-1868), Gużè Muscat Azzopardi (1853-1927), Anton Muscat Fenech (1854-1910), Dwardu Cachia (1853-1907), Manwel Dimech (1860-1921) and others continued to develop further the democratic orientation of poetry and to widen the poet's sources of inspiration through a better understanding of social structures and a more flexible manipulation of popular diction according to a set of literary criteria. The romantic axiom that poetry is a depository of national truth explains what actually happened on the poetic level. On the other hand, the school of Maltese poets writing in Italian sought to drive home this vision of man and the country. But since now it was only popular sensibility which could inspire works of art — a basic truth insistently proclaimed and diffused in Malta through the island's participation in Italy's romantic experience, and particularly through the extensive local activity of the Italian exiled rebels (1804-ca. 1860)— and since Maltese was rapidly assuming a central role which was ultimately destined to sub-

stitute, at least partly, the traditional cultural role of Italian,<sup>11</sup> this group of writers found themselves faced with a decisive dilemma: they had either to come to grips with the new situation (that is, through resorting to the handling of Maltese as their artistic medium and through reaching a compromise with the immediate aspirations and the real educational standards of the majority), or to isolate themselves considerably from the mainstream and to reduce themselves to a consciously isolated socio-literary caste.

Consequently, many of the romantically oriented poets of the early twentieth century (like Ġ. Muscat Azzopardi, A. Cuschieri, N. Cremona, Dun Karm) soon found that the new challenge, being both political and aesthetic, could only be adequately faced through translating (and partly modifying) their own "Italian" romantic conscience into Maltese. Others, however, failed to accept the intrinsic value of the popular idiom and continued to write romantic poetry which, paradoxically enough, could no longer reach its basic aim, popular communication. The implied aesthetic contradiction is indirectly present in certain Maltese poems which proclaim the myth of a national language.

The contemporaneity of the two schools, though linguistically much different and socially opposed, may appear at first sight to be analogous to the thematic and formal distinction between the old literature, still written according to the Latin tradition, and the new literature which reflected certain elements of Semitic philosophy and technical apparatus. Maltese was looked at, up to a few decades ago, as a mere corrupt Arabic dialect, the "poverty" of which was further proved by its lexical assimilations from Sicilian and Italian.<sup>12</sup> Since

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<sup>11</sup>Maltese became an official language of Malta in 1934 ("Letters Patent Passed under the Great Seal of the Realm Amending Section 57 of the Malta Constitution Letters Patent," *The Malta Government Gazette* 7937 (21/8/1934), 642-644, 650-652).

<sup>12</sup>Although the language question emphasised the basic distinction between Italian (as the living evidence of a rich Latin patrimony) and Maltese (as a Semitic dialect, then deemed unworthy, which served as a mere vehicle of popular communication), for the literary historian it is still more important insofar as it motivated a further distinction within the Maltese language literary movement itself. Some writers sought to purify the written idiom from all non-Semitic derivatives (an attitude analogous in various ways to the Italian purist movement, led by Antonio Cesari and others, which during the Napoleonic era tried to restore the modern language according to the Italian of the "aureo Trecento"). Others, however, believed that an effective democratisation of literature in Maltese could not be adequately carried out without using lexical and structural patterns which, although carefully and intelligently selected, were also totally faithful to the actual choices of the contemporary population. The purist movement,

the Maltese community had, and still has, a Catholic orientation, and since the local writers who, either abandoned Italian to start experimenting with Maltese or initiated their creative activity through Maltese, were not in any way alien to the Italian tradition,<sup>13</sup> they were repeatedly reminded of their being "educati italianamente."

One can only speak, therefore, of a harmonious fusion of the older and the new tradition, a historically organic continuation of one complete process. The modern usage of the native language instead of the more respectable one and the consequent democratisation of literature are only new bearings within the same linear development.

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represented mainly by A.M. Caruana (1838-1907), who sought to eliminate as much as possible non-Semitic loan words from his novel *Inez Ferrug* (1889), and from his *Vocabolario della lingua maltese* (1903), and by Annibale Preca (1830-1901), who strove to give an all-embracing Semitic origin to common words of Romance derivation, particularly to place-names and surnames, in his *Malta Cananea* (1904), was later on succeeded by a group of liberal thinkers who faithfully reiterated the linguistic democratism of the Italian romantics. Napuljun Tagliaferro (1843-1915; "Sugli elementi costitutivi del linguaggio maltese," *Archivum melitense* 1 [1910] 8-14); Ninu Cremona (1880-1972; *X'inhu l-Malti Safi* [What Is Pure Maltese; Malta, 1925]); Dun Karm (1871-1961; "Inhobba l-ilsien Malti" [Let's Love the Maltese Language], *Il-Malti* vol. 7, no. 4 [1931] 101-103); and G. Aquilina (b. 1911; *L-ilsien Malti* [The Maltese Language; Malta, 1945]) were openly in favour of a natural fusion of Semitic and Romance words which ultimately reflected both the truest image of popular spirit and a synchronised version of the spoken language.

<sup>13</sup>In spite of the well-known fact that Latin Romanticism amply exploited various extra-European sources of inspiration, and notwithstanding the basic Semitic character of Maltese, Vassallo insisted that local writers were duty bound to interpret and sublimate the real identity of the country. In practical terms this meant — as it subsequently came to pass — that they were only expected to insert themselves within the wider current of the Latin tradition and to find the adequate channels through which they could adopt a linguistic medium of Semitic origin according to the set of non-Semitic formal and thematic components that were part and parcel of the island's cultural orientation. When one bears in mind that Vassallo was fully aware of the need of diffusing the popular language and of creating a poetic corpus which faithfully reflected the community's innermost experiences, one can only conclude that in this way he was advocating the organic fusion of a Semitic language and a Latin spirituality which henceforth was destined to prevail in all future literary works: "Sacrificheremo pure vanità filologiche e interessi maggiori, a più alto fine; facciamo ogni sforzo per ispingerci verso l'occidente nonostante l'orientalismo della nostra lingua. All'Oriente, bellissimo nelle pagine di Chateaubriand e Lamartine, diamo soltanto un saluto poetico; sien essi però i nostri sguardi, i nostri sospiri, per l'occidente" *Lettera al Prof. Dott. Stefano Zerafa* (cit.), 3-4.

*Dun Karm as a nationalist and a solitary*

Maltese only needed then to assume this respectability and to be identified with culture, apart from folklore, popular comedy, and religious ritual. This was the challenge which awaited a master of both languages, ideally gifted also with a sublime poetic character, since the poetic genre was actually the most popular and hence the most suitable to involve the majority in such a socio-cultural encounter. This poet could not possibly be one who was outside the *only* group of dedicated Maltese authors, that is, those who cultivated the Italian tradition and sought to develop it locally. The broader cultural situation is commonly labelled as linguistic but in reality was deeply rooted in social and ideological substrata. It only lacked the presence of a unifying spirit who also happened to be a resourceful author, and who had already let European, and especially Italian risorgimental, Romanticism exert far-reaching influences on his identity, to make him take the irrevocable decision of giving both Italian and Maltese their respective due. In fact, Dun Karm (1871-1961) was endowed with a deep sense of historicism and could easily accept the challenge in its entirety, but only "failed" to see any incompatibility between the two linguistic media on the creative level.

Since he wrote exclusively in Italian up to 1912 (his first poem dates to 1889), when he started to write in Maltese he did not undergo a substantial or radical change, but retaining the formal and ideological features he had already developed in his first literary phase, he continued to assert the same dignity in regard to the native language. The fact that this event of major importance in the literary evolution of Maltese did not take the form of a total re-examination but of a healthy fusion of past and present is further evinced by another, equally significant fact: Dun Karm went on to write occasionally in Italian even after the year of his linguistic "conversion" (1912).

Dun Karm succeeds in exalting for the first time the vision of a glorious nation, and transforms its long history into a lyrical epic full of heroes and spectacular events. Through the dramatic reincarnation of such patriots as Dun Mikiel Xerri, Vassalli, and La Valette, and through the depiction of a varied series of folkloristic vignettes, he unifies in one complete whole the always relevant glories of the past and the verifiable merits of contemporary life. A group of national figures, romantically conceived as the fathers of the country (a direct participation in a central motive of Italian nineteenth-century inspiration, elaborated and diffused in particular by Foscolo, with whom Dun Karm takes part in an ideal but intimately passionate dialogue,

and whose *I sepolcri* he translated into superb Maltese), and an anonymous multitude of faithful citizens form one ethnic entity distinctly characterised by its religious charity in deeds and intentions. The Mazzinian emblem of "God and the People", as well as the thinker's doctrine of one's right to have a homeland and consequently one's duty to construct it, assume an essential importance in the poetry of Dun Karm (and then of his numerous followers). Metaphors, similes, rhetorical devices, poetic forms, emotional adjectivisations and other lexical choices easily define this poetic corpus as significantly risorigimental according to the Italian models, which are here revisited and experienced by a mature spirit, and reorganised according to the needs and suggestions of an immediate historical situation.<sup>14</sup>

The subject-object dilemma of the romantic conscience is also actively present in Dun Karm. In complete contrast with the nationalistic, outward-looking component of his poetic personality, there is the equally important aspect of his solitude. This motive is insistently expressed in poems which evoke the fatally remote figure of his mother and which depict a loving nostalgia for the countryside where the poet's sensibility revives the past and seeks to indulge in an ego-id relationship, at once physical and spiritual. The landscape, previously transformed into a figurative version of the island's differentiating factors which form and justify its national definition, is now spiritualised according to one's own internal universe and reduced to an objectivised projection of a disturbed human psychology. Even if Christianised and ethically restrained, the *Sehnsucht* motive, the urge for the nostalgically exotic, is typical of Dun Karm's real individuality.

### *Poetry as a lyric*

The thematic field of subsequent romantic poets was destined to evolve within analogous limits. This was partly due to Dun Karm's literary influence on his contemporaries as well as to a sort of collective participation in one general experience, aesthetically romantic and historically Maltese, which was bound to make itself evident in terms of a common trend, a *courant commun*, to use Van Tieghem's comparative language.<sup>15</sup> Although substantially and stylistically very distinct

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<sup>14</sup>For an examination of this central component of Maltese national poetry, O. Friggieri, *Storia della letteratura maltese* (Milazzo, 1986), 217-254.

<sup>15</sup>P. Van Tieghem, *La littérature comparée* (3rd edition, Paris, 1946), 136.

from one another, Ruġar Briffa (1906-1963), George Zammit (b. 1908), Anton Buttigieg (1912-1983) and Karmenu Vassallo (1913-1987) gradually eliminate the remnants of patriotic inspiration and adopt a thoroughly subjective, inward-looking attitude. Instead of socio-political preoccupations, their lyricism at its best presents a second stage of the main romantic evolution, an intensified investigation of man as a passionate victim of his sensations as well as of the supreme forces of nature with which (or better, with whom, since the world of empirical data is always personified and frequently transformed into an ethereal, omnipresent feminine figure) they can develop a psychological relationship. Since this is their particular way of passing from monologue to dialogue, from isolation to extra-personal commitment, the focal character of their poetry is confessional, at times overtly diaristic.

Ruġar Briffa imposes upon his own sensibility a set of time-space limits which transcend their original sensory data insofar as they convey the imaginative exaltation of a suffering soul. George Zammit seeks the mysteriously religious significance of creatures and objects by which he is hauntingly surrounded, and sees in empirical data a mystic manifestation of infinity which is both external and spiritual. Anton Buttigieg challenges the ideal-real dichotomy by depicting reality (which is largely vegetative and sensitive) according to an ideally anthropomorphised conception. His seemingly descriptive poetry, richly suggestive and allusive, is only an elevated projection of his own internal universe. Karmenu Vassallo, whose first poetic phase (1932-1944) is essentially determined by Leopardi's poetics of socio-psychological exclusion on the one hand, and a poetics of negation, as evinced by his central lexical choices and syntactic patterns, on the other, has a contrasting identity: he is perhaps the only local poet to reveal an affinity with the *Sturm und Drang* state of soul (a directly Italian, and indirectly German, assimilation), but he also ends up by denying humanity in general, and poets in particular, the possibility of ever creating illusions. This anti-Kantian negation is traceable back to both philosophical and literary spirits of modern Europe.

*University of Malta*

## REFLECTIONS ON THE STUDY OF MUSLIM SICILY: History, Politics, and Nineteenth-Century Sicilian Historiography

The theme of re-reading history, of re-reading the pages of history relating to the presence of Islam in Europe during the Middle Ages and during the modern period, of new historiographic approaches, has been for some time at the centre of a stimulating debate involving orientalisists as well as intellectuals and scholars of western history. Given the complexity of the theme, and particularly in light of the fact that the its political resonance can be analysed from various points of view,<sup>1</sup> we will limit our observations to the scope that has been set by the organisers of this issue of *Scripta Mediterranea*, making reference to exemplary moments in Sicilian historiographic production of the first half of the nineteenth century. These writings, little known outside the region, made use of the results generated by the research of Arabists in general, in order to grant crucial space to the “problem” of the presence of Islam in Sicily during the Middle Ages—one of the diverse factors that contributed to the formation of the idea of “Sicilianism”<sup>2</sup>—during an epoch of transition and of political and institutional restructuring on the island. In this context, forming a judgement on the scientific value of the aforementioned historiographic production is of no interest. It must rather be taken into consideration as a phenomenon intimately linked to the development of ideas and of sentiments, impossible to break down or to isolate without running the risk—as has been justly noted—of undervaluing or impoverishing it.<sup>3</sup> What is of interest is the fact that modern Sicilian historiography, positioning

*SCRIPTA MEDITERRANEA*, Vols XIX-XX 1998-1999, 109

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<sup>1</sup>See B. Scarcia Amoretti, “La storiografia arabistica italiana di fronte alla questione della presenza islamica nel mezzogiorno medievale,” in *Il mezzogiorno medievale nella storiografia del secondo dopoguerra: risultati e prospettive*, Atti del IV Convegno Nazionale A.M.I. (Bari, n.d.), 113-21.

<sup>2</sup>Interesting in this regard is G. Trovato, *Sopravvivenze arabe in Sicilia* (Mon-reale, 1949). Trovato notes, among other things: “among the various dominating nations that occupied Sicily in succession, none enjoys more popular memories than the Saracens; the memory of this occupation has retained great currency in the popular imagination.”

<sup>3</sup>F. Brancato, *Storiografia e politica nella Sicilia dell'Ottocento* (Palermo, 1973), 39.

itself in relation to the "problem" (as well as the *study*) of the presence of Islam in the largest island of the Mediterranean, and positioning itself in relation to the processes of historical and political re-composition that engaged the European and Italian nineteenth century, came to represent a phenomenon that was complex, original and anti-conformist in respect to the historiographic tendencies dominant in Europe during the era. This must be pointed out, whether in the interests of analysing other European experiences of the same epoch, or in the interests of considering the Sicilian historical research of our own age. Even that Sicilian historiographic production properly termed "Arabist" —like the work published by Amari at the mid-point of the nineteenth century— does not seem, at least for the moment, to constitute an appropriate object for reconsideration: quite the opposite of the situation of contemporary Hispano-Arabists, who have taken up the specific "question" of the presence of Islam in the Iberian peninsula.<sup>4</sup>

Canard held that "on ne peut guère ajouter que des broutilles à l'immortelle *Storia dei Musulmani di Sicilia*."<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, it is true that many have called implicitly for a re-thinking of the history of Islam in Sicily, beginning with a re-reading of the sources Amari used: a broadening of the field of investigation; the identification of new materials and sources; re-examination of the "problems," in an attempt not only to enrich that which is considered cultural history, but also to clarify conceptualisation of the political history relevant to the presence of Islam in Sicily, in relation to broader Mediterranean developments.<sup>6</sup> The sequence of events with which the traditional Arabo-Muslim sources have familiarised us, as they were recorded by Maghribi Muslim historians who lived during a later epoch than the facts they wrote about, and as Amari collected and analysed them, can appear to the researcher to be definitive fact. But these very historico-political judgements in truth were, between the end of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century, at the centre of the historiographic polemic and political discourse that surrounded the "Sicilianist" debate.<sup>7</sup> Recent archaeological discoveries (in the area of Trapani and in the very city of Palermo); new and important socio-economic studies; the publication of Arabo-Islamic sources, among them

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<sup>4</sup>See, e.g., P. Chalmeta, *Invasión e islamización, la sumisión de Hispania y la formación de al-Andalus* (Madrid, 1994).

<sup>5</sup>M. Canard, "Quelques notes relatives à la Sicile sous les premiers califes fatimites," in *L'Expansion arabo-islamique et ses repercussions* (London, 1974), 569.

<sup>6</sup>See *Del nuovo sulla Sicilia musulmana*, Atti della giornata di studio, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei (Fondazione Leone Caetani) (Rome, 1995).

<sup>7</sup>The relevant considerations expressed by Amari in *La guerra del Vespro siciliano* (Palermo, 1842) can be considered paradigmatic.



the Shiite and Ismailite sources, until recently largely unknown, which Amari himself did not know, and which still have been used only in part, represent new developments which challenge previously held definitions of the role of Sicily in the context of the *dār al-Islām*, as “border land” (*thaghr*) and “land of *jihād*.”<sup>8</sup> Definition of the relations between the most important island in Muslim hands and the Fatimite imamate during the tenth century, with regard to political and cultural history, to the structure of institutional systems, to society, to juridical and doctrinal tendencies, is a matter of no minor import. The “Biography” of the *ustādh* Jawdhar has cast new light, as has now been amply recognised, on the role of the first *‘ummāl* of the Banū Abī'l-Ḥusayn, or the Kalbites of Sicily, and on the relations between these governors and the *‘ubayad* caliph-imams.<sup>9</sup> The historical and historico-exhortative work of the Fatimite *qāḥīl-quḥāt*, Qāḥī al-Nu‘mān, who died at Fustat in 973, and that later work written by Idrīs ‘Imād al-Dīn, the Ismailite *dā‘ī* who lived during the fifteenth century, add no new details of importance to that exposition of events already known to us. Still they provide for the scholar a clearer historico-political frame within which the pages of history relative to Islamic Sicily might be placed, and they offer to the scholar points of reflection on the fundamental question of the relations between the governors and the governed, between *khāssa* and *‘amma*, between partisans of the true faith and *munāfiqīn*, in relation to the particular politico-ideological system edified by the Shiite caliph-imams in Ifrīpyyah.<sup>10</sup> The information provided by the authors named here regarding the rebellion and/or *nifāq* of Ibn Qurhub (913-16), a member of the family of the Banūl-Aghlab, the “corrupt” governing Sunnis, to cite a single, significant example, emerges as noteworthy in this respect. The general sketch that emerges of the renowned Palermitan’s rebellion tends to illuminate the role of the *akābir* and/or the rich urban nobility, and of Ibn Qurhub himself, whom Amari, perhaps a bit too romantically, had considered “sincere and loyal ... a noble citizen, orthodox, affectionate toward the Aghlabites, a Sicilian (*sic!*) ... (he initiated the revolt) not

<sup>8</sup>I have attempted to accomplish this in recent publications, such as “The Historical-ideological Framework of Islamic Fāṭimid Sicily with Reference to the Works of the Qāḥī l-Nu‘man,” in *Al-Masāq* 7 (1994): 111-163, and *I Fatimiti e la Sicilia (sec. X)* (Palermo, 1997).

<sup>9</sup>See my “Qualche nota relativa ai Banū Abī'l-Ḥusayn,” In *Azāār: Studi arabo-islamici in memoria di Umberto Rizzitano* (Palermo, 1995), 157-75.

<sup>10</sup>By Qadī al-Nu‘mān, see in particular *Kitāb iftītāḥ al-da‘wah* (Beirut, 1970) and *Kitāb al-majālis wa'l-musāyarāt* (Tunis, 1978). By Idrīs ‘Imād al-Dīn, *Ta‘rīkh al-khulafā’ al-fāṭimīyyīn bi'l-Maghrib* (Beirut, 1985).

for frivolous reasons, not for vanity, nor inspired by the ambition ... of a generous spirit ... to liberate his homeland (*sic!*) at once from Africa and from anarchy... Ibn Qurhub aimed to create in Sicily a legitimate and stable government, with all that liberty that the orthodox Muslim might ever have imagined."<sup>11</sup>

If the judgements expressed by the Sunnite Muslim historians against the "abominable"<sup>12</sup> Shiite dynasty of the *Ubaydiyyin* are taken into consideration, the judgement of Amari — who had made reference to those historians in particular — appears comprehensible. The revolt of the Sicilian Ibn Qurhub, like the other important events that occurred during the early years of the Fatimite caliphate-imamate, can be traced to a common source, emblematically identified by an unknown author of the twelfth century, himself a sympathetic Fatimite and probably belonging to the Shiite *madhḥab*: the crisis of the Abbasid caliphate, and the rupture of equilibrium within the world of Islam during the tenth century.<sup>13</sup> It was not by accident that Ibn Ḥawqal — at times underrated, often considered a propagandist *tout court*, serving the Shiite imams of North Africa — wrote during the tenth century on the political situation of Ikhshidite Egypt and on Byzantium's aggression in the eastern Mediterranean: "power (*mulk*) is non-existent; the lord (*al-mālik*) thinks only of his own interests; the man of science (*al-ʿālim*) devotes himself to robbery and is corrupt, and no one moves to stop him; the legal expert (*al-faqīh*) behaves like a famished wolf who knows how to manoeuvre when faced with any situation and profits from every opportunity offered him; the merchant is a patent liar, the most illicit transactions are permitted him; the territories and their populations are left at the mercy of enemies."<sup>14</sup>

Probably Ibn Ḥawqal, who never disguised his sympathies for the ʿUbayyad caliphs, strove to discredit the pro-Abbasid dynasty of Fustat. But the political crisis that rocked the Islamic world as, beginning in 937, dynasties and clans redistributed their own personal power (*mulk*), should certainly be considered the frame within which to place a more precise historico-political profile of the events that occurred in that century, in the Islamic world in general, and therefore in Muslim Sicily. For this reason, the passage relevant to the revolt spearheaded

<sup>11</sup> Amari, *Storia dei musulmani di Sicilia*, ed. Carlos Alfonso Nallino (Catania, 1933-39), vol. II, 172-75.

<sup>12</sup> See, among other works, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Taʾrīkh al-khulafāʾ* (Beirut, 1988): the Fatimite dynasty is defined as "al-khabīṭa," p. 420.

<sup>13</sup> *Kitāb al-ʿuyūn waʾl ḥadāʾiq fī akhbār alḥaqāʾiq* (vol. IV, author unknown) (Damascus, 1972-73).

<sup>14</sup> Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ṣurat al-arḍ* (Beirut, 1963), 185-86.

by the Palermitan Ibn Qurhub, taken from a work justly held to be immortal, cannot but compel the scholar, in the light of the new information that has been noted here, to recognise the need of re-reading the history of Islam and, with specific reference to those pages of history relative to the presence of Islam in Sicily and to *Sicily in Islam*, to conduct this re-reading using the methodologies provided by new historiographic approaches. This must be taken into account, in particular, if one wishes to remain within the scope of traditional scholarly studies, for which any involvement with Sicily and Islam during the Middle Ages produces an investment that is in the last analysis negative: the pages of history relative to Islamic Sicily are to be considered, according to a certain contemporary vision, not only external, but even secondary, to be taken in consideration in support of theses of regionalist and/or provincialist autonomy.<sup>15</sup>

To delineate in this sense and in this context a profile of the approach taken by Sicilian historians and intellectuals of the first half of the nineteenth century in relation to the phenomenon of Islam in Sicily during the Middle Ages can be a useful task. The act of defining the interpretative trajectory that characterised the most representative Sicilian historiography during the period between the end of the eighteenth century and the production of Amari the Arabist (the midway point of the nineteenth century) constitutes, in our view, a forum, with no pretext of completeness, for subsequent reflections regarding the details of the debate. And it illuminates the necessity of re-reading history, and of rebuilding, from a new foundation, the philosophical spirit of historical research, departing directly in this case from the historiographic production of past centuries.

Beginning in the sixteenth century, as is well known, the West undertook to perfect its historiographic techniques and methodology by focusing on a more accurate elaboration of historico-chronological and philosophical data; this process lasted until the middle of the eighteenth century. In Sicily a number of scholars made important contributions during this period: Tommaso Fazello (1498-1570), held to be the "father of Sicilian history," author of a *De rebus Siculis o Historiae Siculae (History of Sicily)*, considered history "lux veritatis,"<sup>16</sup> even when he treated the pages of history relevant to Islam in Sicily, though he incorporated obvious errors and traditional negative judgements; Giambattista Caruso (1673-1724), author of the *Bibliotheca Historica Regni Siciliae* (Palermo, 1723), which included a *Historiae*

<sup>15</sup>A worthwhile work to consult in this regard is the philosopher G. Gentile's *Il tramonto della cultura siciliana* (second edition, Florence, 1963), and in particular the preface.

<sup>16</sup>T. Fazello, *Storia di Sicilia* (Palermo, 1990 and 1992); introduction by M. Ganci, p. 6. The section dedicated to Islam in medieval Sicily is in the second volume, 347-385.

*saraceno-siculae varia monumenta*;<sup>17</sup> Antonino Mongitore (1663-1743), who also produced a *Bibliotheca Sicula*.<sup>18</sup> But it was without a doubt during the final decades of the eighteenth century that the diffusion of the new trends linked to the Enlightenment stimulated scholars and intellectuals in Sicily in the research of new historiographic approaches, designed to refine knowledge of the juridico-social dimension of the history of the “fatherland,” and not focused on erudition as an end in itself, which had characterised certain works from the previous era. Wishing to affirm his love of research and of history, the scholar strove to demonstrate an idea, a principle, an interpretation.<sup>19</sup> From this point of view, Sicilian culture articulated closer ties to English thought than to French “Encyclopaedism”: the work of David Hume (1711-1776) and in particular his *History of England* (1754-61), was recognised as a model of historico-critical methodology valid also for Sicily, whose history would be informed (like English history) by a substantial, secular unifying spirit, founded along precise juridical lines.<sup>20</sup>

However, it should be remembered that those studies from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that could be termed, strictly speaking, “Arabist” awakened the desire to acquire a new and less approximate knowledge of Sicily’s Islamic past. Thus they served to quicken a more dynamic interest and inspire more rigorous researches toward the rediscovery of the “great moment,” represented for Sicily by the Arabo-Norman era, whose crisis —especially the crisis of the state’s “autonomistic” organisation— would signal the beginning of the decadence of the largest island in the Mediterranean.<sup>21</sup> The most representative Sicilian historiographic production from the late eighteenth-early nineteenth centuries considered the arrival of Islam in Sicily in the ninth century to be a fundamentally positive event. The

<sup>17</sup>See U. Rizzitano, “Un secolo di studi arabistici siciliani,” from *La presenza della Sicilia nella cultura degli ultimi cento anni* (Palermo, n.d.), 54-55.

<sup>18</sup>See F. Brancato 53.

<sup>19</sup>A complete list of the historico-cultural works in which this approach is articulated would be too long. However it is valuable to cite as exemplary those works that we find most interesting: P. Lanza di Scordia (d. 1855), *Considerazioni sulla storia di Sicilia dal 1532 al 1759* (Palermo, 1836); A. Narbone (d. 1860), *Istoria della letteratura siciliana* (Palermo, 1856); vol. IV —358 pages— is entirely dedicated to Arabo-Islamic culture in Sicily; G. Picone (1901), *Memorie storiche agrigentine* (Girgenti, 1866): the fifth “memory” is dedicated to Muslim Agrigento (pp. 351-448).

<sup>20</sup>See F. Brancato 58.

<sup>21</sup>F. Gabrieli, “Un secolo di studi arabo-siculi,” in *Studia Islamica*, 2 (1954): 89-102; U. Rizzitano, *Storia e cultura nella Sicilia saracena* (Palermo, 1975); and by the same author, “Gli studi arabo-siculi: bilancio e prospettive,” in *Atti dell’Accademia di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti di Palermo* 35 (1975-76): 167-183.

coming of the troops under the leadership of the *qādī* Asad Ibn al-Furāt would open a new era: "the lasting international peace which the Sicilians enjoyed for 200 years was the gift of the Saracens," wrote Saverio Scrofani (d. 1835). In support of this thesis he cited factors relevant 1) to culture: "(the Arabs) caused the fine arts and scholarship to flower again ... and promoted them more abundantly than ever before"; 2) to administration and juridical organisation: "they divided the island, providently, into a number of parts ... they introduced emirs, *al-caidi*, *gaiti*, and with these, new limits on ownership, on contracts, on private inheritance, and every other means of regulation, which the Normans would subsequently maintain"; 3) to economy and agricultural redevelopment through "tax on the lands of the new subjects ... new treaties (no longer vague and at the discretion of greedy lords)." Scrofani recognised, finally, in a note on this work in 1824: "although these sciences and arts were very far from those of the Greeks to which the West would one day come around, still they merit a distinguished position in history as an honourable effort of the human spirit, and as a flicker of that sacred fire, which prepared Italy and the world for a more favourable era."<sup>22</sup>

Matters of government and juridical organisation were taken up, during this epoch of transition between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as worthy objects of interest and study, and exalted as the essential factors thanks to which Sicily would enjoy, according to the Sicilian historians of the era, a unique politico-institutional and cultural position. Although such factors were rooted in the period of Islamic presence during the preceding centuries, they were fully realised with the advent of the Norman monarchy. It redounds to the merit of Sicilian historiography of the moment, therefore, that historians recognised and stressed the fundamental weight of the customs derived from the presence of Islam in Sicily during the Middle Ages. Not by accident did a historian and intellectual like Gioacchino Di Marzo, in a work published in Palermo in 1858 under the title *Dell'incivilimento siciliano nell'epoca normanna e sveva, poche riflessioni*, while underscoring the fact that the genesis of Sicilian civilisation in the medieval epoch began with the Normans and came to fruition during the Hohenstaufen years, identify the historico-political and cultural origins of this process in the earlier Arabo-Muslim presence. Indeed, Di Marzo wrote: "we call a society 'civil' not only when it is infused with scientific knowledge, when virtue takes root in it, when the fine arts flower and every sort of industry finds vigorous expression within it; we require as well

<sup>22</sup>S. Scrofani, *Discorsi due della dominazione degli stranieri in Sicilia* (Paris, 1824), 116-118; note, p. 242.

perfected social practices, which should constitute a civil government, a wise and just legislation, a public governing body capable of creating a sense of peace and security both within and without ... The Arabs, as everybody knows, created the most civil of the states which flourished during the Middle Ages ... they made every effort to pursue the progress of the sciences and the arts ... they were the most civil population that then populated Europe."<sup>23</sup>

Again, the reflections on history written by Niccolò Palmeri (1778-1837) in the preface to his *Somma della storia di Sicilia* are paradigmatic in this regard: "history is enumerated among the sciences; but it cannot be called such, until it is confined in the narrow limits of the bare narration of events. As the painter does men, the historian must portray people. The most rigid precision is required of both ... Except that, while the one depicts the man in a single attitude, the other must demonstrate the diverse aspects that time and the variations of fortune have bestowed upon nations. Nor with the simple exposition of facts can he work through his material. His craft requires him to proceed revealing bit by bit, with sober and sage discernment, from the facts themselves which he narrates, what were the political forms, with which peoples were governed; what were their civil customs; the religion; the number of inhabitants; the origins of public and private wealth; letters; sciences; arts; and all that which constitutes the essence of civil societies" (pp. iii-iv).<sup>24</sup>

Working from similar assumptions, Carmelo Martorana (d. 1870)—intellectual and scholar of jurisprudence; first prefect of Palermo, then procurator in Messina for the king during the years of the restored Bourbon monarchy, to whom he considered himself a faithful servant—published during 1832-3 a voluminous work entitled *Notizie storiche dei Saraceni di Sicilia*. This study, the first complete history of Muslim Sicily produced by a non-Arabist, was conceived with the explicit purpose of casting light on the period of the Muslim domination, to that point little-known compared to other moments in Sicilian history. An Arabist like Vincenzo Mortillaro (d. 1888) felt compelled to emphasise on two occasions the value of Martorana's work, writing: "To tell the truth, to this day I have found no one who thought more effectively about our Saracens, or with greater accuracy, or with finer judge-

<sup>23</sup>G. Di Marzo 5-6 and 9-13.

<sup>24</sup>The pages from Palmeri's work dedicated to Islam in Sicily (chapter XVI) bear witness to the reflections considered above, although his comprehensive judgement on the Muslim domination was not flattering, since —Palmeri emphasises— it proves that "the domination of foreigners has always been pernicious for Sicily, no matter how cultured they might have been" (p. 119).

and is suitable only for legal specialists; rather, I comfort myself that I follow the fine example of Pietro Giannone and other great men, who, on the contrary, have done precisely that while narrating the history of many peoples."<sup>27</sup>

From this point of view, Martorana's work can be considered representative of a tendency common from the end of the eighteenth until the middle of the nineteenth centuries, designed to problematise and criticise the impact of external factors on the affirmation of a "Sicilianism" (or the pretension of such) grounded in juridical organisation and autonomous administration. Not all intellectuals and Sicilian historians of the epoch thought in the same manner; the vision of Martorana, a faithful servant of the Bourbon monarchy which conceded nothing to the political movement of *sicilianismo*, constitutes an illuminating example. However, one fact common to all should be noted: Sicilian scholars, beyond the diversity of their individual political alliances, laboured towards the goal of defining, in the "good government" and "good laws" upon which first Muslim Sicily and then the Norman monarchy would be founded, the impact of a Mediterranean dynamic on Sicily, and Sicily's cultural specificity.<sup>28</sup>

Despite the influence of the events that unravelled after 1860, and despite the fact that the publication of the work of the great Amari would make our knowledge of the presence of Islam in Sicily during the Middle Ages more complete and more precise, the historiographic studies of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries should be considered significant for escaping the impoverishment to which such debate would be confined in a unified Italy. Posing the historico-political and cultural problem of the impact of external factors on regionally specific formations, it had the merit of proposing and problematising fundamental historico-political and cultural themes, still today at the centre of debate between historians and specialists.<sup>29</sup>

University of Toronto  
(Trans. Karla Mallette)

<sup>27</sup>C. Martorana, *op. cit.*, vol. II, chapter III, p. 123. Pietro Giannone (1676-1748), to whom the author makes reference, is considered one of the great modern historians, and was author of an *Istoria del regno di Napoli*.

<sup>28</sup>The case of Isidoro La Lumia (d. 1879) can be considered emblematic: though he laboured for unification, he is held to be the historian of most typically Sicilian character.

<sup>29</sup>It is interesting to note that Francesco Gabrieli, who recently passed on and who played such a crucial role in stimulating Siculo-Arabic studies, at times aligned himself in favour of the thesis that held that the Islamic presence in medieval Sicily would be characterised in the last analysis as episodic, a parenthesis concluded with the re-entry of the Mediterranean island "into the circle of occidental civilisation" (see F. Gabrieli, "L'eredità romana nell'Italia meridionale e le invasioni islamiche," in *Storia e civiltà musulmana* [Naples, 1947] 32. By the same author, see also *Pagine arabo-siciliane* [Mazara del Vallo, 1986]).

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## LAUZENGIER—WĀSHĪ-INDEX, GARDADOR— CUSTOS: The “Enemies of Love” in Provençal, Arabo-Andalusian, and Latin Poetry

Among the range of possible connections between Arabo-Andalusian lyric, which emerged on Iberian soil around the eighth century, and the rise of love poetry in Provence<sup>1</sup> at the end of the eleventh century, scholars have identified a motif which perhaps merits further reflection:<sup>2</sup> that is, the so-called “enemies of love,” characters that create numerous and diverse difficulties for the lovers and seek to block the realisation of their desires. The theme is a *topos* of the love poetry of every age, and thus it has played a secondary role in studies of the origins of troubadour poetry, including those studies that sought such origins on Spanish soil. However, even if a theme is present in a number of cultures, as in the present case, the reader may still distinguish closer relations between particular uses of it. This occurs when given characteristics and constitutive elements of the theme demonstrate traits common to two cultures but not found in others, which are such as to allow the reader to detect a reciprocal influence between the two literary traditions or, indeed, the possible dependence of one tradition on the other, with specific regard to the theme in question.

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<sup>1</sup>The substantive Provence and the adjective Provençal are used in this article in reference to the ancient *Provincia* of the Romans, and not to the region of modern France, which is much smaller than that territory where a courtly poetry emerged at the end of the eleventh century.

<sup>2</sup>See, among other works: Lawrence Ecker, *Arabischer, Provenzalischer und deutscher Minnesang: Eine motifgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Bern und Leipzig, 1934) 22-55; Aloys R. Nykl, *Hispano-Arabic Poetry and its Relations with the Old Provençal Troubadours* (Baltimore, 1946) 394-395; Évariste Lévi-Provençal, *Islam d'Occident. Études d'histoire médiévale* (Paris, 1948) 295-296; Irénée Cluzel, “Quelques réflexions à propos des origines de la poésie lyrique des troubadours,” in *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* (1961): 179-188, p. 183; William Myron Davis, “Current Scholarship on the Origins of the Medieval Provençal Lyric: Some Conclusions,” in *Philologica pragensia* 10 (1967): 92-96, p. 93; Glynnis M. Cropp, *Le vocabulaire courtois des troubadours de l'époque classique* (Genève, 1975) 233-252. Further documentation can be found in the present author's dissertation, from which this article is taken: Patrizia Onesta, *La poesia d'amore in Provenza e in al-Andalus. Dall'analisi al confronto* (Università di Macerata, 1992/93) 188-198, 336-345, 389-393.

This is indeed the case with regard to the parallels between Arabo-Andalusian and Provençal lyric, in relation to the so-called "enemies of love." The theme, so diffuse in the love poetry of all epochs, presents in fact a wide range of variants, from the individualisation (more or less generic in diverse cases) of the character who thwarts the lovers, to his characterisation, his public and private role, and the poet-lover's diverse reactions to him.

Indeed, an examination of these variants allows us to distinguish noteworthy affinities between the *lauzengier* (slanderer) and *gardador* (watchman), two well-defined Provençal "enemies of love," on the one hand, and the *wāshī* (slanderer) and *raqīb* (observer), individuals who thwart the lovers in Arabo-Andalusian poetry, on the other. An analogous parallel could not be drawn, however, between the Provençal *ge-los* (the jealous one; a term with which the poet identifies the husband of the beloved) and the *castiador* (reprover) on the one hand, and the Arabo-Andalusian *ḥasūd* (jealous one) and *‘ādhil* (reprover). Nor can more certain points of comparison in this regard be found in Latin poetry; in Roman society, *censura* (censorship) was a public office, and the husband is rarely defined as jealous in the Latin poetic tradition. The affinities are much less obvious between Provençal and Latin love poetry with regard to the Provençal *lauzengier* and *gardador*. Indeed, in Latin lyric a single figure appears to dominate, among a few other decidedly secondary characters: that of the *custos* (guardian), who is also often the *ianitor* (door-keeper). This figure has certain traits in common with both the *gardador* and the *raqīb* on the one hand, and the *lauzengier* and *wāshī* on the other; he is presented as a discreet figure, firmly established in the classical tradition and in Roman society, isolated, and somewhat generic.<sup>3</sup> But it should be noted that, among the secondary figures, there does appear in Ovid an *index* (denouncer, spy), who, like the Provençal *lauzengier* and the Arabo-Andalusian *wāshī*, acts with the sole purpose of revealing the secret love of the two lovers. Another distinction between Latin and Provençal lyric is the lack, in the first, of a strong opposition to and an equally strong condemnation of, the poet-lover on the part of those who oppose the realisation of his desire for love. This tendency, on the other hand, is present both in Arabo-Andalusian and, in greater measure, Provençal lyric. In addi-

<sup>3</sup>Indeed, Plautus introduces this figure into six of his comedies; cf.: *Aulularia*, 556; *Curculio*, 76, 91; *Menaechmi*, 131; *Miles gloriosus*, 146, 153, 267, 271, 298, 305, 550; *Pseudolus*, 1037; and *Truculentus*, 812. He is among the characters that the Latin author used as leverage to raise a laugh from the spectators, and to resolve the plot of comedies; thus, he is well-known to the public as a typical figure in the Roman society of the period.

tion, the Arabo-Andalusian and Provençal traditions demonstrate a set of less strongly stated but similar strategies: the lover may seek to carry out surveillance of the beloved on his own part, or may instruct the beloved to become an expert in the subtle art of deceit. Both these elements are present in Latin lyric and particularly in the works of Ovid.<sup>4</sup>

In this article, similarities and differences between the love poetry of the three cultures will be outlined, both through examination of the characters who take on the role of "enemy of love" in each of them, and through the diverse reactions of the poet-lover to these characters. The examination will be based on texts treating for the most part amorous themes, both in prose and in poetry, from the eleventh-twelfth centuries for the Provençal poetry, the eighth-eleventh centuries for Arabo-Andalusian poetry, and from the third century BC to the second century AD for Latin poetry.<sup>5</sup> These readings will demonstrate that the very first Provençal poets —and among them, precisely those poets who were able to spend periods of time in Spanish courts<sup>6</sup>— were able to reconceive in their poetry the traditional figure of the "enemies of love," drawing on the institutions of the feudal society in which they lived,<sup>7</sup> and introducing other characteristics specific to Arabo-Andalusian lyric. Of the two figures under examination —the *lauzengier* and the *gardador* — only one, the *lauzengier*, remains in the works of the Provençal poets of the subsequent generation; and he maintains the characteristics of the Arabo-Andalusian *wāshī*. The violent reaction of the poet-lover to these characters also remains a constant characteristic in subsequent troubadour love poetry.

All this, as will be seen, delineates a part of the role that Arabo-Andalusian love poetry could have had in the emergence and development of Provençal poetry. In the absence of more explicit attestations of

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<sup>4</sup>I cite Ovid in particular, not only here but throughout this article, because he was an author whom the Provençal poets certainly knew; they quote him in their poetry (cf. Marcabru, *Ugo Catola*, 37-40; and Arnaut de Mareulh, *Mout eron doutz miei cossir*, 28-30).

<sup>5</sup>In the examination of troubadour poetry I do not intend to cross the "watershed" constituted by the Albigensian crusade (1209-1218), when the diaspora of the proponents of courtly love and the imposition, on the part of the Catholic church, of a much more spiritualised concept of love marked the end of courtly civilisation in the south of France. The examination of Arabo-Andalusian poetry closes at the end of the eleventh century, that is with the first poetic manifestations of the troubadour's art; extending the study of that tradition between such date would introduce material irrelevant to the study of the origins of Provençal love poetry.

<sup>6</sup>I.e., Guilhelm de Peiteu and Marcabru. This argument will be taken up again in the conclusion of the article.

<sup>7</sup>See Glynnis M. Cropp, p. 250, with notes.

possible cultural exchange between Provence and al-Andalus at the end of the eleventh century or earlier, philology seeks to draw from the extant texts as much as possible in order to sketch a clearer portrait of the communications that occurred between Christian and Muslim culture during the High Middle Ages. This article aims to provide a modest contribution to one aspect of those studies.

### Provençal love poetry: The *lauzengier* and the *gardador*

Many are those who seek to block or impede the realisation of courtly lovers' desires in Provençal poetry of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.<sup>8</sup> Beside the figures designated with generic names, such as the *enemics* (enemies), the *enoyos* (bothersome ones), and the *enveyos* (envious), whom *fin 'Amor vol[on] blasmar*,<sup>9</sup> we find characters drawn with greater care; and among these are the *lauzengier* and the *gardador*.

The term *lauzengier*<sup>10</sup> is used, after Jaufre Rudel, by all the Provençal poets whose work will be considered in this article, with the exception of Peire Rogier; it signifies, in general, the consummate scandal-monger. From the etymological point of view the most exact translation is "slanderer," given that the word conveys a notion of dishonesty,<sup>11</sup> and is often qualified with the adjective *fals*<sup>12</sup> (false) or associated with terms that indicate lying or feigning.<sup>13</sup>

The *lauzengier* is anonymous:<sup>14</sup> his individuality is subsumed by the category to which he belongs (in fact the term is most often used in the plural).<sup>15</sup> He does not act exclusively out of jealousy or amorous rivalry, but is the consummate enemy of courtly society, because he

<sup>8</sup>For the source of the texts of the Provençal poets cited in this work, see the bibliography at the end of this article.

<sup>9</sup>Marcabru, XL, 12: "They wish to blame perfect Love."

<sup>10</sup>The term is related to the Frankish *lausinga* (flattery) and not to the Latin *laus*, *laudis* (praise): see Cropp, p. 237, note 15.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 238, note 22.

<sup>12</sup>See Bernart de Ventadorn, XXXVII, 10; Raimbaut d'Aurenga, VII, 16; XIV, 24; XXXIX, 40; Guiraut de Bornhelh, XIII, 21 and 29; Raimon Jordan, XII, 31; Arnaut Daniel, XII, 23; XVII, 41; Bertran de Born, VI, 43; XXI, 12.

<sup>13</sup>See Marcabru, XXIV, 14; Bernart de Ventadorn, I, 35; XXVI, 42; XXXIV, 52; Raimbaut d'Aurenga, XV, 27; Arnaut Daniel, XV, 38; Bertran de Born, VI, 2.

<sup>14</sup>Only Raimbaut d'Aurenga, on one occasion, names names (I, 38): *Vidal, Costanz, Martin, Domerc*.

<sup>15</sup>Of the 51 occurrences of the term *lauzengier* in the troubadour poetry considered in the present study, 43 are in the plural, and only 8 in the singular.

strives to lower the reputation of the poet and the lady, and to destroy the relationship between the two lovers, divulging their secret love, or making the woman believe that the poet-lover is not faithful to her:

car m'an fag de mi donz sebrar  
lauzenjador, cui Deus azir!  
(Cercamon, II, 10-11)

because they have separated me from my master (i.e., my mistress),  
the slanderers, may God hate them!

No volh lauengers me tolha  
s'amor ni'm leve tal crit  
per qu'eu me lais morir de dol.  
(Bernart de Ventadorn, XIX, 25-27)

I don't wish a slanderer to remove me  
from her love, or raise such an uproar  
that I will have to die of a broken heart.

Can mi soven, dompna genta,  
com era nostre jois verais  
tro lauengiers crois e savais  
nos loigner on ab lor fals brais  
(Raimbaut d'Aurenga, XV, 25-28)

When I remember, noble lady,  
how true our joy was  
until the wicked and cruel slanderers  
divided us with their false gossip

*Lauengiers* are defined as: *raubador* (thieves: Marcabru, XXIV, 22); *d'aver amassaire, mal parlier, lengatrenchan* (people who heap up riches, who curse or speak badly about others, sharp-tongued: Bernart Marti, IX, 22-23); *janglos truan* (base chatterers: Bernart Marti, IX, 23); *mals emveios* (wicked men: Bernart Marti, IX, 34); *lengutz* (gossipy: Peire d'Alvernha, V, 26); *fers* (cruel: Raimbaut d'Aurenga, VII, 13); *plu ponhens que gibres* (more poisonous than vipers: Raimbaut d'Aurenga, X, 21); *complitz de malvestat* (full of wickedness: Guiraut de Bornelh, XIII, 29); *fementit* (perjurers: Bertran de Born, VI, 43); *desenseignat, vilan* (evil and base men: Bertran de Born, XXI, 13); and so on. Furthermore, the troubadour hurls himself at them with every sort of insult, with violent hatred, utilising an almost vulgar lexicon and invoking God's strongest maledictions against them:

Ist lauengier, linguas trencans  
cuy Dieus cofonda et azir

meton Proeza en balans  
 e fan Malvestat enantir  
 (Marcabru, XXXIV, 15-18)

These slanderers with their sharp tongues  
 may God despise and confound them  
 they poise Nobility in equilibrium<sup>16</sup>  
 and cause Wickedness to advance

per lauzengiers qu'an bec malahuros,  
 qui son peyor que Judas, qui Dieu trays,  
 ardre'ls degr'om o totz vius sebellir.  
 (Cercamon, V, 34-36)

because of the slanderers with their cursed tongues  
 worse than Judas, who betrayed God  
 they should be burned or buried alive.

E s'anc parliei e ma chanso  
 de lauzengiers, cui Dieus azir,  
 aissi los vuelh del tot maldir,  
 e ja Dieus noqua lor perdo  
 quar an dig so qu'anc vers no fo  
 (Folquet de Marselha, III, 13-17)

And if I ever spoke in my *chansos*  
 of the slanderers, may God hate them,  
 here I wish to curse them all.  
 May God never bestow on them his forgiveness  
 because they said what was never true.

Fals lausengier, fuocs las lengas vos arga,  
 e que perdatz ams los huoills de mal cranc,  
 que per vos son estraich cavail e marc:  
 amor toletz, c'ab pauc del tot non tomba;  
 confonda-us Dieus que ia non sapchatz com,  
 qe'us fatz als drutz maldire e viltener  
 malastres es qe-us ten, desconoissens,  
 que peior etz, qui plus vos amonesta.  
 (Arnaut Daniel, XVII, 41-48)

False slanderers, may fire burn your tongues  
 and may you lose your eyes to a terrible cancer,  
 for horses and [silver] marks  
 have disappeared through your fault:  
 you prevent love —it nearly fails altogether

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<sup>16</sup>I.e., they stall it or undermine it.

may God confound you without your knowing  
 for you make lovers speak and do evil things  
 it is misfortune that supports you, misbelievers  
 you get worse the more you are reproached

All this linguistic violence, however, goes no further than the page; the troubadour does not move on to counterattack, and is never vindicated against them. Bernart de Ventadorn (XIII, 54) asserts that he is outright foolish who wishes to battle against the *lauzengiers* and seeks, along with his beloved (XXX, 41-44), to find a way to deceive them; Bernart Marti (IX, 7) recommends choosing a lady who pays no attention to their gossip; Arnaut Daniel (VII, 36-44) and Arnaut de Mareulh (XVI, 36-42) defend themselves by pretending not to love, and hiding their feelings.

The poet-lover renounces combat because he would gain from it only hardship, he fears the evil-tongued, he wishes to come to an understanding with them. In reality, the only weapon that he possesses for self-defence from them is the attachment of the beloved, who does not change her feelings toward the poet, notwithstanding the gossip and calumny:

Doncs lor deuri'eu be servir,  
 pois vei que re guerra no-m vau  
 que s'ab lauzengers estau mau,  
 greu-m poiria d'amor jauzir.

(Bernart de Ventadorn, XIII, 37-40)

Therefore, I should serve (the slanderers) well,  
 for I see that war does me no good  
 because if I behave badly toward the slanderers  
 I could scarcely enjoy love.

Fals, enveios, fementit lausengier,  
 pois ab midonz m'avetz mes destorbier  
 be-us lausera que'm laissasetz estar.

(Bertran de Born, VI, 43-45)

False, envious, perjuring slanderers,  
 as you set my lord and me (i.e., my lady) at variance,  
 I would implore you to let me live in peace.

lo iorn qez ieu e midonz nos baisem  
 e-m fetz escut de son bel mantel endi  
 que lausengier fals, lenga de colobra,  
 non o visson, don tan mals motz escampa.

(Arnaut Daniel, XII, 21-24)

The day on which my lord (i.e., my lady) and I kissed  
she shielded me with her blue mantle  
so that the false slanderers, with their vipers' tongues,  
who speak so many wicked words, did not see us.

Fals lauzengiers Deu prec que-us gart de mort,  
car, si pocsetz, agratz mi fait gran tort,  
mas ara-m platz la vostra malvolensa,  
qu'ades vos vei e secar e languir  
car ma domna mi denha aculhir,  
e car li platz qu'Amors vas mi la vensa.

(Raimon Jordan, XII, 31-36)

False slanderers, I pray God to preserve you from death,  
for, if you could, you would have done me great wrong,  
but now your malice pleases me  
because I see you getting thin and languishing  
because my lady is happy to receive me,  
and because she is pleased that Love overcomes her for my sake.

The term *gardador* is found only three times in the troubadour lyrics under examination in this paper — in a composition by Guilhelm de Peitieu and in a poem by Marcabru (II, 17) — and is always in the plural;<sup>17</sup> furthermore, Marcabru in another poem describes a situation in which the *gardadors* appear, although he does not name them: qu'una domna s'es clamada de sos gardadors a mei.

<i>E</i> diz que non volo prendre	dreit ni lei,
ans la teno esserrada	quadra trei,
tant l'us no'ill largua l'estaca que l'altre plus	no la'ill plei.
<i>Et</i> aquill fan entre lor	aital agrei:
l'us es compains gens a for	mandacarrei,
e meno trop major nauza que la mainada del rei.	

<i>Et</i> dic vos, gardador,	e vos castei,
e sera bens grans folia	qui no'm crei:
greu veirez nenguna garda	que ad oras non sonei.

(Guilhelm de Peitieu, II, 3-12)

a lady has appealed to me because of her keepers.  
She says that they refuse to accept both right and law,  
on the contrary, they all three keep her shut in,  
and if one gives her more freedom, another denies her.

<sup>17</sup>For the etymology of the term *gardador* cf. Cropp, p. 250; on the same page, the scholar attempts a possible explanation of that fact that this figure disappears almost instantly from Provençal love poetry.



And between them, they cause her such grief:  
 one is a friend, nice as a carter,  
 and they cause more confusion than the king's procession.  
 And I tell you, watchmen, and I give you this advice,  
 and he is truly mad who won't believe me:  
 you'll seldom find a guard who doesn't doze at times.

hi a rics homes e baros  
 qui las enserron dinz maios  
 qu'estrains non i posca intrar  
 e tenon guirbautz als tisos  
 cui las comandon a gardar.

(Marcabru, XXIX, 20-24)

there are rich men and barons  
 who close them (their wives) at home,  
 so that a stranger cannot enter;  
 and they keep some peasants near the hearth  
 and they order them to watch over the ladies.

From these few verses, we learn that the watchman is from a lower social class, and has been placed near the woman by her husband. The troubadour despises him; and the beloved finds a way to negotiate even this obstacle, in order to enjoy the pleasures of love along with her courtly lover.

### Arabo-Andalusian love poetry: *The wāshī and the raqīb*

In Arabo-Andalusian love poetry, certain negative characters recur frequently, hindering the lovers with their actions, and often provoking their separation. Some of them are distinguished only by the names with which they are designated — "envious ones" and "enemies"; others, however, are described with greater care, and among these are the *wāshī* and the *raqīb*.<sup>18</sup>

The *wāshī* is the calumniator, the slanderer who, using conjecture and gossip, seeks to disturb the lovers' harmony. Ibn Ḥazm in his *Ṭawq al-Ḥamāma*<sup>19</sup> (chapter 19, pp. 101-103) distinguishes three types of *wāshī*: he who wishes only to sow discord between the two lovers, and therefore suggests to the beloved that the lover does not respect the secrecy of their love, that her lover is not sincere, or that he is in love with another woman; the rival, who wishes to separate the lovers in

<sup>18</sup>For the source of the texts and the translations of the Arabic poets cited in this work, see the bibliography at the end of this article.

<sup>19</sup>I. e., the *Ṭawq al-Ḥamāma fī 'l-Ulfa wa'l-Ullāf*; the citations in this article are based on the translation of Francesco Gabrieli.

order to possess the beloved for himself; and finally, he who acts against both of them, for the pleasure of scandal:

The slanderers disturbed the purity of my love  
and they ascribe to me a pack of offensive lies  
(Al-Ḥamdānī, p. 151, II, 1)

When you were united with me, as love is united with the heart,  
and you merged with me, as the soul merges with the body,  
the place I hold in you drove the slanderers to anger:  
the flame of envy burns in every rival's heart.  
(Ibn Zaydūn, p. 60)

Ibn Ḥazm accuses this character of every possible evil, and makes a long digression on the lie, which is the slanderer's typical tool, stating that he is obliged to speak on the subject, such a source of grief it is for him:

There are no worse men than slanderers or denouncers. Slander is a quality that reveals the rottenness of the root and the decay of the branch, the ruined nature and the ignoble birth. The slanderer cannot help lying, and slander is a branch and a species of lie; every slanderer is a liar. And I have never loved a liar; I am indulgent in friendship with people afflicted with every sort of fault, even serious faults, and I pray to the Creator to take care of them and appreciate the better parts of their characters, except those who are liars; that quality, for me, cancels out all their virtues, obliterates all their good qualities, and destroys their worth, so that I expect absolutely no good from them.

(Ibn Ḥazm, Chapter 19, p. 104)

And again:

I think that death and fate have learned from him  
the wicked art of dividing those who love.  
(*ibid.*, p. 109)

\* \* \*

The obstacle that recurs most often in Arabo-Andalusian love poetry is the *raqīb* –etymologically an “observer,” as Pérès specifies (p. 418), but we can define him also as “spy, guardian, watchman,” in accordance with the duties assigned him. According to Ibn Ḥazm (chap. XVIII, pp. 97-98) — who defines him “one of love's calamities,” “a latent fever, a persistent pleuritis” — there are diverse characters who can be indi-

cated with this name: he who, without intending to, installs himself in the trysting place of the two lovers and in effect impedes them from revealing their reciprocal love; or a person who has understood that there is something between the two lovers and wishes to clarify, scrutinising closely their activities and movements, what their true relations are.

But the poets — continues Ibn Ḥazm (ibid., p. 98-99) speak in their verses of yet another type of watchman: he who is posted to guard the beloved. This is he most feared raqīb, because slander is his livelihood and he does not desist, neither when faced with the sincerity of the lovers' sentiments nor when faced with their prayers His sole role is to impede the amorous union to the point of compelling the two lovers to separate, revealing their secret love; he can act out of envy or jealousy, if he is a spurned lover, but most of the time, he has been charged with the duty of surveillance by the beloved's husband, or by the girl's parents.

Surveillance of the woman is an Arabic custom, with roots in ancient Bedouin society: it was not only the girl's honour that was protected in this manner, but also the honour of the whole family.<sup>20</sup> Such surveillance was rigorous, and was extended also to boys from noble families: indeed, the girls in love of the *kharajāt* of Arabo-Andalusian *muwashshahāt* lament this fact often.<sup>21</sup> Sometimes the lover confronts this enemy, seeking to elude the surveillance of the girl's guardians and family-members:

Here I am! I heed not the words of the spy!  
(Al-Tutilī, p. 249, v. 6)

Despite the danger of unsheathed swords,  
I would assault the guardians of your tents.  
I will face the lances tempered at Khatt that keep me at bay,  
and put an end to their threats  
because I obey only the tenderness which urges me to slake my thirst with you  
Ibn Ḥāni pp. 208-9, XLI, 7-8

But usually he is afraid (the beloved, too, fears the *raqīb*) and therefore seeks to win the watchman over to his side with blandishments:

<sup>20</sup>See: Mansour Fahmy, *La condition de la femme dans l'Islam* (1913, reprinted Paris, 1990) 91-113; and Pierre Guichard, *Al-Andalus. Estructura antropológica de una sociedad islamica en Occidente* (Barcelona, 1976) 114-116 and 168-170.

<sup>21</sup>Cf.: Gerald Hilty, "Celoso-Raqīb," in *Al-Andalus* 36 (1971): 127-144; *id.*, "La figura del 'raqīb' en las jarchas," in *Poesía Estrófica. Actas del Primer Congreso Internacional sobre Poesía Estrófica Árabe y Hebrea y sus Paralelos Romances* (Madrid, diciembre de 1989) (Madrid, 1991) 155-165.

Were it not for the prying eyes that follow me  
and the fact that I must beware of the guardians' gossip,  
I would visit you, that you might forgive my inconstancy . . .  
(Al-Muṣṭamid, p. 27, II)

Three things prevented me from visiting her,  
for fear of the spy . . . (Al-Muṣṭamid, p. 114, v. 1)

There was a watchman on guard, who always stayed there to watch over my  
lord [my beloved], to keep me away from her.  
But the cunning blandishments took root so shrewdly in him, that the fear I  
had for him changed into confidence.  
He was a sword unsheathed to kill me, and he became a friend of boundless  
goodness. (Ibn Ḥazm, p. 99, chap. XVIII, I)

He became life, who had been a murderous arrow; he was poison, and he be-  
came health-bestowing potion. (Ibn Ḥazm, *ibid.*, II)

If the watchman is faithful to his task, incapable of betraying his  
trust, and the lovers can do nothing to win him over to their side, they  
have no recourse but to act with prudence, to trust to certain tokens of  
understanding, and to speak in an allusive manner, or to hope that the  
watchman falls asleep:

It is as if we had never passed a night alone but for the presence of our own  
union and good fortune lowered the eyelids of our watchman.  
(Ibn Zaydūn, pp. 48-49, v. 36)

How I desire that the *raqīb* won't be there when we meet again, and so I will  
obtain the favour of slaking my thirst at the delicious spring of your purple  
lips.

(Ibn Ḥammār, p. 418, III, 4)

It is necessary to deceive the *raqīb* and to profit from the moments when  
he is not present, otherwise:

May God not bestow His forgiveness on him who wastes an hour free from  
those who sow seeds of discord and from the spies  
(Al-Ṭalīq, p. 85, III, final verse)

The figure of the *raqīb* is decisively traditional in Arabo-Andalusian  
love poetry, as is demonstrated by this use of it in a poem that describes  
the amorous encounter of a flower and a breeze:

Between the breeze and the flower a conversation transpires that becomes  
more wondrous with the arrival of the night.

The flower has a perfumed breath that spreads and propagates itself in union with the night;  
[the night] seems to possess a secret that makes the flower hesitant while it arrives little by little along with the sunset; it hides itself when the dawn arises because it fears the day, which becomes its *raqīb*.

(Ibn Khafāja, p. 15, v. 1) *raqīb*.

### Archaic, classical, and imperial Latin love poetry: the *index* and the *custos*

Among the characters opposed to the lovers' happiness in Latin poetry we find the figure of the *custos*, who is sometimes the slave posted as guard over the door of the house (*ianitor*), and who also fulfils the function of spy.<sup>22</sup> An additional character appears (though only in the works of Ovid), clearly distinguished from the *custos*: the *index*. This is often a scarcely-defined figure (only twice is he designated with the negative qualifications "non exorabilis" [not to be entreated] and "temerarius" [rash]<sup>23</sup>) who reveals to the husband the wife's infidelity, or makes the beloved believe that the lover is not faithful to her:

quis fuit inter nos sociati corporis index? (*Amores*, II, 8, 5)  
who revealed that we joined our bodies?

sed ales  
sensit adulterium Phoebæius, utque latentem  
detergeret culpam, non exorabilis index  
ad dominum tendebat iter . . . (*Metamorphoses*, II, 546)

but Phoebus' bird  
discovered the adultery, and in order to reveal  
the secret crime, the denouncer, impervious to entreaty,  
flew to its master . . .

The maidservant who, having served as messenger between the mistress and her lover, reveals their secret love out of jealousy, can also become an *index*. To avoid this difficulty, Ovid suggests that the lovers implicate her in their affair:

tollitur index,  
cum semel in partem criminis ipsa uenit.

<sup>22</sup>For the source of the texts of the Latin poets cited in this work, see the bibliography at the end of this article.

<sup>23</sup>*Metamorphoses*, II, 546; VII, 824.

non auis utiliter uiscatis effugit alis,  
 non bene de laxis cassibus exit aper.  
 .....

Sed bene celetur: bene si celabitur index,  
 notitiae suberit semper amica tuae.

(*Ars Amatoria*, I, 389-396)

the spy is removed  
 once she has become herself involved in the crime:  
 the bird with cunningly limed wings cannot escape,  
 the wild boar cannot escape from the wide nets so easily.  
 .....

But the fact must remain well-hidden: if the spy is hidden properly, the beloved  
 will always remain under your control.

\* \* \*

He who does not know how to keep a love secret but talks about it is cruelly  
 punished, cast into a squalid prison, and chained by the neck.  
 (*Amores*, II, 2, 41-42); or:

nunc quoque per pueros iaculis incessitur index  
 et pretium auctori vulneris ipsa datur. (*Amores*, III, 13, 21-22)

still now the denouncer is prodded by the boys' javelins  
 and she is given in reward to the author of the wounds

The *custos* is a slave or a maidservant whom, in accordance with an ancient custom, the husband orders to stand guard over the wife, the father places as watcher over the daughter, and the lover commands to guard the beloved, to protect from all eventual rivals in love. Sometimes, the *custos* is also the *ianitor* who guards before the closed door of the house, and is an unmovable barrier for the lover because he is chained to the door, according to the most ancient usage:

custodum transire manu uigilumque cateruas  
 militis et miseri semper amantis opus  
 (Ovid, *Amores*, I, 9, 27-28)

to overcome armies of guards and bands of sentries  
 is the everlasting task of unlucky soldiers and lovers.

anus hic solet cubare custos ianitrix  
 nomen Leanaest, multibiba atque merobiba  
 (Plauto, *Curculio*, 76)

An old woman, named Leena, a hard drinker of pure wine,  
usually sleeps there to watch the door.

Dic et argutae properet Neaerae  
murreum nodo cohibere crinem;  
si per inuisum mora ianitorem  
flet, abito. (Horace, *Odes*, III 14, 21-24)

Tell Neera, with her beautiful voice,  
to tie her hair in a myrrh-scented knot;  
but if the hateful door-keeper bars your way,  
come back to me.

The Latin poet complains about the *custos*, defining him as *amarus* (harsh, irritable: Propertius, II, 23, 9); *catus* (cunning: Plautus, *Menaechmi*, 131); *cautus* (crafty: Plautus, *Miles gloriosus*, 467, and *Pseudolus*, 1037); possessed of a *mala lingua* (sharp tongue: Ovid, *Amores*, II, 2, 49); *molestus* (bothersome: Ovid, *Amores*, II, 3, 15); *odiosus* (hateful: Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*, 235); *pavidum* (anxious: Horace, *Odes*, III, 16, 6); *saevus* (cruel: Ovid, *Amores*, III, 1, 55); and *vigil* (watchful: Tibullus, III, 12, 11, and Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*, III, 612). In the same manner, the *ianitor* is *ferreus* (inflexible: Ovid, *Amores*, I, 6, 27); *invisus* (detested: Horaces, *Odes*, III, 14, 23); *lentus* (unfeeling: Ovid, *Amores*, I, 6, 41 and 72); and *turpis* (base: Ovid, *Amores*, I, 6, 72).

All the same, the poet-lover does not manifest violent reactions against these two characters, even if he complains about their guardianship, characterised as *nimum molesta* (exceedingly troublesome: Ovid, *Amores*, II, 2, 8); *saeva* (cruel: Tibullus, I, 2, 5); and *tristis* (strict: Propertius, II, 6, 27). The threats are in general directed at the barred door of the maiden, and the poet repents instantly. Even when they are turned directly against the door-keeper, as happens in Ovid, the poet's tone is somewhat conciliating because the poet seeks to bring the *ianitor* over to his own side, alternating threats and blandishments:

Nam posita est nostrae custodia saeva puellae,  
clauditur et dura ianua firma sera.  
ianua, difficilis domini, te uerberet imber,  
te Iovis imperio fulmina missa petant.  
ianua, iam pateas uni mihi, victa querelis,  
neu furtim verso cardine aperta sones.  
et mala siqua tibi dixit dementia nostra,  
ignoscas: capiti sint precor illa meo.  
(Tibullus, I, 2, 5-12)

My maid has been placed into a cruel custody,  
 and the solid door has been closed by a strong bolt.  
 O door of an intractable master, may the rain lash against you  
 may the thunderbolts thrown by Jove's order injure you.  
 O door — overcome by my cries — open now only for me,  
 but do not make a noise while turning on your hinges:  
 And if my raging spoke evil words against you,  
 forgive me: I pray that those words fall on my head.

quod nimium dominae cura molesta tua est.  
 si sapis, o custos, odium, mihi crede, mereri  
 desine: quem metuit quisque, periisse cupit.

(Ovid, *Amores*, II, 2, 8-10)

for your custody of the mistress is too troublesome:  
 if you are wise, guardian, believe me, cease,  
 to merit our hate: whoever fears you, wishes your death.

Ianitor (indignum) dura religate catena,  
 difficilem moto cardine pande forem. (vv. 1-2)

Door-keeper (how unworthy!), fastened with a brutal chain,  
 move the hinges and open the cruel door.

.....

te nimium lentum timeo, tibi blandior uni:  
 tu, me quo possis perdere, fulmen habes.  
 aspice (uti uideas, inmitia claustra relaxa)  
 uda sit ut lacrimis ianua facta meis. (vv. 15-18)

I fear you — too unfeeling — I flatter only you:  
 you possess the thunderbolt that can kill me.  
 Look (and in order that you might see, open the harsh bolt)  
 how my tears have moistened the door

.....

tempora noctis eunt; excute poste seram.  
 excute sic umquam longa releuere catena,  
 nec tibi perpetuo serua bibatur aqua. (vv. 24-26)

The night hours are going away, take the bolt away from the door  
 Take it away: so might you one day be unfastened from the long chain nor drink  
 any longer the water kept for slaves.

.....

Lentus es, an somnus, qui te male perdat, amantis  
 uerba dat in uentos aure repulsa tua? (vv. 41-42)



Are you unfeeling, or do you sleep — may it bring you ruin! —  
that you throw the lover's words, rejected by your ears, to the winds?  
.....

Omnia consumpsi, nec te precibusque minisque  
mouimus, o foribus durior ipse tuis.  
non te formosae decuit seruare puellae  
limina: sollicito carcere dignus eras. (vv. 61-64)

I have used up all my wealth, but neither my prayers nor my threats have  
moved you, o you who are harder than your door.  
you are not suited to guard the door of a beautiful girl:  
you are fit for a prison full of torments.

(Ovid, *Amores*, I, 6, 61-64)

The lover seeks by every means to convince the *ianitor* or the *custos* to pretend that he sees nothing and knows nothing, if he is afraid that the beloved's husband will accuse him of complicity, and he predicts a series of punishments from his master if the guardian does not know how to keep quiet. The lovers do nothing wrong: they do not plan a crime, they do not mix poisons, but seek only to be able to love each other with security, thanks to the guardian's complicity.<sup>24</sup> If this does not succeed, the lover teaches the beloved how to hide, using appropriate codes, the words that she wishes to speak to him (he himself will do the same with regard to her, particularly in the presence of the husband), how to deceive her guardians by sending messages written with fresh milk or by pretending that she is ill, or by drugging the guardian with a large quantity of wine or with medicines, or buying his silence with precious gifts:<sup>25</sup>

me specta nutusque meos uultumque loquacem:  
excipe furtiuas et refer ipsa notas.  
uerba superciliis sine uoce loquentia dicam;  
uerba leges digitis, uerba notata mero.  
cum tibi succurreret Veneris lasciua nostrae,  
purpureas tenero pollice tange genas;  
si quid erit, de me tacita quod mente queraris,  
pendeat extrema mollis ab aure manus;  
cum tibi, quae faciam, mea lux, dicamue, placebunt,  
uersetur digitis anulus usque tuis

(Ovid, *Amores*, I, 4, 17-26)

look at me, at my signals, and at my communicative face,  
consider and return yourself the furtive signs.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Ovid, *Amores*, II, 2.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Tibullus I, II, 15-24; VI, 7-22; Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*, III, 621-658, and *Tristia*, II, 449-462.

I will say words with my eyebrows, speaking with no voice,  
 you will read words written with the fingers or with wine.  
 When you remember the lust of our love,  
 touch your purple cheeks with your tender thumb;  
 if there is anything about which you wish to complain to me tacitly,  
 your soft hand hangs from your earlobe;  
 when you like what I saw or do, my darling,  
 turn the ring on your finger continuously

custodes furtim transgressa iacentes  
 ad iuuenem tenebris sola puella uenit  
 (Tibullus, II, 1, 75-76)

after passing unnoticed among the guardians lying asleep,  
 the girl goes to visit the youth, alone in the night

lumina custodis succumbere nescia somno  
 ultimus est alique decipere arte labor. (Ovid, *Heroides*, XII, 49-50)

The last toil is to cunningly deceive the eyes of the guardian, which don't  
 know how to sleep.

Nonetheless, the *custos* is well-loved by the poet if he comes round to the lover's service, and makes that the beloved remains faithful to him and does not acquire other lovers. The lover himself wishes to become her guardian and, therefore, behaves towards her just as her husband does. This extraordinary trait demonstrates how deeply rooted in Roman society was the custom of surveillance of women, and it may indeed account for the fact that the poet does not provoke the beloved's guardians with harsh words:

quos igitur tibi custodes, quae limina ponam,  
 quae numquam supra pes inimicus erat?  
 nam nihil inuitae tristis custodia prodest (Propertius, II, 6, 37-39)

What guardians, then, should I place over you?  
 what doors that an enemy foot can never pass?  
 for a strict watch is worthless against a girl's will.

at tu casta precor maneat, sanctique pudoris  
 adsideat custos sedula semper anus. (Tibullus, I, 3, 83-84)

but I pray you to be chaste, and may the old woman,  
 the guardian of sacred chastity, sit always near you.

me retinent uictum formosae uincla puellae  
 et sedeo duas ianitor ante fores. (Tibullus, I, 1, 55-56)

the chain of a beautiful girl keeps me fastened  
 and I sit, a guardian before her cruel door.  
 ipse tuus custos, ipse uir, ipse comes? (Ovid, *Amores*, III, 11, 18)

(Am) I myself your guardian, your husband, your lover?

### Conclusion

These three civilisations —the Provençal, the Arabo-Andalusian, and the Latin— have in common the limitation of the liberty of women, which is articulated through given social customs, like the institution of the harem among the Arabs and the maintenance of a certain morality in the Latin world (the *ensor* was a public office). Again, the liberty or curtailment of women's movements may respond to factors subject to change: the absence of the feudal lord of the castle for an extended period of time, the liberty of behaviour characteristic of imperial Rome.

As regards the differences between these three worlds, aside from the verbal violence of the poet-lover's language —almost absent in Latin lyric, and on the other hand quite common in Arabo-Andalusian and even more so in Provençal lyric— an important detail emerges: in Latin poetry the figure of the *custos* is in a certain manner unique, combining into a single figure the characteristics of the *gardador* and the *lauzengier* from Provençal poetry, and of the *raqīb* and the *wāshī* from Arabo-Andalusian poetry. Neither does the figure of the *index*, introduced by Ovid (whose duties the *custos* continues to perform also in this poet's works), distinguish clearly between the roles of the guardian and the spy.

Instead, it was the Arabo-Andalusian poets who defined in precise terms and consolidated, in works like Ibn Ḥazm's *ṭawq al-Ḥamāma*, the role of each of the characters hostile to the lovers: in such manner, they created —if I may be forgiven the expression— a "family" of lovers' enemies. A nearly analogous "family" is found in troubadour poetry with the *lauzengier*, the *gardador*, the *castiador* and the *gelos*, although only the *lauzengier* and the *gardador* correspond to the respective characters in Arabo-Andalusian love poetry, the *wāshī* and the *raqīb*.

Marcabru's *castiador*<sup>26</sup> seems, in his position as a private citizen, closer to the Arabo-Andalusian *cādīl* than to the Latin *ensor*. How-

<sup>26</sup>Marcabru, V, 31; XXIV, 16. See also: Marcabru, XVII, 37; XXV, 43; XL, 49; XLI, 25, 28.

ever it is also true that the poet himself aspires to fill this position, holding himself up as judge of corrupt behaviour, a role played by the Latin *ensor* as well. Nonetheless, the presence of the *castiador* —who appears only in the poetry of Marcabru— can also be accounted for by the strong moralising thread that runs through all the work of this Provençal poet.

As regards the *gelos*, it is difficult to draw conclusions, because the Arabo-Andalusian *Ḍasūd* is not always the husband of the beloved; sometimes the term identifies “jealous ones” who are not otherwise distinguished. On the other hand, in Latin poetry the husband is rarely defined as jealous, even though the poet may speak in passing of his jealousy and envy.

In reference to literary connections between Provençal and Arabo-Andalusian love poetry relative to the theme under consideration, the only detail that can be confirmed is the existence of a “family of enemies,” with a well-defined role for each of its components. Such a “family” is present in Arabo-Andalusian poetry, which inherited it from classical Arabic poetry; and that Arabo-Andalusian “family” must have influenced in some way the works of the first troubadours: Guilhelm de Peitieu, who introduces the figure of the *gardador* in one of his compositions, and, even more, Marcabru, who presents all four of the characters —the *lauzengier*, the *gardador*, the *castiador*, and the *gelos*— in his works.<sup>27</sup> Two of these characters, the *lauzengier* and the *gelos*, are present also in the works of his “student,” Cercamon,<sup>28</sup> and are precisely those that will appear in the works of the troubadours of subsequent generations. Furthermore, the Provençal *lauzengier* will continue to maintain the characteristics of the Arabo-Andalusian *wāshī*, differentiating itself in this manner clearly from the Latin *custos*.

Guilhelm de Peitieu and Marcabru sojourned in Spain at the courts of the “Catholic kings” (the former in 1120, and the latter in 1137 or 1143). There, perhaps, they would have had the opportunity to listen to Arabic songs; and perhaps word of Ibn Ḥazm’s *Ḥawq al-Ōamâma*, which achieved an enormous success in the Arabo-Andalusian world immediately after its appearance, reached the Spanish courts, or even crossed the Pyrenees during the twelfth century. However, during the epoch of these Provençal poets’ visits to Spain, troubadour poetry had already appeared. Therefore the literary contacts between al-Andalus and Provence ought to be placed somewhat earlier, a notion which may

<sup>27</sup> Marcabru, XXIV, 14; XXXIV, 15 (*lauzengier*); II, 17 (*gardador*); V, 31; XXIV, 16 (*castiador*); II, 16; 24; 36; XLIII, 15 (*gelos*).

<sup>28</sup> Cercamon, II, 11; V, 34 (*lauzengier*) and IV, 49 (*gelos*).

be supported by the frequent commercial exchanges and crusades on Spanish soil.

As is well known, during the years 1050-1100 Provençals preferred to orient themselves, for political motives but also for the sake of intellectual or cultural affinity, toward the South and not toward the North, a policy that was so marked that the lords of Provence recognised the sovereignty of the king of Aragon during this period. We know also that Arabs taught medicine at Montpellier during the eleventh century, and a certain Petrus Alphonsi, in 1106, attests to the existence of translations of both prose and poetry from the Arabic.<sup>29</sup> However, contacts with Christian Spain occurred above all when the king of Navarre, Sancho el Mayor (1000-1035), calling himself *rex ibericus* (Iberian king), engaged both himself and his successors—for whom he contracted dynastic marriages that linked them more closely with the Provençal lords—in closer relations with France and with Rome.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, neither the Provençal *vidas* nor the *razos* nor any other document tells us what sort of library the first troubadours had access to. The only sort of evidence we have is indirect, suggesting that the poets' preparation in Latin classical texts relied for the most part on florilegia and collections of aphorisms.

We are not able to evaluate this material by any method other than philological analysis, through comparison of the texts. This possible witness of literary contact between Provence and al-Andalus, at the dawn of troubadour lyric, provided by the figures of the so-called "enemies of love" is only one tile in a mosaic, and even when it is placed alongside other tiles of the same nature, still a clear image does not emerge. Nonetheless, it can furnish certain new details, and contribute appreciably to the history—still in large part to be written—of literary contacts between Provençal and Arabo-Andalusian culture during the high Middle Ages.

*Università di Macerata, Italy*  
(trans. Karla Mallette)

<sup>29</sup>See: Aloys R. Nykl, "La poesía a ambos lados del Pirineo hacia el año 1100," in *Al-Andalus* 1 (1933): 357-405. The passage from Petrus Alphonsi reads: "Propterea libellum compegi, partim ex prouerbiis philosophorum, et suis castigationibus arabicis, et fabulis, et uersibus, partim ex animalium et uolucrum similitudinibus" (p. 377-378; "In addition, I wrote a little book, composed partly of Arabic philosophers' proverbs, reproaches, fables, and verses, partly of likenesses of animals and birds").

<sup>30</sup>Cf. Charles Camproux, *Le Joi d'Amor des Troubadours. Jeu et joie d'amour* (Montpellier, Causse e Castelnaud, 1965) 56-57; Ramón Menéndez Pidal, "La primitiva lírica europea, Estado actual del problema," in *Revista de Filología Española*, 43 (1960): 279-354; Robert Briffault, *Les Troubadours et le sentiment romanesque* (Geneva, 1974) 62-68.

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María Teresa Ferrer i Mallol

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## THE MUSLIM ALJAMA OF TORTOSA IN THE LATE MIDDLE AGES: Notes on Its Organisation<sup>1</sup>

Tortosa is a city located in Catalonia, near the mouth of the Ebro River. In the Middle Ages, the Ebro was navigable and was a conduit of communication and commerce between the interior of the Iberian peninsula and the Mediterranean coast. Although Tortosa is not located on the shore itself, it is very near to the coast, and for that reason is considered a maritime city. In the Islamic era it flourished, especially once it became the capital of the independent *taifa*, or principality of Tortosa. When it was conquered in 1148 by Ramon Berenguer IV, Count of Barcelona, a great number of Muslim inhabitants remained in the city to live under Christian dominion.<sup>2</sup> In the surrender agreements concluded with the Christians, these Muslims received assurances that they would be able to remain in the area of the city, given that they leave the very centre and move their homes to the extramural suburbs.<sup>3</sup> The successors of Count Ramon, the kings of the Crown of Aragon, respected these concessions and authorised many other privileges for the Muslims of Tortosa, giving heed to their complaints as these arose. Frequently, at least one time in each reign, the Muslims strove to have the privileges which had been authorised by the reigning monarch's predecessors confirmed. In 1370, for example, Pedro the Ceremonious confirmed the privileges of Tortosa, including the text of the *carta puebla* authorised by Count Ramon Berenguer IV in 1148, as well as another privilege conceded by Alfons the Troubadour in September 1180.<sup>4</sup> A similar confirmation was conceded by Martí the Humane in 1408, enhanced with concessions which responded to specific complaints made by the Muslims regarding the interference of Christian officials in the

*SCRIPTA MEDITERRANEA*, Vols XIX-XX 1998-1999, 143

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<sup>1</sup> The following article was written as part of the research project, "The Crown of Aragon and the Islamic Countries in the Late Middle Ages: 1 the Politico-Military Setting and the Economic and Cultural Exchanges" (PB 94-0123).

<sup>2</sup> J. M. Font Rius, *Cartas de población y franquicia de Cataluña*, 2 vols., vol. 1, *Textos* (Madrid-Barcelona, 1969), 770-775.

<sup>3</sup> P. Bofarull, *Colección de documentos inéditos del Archivo de la Corona de Aragón*, vol. 4 (Barcelona, 1849), 130-135.

<sup>4</sup> Arxiu de la Corona d'Aragó, Cancelleria, registre. 918, ff. 114 r.-116 v. (1 February, 1370).

internal affairs of the *aljama*. This concession prohibited, as well, the imposition of taxes on the performance of troubadours or singers at weddings — a matter which we will return to.<sup>5</sup> Later, in 1419, a little after he came to the throne, Alfons the Magnanimous also confirmed the privileges conceded by his predecessors to the *aljama* of the Muslims of Tortosa.<sup>6</sup>

The *aljama* of Tortosa, along with that of Lleida, was one of the two great urban *morerias* of Catalonia. Nevertheless, the importance of the Tortosan *moreria* has not been given the attention that it deserves. The internal sources of the *moreria* no longer exist, and so we have to approach them through the study of the Christian documentation. I have made use principally of the register of the royal chancellery of the Archive of the Crown of Aragon to write this article, which itself is a preliminary to a more extensive study that I hope to complete in the future.

The authors who have studied the *aljama* of Tortosa up to now have not been able to agree on the location of the *moreria* within the city. According to Lapeyre, it was located in the modern suburb of Vilanova;<sup>7</sup> according to Miravall, in the place known as Garrofer<sup>8</sup> and, according to Bayerri, in Remolins.<sup>9</sup> It is this last suggestion that seems most credible. Several documents corroborate in citing Remolins in relation to the Muslims of Tortosa. For example, a letter of Jaume II written to Guillem de Ceret, *battle* ["bailiff," approximately] of Tortosa in November 1313 comments that a complaint of the *aljama* of Remolins has reached the king on account of certain men of Tortosa who had entered the house of Facen Jaba against the will of the *cadi* of the *aljama*.<sup>10</sup> We also know that the Muslim artisans (and indeed the Jewish ones too) had been obliged to locate themselves in "Market Street" in Remolins, an order to which they did not all comply, which precipitated a loss to the royal fisc, given that this area fell under the dominion of the king and was a source of revenue through taxation of its tradesmen.<sup>11</sup> The butcher shops where Muslims were obliged to buy their meat was also found in this suburb.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>5</sup> ACA, C, reg. 2206, ff. 45 r.-47 v. (4 September, 1408).

<sup>6</sup> ACA, C, reg. 2585, f. 74 r. (8 August, 1416).

<sup>7</sup> H. Lapeyre, *Géographie de l'Espagne morisque* (Paris, 1959), 104.

<sup>8</sup> R. Miravall, *Tortosa i els tortosins* (Barcelona, 1969), 81.

<sup>9</sup> E. Bayerri Bartomeu, *Historia de Tortosa* (Tortosa, 1953-1960), vol. 6, 374; vol. 7, 479, 613ff.

<sup>10</sup> The complaint was registered again by the king in 1316: ACA, C, reg. 158, f. 297 r. (4 March, 1316).

<sup>11</sup> ACA, C, reg. 115, f. 394 v. (17 April, 1300).

<sup>12</sup> ACA, C, reg. 171, ff. 25 v.-26 r. (18 December, 1320).

The documentation that I have studied does not provide any information regarding the location of the nerve centres of the *moreria*, such as the congregational mosque and baths. Nevertheless it can be assumed that there were municipal baths that Muslims, Christians and Jews all used. According to the *Costums* of Tortosa and other earlier ordinances, Muslims, both men and women were to use the baths on Fridays only. Moreover, there must have been other baths outside of the walls which were shared by members of the different faiths.<sup>13</sup> In 1406 King Martí the Humane published a decree by crier which referred to the rights of the Muslims and which also authorised that, if it was judged necessary, the royal flag be raised over the gate of the *moreria* as a visible sign of royal protection.<sup>14</sup>

Just like the other *aljamas*, that of Tortosa was ruled by a *cadi* [Arabic: *al-qāḍī*].<sup>15</sup> In principle, the *cadi* had clearly established judicial powers, established with the first holder of this office, Abubaquer Avinahole.<sup>16</sup> He was to administer the "*sunna e xara*", just as is specified for other *aljamas* such as those of Orihuela, Elx, and Elda.<sup>17</sup> But other duties are laid out as well, including the gathering of taxes (as in Elx) or notarial duties (as in Asp).<sup>18</sup> The *cadis* collected and administered taxes in Tortosa as well, a matter with which we are acquainted owing to the number of complaints of abuses which the *aljama* registered with the kings. In May of 1298, for example, the Muslim community complained to the king that two former *cadis*, Nuanelle (or Eunile) Habib and Mahomet Gavarreix (or Gabbareig) did not wish to give accounts to the *aljama* of the sums that they had taken as loans or had received as, and the community's taxes (such as the *questia*), as well as

<sup>13</sup> D. Romano, "Los judíos en los baños de Tortosa (siglos XIII-XIV)," *Sefarad*, 40 (1980): 57-64.

<sup>14</sup> ACA, C, reg. 2204, ff. 71 v.-72 r. (10 December, 1406).

<sup>15</sup> For more on this figure, so crucial to *aljama* government, see J. Boswell, *The Royal Treasure: Muslim Communities under the Crown of Aragon in the Fourteenth Century* (New Haven CN, 1977), 77-79; R. I. Burns, *Islam under the Crusader. Colonial Survival in the Thirteenth-Century Kingdom of Valencia* (Princeton, 1974), 224-234, 258, and 375ff.; J. Mutgé i Vives, *L'aljama sarraïna de Lleida a l'Edat Mitjana. Aproximació a la seva història* (Barcelona, 1992), 21-22; M. B. Basáñez Villaluenga, *La aljama sarracena de Huesca en el siglo XIV* (Barcelona, 1989), 30-31.

<sup>16</sup> ACA, C, pergami de Juame I, 4, ed. by R. Argemí, *Els Tagarins a la Ribera de l'Ebre al segle XIII*, Tesis de licenciatura (Departamento de Filología Semítica de la Universidad de Barcelona, 1972), 95. The selection of the *cadi* was made by the Commander of the Temple and by Ramon de Montcada, lords of the city.

<sup>17</sup> M. T. Ferrer i Mallol, *Les aljames sarraïnes de la governació d'Oriola en el segle XIV* (Barcelona, 1988), 59, 62 and 76-77.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 63 and 77.

for other unspecified reasons. In addition, it seems that their legal competency was placed in doubt because they borrowed money in the name of the *aljama*, but without its permission. The *aljama*, naturally, did not wish then to pay the public loans undertaken by the former *cadis*, apart from those which had been directed to the benefit of the community, and which they had been authorised to take.<sup>19</sup> A copy of one of these loans is preserved in a parchment of King Alfons II. It treats of a loan by Bernat Llorenç, a citizen of Tortosa, of twenty-two *libras jaqueses* to Mahomet Gavarreg, *cadi* of Tortosa, his wife Elfi, Alfag Abinaule, Eunile Habib, Moferrig Abinahomet, *alamin* of Benifallet, Jucef Abingena, Moferrig Abnelfaqui, Abrafim Abehaudo and Ali, son of Moferrig Arrahaudi, with the *cadi* acting in the name of the whole *aljama*.<sup>20</sup> Despite the complaint of the community, the debt seems to have been endorsed then by a group widely representative of the *aljama*, and so the protest may have been a result of a clash between parties within the administration. Less contentious was the performance of the *cadi* as notary. In 1321, Jaume II demanded that the emir Isma'il, son of the king of Granada, return a shipment of oil valued at sixty-one *libras* and twelve *sous* which Pascual Cifre had entrusted to two Muslims of Tortosa and for whom the *cadi* had written a "*carta morisca*."<sup>21</sup>

The appointment of the *cadi* passed into the hands of the king in 1294, having previously been a seignorial appointment, as we have seen. The first of these officials cited in the documents was a certain Mafomet, nominated in 1174.<sup>22</sup> At that time the candidate was typically chosen from among the king's entourage, and directed the office by means of an intermediary.<sup>23</sup> This occurred for example in May 27, 1316, when Haçon, son of the deceased Abraham who had been the scribe of the "*manescal*" of the king, was appointed. We hear of a minor palace intrigue in which, in order to divert some of the revenue of the *aljama* to him, Haçon was given the office and allowed to hold it indirectly.<sup>24</sup> Later, in May 1316, Hamet Saragoci, another inhabitant of Tortosa, who was perhaps a suitable candidate but with less influence at court, was appointed as *cadi* of the *aljama* of Valencia. This community was less populous than that of Tortosa and was therefore less desirable to hold as an office. Nevertheless, Hamet Saragoci's merits did not long go unnoticed and in January of 1321 he was given the office of *cadi* of

<sup>19</sup> ACA, C, reg. 110, f. 157 v. (5 May, 1298) and reg. 111, f. 232 r. (21 May, 1298).

<sup>20</sup> ACA, C, pergamiés d'Alfons II, 10 (14 February, 1291), ed. Argemí, 137-138.

<sup>21</sup> ACA, C, reg. 173, f. 204 r.-v. (20 July, 1321).

<sup>22</sup> ACA, C, pergamiés d'Alfons I, 159, ed. Argemí, 109.

<sup>23</sup> ACA, C, reg. 232, ff. 229 v. and 230 r. (27 May, 1316).

<sup>24</sup> ACA, C, reg. 232, f. 340 v. (21 May, 1316).

Tortosa at the king's pleasure, later for life in 1324.<sup>25</sup> The office remained in the hands of the Sargoci for the succeeding years. In March of 1396 Azmet Saragoci, who was no doubt a descendent of Hamet, obtained the same office for life when its previous holder died. Martí the Humane confirmed him in this post in July of 1397.<sup>26</sup>

In 1433 the *batlle* of Tortosa intervened in the nomination of the *cadi*, an interference which met with an immediate reaction on the part of the reigning queen, Maria, wife of Alfons the Magnanimous. The *batlle* in question, Bartomeu Domènec, had fired the current *cadi* in order to put a Muslim of Valencia in his place. The *aljama* of Tortosa complained of this act of the *batlle* on the grounds that it contravened their privileges, which upon examination showed that the nomination of the *cadi* was the exclusive right of the king, or the queen reigning in his name. In addition, the queen admonished Bartomeu for having brought in a *cadi* from Valencia, given that the judicial norms in Valencia and Tortosa differed. This distinction is very interesting. For all of that, the queen ordered the *batlle* to restore the deposed *cadi* to his office, and thereafter to proceed in such matters only with her judicial assessor, who normally accompanied her when she presided over tribunals.<sup>27</sup>

The *salmédina* was an official who played an important role in the life of the *aljamas* of the thirteenth century, but who came to be converted into a mere assistant of the *cadi* in the fourteenth. One of his principal occupations was the supervision of the market, although his precise duties varied from place to place.<sup>28</sup> In 1174, a certain Nage is mentioned as *salmédina* in a document which predates the earliest mention of the *cadi*.<sup>29</sup> In the nomination of Abubaquer Avinahole in 1216 the lords of Tortosa instructed the *cadi* that he not infringe on the role and jurisdiction of the *salmédina*, as the latter should not interfere with his own.<sup>30</sup> Much later, in March 1386, the office was conceded to Mahoma Capo, caulker of Tortosa, a nomination confirmed by Joan I in March of 1387.<sup>31</sup> In 1408, certain controversies arose between the *cadi* and *salmédina* vis-à-vis their respective powers, as well as between them and some of the royal officials regarding the functioning of the

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<sup>25</sup> ACA, C, reg. 233, f. 146 r. (1 January, 1321) and f. 246 r.

<sup>26</sup> ACA, C, reg. 1916, f. 165 v. (6 March, 1396) and reg. 2114, f. 28 r. (5 July, 1397).

<sup>27</sup> ACA, C, reg. 3125, f. 60 r.-v. (18 December, 1433).

<sup>28</sup> Burns, 235-237.

<sup>29</sup> ACA, C, pergami d'Alfons I, 159, ed. Argemí, 109.

<sup>30</sup> ACA, C, perg. de Jaime I, 4, ed. R. Argemí, *Els Tagarins de la Ribera d'Ebre al segle XIII* (Barcelona, 1972), 95.

<sup>31</sup> ACA, C, reg. 1912, ff. 147 v.-148 r. (26 March, 1387).

administrative offices of the *aljama*. Martí the Humane ruled that no *alguacil* (a Christian post) should interfere in any matter that was in the province of the *salmedina*, nor the *salmedina* in the affairs of the *cadi*, and further that neither the Christian, Jewish nor Muslim *batlle* might have any power in the province of the *cadi*.<sup>32</sup> This document implies that some of the functions of the *salmedina* must have overlapped with those of the *alguacil*, both of whom were authorised to carry out sentences of the *cadi* among the Muslims.

The *aljama* also had one or two *adelantats*, although there are few citations of this office and those which we have are late. In general one supposes that the function of the *adelantats* was similar to that of the *jurats* of the *universitats*, or Christian municipalities. It appears that they were elected either by the *aljama* or by the departing *adelantats*. Their powers and the duration of their tenure varied widely from one place to another.<sup>33</sup> In the *aljamas* of the southern zone of the kingdom of Valencia the *adelantats* were referred to as elders or "*vells*" and their function appears to have been similar to those of Tortosa.<sup>34</sup> The notices that I have discovered regarding Tortosan *adelantats* shed little light on their precise duties, although it is clear that they were involved in the economic sphere of the *aljama*. In 1389, an *adelantat* named Çayd Alqueya intervened in the negotiation of the payment of the *aljama's* tax instalments to the king.<sup>35</sup> In 1399, the Queen Maria de Luna reprimanded Guillem Gocet, a commissioner appointed by the king, because he had obliged the Jewish and Muslim *aljamas* of Tortosa to show their accounts-payable although the king had ordered that he not exercise his office in those *aljamas* that fell under the jurisdiction of the queen. Maria de Luna sent the king's letter to the Jewish and Muslim *adelantats* of Tortosa. Clearly, the *adelantados* must have been involved in the fiscal affairs of the community.<sup>36</sup> In May 1400, the king again assigned the *adelantats* of Tortosa a task of financial nature: the authorisation to redeem the *aljama's* mortgages [*censales muertos*] that

<sup>32</sup> ACA, C, reg. 2206, ff. 45 r.-47 v. (4 September, 1408).

<sup>33</sup> F. Macho y Ortega, "Condición social de los mudéjares aragoneses (s. XV)," *Memoria de la Facultad de Filosofía y Letras de la Universidad de Zaragoza*, (1922-23): 158-159. Cf. also F.A. Roca Traver, "Un siglo de vida mudéjar en la Valencia medieval (1238-1338)," *Estudios de Edad Media de la Corona de Aragón*, 5 (1952): 128; Boswell, 72; Burns, 394-398; Mutgé, 17-21; Basáñez, 22-23.

<sup>34</sup> Ferrer, 59-62 and 78.

<sup>35</sup> ACA, C, reg. 1871, f. 111 v. (25 January, 1389).

<sup>36</sup> ACA, C, reg. 2337, f. 86 (23 October, 1399), publ. F. Macho y Ortega, "Documentos relativos a la condición social y jurídica de los moros aragoneses," *Revista de Ciencias Jurídicas y Sociales*, 5 (1922): 148-149.

had been sold at a low price and with a high annual interest rate and to sell new ones at a higher price and with lower interest, so that they could pay the redemptions. This time the king mentions "*adelantats*" in plural, which indicates that there had been at least two,<sup>37</sup> whereas in 1406 it appears that there was only one. Homado Alquena is cited by name in a notarial request that was presented to Homado, the *cadi* Azmet Saragoci, and to the *aljama's* elected representative [*sindico*] Çayd Alfaceni in order to pay a mortgage owed by the *aljama*.<sup>38</sup>

Muslims like the Christians were obliged to pay ordinary taxes, (both direct and indirect) as well as extraordinary levies motivated by wars, royal marriages, coronations and other special events. Ordinary taxes included the *questia* or *peita*, the *cena* and the *monedaje* although, for our purposes, only the first two will be of concern, given that the *monedaje* is not mentioned in connection with the *aljama* of Tortosa. Muslims were also obliged to pay certain specific taxes, such as the "*adache*", and a tax on weddings. With all of this, extraordinary taxes, or subsidies, and the general state of indebtedness of the *aljama* must also be taken into account. Unfortunately, the sources that relate to the taxation of the *aljama* are not very abundant, owing to the fact that for many years the community belonged to the *camara* of the queens and patrimonies of the *infants*, the correspondence of which has disappeared from the royal chancellery.

Among the Muslim communities of Valencia, the *questia*, *peita* or "*alfarda*" was a direct contribution of both a local and global character, which is to say, the king asked for a fixed and annual quantity from each of the local Jewish and Muslim communities in each municipality of his kingdoms. Each community then had to share out the tax burden among its members according to the resources of each.<sup>39</sup> The rate of the *peita*, *questia* or ordinary tax which the Muslims of Tortosa paid is difficult to determine. In 1174 Alfons I established that the rate was to be four hundred *mazmudinas* of gold per year, a quantity that would increase or decrease according to the level of population of the *aljama*.<sup>40</sup> Later in 1287, some of the accounts of the Templars and the king show us how the taxes of Tortosa were shared by the Order and the king, who received one third of the total. The accounts in question correspond to one month, in which period the rate had risen to eighty *sous*, of which twenty-six *sous* and eight *diners* went to the king. Yearly, this would

<sup>37</sup> ACA, C, reg. 2194, f. 157 r. (22 May, 1400).

<sup>38</sup> Arxiu Històric Provincial de Tarragona, man. del notari Jaume Pont, reg. 1136, f. 53 v. (18 July, 1406).

<sup>39</sup> M. T. Ferrer, *Les aljames sarraïnes de la governació d'Oriola*, 123-130. Mutgé, 122-125.

<sup>40</sup> ACA, C, pergami 159, ed. Argemí, *Els tagarins a la Ribera de l'Ebre*, 109.

have made for a *questia* of nine hundred and sixty *sous*.<sup>41</sup> In 1386, after a reduction had been conceded, the *aljama* paid twelve hundred *sous barcelonesos* over two years.<sup>42</sup>

The origin of the *cena* was to maintain the king and his entourage when they passed through a village or town. It came to be converted into an ordinary and general tribute, in that it applied both to Christians and Muslims, and came to be distinguished between the "absent" *cena* ("*cena d'absència*" or simply, "*cena*") and the "present" *cena* ("*cena de presència*"). Although during the thirteenth century the king's lordship in Tortosa had been reduced to a third of the city, the crown continued to try collect this tax. In 1284 Alfons, the first-born of King Pedro, ordered Ramon de Montcada, Lord of Fraga, and one of the lords of the city, that he not impede the collection of the *cena* from the Jews and Muslims. Ramon for his part and the Muslims for theirs, assured the *infant* that they were not in fact obliged to pay, and after an investigation had been launched, the prince desisted from his demands.<sup>43</sup>

After the whole of the lordship and jurisdiction of Tortosa had passed into the hands of the king in 1294, all of these taxes were reinstated with vigour. Nevertheless, the Muslims succeeded, under the pretext of the poverty, misery, and oppression from which they had suffered, in getting Jaume II to concede a five-year *franquicia* from the *cena*, the *questia* and other new taxes which he was levying, but they did not find it so easy to make the *batlle* respect this concession. In May 1298, they complained that this official had demanded that they pay those very taxes, leading the king to grant them a new concession.<sup>44</sup>

Once this concession had expired, Queen Blanca, wife of Jaume II, who had received the rents and possessions of the *aljama* in order to maintain her household, decided in 1303 to authorise a reduction of the *cena*, which then was to remain fixed at two hundred *sous* annually. The said concession was confirmed by Jaume II after the death of the queen in 1311.<sup>45</sup> Much later, in 1382, Pedro the Ceremonious conceded to the *aljama* that during thirty years they would not have to pay more than two hundred *sous* per year for the *cena de presència* such that the

<sup>41</sup> ACA, C, Pergamís de Tortosa, armari 4, 17.

<sup>42</sup> ACA, C, reg. 848, f. 76 v. (14 March, 1386).

<sup>43</sup> ACA, C, reg. 62, f. 104 r. (8 December, 1284) and 132 v. (9 March, 1285), publ. Argemí, *Els tagarins a la Ribera de l'Ebre*, 130-131.

<sup>44</sup> ACA, C, reg. 110, f. 154 v. (5 May, 1298).

<sup>45</sup> The concession of 3 January, 1303 was confirmed in 1311. [ACA, C, reg. 207, f. 205 v. (18 February, 1311)].



amount would be equal to that paid for the *cena d'absència* during the reign of Queen Blanca.<sup>46</sup>

The privilege of levying a *cena* was soon extended to the procurators or governors of the kingdoms, who rationalised their entitlement to maintenance as representatives of the king, and tried to place this demand on Jews as much as Muslims.<sup>47</sup> In 1297, the Muslim and Jewish *aljamas* of Tortosa complained that Ramon Folc of Cardona, procurator of Catalonia, was imposing this tax on them. According to the king, neither the Jews nor the Muslims were obliged to pay, and he ordered Ramon to cease demanding it from these communities (and from the Muslims and Jews of Lleida, for that matter).<sup>48</sup> Later, the *cena* taxes of the first-born of the king and of the governor-general of the kingdoms were consolidated, rising, at the end of the fourteenth century, to a rate of sixty-six *sous* and eight *diners*. Martí the Humane ceded the payment of the "*cena* of the first-born" to Sister Graïda de Torrelles, a Clarissan nun of the Convent of San Daniel in Barcelona, but in 1413, the *infant* Alfons (later King Alfons the Magnanimous) recovered it, on the basis that it rightfully belonged to him as first-born of King Ferdinand of Antequera.<sup>49</sup>

We also have references to the agricultural taxes charged to the Muslims of Tortosa, by means of the protests which these taxes produced. In 1298, Mahomet Gabarreig (or Gavarreix) complained that the Muslims' exemption from the taxes on chickens and wood was not being observed. This exemption had been granted by the Temple and by Ramon de Montcada, when they were the lords of the city, and had subsequently been reclaimed by the *honores* which were held in the city.<sup>50</sup> The "*sadache*" or "*sadacha*" should also be mentioned, as should the tax levied per jar of oil, which by the end of the fourteenth century had been converted to a fixed payment of fifteen hundred *sous*, an amount that appears to cover both of these obligations. At any rate, one of the documents on which this observation is based states that this is the case. In 1376, Pedro the Ceremonious conceded a rebate of three hundred *sous* of the said figure over a three year period, in such a fashion that the Muslims only had to pay twelve hundred *sous* annually. This rebate

<sup>46</sup> ACA, C, reg. 1518, f. 101 v. (10 December, 1382). This concession was confirmed by the first-born *infante* Juan [ACA, C, reg. 1689, f. 173 r.-v. (26 May, 1384)].

<sup>47</sup> L. Klüpfel, "El règim de la Confederació catalano-aragonesa a finals del s. XIII," *Revista Jurídica de Catalunya*, (1930): 99-100.

<sup>48</sup> ACA, C, reg. 106, f. 151 r.-v. (16 December, 1297).

<sup>49</sup> ACA, C, reg. 2450, f. 169 r. (30 January, 1413).

<sup>50</sup> ACA, C, reg. 107, f. 266 r. (1 March, 1298).

was renewed in 1384, this time for four years and for the same amount, owing to the debts by which the Muslims were oppressed.<sup>51</sup>

Weddings, and more specifically the performance of musicians and singers at these festivities were also the object of a tax. This imposition also elicited vocal protests on the part of the Muslims, and was suppressed and reintroduced a number of times. In 1180, Alfons I had already had to intervene in favour of the Muslims of Tortosa because they had been obliged to hire a singer or musician at their weddings, whether they were rich or poor, and whether or not they wanted such entertainment. No doubt this was enacted in order to guarantee the collection of this fee at every wedding. In any event, the king decided that if anyone wanted to have one of these artists present at a wedding, they would not have to pay anything to the *batlle* for it.<sup>52</sup> The Muslim singers themselves paid a tax which in July of 1287 was assessed at ten *sous*, of which the king received three *sous* and one *dinero*.<sup>53</sup> Needless to say, it was in the interests of the authorities that the singers be busily employed. Much later, it was the Christian municipality of Tortosa which tried to reintroduce this wedding tax, thereafter referred to as "*aldehees*." In 1399, Queen Mary had to intervene again to ask the procurators of Tortosa to cease demanding this tax from the Muslims.<sup>54</sup> Her prohibition, however, cannot have lasted long, for in 1408, when the Queen had died, King Martí the Humane again forbade that the Muslims be taxed for wedding performances.<sup>55</sup> It should also be remarked that there was a tax on Muslim prostitutes which, during the year ending in May of 1282, had brought in twenty-two *sous*, as much as had the taxes on inheritances.<sup>56</sup>

In Tortosa, as in other locales, we know that there were conflicts between the Christian and Muslim communities regarding the contributions that the latter were obliged to make with the Christians in communally assessed taxes. For instance, in May of 1316 the Christians had seized Muslim property because of this. The *batlle* of Tortosa, Arnau d'Agramunt had tried to return these confiscations, but the representatives [*síndics*] of Tortosa had opposed this, alleging that the restitution of those confiscated goods would have been against the uses and customs

<sup>51</sup> ACA, C, reg. 929, f. 195 r. (19 November, 1376), reg. 943, f. 23 r.-v. (17 February, 1384).

<sup>52</sup> CA, C, pergami d'Alfons I, 299, copy of 1247, publ. Argemí, *Els tagarins a la Ribera d'Ebre*, 103.

<sup>53</sup> ACA, C, pergamis de Tortosa, armari 4, 17, publ. *Ibid.*, 135.

<sup>54</sup> ACA, C, reg. 2337, f. 14, publ. Macho y Ortega, 147.

<sup>55</sup> ACA, C, reg. 2206, ff. 45 r.-47 v. (4 September, 1408).

<sup>56</sup> ACA, C, pergamis de Tortosa, armari 4, 39 and 29 (5 May, 1292 and 8 February, 1294), publ. Argemí, *Els tagarins de la Ribera de l'Ebre*, 139-144.

of the city. The problem was that this position would result in an infringement of the rights of the Muslims, and for this reason, the king asked the *batlle* to initiate an inquiry to clarify this question. In the meantime, the *batlle* was instructed that the Muslims of the city were not to be forced to contribute with the Christians. The procurators of the city, for their part, were trying to suppress information pertinent to the investigation, so the king ordered the *batlle* to consult his predecessor, Guillem de Ceret, to resolve the matter.<sup>57</sup> The question must have been resolved in favour of the Muslims, because in 1324, the king admonished the collectors of the subsidy for Sardinia in the city and the *veguers* of Tortosa because they were demanding these taxes from the Muslims and were making confiscations on this basis, when in fact the Muslims were not obliged to contribute to such levies.<sup>58</sup> This distinction was clarified in the later practice of assessing extraordinary levies on each community separately. In 1329, the Muslim *aljama* was taxed twenty-two hundred *sous barcelonesos* for the subsidy for the Crusade against Granada, but nothing was in fact collected, given that the city had been given by the king to the *infant* Ferdinand in December of 1328.<sup>59</sup> This situation continued up to the death of the *infant* in 1364.<sup>60</sup>

At the end of the reign of Pedro the Ceremonious, the Muslims of Tortosa, just like all of the communities of the realm, be they Islamic, Jewish or Christian, found themselves in economic difficulties due because of the great financial demands that had been placed on them in order to satisfy the demands of the king, and which were destined to support the great wars of the mid-century. The war against Castile was particularly expensive, lasting from 1356 to 1369, with no firm peace until 1375. Although the king found himself with few resources, he was forced to moderate his fiscal demands in order to give some breathing space to his subjects. In 1376 and in 1386, he had to concede various tax reductions to the Muslims of Tortosa, including the conversion of a subsidy of eight hundred *sous barcelonesos* to six hundred *sous* in 1376, and rebates of the *sadaque*, the *cena de presencia* and of the *peita*.<sup>61</sup> Nevertheless in 1385, he asked for a new subsidy for the juridical and military operation which he had undertaken against Empuries, a county which had been defying his authority. The Muslims of Tortosa were

<sup>57</sup> ACA, C, reg. 161, f. 51 v. (23 July, 1316).

<sup>58</sup> ACA, C, reg. 224, f. 117 r. (13 February, 1324).

<sup>59</sup> M. Sánchez Martínez, "'Questie' y subsidios en Cataluña durante el primer tercio del siglo XIV: el subsidio para la cruzada granadina (1329-1334)", *Cuadernos de Historia Económica de Cataluña*, 16 (1977): 19.

<sup>60</sup> Ferrer, *Oriola*, 35-36.

<sup>61</sup> ACA, C, reg. 929, f. 198 r. (19 November, 1376).

taxed two hundred and fifty *florins*, half of the amount of Zaragoza and Xativa, less than Huesca (which had to pay four hundred), but more than those of Lleida or Tamarite (assessed at one hundred fifty).<sup>62</sup> In 1389, the royal treasury concluded an agreement with the *aljama* so that they would be able to pay the ordinary and extraordinary tribute they owed up to the first of May of that year. The *adelantat* Çayd Alqueya agreed to the payment of one hundred fifty *florins* annually for four years.<sup>63</sup> In 1399, when the fiscal preparations for the wedding of Martí the Humane got underway, Pere Martes, the commissioner charged with assessing the taxes for the event demanded a contribution from the *aljama* of Tortosa; but at the moment the *aljama* belonged to the queen, Maria de Luna, who affirmed that they were not obliged to contribute to this imposition.<sup>64</sup>

The imposition of local taxes on produce were also a source of litigation among Christian and Muslim communities in those areas in which they cohabited. Controversies arose over the Muslims' liability for the taxes on consumption which Christian municipalities levied. In many instances this meant the collection of funds that would have ordinarily gone to pay the royal taxes of the Christian community, so Muslim resistance is understandable. In 1328, in the reign of Alfons the Benign, the *aljama* of Tortosa had been protesting because they had been asked, in violation of their custom, to pay a tax on meat slaughtered in their butcher shop and for certain other foodstuffs. The monarch asked the *batlle* to investigate the matter, but we are unaware of how the affair was concluded.<sup>65</sup>

In 1371, in reaction to what surely must have been recurring protests, King Pedro the Ceremonious ordered that the Muslims of Tortosa should not be obliged to contribute with the city in tolls and other exactions, except for works relating to the walls and ditches, and for sentries and defence. This exemption was conceded due to the debts that had been contracted in previous years owing to the tax burden of the wars.<sup>66</sup> This privilege met with fierce opposition on the part of the procurators of the city, who arranged that it remain suspended until they could determine the resulting impact on their rights, which they

<sup>62</sup> ACA, C, reg. 1289, f. 77 v. (6 January, 1385).

<sup>63</sup> ACA, C, reg. 1871, f. 111 v. (25 January, 1389).

<sup>64</sup> ACA, C, reg. 2337, f. 14. publ. Macho y Ortega, 147.

<sup>65</sup> ACA, C, reg. 430, f. 28 v. (18 October, 1328), publ. R. Mayordomo, "Notas históricas sobre la carnicería de la aljama sarracena de Tortosa (siglo XIV)", in *Homenatge a la memòria del Prof. Dr. Emilio Sáez. Aplec d'estudis dels seus deixebles i col·laboradors* (Barcelona, 1989), doc. 5.

<sup>66</sup> ACA, C, reg. 920, f. 96 r.-v. (20 February, 1371).

argued were thus prejudiced. Finally in 1393, it appears that the city *batlle*, Arnau Torrelles, had managed to convince them to cede this point.<sup>67</sup> But this concession was not to last. In 1397, Martí the Humane had to insist that his officials in Tortosa not ask the Muslims of that city to pay taxes on bread, wine, meat and other products such as the Christians did, because they had been relieved of this burden by the privilege of 1371. The monarch considered, furthermore, that the Muslims were already sufficiently burdened by the ordinary and extraordinary taxes that they had to pay.<sup>68</sup> This resolution gave rise to renewed protests on the part of the city of Tortosa, but the king confirmed it because it was in accord with the original charter of the city and the privilege of Pedro the Ceremonious already alluded to, which had maintained that it was upon the city of Tortosa that the burden of proof fell in this regard.<sup>69</sup>

The various contributions to the royal fisc that were demanded of the *aljama* certainly provoked its indebtedness, to the extent that it was obliged to sell "*censals morts*" or certificates of debt. In 1400, Martí the Humane authorised the conversion of these *censals*, recovering a previous sale that had been made at high interest rates, and substituting one at lower rates.<sup>70</sup> The *aljama* had the right to issue certificates of debt as well as contract loans with its goods standing as guarantee, without the express permission of the king or of his representative, the *batlle*. It appears, however, that this provision notwithstanding, those who lent money to the *aljama* sought the signature of the *batlle*, thinking that by this they would secure a greater guarantee on their credit. The refusal of the *batlle* to do this, given that this was not according to protocol, led some to rescind their loan offers, prompting the king to solemnly ratify the custom of the Muslims of Tortosa in 1408, which permitted them to indent themselves without royal permission. This, of course did not apply if the goods that comprised the collateral were held in enfiteusis by the king — for these royal licence was required.<sup>71</sup> Alfons the Magnanimous ratified this deposition, so vital for the *aljama* in 1416.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> ACA, C, reg. 1884, f. 26 r.-v. (29 April, 1393).

<sup>68</sup> ACA, C, reg. 2111, f. 48 v. (17 July, 1397).

<sup>69</sup> ACA, C, reg. 2117, f. 28 r.-v. (27 February, 1398).

<sup>70</sup> ACA, C, reg. 2194, f. 157 r. (22 May, 1400).

<sup>71</sup> ACA, C, reg. 2206, ff. 49 r.-v. (23 September, 1408).

<sup>72</sup> ACA, C, reg. 2586, ff. 38 v.-39 r. (27 February, 1416).

Royal patrimony, in the Middle Ages, was comprised of properties, various rents, taxes and numerous *regalias*.<sup>73</sup> Prominent among these seigniorial privileges was the right of monopoly over certain public services: mills, ovens, butcher's shops, baths, olive presses, and so on. Of these monopolies, some carried a religious connotation for the minorities, such as the butcher shops and the ovens, and because of this, they were often eager to have such services, especially butcher's shops, in their respective neighbourhoods. Islamic law prohibits the consumption of the meat of animals which are not drained of blood at the time of slaughter, which drown, which have been killed by other animals or which die accidentally, and in which the blood has congealed. Pork and blood are generally prohibited.<sup>74</sup> Obviously, it was very much in their interests to have control of an abattoir in order to assure the legality of their meat. This privilege, however, did not come without a tax — a *sisá* or *lleuda*, which was customarily one *dinero* for every pound of meat (gross weight) slaughtered.<sup>75</sup>

If the Muslims of Tortosa had had a butcher's shop during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, they had lost it by the end of that century. In 1298, they obtained a four-year licence to buy meat in whichever butcher's shop of the city they pleased, not only the Jewish one to which they had been previously limited. The act that authorises this liberty is one of those which has the stated intention of relieving the poverty of the *aljama* ("*attendentes inopiam et paupere-tatem quam ... patimini*"), and confirms that their previous butcher shop had been burdened with a *sisá* or a *lleuda*, which increased its prices. The other privilege extended by Jaume II was, in fact, an exemption from the payment of whatever *lleuda* to which they had been liable for the same four-year period.<sup>76</sup> This period having passed, they were obliged, once more and for some years thereafter, to buy their meat from the Jews of the city.

As it happened that in many towns and villages neither the Jewish nor the Islamic community was sufficiently numerous to support their own separate butcher's shops, at times they had to share this service with Christians (although the meat was handled according to their own rites). In the instances where Muslims shared an abattoir with

<sup>73</sup> *Regalias* might take the form of monopolies (such as over ovens or other utilities) or general rights of sovereignty (such as the right to impose taxes).

<sup>74</sup> J. Caro Baroja, *Los moriscos del Reino de Granada* (Madrid, 1976), 132; R. M. Blasco, "Una carnicería regentada por moriscos en el arrabal de San Juan, de Elche," *Sharq Al-Andalus*, 2 (1985): 76.

<sup>75</sup> Macho y Ortega, 184-185; Boswell, 96-98 and 102-103; Mutgé i Vives, 11-12.

<sup>76</sup> ACA, C, reg. 196, f. 232 v. (21 May, 1298). publ. Mayordomo, doc. 1.

Jews, a co-operative arrangement often resulted, wherein Muslims (having less strict dietary laws) could consume some animal parts were not acceptable to Jews, thus permitting the more efficient use of the animal in question, and greater profit for the butcher shop. The Muslims, however, often felt their dignity slighted by this circumstance, and this led at times to conflict. In 1320, for instance, some Jews of Tortosa were taunting the Muslims, saying that they had to buy a certain type of ram's meat (*molto*) which had been butchered by Jews in the royal abattoir of Remolins, and which was referred to as "*trufegas*." This meat, it was said, sat for sale because the Jews did not consider it worthy of consumption. The king ordered the Jews to cease taunting the Muslims in this manner.<sup>77</sup> Then, however, it was the Jews who began to complain to the king regarding the attitude of the Muslims, who now wanted to establish an abattoir of their own, in which they would not have to buy the meat rejected by Jews. The complaint was that this loss of business would result in higher prices for the Jews. In this case, the king ruled in their favour, doubtless given that a reduction of income of the Jewish butcher's shop would entail a reduction of royal revenue.<sup>78</sup> Nevertheless, the Muslims were eventually successful and in May of 1321 the king authorised them to construct an exclusive butcher's shop between the city gate known as Vinpeçol and the dye works in Remolins; this despite a process of the *batlle* of Tortosa that had been to the contrary. They appealed to the king regarding the *batlle*'s ruling and he upheld their right in this regard, although in exchange they were obliged to pay an annual tax of six hundred *sous barcelonesos*.<sup>79</sup>

The Jews continued to protest, now on the grounds of the location of the new abattoir, which they considered prejudicial to their interests. Finally the king chose to recommend to the *batlle* of Tortosa, Bernat Vidal, that he order the construction of the butcher's shop to take place within the boundaries of the *moreria*, with the order to destroy any butcher's shop built in contravention of this. He further authorised non-Tortosan Muslims to buy their meat from whichever butchers they pleased.<sup>80</sup> According to subsequent Jewish complaints that the abattoir had in fact been constructed outside of the *moreria*, Jaume II, following

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<sup>77</sup> ACA, C, reg. 170, f. 277 v. (1 December, 1320).

<sup>78</sup> ACA, C, reg. 171, ff. 25 v.-26 r. (18 December, 1320).

<sup>79</sup> ACA, C, reg. 219, ff. 306 v.-307 r. (1 May, 1321), publ. Mayordomo, doc. 2. Regarding this, see also D. Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1996), 171-172.

<sup>80</sup> ACA, C, reg. 220, f. 15 r. (25 May, 1321), publ. Mayordomo, doc. 3.

his earlier mandate, ordered it torn down and a new one constructed in conformity with the original licence.<sup>81</sup>

But the problems did not disappear, for the Jews then asked for a new butcher's shop for themselves. Ramon de Sentenat, who held the concession for its construction, wanted to build it in Market Street, but as this site was quite close to that of the Muslims, the king ordered him to construct it farther away, between the mansions of Vidal Bonsenyor and of Chue Avinacara, in order to avoid further controversies. This would have meant making a hole in the wall of the Jewish neighbourhood (or *call*) and constructing an arch, which would thereafter be blocked up from the inside so that the security of the Jewish quarter would not be compromised. Before proceeding, the king sought the opinion of the city of Tortosa. This solution was not deemed acceptable and after further inquiries, the Jewish butcher's shop was constructed out of two shops, in a location that was, in the end, very close to the Muslim abattoir.<sup>82</sup>

The oven appears to have been a source of much less conflict than the butcher's shop. We know that Jewish and Muslims bakers had their own ovens, but that they were also used by Christians, although this was eventually forbidden by Jaume II and offenders ordered punished because it prejudiced the royal oven of Remolins.<sup>83</sup>

The irrigated fields along the Ebro in the northern region of Tortosa's limits were very extensive, and there were many Muslims who harvested olives in the village of Benifallet. While there is no reference to support the existence of a Muslim olive press in Tortosa—a logical conclusion, as the city's inhabitants would have been more involved in artisanal pursuits than agriculture—there is mention of an olive press rented by a Muslim named Jafia Avinolle Alfach at the beginning of the fourteenth century. Jafia's father, Alhaig Avinolle had obtained this mill in *enfiteusis* from the nobleman Ramon de Montcada, a descendant of Guillem Ramon de Montcada, one of those who had accompanied Count Ramon Berenguer IV of Tortosa in his conquest of the city in 1148. This nobleman had received, in exchange for his services, one third of the city, a share which was exchanged by the king for another property in 1294, when the latter acquired lordship over the city.<sup>84</sup> The concession of the press had been in the form of a monopoly, which is to say, all of the Muslims of Benifallet had been obliged to carry their

<sup>81</sup> ACA, C, reg. 220, f. 40 r.-v. (28 June, 1321), publ. *Ibid.*, doc. 4.

<sup>82</sup> ACA, C, reg. 222, ff. 43 v. y 69 r. (1 July and 17 August, 1322).

<sup>83</sup> ACA, C, reg. 115, ff. 394 v.-395 r. (17 April, 1300).

<sup>84</sup> S. Sobrequés i Vidal, *Els barons de Catalunya* (Barcelona, 1961), 60.



olives to that press, and no other Muslim of Benifallet could have a press. In exchange for this concession the Avinolles had to pay the Montcada family twenty *càntirs* of olive oil annually, while they had promised to pay the Avinolles sixty *sous* if the monopoly was not respected. In 1311, by which time the lordship of Tortosa had already passed to the king, a Christian named Pere d'Almenara built a press in Benifallet and this act provoked a protest on the part of Jafia. The king left the resolution of this complaint to the *batlle* of Tortosa, who was obliged to resolve it to the satisfaction of Jafia.

Then, some years later, another situation arose which violated Jafia's monopoly.<sup>85</sup> In 1317, certain Muslims of Benifallet had begun to sell their olives "on the branch" (which is to say, before they were harvested) to non-residents of the village. These buyers then took the olives to other locales to have them pressed. In response to Jafia's protest, the king declared that even these non-residents were obliged to respect his monopoly and take any olives harvested in Benifallet to his mill. Many years later, in 1433, Queen Maria, the wife of Alfons the Magnanimous, intervened in the affairs of the olive press of Benifallet, the functioning of which was threatened by the confiscation of the two animals that powered the mill, due to the debts of the *aljama* of Benifallet. The queen asked the *batlle* to confiscate whatever else he could before the animals in question so that the press could continue to function. It is not certain if the mill still belonged at this point to Jafia's family.<sup>86</sup>

In the sphere of individual rights, the Muslims of Tortosa were subject to certain restrictions but were also, by law, guaranteed various liberties. The theoretical obligation of Muslims to dress in a manner distinct from that of the Christians complemented the rules of segregation that the Church had imposed on Christian monarchs who had Muslim subjects. The fourth Lateran council of 1215 enjoined rulers to impose vestimental distinctions on Muslims, so that they might not be confused with Christians. This was implemented in order to reduce the risk of sexual relations among people of different religions — relations which might endanger the purity of the Christian faith. In the period immediately after the conquest of this territory, the problem of maintaining such a distinction was not so acute, given that the latter continued to wear their traditional garb. But later, out of either imitation or the desire not to appear distinct from the dominant culture, they came

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<sup>85</sup> ACA, C, reg. 159, f. 101 r. (20 November, 1311) and ff. 196 v.-197 r. (3 January, 1317).

<sup>86</sup> ACA, C, reg. 3125, f. 61 v. (18 December, 1433).

to adopt Christian clothing and fashions. This, in turn, led Christian authorities to regulate such matters.

It appears that the "*Costum*" of Tortosa (1272 and 1277-1279) was the first legal compilation that addressed this concern. It established the requirement that Muslims cut their hair in a round style and wear their beards long. As for clothing, they were to wear an *aljuba* or *almeixa*, except when they were at work. Muslim women, as Jewish women, were to wear the *aldifara* over their normal clothes.<sup>87</sup> By 1384, things had changed significantly. One of the city's messengers to the king complained that for some time Muslims had been dressing in the same manner as Christians; some had even gone so far as to cut their beards like clerics while others imitated the styles of young lay Christians. Out of this lack of differentiation, there arose many dangers, particularly the risk of sexual relations with Christian women. The messengers also complained that Muslims were going about armed with swords and daggers. They asked that this be controlled, so that the Muslims would not be tempted into greater audacities, since it had given rise, they said, to the speaking of insults and improprieties towards Christians. Pedro the Ceremonious responded by ordering his steward Arnau Torrelles, who was *batlle* of Tortosa, to impose the distinction of dress and impose arms control on the Muslims.<sup>88</sup>

The *batlle* must have acted, for a few months later, the Muslims lodged complaints that the *batlle* had obliged them to wear clothing and hairstyles distinct from those of the other Muslims of the land.<sup>89</sup> As it is not stated explicitly, we are not aware of the measures that the *batlle* had imposed, although it is possible he had adhered to the letter of the Custom of Tortosa, whereas in other places at this time, Muslims commonly wore their hair longer and parted in the middle, so that it fell over their ears.<sup>90</sup> The difficulty in making them submit to these norms of appearance gave rise to the imposition of another means of distinction. The *Cortes generales* summoned by King Joan I in 1390 approved a regulation that required all Muslims of Catalonia, men and women of ten years and older, to wear a yellow band of half a palm in length by two centimetres in width on the right sleeve of their garment. The band was to be red if the clothing in question was yellow. This law was very badly received by the Muslims, and for all intents and purposes, was never put into practice, aside from for a few months in 1397

<sup>87</sup> M. T. Ferrer i Mallol, *Els sarraïns de la Corona catalano-aragonesa en el segle XIV. Segregació i Discriminació* (Barcelona, 1987), 41-42.

<sup>88</sup> ACA, C, reg. 841, f. 49 v. (17 November, 1384).

<sup>89</sup> ACA, C, reg. 842, f. 132 v. (16 Februaury, 1385).

<sup>90</sup> Ferrer, *Els sarraïns de la Corona catalano-aragonesa*, 43-55.

under the authority of the queen, Maria de Luna. In that same year, Martí the Humane decided to abolish this requirement, no doubt in exchange for a donation from the *aljamas*. The record does show that the *cadi general* of the king, Ali de Bellvis, along with the *cadi* of the *moreria* of Tortosa, Hamet Saragoci, and Ovecar de Bellvis were given the task of explaining this regulation to the *cadis*, *alamins*, *adelantats* and Muslim *aljamas* of Catalonia.<sup>91</sup>

In theory, Muslims of Tortosa enjoyed the liberty to change their place of residence, but this was not always an easy matter. Women had the most difficulties, especially if they were single, as they comprised an important element in maintaining and increasing the population of any given place, and therefore of maintaining the revenues of the lord in question.<sup>92</sup> In 1319, Mahomat, son of Ali Saragoci, had to pay an expensive remission, which amounted to eight hundred *sous*, to receive a pardon for the offence of having married a Muslim of Valencia who had already been engaged to another, and carrying her off illegally from her city. After the first payment of one hundred fifty *sous*, which had been ruled as invalid given that it had been paid in Tortosa, he was obliged to pay afresh the full amount of eight hundred. Six hundred of this went to the owner of the tax licence of the *moreria* of Valencia, who felt prejudiced by the abduction of the woman, while the rest went to the king.<sup>93</sup>

When Muslims changed their place of residence, one of the most serious difficulties that they encountered was how to move their belongings to their new locale. It appears that this was not governed by any general legislation, and the rules varied from place to place according to local custom. The rules of the county of Tortosa and of the Ribera d'Ebre happened to be amongst the most strict and generated a great number of suits and complaints due to seignorial acts that the Muslims considered to be abusive. At times, these controversies even brought different Christian lords into conflict.

During the reign of Pedro the Great, in 1282, some Muslims of Tortosa having obtained the authorisation of the king, moved to the city of Amposta. The Commander of the Temple in Tortosa, however, impounded their goods, arguing that the customs of the city provided him this right when Muslims moved from place to place. When the Muslims in question filed a suit before the judge of Amposta, the king ruled

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<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 55-59.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 119-120.

<sup>93</sup> ACA, C. reg. 217, ff. 213 v.-214 r. (2 December, 1319). The king wrote to the bailiff of Tortosa in a similar tenor [ACA, C. reg. 217, f. 214 r.-v.].

that the ancient privileges of the Muslims allowed them to move about without losing their belongings. He then confirmed this privilege and ordered the "sotsveguer" of Tortosa, Sebastià Mas, to oblige the Commander to return the goods that had been seized.<sup>94</sup> This restitution was not made and, in the end, the *batlle* of Amposta seized the goods belonging to the Templars, which lay within his jurisdiction. At the protests of the Templars, Alfons the Liberal, successor of Pedro the Great, overrode his father's decision and ordered the *batlle* of Amposta to return the Templars' goods if the customs of Tortosa were found to support their case.<sup>95</sup>

In another case, the lord of a place away from which some Muslims had moved, tried to exert his right to make them return and even to punish them. Pere Marí, a citizen of Barcelona and a member the entourage of Queen Constanza of Sicily, the mother of Jaume II, had acquired the lordship over La Aldea, and according to him, the Order of the Hospital, which was lord of the place between 1206 and 1280<sup>96</sup> had established certain treaties with the Muslims that specified this right. The pacts referred to included, no doubt, the *carta de població* granted to La Aldea by the Order in 1258, and which specifies, "*Et si aliquis vestrum ierit et recesserit a dominatione nostra et elegerit alium dominum, ut sit incursus ad voluntatem nostram sed alii non teneantur nobis in aliquo de illo qui fugitur.*"<sup>97</sup> Pere Marí's protest was motivated by the departure of some of the Muslims of La Aldea, who had gone to live in Tortosa. In 1297, Jaume II entrusted the resolution of this case to the bishop of Tortosa.<sup>98</sup>

The customs of the Ribera d'Ebre permitted the mobility of Muslims but sanctioned the forfeit of their goods, both movable and immovable, which they had possessed in their original residence. In 1301, Ali Alcaez, a Muslim formerly of Miravet, a place that belonged to the Temple, moved to Tortosa. It appears that he took the precaution of secretly taking his belongings with him, but lost his immovable goods. He then brought a protest before the *batlle* of Tortosa, Bernat de Fonollar, who asked the Commander of Miravet to restore all of Ali's property, threatening to confiscate property of the Order if he did not com-

<sup>94</sup> ACA, C, reg. 59, f. 110 v. (6 October, 1282) and f. 191 r. (4 January, 1283) publ. Argemí, *Els tagarins de la Ribera de l'Ebre*, 123-124 and 126.

<sup>95</sup> ACA, C, reg. 66, f. 117 r. (9 June, 1286), publ. *Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>96</sup> J.M. Font Rius, vol. 1, 785-786, and vol. 2, 727; P. Català Roca, "Presidència de la Suda -o castell de Sant Joan- de Tortosa. Comentari marginal," in R. Dalmau ed., *Els castells Catalans*, 4 (Barcelona, 1973), 577-578.

<sup>97</sup> Font Rius, vol. 1, doc. 303, 446.

<sup>98</sup> ACA, C, reg. 107, f. 170 v. (29 December, 1297).

ply. The king intervened and asked the *batlle* to send him information regarding the customs of Miravet and Ribera d'Ebre. When this information arrived, the king found that the Commander had in fact acted within his rights in confiscating Ali's goods, and in fact that the *batlle* should return the rest of Ali's property to the Order as well.<sup>99</sup>

The truth is that the custom of Tortosa was not much more generous than that of Miravet. This is demonstrated by the case of Matfuna, a Muslim of Tortosa who moved to Miravet, where he married in 1321. This was, in other words, the opposite of Ali Alcacez's case. When the *batlle* of Tortosa, Arnau d'Agramunt, found out that he had married in Miravet, he confiscated a house which Matfuna had possessed in the *moreria* of Tortosa and which he had given to his niece Mariam who had then sold it. Matfuna appealed to the king and he ordered the *batlle* Bernat Vidal, who had in the meanwhile succeeded Arnau, that he rule over this case with all speed so that neither Matfuna nor Mariam would be prejudiced.<sup>100</sup>

It may have been in order to prevent just such complications that Haumell, son of Ubequer de Asco, asked for royal authorisation to buy property in Tortosa, where he intended to move in 1322. At the same time he also sought permission to leave his present properties in the hands of his brothers.<sup>101</sup> It was probably this second point that worried Haumell the most, for indirect inheritances were often a source of legal complications.

Tortosa attracted a Muslim population not only on the regional level, from the whole zone of the Ebro, but also immigrants from beyond the frontiers of the Catalano-Aragonese Crown, and in particular Navarre. The case of Abdalla el Castellano is particularly interesting. This Muslim of Tudela was imprisoned by the *merino* of Zaragoza, Domingo López Sarnes, when he boarded a boat along with his wife and family and all of his goods and set out to move to Tortosa. The king was forced to intervene and order the *merino* to free Abdalla and his family, letting him proceed with his goods from Zaragoza. It is uncertain what exactly led the *merino* to detain Abdalla. There may have been some bureaucratic problem, a missing authorisation or some unpaid toll, or it may well have been that he tried to detain the Muslim in the *moreria* of Zaragoza in order to augment that community's population and revenue. In any case, aside from the resolution of Abdalla's deten-

<sup>99</sup> ACA, C, reg. 121, f. 27 r.-v. i reg. 122, ff. 161 v.-162 r. (19 June and 27 July, 1301), reg. 124, ff. 152 v. and 153 r. (16 May, 1302); M. T. Ferrer, *Els sarraïns de la Corona catalano-aragonesa*, 121.

<sup>100</sup> ACA, C, reg. 173, f. 92 v. (18 May, 1321).

<sup>101</sup> ACA, C, reg. 222, f. 72 r. (24 August, 1322).

tion, the king sent another more general order to the *merino*, instructing him not to mistreat any Muslims who were coming from Castile or Navarre in order to settle in his realms. He was concerned, having been informed that many would-be immigrants were dissuaded by fears of imprisonment and confiscation of their goods, of the precise nature that Abdalla had suffered.<sup>102</sup>

The *aljama* of Tortosa had a substantial population and was an important centre of commerce and although this alone may explain the attraction it held for migrating Muslims, there is little doubt that Muslims of other realms saw it as a stepping stone to immigration further abroad — to Islamic lands. From here, it was possible to embark on commercial voyages to the Maghrib, superficially justifiable by the normal economic activity of the *aljama* but which allowed Muslims to prepare their eventual emigration and guarantee a greater chance of success abroad.

The preliminary sketch of the structure and life of the *aljama* that I have presented here is far from complete; the nature and practice of the economy, of the artisanal, commercial, and agricultural activities of its members have hardly been touched on, nor the administration of justice. This is indeed the ground work for a fuller study on which I am currently involved, but the data presented here should provide an illustration of the type of information that we can gather about the Muslim communities of the Catalano-Aragonese Crown and may prove useful as comparative material for scholars interested in minority communities in the Crown or beyond.

*Institució Milà y Fontanals, CSIC (Barcelona)*

*(Translated by Brian Catlos)*

*Centre for Medieval Studies, U. of Toronto*

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<sup>102</sup> ACA, C, reg. 1226, ff. 37 r.-38 r. (5 January, 1370).

## FOUR KIDNAPPINGS IN THIRTEENTH-CENTURY ARAGON: Christian Children as Victims of Christian-Muslim Domination

In 1281 Marinel de Grailla, an inhabitant of Sariñena in Aragon, sold a young boy whom he supposed to be Muslim to his fellow townsman Johannes Carcassers in the market of Pamplona. When the boy began to protest that he was actually a Christian, Marinel and Johannes hurried him off to a field and put a knife to his throat to silence him. Thereafter they took him to the house of the latter, where they circumcised him by force and then threatened him not to divulge what had passed. The two went on to sell their victim at the convent of Sijena a few miles to the south-east, but not before rumours of their crime had become common parlance in their town.<sup>1</sup>

In 1292 a complaint came to the ears of the *infante* Pedro of Aragon that the Commander of the Order of Calatrava at Alcañiz was holding a boy whom the Order claimed to be a Muslim, but whom Pedro de Podio de Nina, an inhabitant of the same town asserted to be his own son Dominicus, a Christian. Despite the fact that the identity of the boy had been established to the apparent satisfaction of the law, the Knights refused to restore the boy to his proper faith and family.<sup>2</sup>

In 1296 the five-year-old son of Bonanatus Ballesterius and his wife Dulcia was carried off to the *huerta* of Murcia by Christian soldiers of fortune and eventually sold as a Muslim slave along with other captive *sarraceni*. Two months later, when the mother's complaint reached the ears of the king, the boy had yet to be found. Jaime II ordered his officials to be on the alert for the lad, and ordered that they proceed against the mercenaries in question.<sup>3</sup>

In 1298 Berenguer Jonerius, a vassal of Berenguer d'Entença, by "diabolical inspiration" carried off a Christian boy in the city of Tortosa, took him back to the lands of his lord and sold him there as a Muslim slave. After the purchase, the new owner enlisted the help of

*SCRIPTA MEDITERRANEA*, Vols XIX-XX 1998-1999, 165

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<sup>1</sup>Arxiu de la Corona de Aragó, Cancelleria, Registre 50 f. 163v (18 September, 1281). Cf. Appendix, Doc. 1.

<sup>2</sup>A.C.A., C. Reg. 87 f. 27v (1 January, 1293). Cf. Appendix, Doc. 2.

<sup>3</sup>A.C.A., C. Reg. 430 f. 96v (25 June, 1296). Cf. Appendix, Doc. 3.

the Muslim *alaminus* of Tivissa, a town in the hills of Tarragona, who circumcised the child and indoctrinated him into the "Saracen error of perversity," which is to say, Islam. When the lord of Entença, Berenguer, heard word of what had come to pass, he fined the *alaminus* one hundred and fifty *solidi*, but accepted the kidnapping and conversion as a *fait accompli* and did not care to restore the victim of the crime to either his faith or his family. King Jaime II was obliged to order the bailiff of Tortosa to collect the lad, and warned the lady Galbos, wife of lord Berenguer, that if she did not expedite the extradition, she, the lord himself, and their goods would be held to account.<sup>4</sup>

The thirteenth-century Crown of Aragon was perhaps the most pluralistic western European society of its time. For the previous two centuries the Crown had embarked on an aggressive and successful campaign of expansion in the Muslim territories to its south, and in these years its area and population increased exponentially.<sup>5</sup> Even in the late thirteenth century when the incidents in question occurred, the over-all Muslim population of the Crown may have been as high as thirty per cent.<sup>6</sup> This would not have been an even distribution, rather, some villages and rural regions doubtless remained almost entirely Muslim while other areas may have been mixed. In addition to the Islamic component of the population which was itself varied, there was a substantial Jewish minority of perhaps 3.5%, which may have been overwhelmingly urban, but which nonetheless also included rural landlords and agricultural producers.<sup>7</sup> Even the Christian population was varied, as the conditions of the frontier had drawn not only Aragonese,

<sup>4</sup>A.C.A., C. Reg. 107 ff. 224v-225r (18 March, 1297). This document is also partially recorded in Reg. 264 f. 96r Cf. Appendix, Doc. 4. I discovered the documents which relate these cases of abduction in 1997 while doing research for my dissertation, "The Victors and the Vanquished: Christians and Muslims of the Ebro Valley, ss. XI-XIII." During that year my work was made possible by the generous support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the *Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores de España*, the Institutió Milà i Fontanals (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Barcelona), a Harcourt Brown Travel Fellowship (University College, Toronto), the Associates of the School of Graduate Studies (University of Toronto) and a Bernadotte Schmidt Research Grant (American Historical Association).

<sup>5</sup>The Catalan-Aragonese "Reconquest" can be divided into two main phases. The first really got underway with the conquest of Huesca in 1096 and lasted through the 1180s. It was at this time that mainland Catalonia and Aragon reached their present size. The subsequent phase, under Jaime I (1215-1276) saw the addition of the Kingdom of Mallorca, along with the other Balearic Islands, the Kingdom of Valencia and, temporarily, Denia and Alicante.

<sup>6</sup>J. Boswell, *The Royal Treasure. Muslim Communities under the Crown of Aragon in the Fourteenth Century* (New Haven, 1977), 7.

<sup>7</sup>These estimates are based on Hillgarth's estimates for the late thirteenth century. See J. N. Hillgarth, *The Spanish Kingdoms*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1976-78), vol. I, 30-31.



Catalans, Navarrese and Basques to settle in the low-lands of the Crown, but also immigrants from western Europe beyond the Pyrenees.

Ethnicity was only one index of diversity. Other classes, groups and organisations operated within the Crown, each embodying a cohesiveness and self-consciousness at least as strong as the religious one, and whose members pursued their agendas of both the group and their own. Examples of these are corporate entities such as cathedral chapters, monastic houses, and the Military Orders. These corporations, especially the latter, were major economic concerns with extensive land-holdings, a role that brought them into intimate contact with members of each of the religious communities.<sup>8</sup>

The Crown suffered from a condition typical of the age: widespread criminal and class violence and general public disorder. Despite Jaime I's efforts to cow his nobles and to establish the "Peace and Truce of God," civil disorder was widespread. Complaints of banditry and organised violence on the part of renegade nobles regularly punctuate the voluminous Chancellery Registers.<sup>9</sup> The victims of these depredations were often, but far from exclusively, Muslims. The royal responses to these complaints usually included threats of castigation against the offending party, but seldom provided for restitution, redress or return of stolen goods, meaning that perpetrators were left with little discouragement against subsequent offences.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup>The Military Orders, in particular, made use of Muslim labour both free and servile. A 1289 inventory of Templar holdings reveals that the commandery of Monzon had forty-nine slaves, at Huesca eight, Ambel seven, Villed eighteen, and Castellor thirteen. [J. Miret y Sans, *Les cases de Templars y Hospitalers en Catalunya: Aplech de notes y documents historichs* (Barcelona, 1910), 278]

<sup>9</sup>The ubiquity of this sort of violence is attested to through the later decades of the thirteenth century in a variety of documents. For example, the villagers of the diocese of Girona were given a general order to assemble with arms in order to repel "*bannitis et aliis malefactoribus*" whenever the alarm was sounded [A.C.A., C. Reg. 70, f. 20r (22 October, 1286)]. In 1210, the council of Aranda, both Christians and Muslims, complained of the depredations of a Christian nobleman who attacked the town, set fire to the mills and carried off three Muslims as captives [A.C.A., C. Reg. 85, f. 180r (7 June 1291); cit. E. Lourie, "Anatomy of Ambivalence. Muslims under the Crown of Aragon in the Late Thirteenth Century Crusade and Colonization," in *Crusader Colonization: Muslims, Christians and Jews in Medieval Aragon*, (Aldershot, 1990), VII, 67]. In the same year, Sancio Martin Doblites, *superiunterius* of Zaragoza, was threatened with prosecution himself if he did not attend to the "*multa homicidia furta ropperie et alia grauvia maleficia perpetrata et commissa...*" in his jurisdiction [A.C.A., C. Reg. 85, f. 183v (20 July, 1290)]. At the same time, Pedro Garcessi de Morea, *miles*, was ordered to apprehend certain renegade *almogavers* who, it was alleged, were responsible for "*multe ropperie, furta et maleficia ... in frontera apud Montreal aldea Daroca...*" [A.C.A., C. Reg. 85, f. 185r (20 July, 1290)].

<sup>10</sup>For example, in 1292 Alfonso III ordered Pedro Altata to return the persons and goods he abducted by force in a violent raid on the village of Pina. He was warned that, should

The Muslims of the Crown of Aragon were particularly vulnerable in this socio-economic scheme, even in spite of the special protection they enjoyed as exclusively royal subjects.<sup>11</sup> Although they lived as a community governed by their own laws, in circumstances where they came into (either civil or criminal) legal conflict with Christians they were at a decided disadvantage. In such cases their rights generally bent to the jurisdictional superiority of Christian justice. Although the majority were free subjects, and indeed enjoyed a theoretical royal protection, Muslims constituted the overwhelming majority of the important slave population of the Crown. Many of these slaves were of foreign origin, having been enslaved by capture in war or raids, but a significant number were of local origin. This typically came about by judicial enslavement, either as a result of the commission of an offence against Christian law, or in cases where Muslim law normally prescribed capital punishment. As Muslims did not have the right to execute each other, such a sentence would typically be commuted to lifetime slavery by the royal authorities — a sort of social “death” for the individual concerned. Muslim women were frequently enslaved and so found themselves as inmates of royal brothels, or given away by the kings as prizes to their favourites. Elena Lourie considered these issues when she described the “double vulnerability” of *mudéjar* women.<sup>12</sup>

So what are we to make of the four incidents of kidnapping recounted above? Clearly there is a religious context, a Christian-Muslim context, to each of the events. But, with the exception of the knife-wielding *alaminus* of Tivissa, all of the characters involved in the narratives are Christian. In three of the cases, Christian adults, acting deliberately, abducted children whom they also knew to be Christian. In the remaining case, the Knights of Calatrava, a Military Order dedicated in principle to fighting Islam, knowingly maintained a Christian child in a state of servitude that entailed his *de facto* conversion to Islam. We don't have to probe too deeply to identify the impetus for these acts: it was simple greed. Marinel and Johannus had made a deal over a slave who turned out to be Christian — rather than come to some sort of compromise over the sale price, they decided to co-operate in selling the boy on, and thus recoup their money.<sup>13</sup> As for the Comman-

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he commit such a crime *again*, he would be punished. [A.C.A., C. Reg. 87, f. 50v (11 March, 1292).]

<sup>11</sup>See Boswell, 30.

<sup>12</sup>Lourie, 69ff. Boswell and Nirenberg also examine similar issues (D. Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence* [Princeton, 1996]).

<sup>13</sup>It would seem, in fact, that the obligation would have fallen upon Marinel to return Johannus' money, given that in a case where a free Muslim was sold as a slave, the buyer

der of Alcañiz, the motivation was once again economic gain; by setting the Christian boy at liberty, he would have lost a piece of property. The privateers who abducted the Murcian child would have benefited to the tune of the lad's sale price, as would have Berenguer Jonerius, the Christian of Tivissa. In the last case, the forces of self-interest extended their grip even beyond their immediate benefactor. It had been proven to Jonerius' lord, Berenguer d'Entença, that the boy was a victim of kidnapping, but he had not acted to restore him. Once he had collected a hefty fine from the complicitous Muslim *alaminus*, he lost interest in the case, to the point that the King had to threaten the noble's property with confiscation should he interfere with the bailiff of Tortosa's efforts to recover the child. In the late thirteenth century, male adult Muslim slaves were selling in the range of 200 to 400 *solidi*.<sup>14</sup> It is difficult to establish what these prices meant in real, everyday terms, but the amounts involved would have been considerable, especially for a beneficiary of modest means.<sup>15</sup>

Nor should the involvement of the Muslim *alaminus* surprise us. If mere greed were not enough of an encouragement on his part, in the context of the Christian domination, he may have derived a certain satisfaction out of the surreptitious conversion of a Christian child. Certainly, conversion to the true faith would have done the child no harm — and in the free Islamic world enslaved Christian children were converted as a matter of course.

Another characteristic of the cases is the inefficiency with which these various charges were brought before the law — or the inability of the law to protect the victims. In the case of Marinel and Johannes, the two suspects were ordered apprehended and interrogated. In the case of the son of Petrus de Podio, the King ordered the Knights' Commander to liberate the boy — it "not being consonant with reason to hold him in place of a Saracen..." — but does not indicate any punitive or coercive measures that might result from his continued captivity. The *almogavers* who abducted the Murcian child are ordered arrested, and pun-

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was entitled to a refund from the vendor. See, for example, A.C.A., C., Reg. 81 f. 159v (18 September, 1290).

<sup>14</sup>C. Verlinden, *L'esclavage dans l'Europe médiévale*, 2 vols. (Bruges, 1955), 282-283.

<sup>15</sup>No systematic study of prices has been done for the Crown of Aragon in the period in question, but for comparative purposes a glance at the documentation reveals, for example, that in the Kingdom of Valencia the poll-tax for a working adult Muslim or a female Muslim prostitute was set at twenty *solidi* per annum in 1281 [A.C.A., C., reg. 50, f. 231r, (14 February)]. In the same year the Muslim *aljama* of Teruel paid three hundred *solidi* to the king for *cena* [A.C.A., C., reg. 51, f. 21r (27 June)]. In May 1302, the king paid sixty-two *solidi*, twelve *denarii* to send a Muslim messenger to the King of Granada, while the value of a lost mule was assessed at one hundred sixty *solidi* [E. González Hurtebise, *Libros de la tesorería de la Casa Real de Aragón* (Barcelona, 1911), 35, 42].

ished in such a manner that “their punishment might serve as an example to others who would attempt similar crimes.” What that punishment would be and whether it would be carried out is another question entirely, as is the matter of whether either the perpetrators or the victim would ever be re-located.<sup>16</sup> Finally in the case of Lord Berenguer d’Entença, we see what appears to be a deliberate and continued refusal on the part of the lord—the local judicial authority—to obey either the letter or the spirit of the law. In this case, at least, the king appeared determined to follow through, as an order to recover the boy was despatched to the bailiff of Tortosa at the same time as the order to Lady Galbos.<sup>17</sup>

When the laws as they stood referred to such or to similar offences, they indicated that they were not to be treated lightly. The frontier *fueros*, for example, specify harsh punishments. The *Costum de Tortosa* specified death by hanging for anyone who dared to conceal a fugitive of any faith.<sup>18</sup> The *fuero* of Teruel specifies death by burning for anyone guilty of selling a Christian into slavery and a fine of two hundred *solidi* for forcible castration.<sup>19</sup> But the general compilation of Aragonese law, which was undertaken in 1247 by Vidal Ca-nellas, under the orders of Jaime I, does not mention this specifically as an offence.<sup>20</sup> General ecclesiastical legislation does not seem to directly refer to this crime, but this is not surprising, given that it may have been comparatively rare when the whole of Latin Christendom was consid-

<sup>16</sup>Two months had elapsed since the commission of the crime (April, 1296) and the order for the apprehension of the suspects (June, 1296).

<sup>17</sup>A.C.A., C., reg. 107, f. 225r (18 March, 1297). Cf. Appendix, Doc. 5.

<sup>18</sup>*Costum de Tortosa*, IX, XXIV, 6:

Si algu per engan enbla persona franca, o servu o catiu o cativa, o per aventua la reebra en sa casa, per ço qu’el cel com sera en fuyta, o sera en furtat o enblat, per aquela rao que sos amics de la franca persona o el senyor del servu o del catiu o de la cativa los perden, com sera provat contra ell, deu esser rocegat e puys penjat en guisa que muyra. E tot hom del poble pot fer aquesta accusacio sens escriptio de si, en sens pena de talio, e de tota altra pena. E en aques cas se pot provar per crestians tan solament, que no y ha mester sarrai ne jueu contra jueus o sarrains, e contra crestians. [Verlinden, vol. 1, 278.]

<sup>19</sup>The thirteenth-century *fuero* of Teruel prescribes death by burning for anyone who sells a Christian [“Item mando quod si aliquis uir. siue mulier cristianum uendiderit. et ei probatum fuerit. comburatur...”], and a considerable fine for unlawful castration [“...quicumque hominem castrauerit et ei probatum fuerit. pectet. CC. aureos alfonsinos. Et exeat inimicus...”] (F. Aznar Navarro, ed. *Forum Turolii* (Zaragoza: 1905); {384} and {394}, 210 and 213).

<sup>20</sup>The “Vidal” does establish a fine of two hundred and fifty *solidi* in a case where a *villano* wounds another *villano* [XI: 52, “De iniurijs,” Vidal mayor, G. Tilander, ed. (Lund, 1956), 529].

ered.<sup>21</sup> On the local level, however, the problem is referred to: in 1229, the Council of Lleida ruled that those who kidnap Christians (not necessarily children) for sale to Muslims should be excommunicated, but does not consider the possibility of their sale to Christians.<sup>22</sup> Clearly, however, both secular and religious law would view such offences with the deepest sense of outrage. Not only were the legal rights of the individual grossly violated, but such abductions were an abrogation of their religious rights and a blow against the Church. If individual Christians were absolutely prohibited by Church law from willing conversion to Islam, enslavement and the resulting forced conversion would have been considered outrageous. Yet we find the local Commander of a Crusading Order willingly involved in just such an affront to Christendom.

Still, given the importance and ubiquity of the slave trade in Aragonese society, such criminal acts must not have been uncommon. This would have been the case especially in frontier regions, or adjacent to ports, where it would have been relatively easy to spirit victims out of the country and perhaps on to Muslim Granada or North Africa for sale. Even so, in the four cases with which we are concerned, bar one possible exception, the victims remained in Christian (even local) territories. This would seem to imply that the perpetrators feared neither detection nor punishment. In the case of the circumcision in Tivissa it was not the Christian kidnapper, but the Muslim accomplice who was charged with the crime and assessed the fine in the end.

We already know that illegal abduction was not uncommon in the thirteenth-century Crown. In her "Anatomy of Ambivalence," Elena Lourie recounts episodes where groups (sometimes comprised of Muslims and Christians working together) conspired to kidnap free Muslims for sale into slavery. She notes that women in particular seem to have been victims of this type of abduction. Occasionally, Christian women were abducted as well, and she cites "a sizeable export trade in Christian women [which] was uncovered in Denia [in 1292], despite the presence of the Merce-darians."<sup>23</sup> "Christian peasants," she writes, "...were hardly less despised than Muslim peasants, by the Christian

<sup>21</sup>For general considerations on the attitude of medieval canon law towards children see, R. Metz, "L'enfant dans le droit canonique médiéval. Orientations et recherche," *Recueils de la Société Jean Bodin*, 36 (1976): 9-96; reprinted in idem, *La femme et l'enfant dans le droit canonique médiéval*, (London, 1985). The legislation is primarily concerned with either metaphysical matters or issues relating to the ordination of minors.

<sup>22</sup>J. M. Pons Guri, "Constitucions Conciliars Tarraconenses," *Analecta sacra Tarraconensi*, 47 (1974), {36}, 91. It was probably assumed that abducted Christians would be sold as slaves to the Islamic world.

<sup>23</sup>Lourie, 68.

nobility; but [with the exception of women] they rarely ran the risk of being kidnapped and sold into slavery by their co-religionists."<sup>24</sup> This is not surprising, as women and children would have been preferred victims due to the marketability of the former as sexual slaves and the small size of the latter. Neither had the same capacity to physically resist abduction as a grown man would have. But in any case, it is not necessarily a despising nobility that was responsible for these crimes, but rather, as often as not, the Christians' fellow commoners. A commoner would have accrued a larger economic return on the sale of a slave than a noble (relative to his or her wealth), which makes it a more likely scenario given that, as with the case of women, kidnappings of children would have been primarily economically motivated.

Moreover, we must not forget that we are dealing with slavery here only in its most forthright form. The general disposition of medieval society was inclined towards a notion of bonded servility and there must have been a widespread underground market among Christians, where people exchanged ostensibly free servants who were in fact slaves in every sense of the word. Heers remarks that there was a widespread trade in young girls in Southern Europe; sold as domestic employees, they were in fact bonded.<sup>25</sup> Further, the chronic disorders and endemic banditry of the thirteenth-century Crown of Aragon made rural lawlessness with attendant incidents of robbery and abduction common even in the more stable interior provinces, and the existence of highwaymen and outlaws is attested to not only by the many complaints of such robbery which reached the royal courts, but also by the custom of the kings to issue letters of royal protection (*guidatica*) to travellers of all faiths.<sup>26</sup> The thriving existence of a black market in slaves is also attested to by the warranty clauses that were customarily attached to the sales receipts of slave purchases. In these, the vendor typically guaranteed that the person purchased was legally a slave, whom he or she had the right to sell, and neither a free Muslim, nor a captive Christian.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>25</sup>J. Heers, *Esclaves et domestiques au Moyen Âge dans le monde méditerranéen* (Paris, 1981), 153.

<sup>26</sup>See, example, the *guidaticum* granted to Johannus Luppi, [A.C.A., C. Reg. 89 f. 114r (25 July, 1294)], or that granted to the Muslim Mohammad Abdalhadir [A.C.A., C. Reg. 90 f. 4v (10 August, 1291)]. In 1290, the Jewish mercenary and courtier Abrafim Abenamies was issued a *guidaticum* for a journey to Granada [A.C.A., C. Reg. 84 f. 10v (11 January, 1290)]

<sup>27</sup>The requirement for all slaves to be registered with an *albaranum* also ensured that the royal *quinta* had been paid for the captive in question. After some of Berenguer de Manso's slaves were stolen in the Kingdom of Valencia, royal officials were ordered to impound any slaves "pro quibus dominio eorum non hostenderint albaranum de quinta aut instrumentem emptionis" [A.C.A., C. Reg. 58 f. 113r-v (21 November, 1285)], while in

One might also assume that, had they been operating, the various regulations, both ecclesiastical and secular, which prescribed distinctive garb for the religious minorities might have reduced the possibility of cross-religious misidentification. In culturally diverse societies members of majority and, often minority groups, consider it advantageous to impose distinctive styles of dress on different groups. The prime motives behind this legislation were the prevention of sexual and/or doctrinal contamination, either accidental or deliberate.<sup>28</sup> Such was the case in many medieval Islamic regions, such as Egypt, where Coptic Christians assumed the *zunnār* (a traditional girdle) either by custom or imposition and, increasingly, in the Latin Christian world. Innocent III's instructions of Lateran IV (1215), however, did not necessarily survive the trip across the Pyrenees intact, as the preoccupation with such distinctions seems to have been aimed more at the Jews of Aragon.<sup>29</sup> This issue surfaces rarely in local municipal legislation, and even in the

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1287 Lupo Eximini de Biota complained that his black slave Sayt had been seized for Lupo's failure to produce an *albaranum* [A.C.A., C. Reg. 70 f. 74r-v (13 April)]. A typical *albaranum* reads as follows:

Universis ad quos presentes peruenire. Noveritis quod isti .v. sarraceni albi quorum aliter uocatur Abdela et aliter Asmen et tres uocatur Mahomet quos bene Berenguer Sabaterii ciuis Barchinonae secum ducit sunt de bona guerra et fuerunt capti et abstracti de almonem nostra in Barchinona quare mandamus uobis quatinus eidem Berengueri Sabaterii super ipsis sarracenis nullum impedimentum seu contrarium faciatis seu ab aliquo fieri permitatis.

[A.C.A., C. Reg. 81, f. 141r (7 June, 1290)].

<sup>28</sup>The threat of sexual contamination was, it seems, a prospect as threatening as heterodoxy, as the dress-code was held to be necessary because "contingit interdum quod per errorem christiani Iudeorum seu Saracenorum et Iudei seu Saraceni christianorum mulieribus commiscuntur." [*Constitutiones concilii quarti Lateranensis una cum commentariis glossatorum*, ed. A. García y García, *Monumenta iuris canonici*, Series A: *Corpus glossatorum*, vol. 2 (Vatican, 1981), {68}, 107.] Although the prohibition of cohabitation dates from at least 1179 (Lateran III, {26}) [*Corpus iuris canonici*, A. Friedberg ed. (Leipzig, 1881), 224], in the thirteenth century the Church began to take an increasingly dim view of any interaction of Christians and non-Christians. The Council of Tarragona (the Metropolitan of the Crown of Aragon) of 1266 ruled that Christians were no longer allowed to live with Jews nor to employ them as nurses [Pons Guri, "Constitucions conciliars tarraconenses," *Analecta sacra Tarraconensi*, 48 (1975), {8}, 270]. Later fourteenth-century ordinances further restricted social interaction, such as at weddings and circumcisions. (For example, see Article 71 of the Council of Tarragona of 1330, *ibid.*, 357-8).

<sup>29</sup>Papal legislation specifies both Muslims and Jews:

In nonnullis prouinciis a christianis Iudeos seu Saracenos habitus distinguit diuersitas, set in quibusdam sic quedam inoleuit confusio ut nulla differentia discernatur.... statuimus ut tales utriusque sexus, in omni christianorum prouincia et omni tempore, qualitate habitus publice ab aliis populis distinguantur...

[*Ibid.*, {68}, 107], whereas the statutes of the Council of Lleida (1229) specify only Jews: "Cum iudei signo notabili a christianis discerni debeant..." [Pons Guri, *Analecta sacra Tarraconensi* 47 (1974), Const., Lleida 1229 (XV), 83.]

fourteenth century, the various cases of mistaken religious identity attest to a general inability to distinguish Muslims from Christians solely by means of appearance.<sup>30</sup> This would have been even more the case with children, who as minors would likely be exempt from such rules and, being sexually immature, would not be seen to constitute a threat.<sup>31</sup>

Often, the religiously pluralistic society of Medieval Aragon is perceived too readily by modern historians in terms of the religious divisions by which we choose to characterise it; that is, as a situation of Islam versus Christianity. It is dangerously easy to forget that religious identity, despite its importance, represented only one manner in which the people of the time defined themselves. It is too easy to forget that the members and the institutions of these societies were motivated in their actions by forces particular to the circumstances of the specific situations in which they found themselves. As the psychiatrist R. D. Laing wrote, "The person who moves through different pluralities in a pluralistic society functions in different modes, even simultaneously..." hence the apparent contradictions.<sup>32</sup> In fact, the divisions or partitions of Aragonese society of the time provided opportunities for people to exploit members of their *own* faith as much as members of the others. Much has been written on the vulnerability of minority groups to persecution by the Christians dominant in this society, and especially on the vulnerabilities of Jewish and Islamic women to sexual and economic exploitation at the hands of the majority Christian men. This has been explained in terms of religion, gender and class, all of which undoubtedly played a role. But the various other modes of exploitation engaged in indicate that none of these explanations alone is sufficient to account for the vulnerabilities of the victims of persecution. In the cases examined above it is obvious how, regardless of their religious affiliation, children were victimised. Children are legal minors, physically diminutive, and lacking in experience and confidence, and so in the society of the thirteenth century, as in our own, they comprised a natural target for individuals whose urge for material gain was unhindered by strong scruples, or for others in cases where such exploitation

<sup>30</sup>See, for example, Nirenberg, Chap. 5, 127-165.

<sup>31</sup>Indeed, in an investigation into a case of Muslim-Christian miscegenation in Aragon [20 km up the Ebro from Zaragoza] in 1295, at the request of the nobleman Luppi Ferench de Luna, two Muslim youths were absolved of any complicity due to their age: "... sit quod non dum excesserunt aliquis eorum etatem decem et octo annorum propter quod ratione consensus non potest nec debeat presumiri contra eos, remiserimus ipsos de speciali gracia..." [A.C.A., C., reg. 89 f. 121r (29 August 1295)].

<sup>32</sup>R. D. Laing, *The Politics of the Family* (London, 1969), 12.



could be psychologically rationalised.<sup>33</sup> In these cases of abduction, the *mudéjar* situation did nothing more than provide certain opportunities for the manifestation of violent and criminal impulses which would have otherwise found other terms of expression but with generally similar results.<sup>34</sup>

University of Toronto

## APPENDIX

### Documents:

#### 1. A.C.A., C. Reg. 50 f. 163v (18 September, 1281)

Dilecto suo Garçie Petri de Ayerbe justicie Saraynane, salutem et dilectum. Intelleximus quod cum Marinel de la Grailla uicinus Saraynane emisse apud Pamplonam quondam puerum credens ipsum esse Sarraçenum et postea uendidisset ipsum Johanni de Carcasses uicino Saraynane. Idem Marinel et Johannes de Carcasses cum dictus puer diceret esse Christianum duxerunt ipsum ad quondam ortum et ibidem minati fuerunt ei cultellis euaginatibus quod si decetero diceret se esse Christianum quod decollarent ipsum. Et etiam postquam reduxerunt ipsum de dicto orto et fuerunt in domo dicti Johannis de Carcasses circumcederunt eum ibidem minando ei ne clamat. Unde cum de predictis sit in Saranyena ut dicitur fama publica, mandamus uobis quatinus, uisis presentibus, capiatis predictis Marinel et Johannis de Carcasses et recipiatis ab eis et de dicto puero confessionem, ac eosdem esset captos teneatis donec a nobis aliquid habueritis mandamentum, inquirendo nichilominus diligenter ueritatem super premissis causa in monasterio de Sexena ubi dictus puer fuit, ut dicitur, uenditus per dictum Marinel postquam fuit per eum et dictum Johannem de Carcasses circumcisis, quam etiam in Saranyena. Datum Ilerde XV<sup>o</sup> kalends Septembris.

<sup>33</sup>The special vulnerability and need for protection of certain classes of women and children (i.e. widows and orphans) is acknowledged in a document of 1295, which remarks "Quod domine uidue et pupilli orphani sunt sub protectione et commanda dicti domini regis..." [A.C.A., C., reg. 89 ff. 115v-116r (3 July 1295)]. The document in question responded to the complaint of the Christian noble woman Sibia, widow of Guillermus de Alcalona, that certain knights [*militēs*] (fellow Christians, presumably) and others [*alii*] had been attacking her property and vassals (both Christian and Muslim as the previous document implies) [A.C.A., C., reg. 89 f. 116r (2 July 1295)].

<sup>34</sup>Finally, by way of an "afterword," I might mention another case, in which some Muslims of Almonezir were apprehended after being allegedly discovered with an abducted Muslim child. An investigation was ordered and the accused, if found guilty, were to be punished "in such a manner as might serve as an example for others" [A.C.A. C. reg. 89, 40v (19 December 1294)]. No further details are given and we cannot be sure of the abductors' designs on their victim, but in any event, as in the cases discussed above, this was an instance where a child fell victim to malefactors of his own faith, who hoped to exploit the possibilities of the *mudéjar* situation.

## 2. A.C.A., C. Reg. 87 f. 27v (1 January, 1293)

Venerabili Alvaro Lupi Comendatori de Alcanicio. Intel-leximus per Petro de Podio de Nina uicinum de Alcanicio quod uos tenetis captum quendam filium suum nomine Dominicum asserens ipsum fore Sarracenum et seruum uestrum, unum cum dictus Petro asserat dictum Dominum fore filium suum liberum et quod uult probare, ut dicitur, in posse uestro eius libertatem et filiacionem. Miramur multum de uobis quare uos requirimus et monemus quatinus, dicto Petro de Podio de Nina probatum dictum Dominicum filium suum fore Christianum libertum eundem, a captione absoluatis, cum non sit consonans rationi detinere in captione Christianos et liberos in loco Sarracenorum postquam certum sit ipsum Dominicum esse lib[er]um filium suum, propter quod nos ab huius modi immunitate et gravamine desistere debetis et potius euit[...].<sup>35</sup> Datum apud Foz la Viella, v nonas Januar[ie].

## 3. A.C.A., C. Reg. 340 f. 96v (25 June, 1296)

Uniuersis officialibus ad quos presentes peruenerint, et cetera. Ex parte Dulcie uxore Bonanati Ballesterius quondam nobis fuit expositum conquerendo quod quidam filius suus et dicti uiri sui nomine Iustet[?] qui erat etatis quinque annorum fuit captus et furtiue surreptus in ortis Murcie in mense Aprilis proxime preteritis per quosdam almugauerios seu predones<sup>36</sup> insimul cum quibusdam sarracenis et fuit uenditus in terra et iurisdiccione nostra per eosdam almugaueros seu predones sub nomine sarraceni. propter quod pro parte dicte Dulcie fuit nobis humiliter supplicatum ut super predictis dignaremur eidem de iuris remedio prouidere. Cum nos ipsa supplicatione benigne admissa uobis dicimus et mandamus quatinus unus quisque in districtu suo ubicumque predictum Iustetum[?] inueneritis emperetis eundem et cum nobis constiterit de predictis tradatis ac restituatis seu tradi et resititui faciatis ipsum matri sue predicte uel cui uoluerit loco sui procedendo nichilom[inus] contra almugaueros seu predonos predictos prout fuerit faciendum eosdem taliter puniendo quod pena eorum sit aliis similia atemptantibus in exemplum. Datum Murcie .VIII<sup>o</sup>. kalendas Junii. Anno Domini M<sup>o</sup>. CC<sup>o</sup>. XC<sup>o</sup>. Sexto.

4. <sup>a</sup>A.C.A., C. Reg. 107 ff. 224v-225r (18 March, 1297)<sup>b</sup>A.C.A., C. Reg. 264 f. 96r (18 March, 1297)

Dompne Galbos<sup>37</sup> uxori nobilis Berengerii de Ententia.<sup>38</sup> Ad aures nostras noueritis peruenuisse quod Berengerius Jonerii vasallus dicti nobilis, quod sue salutis inmemor et diabolica suasionem comotus, furtim subreptus in ciuitate Dertose quondam puerum Christianum et ipsum vendidit ut sarracenum in terra dicti Berengerii, et quod post ipsam venditionem dictus puer per aleminum de Teuica fuit circumcisis, et quod cum huiusmodi excessus ad dicto Berengerio de Entencia audienciam peruenuisset, et aleminum predictum in quandam modica quantitate peccunie, uidelicet centum quinquagantum solidorum, multauit, sed cum puerum

<sup>35</sup>End of last word obscured.

<sup>36</sup>The words "sub nomine sarraceni" are struck out.

<sup>37</sup>B reads "de Ententia."

<sup>38</sup>B adds "quomodo et cetera."

ipsum lib[er]are<sup>39</sup> a captione et errore prauitatis Sarracenicæ non curauit. Immo quod abhominabile est inter sarracenos licet coactus eorum sectam tenendo apud Teuïçam conuersatur, unde cum talia et tam grauia<sup>40</sup> per nos in terris nostris non debeant tolerari, nec ea in tantam contumeliam Creatoris debeamus oculisconuiuentibus pertransire, vobis dicimus et mandamus firmiter et districte quatinus, incontinenti uisis presentibus, puerum predictum baiulo nostro predicto {f. 225r} Dertuse uel eius locum tenenti tradatis uel tradi et deliberari faciatis, ut ipsum ad parentes suos possit reducere fidem catholicam quam suscepit cessitati sarracenicæ refutata ulterius inter Christianos cum suis parentibus seruaturum in Sarera. Quod, si presens mandatum nostrum neclexeritis [*sic*] adimplere, contra uos et bona uestra prout qualitas tanti criminis et negocii exigit a requirit procedemus et procedi faciemus, etiam per baiulum nostrum Dertuse et alios officiales nostros rationaliter faciemus. Datum Valencia XII kalendas Martis anno quo supra-scripta.

5. A.C.A., C. Reg. 107 f. 225r (18 March, 1297)

Dilecto suo baiulo Dertuse uel eius locum tenenti, et cetera. Noveritis nos nobili Dompne Galbos uxore nobilis Berenguerii de Entencia quod nostras [...] destinare literas sub hac forma. Jacobus, et cetera ut supra proximo notatur in presenti registro qua propter uobis dicimus et mandamus quod in continenti uisis presentibus faciatis presentari dicte Dompne Galbos literas supradictas et requiratis seu requiri faciatis ab ea ut uobis tradat puerum de quo sit mentio in literis supradictis verum si ipsa dompna Galbos uobis distulerit seu recusauerit tradere puerum supradictum vos ad hoc ipsam et bonam suam fortiter compellatis.

*Datum Valencia .xii. kalendas Martis. Anno quo supra [scripto est].*

## Translations:

1. A.C.A., C. Reg. 50 f. 163v (18 September, 1281)

[King Pedro "el Grande"] To his dear Garcia Petri de Ayerbe, Justice of Sariñena,<sup>41</sup> greetings. We understand that when Marinel de la Grailla, inhabitant of Sariñena, sold at Pamplona a certain boy, he believed him to be Muslim and afterwards sold him to Johannus de Carcasses, inhabitant of Sariñena. [And] that Marinel and Johannus de Carcasses, when the boy said that he was Christian, led him to a certain garden and there threatened him with knives drawn, that if he ever said again that he was Christian that they would cut off his head. And then, thereafter, they led him out of the said garden and to the house of the said Johannus de Carcasses, [where] they circumcised him, threatening him lest he scream. Since this has become common knowledge in Sariñena, we order that, having seen the present [letter], you capture the aforesaid Marinel and Johannus

<sup>39</sup>B reads "liberare"; A reads "libare."

<sup>40</sup>B breaks off at the word "grauia." A note in the inner margin explains, "vacat quare in comuni registrata est".

<sup>41</sup>Sariñena is in the modern province of Huesca.

de Carcasses and receive from them a confession regarding the aforesaid boy, and that you hold them captive until you receive an order from us, and indeed, [that you] inquire diligently of the truth at the Monastery of Sijena,<sup>42</sup> which is in Sariñena, where it is said the boy was sold by the said Marinal after he was circumcised by him and the said Johannes de Carcasses.

*Dated at Lleida, 15 kalends September.*

2. A.C.A., C. Reg. 87 f. 27v (1 January, 1293)

To the venerable Alvarus Lupi Commander of Alcañiz.<sup>43</sup> We understand from Petro de Podio of Nina inhabitant of Alcañiz, that you are holding captive a certain son of his, by the name of Dominicus, asserting him to be a Muslim and your slave. Since the said Petro asserts the said Dominicum to be his free son he wants to enjoy, as it is said, his liberty and relationship, with your leave. We wonder greatly at you [for this] — the said Pedro de Podio of Nina having proved his son Dominicus to be a free Christian. Whereby we require and order that you release [him] from captivity, since it is not consonant with reason to detain free Christians in captivity in place of Saracens, given that it is certain that this Dominicus is his free son, [and] on account of which we [order] you to desist to from and to better avoid this type of aberration and abuse.

*Dated at Foz la Viella, 5 Nonas January.*

3. A.C.A., C. Reg. 340 f. 96v (25 June, 1296)

To all officials to whom the present letter reaches, et cetera. On the part of Dulcia, wife of Bonanatus Ballesterius, who was complaining, it has been demonstrated to us that a certain son of hers and the aforesaid man, and with the name of Iustet[?], who being five years of age was captured and secretly abducted in the *huerta* of Murcia in the month of April just passed by certain *almogavers* or bandits, and that he was sold along with certain Muslims in our territories and jurisdiction by those *almogavers* or bandits under the name of a Muslim. Because it was humbly beseeched of us on the part of the said Dulcia and because it is worthy of us to provide her the remedy of law, so this supplication has been benignly admitted by us, [and] we order and command that you search each in his district wherever the aforesaid Iustet[?] may be found, and since [the burden] befalls us regarding the aforesaid, that you hand him over and restore or make to be handed over and restored [him] to his aforesaid mother or to whomever she may wish in her stead, proceeding nonetheless against the aforesaid *almogavers* or mercenaries concluding the affair in such a manner and punishing them such that their punishment may be an example to others attempting similar [crimes].

*Dated at Murcia, 8 Kalends of June, Anno Domini 1296.*

<sup>42</sup>The Monaster of Sijena lies some sixteen kilometres south-east of Sariñena.

<sup>43</sup>Alcañiz lies on the rich banks of the Guadalope, twenty-five kilometres upstream from its confluence with the River Ebro, in the modern province of Teruel. It had been a possession of the Knights of Calatrava since 1179.

4. A.C.A., C. Reg. 107 ff. 224v-225r (18 March, 1297)

To the Lady Galbos, wife of the noble Berenguer d'Entença.<sup>44</sup> Know that it has come to our ears that Berenguer Jonerii, vassal of the said noble, unmindful of his well-being and having been prompted by diabolical persuasion, has secretly carried off a certain Christian boy in the city of Tortosa<sup>45</sup> and has sold him as a Muslim in the lands of the said Berenguer, and that after that sale, the said boy was circumcised by the *alaminus* of Tivissa,<sup>46</sup> and that when in this manner this excess arrived at the attention of Berenguer de Entença, he fined the said *alaminus* a certain middling sum of money, namely one hundred and fifty *solidi*, but did not care to liberate that boy from captivity nor from the error of Muslim depravity. Therefore indeed, since it is abominable that it be permitted to come about that there be a convert to their sect among the Muslims of Tivissa, [and] since such things, so grave, ought not to be tolerated by us in our lands, nor ought we to let pass such an outrage before of the eyes of the Creator, we firmly and strictly order and command you, having seen the present [letter], that you make the aforesaid boy to be delivered and handed over or given to our aforesaid bailiff of Tortosa or his deputy, such that it is possible to return him to his parents and to the Catholic faith, once the Saracen faith has been renounced, and then [to return him] among Christians that he may serve, with his parents, in Sarera[?].<sup>47</sup> [Know] that, if you neglect to fulfil our present order, we will proceed and make a proceedings against you and your goods just as is merited and required for just such a crime, [and] indeed we will do so as ought to be done through our bailiff of Tortosa and our other officials.

*Dated at Valencia, 12 Kalends of March, in the year written above.*

5. A.C.A., C. Reg. 107 f. 225r (18 March, 1297)

[King Jaime II] to his dear bailiff of Tortosa or his lieutenant, et cetera. Know you that we have sent a letter to the noble Lady Galbos, wife of the noble Berenguer d'Entença in the following form: "James, et cetera..." just as is noted in the previous letter recorded in this register. On account of which we order and command that having seen this letter, you immediately present the above letter to the said Lady Galbos and require or make her to be required to hand over to you the boy who is mentioned in the aforesaid letter. But, if the Lady Galbos delays or refuses to hand over to you the aforesaid boy, [then] compel her most strenuously in this matter [both] by means of her self and her goods.

*Dated at Valencia, 12 Kalends of March, in the year written above.*

<sup>44</sup>Berenguer d'Entença was an important member of an Aragonese magnate family, which originated near Benabarre in the modern province of Huesca. [Cf. *Diccionari biogràfic*, 4 vols. (Barcelona, 1966), 2: 95.]

<sup>45</sup>Now laying forty-five kilometres from the river mouth (due to the accumulation of the Ebro Delta), medieval Tortosa (in the modern province of Tarragona) was an important river and sea port and had a substantial Islamic community.

<sup>46</sup>Modern Tivissa lies seven kilometres from the banks of the Ebro in the Province of Tarragona.

<sup>47</sup>I am unable to locate this town, nor am I sure of the name, as it is abbreviated in the document.



## EXCLUSION OR CONCEALMENT: Approaches to Traditional Arabic Exegesis in Medieval-Latin Translations of the *Qurʾān*

When medieval Latin Christians confronted the large number of Muslims living in southern Europe and adjoining areas they also confronted the *Qurʾān*. For, though it took some centuries, close proximity between Christian and Muslim eventually caused Christians to take an interest in the scriptures that formed the core and inspiration of Islamic religion.<sup>1</sup> That interest, arising quite explicitly out of a desire to refute and convert, became so intense that by the early thirteenth century there existed two complete —though still unedited— Latin translations of the *Qurʾān*, both of them produced in Spain. The first of these, called *Lex Mahumet* and part of the famous collection of Islamic works translated at the behest of Peter the Venerable in 1142-43, was produced by an expatriate Englishman, Robert of Ketton, who had come to Spain during the previous decade to translate Arabic scientific and mathematical works.<sup>2</sup> The second translation, *Liber alchorani*, made by a native, Arabic-speaking Spanish Christian named Mark of Toledo, was completed in 1211 under the aegis of the Archbishop of Toledo, Rodrigo

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<sup>1</sup>On the early-medieval European lack of interest in Islam, and the slow growth of awareness and concern about it, see B. Kedar, *Crusade and Mission: European Approaches toward the Muslims* (Princeton, 1984), *passim*, esp. 3-135.

<sup>2</sup>On Robert and his translating work see Charles S. F. Burnett, "A Group of Arabic-Latin Translators Working in Northern Spain in the Mid-12th Century," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1977), 62-70, esp. 63; *Idem*, "Some Comments on the Translating of Works From Arabic into Latin in the Mid-Twelfth Century," *Orientalische Kultur und europäisches Mittelalter*, ed. A. Zimmermann and I. Craemer-Ruegenberg, *Miscellanea Mediaevalia* 17 (Berlin, New York, 1985), 161-71; *Idem*, "The Translating Activity in Medieval Spain," in S. Jayyusi, ed., *The Legacy of Muslim Spain* (Leiden, 1992), 1043-45; *Idem*, ed. and trans., Herman of Carinthia, *De essentiis: A Critical Edition with Translation and Commentary* (Leiden, 1982), 4-5; Marie-Thérèse d'Alverny, "Translations and Translators," in Robert Benson and Giles Constable, eds., *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, MA, 1982), 449; J. M. Goñi Gaztambide, "Los obispos de Pamplona del siglo XII," *Antologia annua* 13 (1965): 254-64; and James Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam* (Princeton, 1964), 62-65.

Jiménez de Rada.<sup>3</sup> Though there were a surprising number of European intellectuals in the medieval and early-modern periods who could read Arabic and who studied the Qurʾān in the original language, the great majority of European Christians of this period who wanted to investigate Islam's holy book had to do so through the medium of one (or sometimes both)<sup>4</sup> of these medieval-Latin versions.

Now anyone who has thought about it (or tried her hand at translation) is aware of how serious are the potential pitfalls awaiting the translator, and how numerous the opportunities for mischief. Translating is hard work; it is also the occasion for serious distortion should the translator be so motivated. How easy it would be to adjust, to rework, to skew the meaning of a text, particularly if one were hostile to it and the civilisation that has grown up around it. So one cannot take up a medieval Latin translation of the Qurʾān without wondering if the translator has done exactly this. Medieval European Christians were, after all, overtly and nearly universally hostile to Islam and its scriptures. It is just here, however, that these two medieval Latin versions of the Qurʾān first surprise us, for, as Norman Daniel has recently observed, both translators, though they were explicitly opposed to Islam, were quite concerned to produce what they saw as an accurate, intelligible version of that work. While there are numerous flaws and errors in both works, it is very hard to find intentional, polemical distortion in either.<sup>5</sup>

This does not mean, though, that what readers of these texts had in their hands were Latin versions of the Qurʾān exactly as Muslims knew and understood it. For, ironically, the very methods of translation adopted by these high-medieval Arabists to insure the accuracy and intelligibility of their versions tended unintentionally to introduce sys-

<sup>3</sup>For more on Mark's life and work see d'Alverny, "Deux traductions," 113-31; Eadem, "Marc de Tolède, in *Estudios sobre Alfonso VI y la reconquista de Toledo. Actas del 11 Congreso Internacional de Estudios 25-29 Mozárabes (Toledo, 20-26 Mayo, 1985)* [no editor listed] 3 vols. (Toledo, 1986-92), 3: Marie-Thérèse d'Alverny and Georges Vajda, "Marc de Tolède, traducteur d'Ibn Tūmart," *al-Andalus* 16 (1951), 99-140, 259-307, and 17 (1952), 1-56 (these articles also appear in a volume of Variorum Reprints: *La connaissance de l'Islam dans l'Occident Médiéval*, Charles Burnett, ed., [Aldershot and Bookfield VT: 1994]; and the preface to Mark's translation edited in d'Alverny and Vajda, "Marc de Tolède, traducteur," *al-Andalus* 16 (1951), 260-68, esp. 260-61, 266-68.

<sup>4</sup>One manuscript - Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. lat. 14503 - contains both translations, allowing pre-modern readers to consult them side-by-side. On this manuscript see *Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes* 30:19; G. Ouy, V. Gerz von Buren, et al., *Le catalogue de la bibliothèque de l'Abbaye de Saint-Victor de Paris de Claude de Grandrue, 1514* (Paris, 1983), 344-45; and M. -Th. d'Alverny, "Deux traductions," 111.

<sup>5</sup>N. Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image*, rev. ed. (Oxford, 1993), 279-80.



temic distortions. Moreover, in each case the reasons for this were nearly opposite. The first Latin translator, Robert of Ketton, adopted an energetic, paraphrasing approach to his translation of 1142-43. His paraphrase, however, incorporates an enormous amount of explanatory material directly from the Muslim-Arabic tradition of Qurʾān exegesis, so that his version is really a translation of the Qurʾān melded together with substantial portions of the traditional exegesis of it. I have argued elsewhere, therefore, that Robert's much-criticised translation is really a much sounder version of the Qurʾān than it has been given credit for.<sup>6</sup> But though his approach is in many ways a laudable one, there is one serious difficulty with it: Robert proceeded in such a way that it became impossible for the European reader to separate the Qurʾānic text from the long tradition of interpretation of it. Text and commentary have been inextricably combined, and this is not really the Qurʾān as Muslims knew it.

On the other hand, Mark of Toledo attempted to produce a faithful version of the Qurʾān by translating it with mechanical literalism, following the Arabic syntax closely, paraphrasing only rarely, periodically even introducing neologisms based on Arabic models.<sup>7</sup> Though Mark also appears to have consulted Arabic commentaries on the Qurʾān as he translated, he only rarely altered his Latin text to make it conform with them.<sup>8</sup> What the European reader is faced with in this case, then, is a version of the Qurʾān that is almost entirely cut off from the tradition of interpretation according to which it was always understood by Muslims. Just as reading the Bible outside the powerful Jewish and Christian exegetical traditions developed around it is in a very real way not to read the Bible at all, so reading the Qurʾān outside the framework provided by the classical *tafsīrs*, or commentaries, is to engage a Qurʾān that is not quite the Qurʾān of Muslims.

These striking differences in their approaches to translation are apparent upon reading even short passages of their texts side by side with the Arabic Qurʾān. At verse 2:91, for example, the Qurʾān discusses the infidelity of the ancient Jews:

Wa-idhā qīla la-hum, ‘āminū bi-mā anzala Allāh,’ qālū, ‘nu‘minu bi-mā unzila ‘alaynā.’ Wa-yakfurūna bi-mā warā’ ahu wa-huwa al-haqq muṣaddiqan li-

<sup>6</sup>See my “*Tafsīr* and Translation: Traditional Arabic Qurʾān Exegesis and the Latin Qurʾāns of Robert of Ketton and Mark of Toledo,” *Speculum* 73 (1998): 703-32.

<sup>7</sup>On his method of translation, see N. Daniel, *Islam and the West*, 279-80, and d’Alverny and Vajda, “Marc de Tolède, traducteur,” *al-Andalus* 16 (1951), 132-40.

<sup>8</sup>On this see my “*Tafsīr* and Translation,” 708, 716, 720-22.

nā ma‘ahum. Qul: fa-lima taqtulūna anbiyā’ Allāh min qablu in kuntum mu‘minīn?

[And when it is said to them, ‘believe in what God has revealed,’ they say, ‘we believe in what has been revealed to us.’ But they disbelieve in what has come after it, and it (i. e. the Qur’ān) is the truth that verifies what (scripture) they already have. Say: then why did you slay the prophets of God previously if you are believers?]<sup>9</sup>

Mark of Toledo, the literalist, gives his reader this Latin version of the verse:

Et quando dicitur eis, ‘credite in id quod destinavit Deus,’ dicunt, ‘credimus in id quod destinavit nobis,’ et blasphemant in id quod est post ipsum quod est [v]erum attestans ei quod haberent. Dic: quare occidistis prophetas Dei priusquam crederetis.

[And when it is said to them, ‘believe in that which God has sent to you,’ they say, ‘we believe in that which he has sent to us.’ And they blaspheme that which is after this, which is the truth attesting to what (scripture) they had. Say: why did you kill the prophets of God before you believed?]<sup>10</sup>

Though he has made small adjustments, and though he misunderstood one word in the last sentence,<sup>11</sup> for the most part Mark’s translation follows the Arabic closely and carefully. As a result, the reader comes away with not only a very good idea of the literal content of the Qur’ān, but also something of a feel for its rhetorical and stylistic tendencies. Mark nicely preserves here the dialogue form so common throughout the Qur’ān: “And when it is said to them, ... they say ...” Likewise the culminating command to “say” (translating “Qul” as “Dic” — “Say!”) jars the Latin reader just as it does the Arabic reader. It is true that not all of this is natural in Latin. The verb *blaspheme*, for example, is only rarely followed by the preposition *in*, but Mark gives us this construction because that is what the Arabic has, the verb *kafara* (“to blaspheme, to disbelieve”) normally governing through the preposition

<sup>9</sup>All translations from the Arabic or Latin are mine.

<sup>10</sup>Mark of Toledo, *Liber alchorani Machameti quem Marcus canonicus Toletanus de arabica lingua transtulit in latinum* 2 (Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria, F. V. 35), fol. 2va (on this fifteenth-century ms. see A. Sorbelli, *Manoscritti delle Biblioteche d’Italia* 28, 97). Unless otherwise indicated, I will cite this ms., which appears to be one of the better mss. of this work.

<sup>11</sup>He read the *in*, “if,” as *an*, “that,” two words that differ only by a small, and often lacking diacritic, this leading him to understand the last sentence to mean “why have you killed the prophets of God before you believed,” rather than, “why have you killed the prophets of God if you are believers.”

bi- ("in").<sup>12</sup> But despite such potential problems, it is certain that the reader of this passage of Mark's translation has before him a version of this verse that gets across much of its content and form quite accurately. And this passage is quite representative of his approach throughout.<sup>13</sup>

Robert of Ketton, in contrast, provides his reader with an abridging paraphrase of these verses, and attaches it grammatically to the previous verse — something he does fairly commonly throughout his translation:

... qui dicentes uos nulli nisi libro uobis dato credere uestre legi resistitis hunc suum confirmatorem respuentes. Si boni estis cur prophetas perimitis?

[... who (i. e. the Jews), saying yourselves to believe in nothing except the book already given to you, you oppose your (own) religion, rejecting this confirmation of it. If you are good, why do you kill the prophets?]<sup>14</sup>

Stylistically, this is much better Latin, but the price for this more Ciceronian prose has been the elimination of those very dialogic devices that Mark of Toledo so carefully preserved. Though Robert has conveyed the meaning of the passage as accurately as Mark, his reader will never feel the sense of confrontational urgency that the command "Say" (*Qul, Dic*) embodies in both the Arabic original and Mark's literal translation.

Yet we cannot write off Robert's *Lex Mahumet* as an inadequate paraphrase. We cannot do this because it turns out that this energetic recasting of the Qur'ān is frequently influenced in vivid ways by the traditional Muslim commentaries on that sacred book. Consider, for example, his translation of the first part of verse 2:282. At the beginning of this very lengthy discussion of how to draw up purchase and loan contracts, the Qur'ān reads as follows:

Yā ayyuhā alladhīn āmunu, idhā tadāyantum bi-dayn ilā ajl musamman fakutubūhu wal-yaktub baynakum kātib bi'l-ʿadl.

[O you who believe, when you borrow money from each other for a fixed term, do it in writing, and let a scribe write (a contract) between you with impartiality.]

Robert reworks this thoroughly:

Emptionibus ad terminum factis adsit scriba fidelis et deum timens qui nichil addat seu minuat nec quid falsitatis ammisceat.

<sup>12</sup>And Mark does this elsewhere. See my "Tafsīr and Translation," 709, n. 27.

<sup>13</sup>For a systematic discussion of his translation method, see d'Alverny and Vaida, "Marc de Tolède, traducteur," *al-Andalus* 16 (1951), 132-40.

<sup>14</sup>Robert of Ketton, *Lex Mahumet* 1 [2]; Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, 1162, fol. 27vb.

[Let a faithful and God-fearing scribe, who neither adds anything (to the contract) nor subtracts anything (from it), and who does not mix in anything false, be present at purchases arranged with a term.]<sup>15</sup>

As in the example of verse 2:91, Robert has here abbreviated substantially and adopted a rather different construction than the Arabic original had. But he has made at least two changes that seem to go beyond mere paraphrasing and abridging. Why speak of “purchases” (*emptions*) rather than borrowing money as in the Arabic? And why specify that the scribe should neither add anything nor subtract anything from the contract, nor mix any falsity into it, when the Arabic had simply called on the notary to do his job “with impartiality” (*bi-al-ʿadl*)? In their specificity and elaboration, these changes bespeak something more than recasting and reshaping.

But this is because they are actually adjustments made to the text in order to make it conform to the traditional Muslim interpretation of this verse. For if we turn to representative, classical Muslim commentaries on the Qurʾān we find that they point out that when the Qurʾān says “when you borrow money from each other” it means, as the foundational interpreter al-Ṭabarī (838/39-923) put it, “when you *sell to each other* by means of a loan, or *buy* by means of a it, or give to each other by means of it, or take by means of it on a fixed term.”<sup>16</sup> In light of this standard interpretation, Robert’s “purchases arranged with a term” makes eminent sense as a translation for the first part of this verse. Similarly, the commentaries explain that when the Qurʾān insists that the scribe write “with impartiality” it means in particular that, as the twelfth-century commentator al-Ṭabarsī put it, the scribe must write “with justice and equity and truth, not *adding to [the contract]*, and not *subtracting* from it in quality or extent, *not substituting* and not writing

<sup>15</sup>Robert of Ketton, *Lex Mahumet* 4, Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal, 1162, fol. 33vb. The emphasis is mine.

<sup>16</sup>“*Idhā tadāyantum yaʿni idhā tabāyatūm bi-dayn aw ishtaritūm bi-hi aw taʿāyatūm bi-hi aw akhadhtūm bi-hi ilā ajl musamman*” (Abū al-Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn Jarir al-Ṭabarī *Jāmiʿal-bayān ʿan taʿwīl āy al-Qurʾān* on 2:282, ed. Muḥammad Maḥmūd al-Halabī, 30 vols. in 12, third printing (Cairo 1388/1968), 3:116. Hereafter this work will be cited as “al-Ṭabarī.” For similar comments made by a twelfth-century commentator, see Abū ʿAlī al-Faḍl ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭabarsī, *Majmaʿal-bayān fitafsīr al-Qurʾān*, on 2:282 no ed. listed, 5 vols. Qum, Iran, 1403 A. H., 1:397. Hereafter this work will be cited as “al-Ṭabarsī.” For a very learned and readable introduction to the abundant tradition of *Qurʾānic* commentary, see Jane Dammen McAuliffe, *Qurʾānic Christians: An Analysis of Classical and Modern Exegesis* (Cambridge, 1991), 13-89. On these two commentators in particular see *Ibid.*, 38-45, and Mahmoud Ayoub, *The Qurʾān and its Interpreters*, vol. 1 (Albany, NY, 1984), 3-4, 6-7.

anything damaging to one of the two without his knowledge.”<sup>17</sup> Robert’s amplification of the second half of this passage — “that the scribe should be one who neither adds anything ... nor subtracts anything ... and who does not mix in anything false” — is clearly based on this traditional interpretation of what writing “with impartiality” means in 2:282.

Mark of Toledo’s translation of this passage departs slightly from the Arabic construction, but is still an essentially literal version that, in contrast to Robert’s, includes no explanatory additions:

O uos qui creditis, si debueritis cuiquam soluere debitum ad diem prefixum, scribatis inter uos antapocam fideliter.

[O you who believe, if you are obliged to someone to pay back a debt on a fixed day may you honestly write between yourselves a contract.]<sup>18</sup>

This certainly conveys the basic meaning of the first part of 2:282, but it lacks the informing specificity of Robert’s commentary-influenced paraphrase.

And this sort of explanatory adjustment and interpolation based on the traditional Arabic exegesis of the Qurʾān shows up throughout Robert’s translation. Repeatedly his paraphrase contains words, turns of phrase, and explanatory amplifications that are based on one or more of the classical Arabic *tafsīrs*, so that Robert’s version is in many ways a translation of the Qurʾān as Muslims themselves read and understood it.<sup>19</sup>

Mark of Toledo and Robert of Ketten, therefore, each went to impressive though different lengths to provide their Latin-European readers with accurate versions of the Qurʾān. Both translators certainly made sloppy mistakes from time to time, but in general their approaches produced fairly admirable results. And European intellectuals certainly read their Latin Qurʾāns. Robert’s elegant Latin translation was widely consulted throughout Europe over the course of six or seven

<sup>17</sup>“*wal-yaktub baynakum kātib bi’l-ʿadl yaʿnī wal-yaktub kitāb al-mudāyanah aw al-bayʿ ... kātib bi’l-qist wa-’l-inṣāf wa-’l-ḥaqq lā yazīdu fi-hi wa-lā yanquṣu min-hu fi ṣifah wa-lā miqdār, wa-lā yastabdilu wa-lā yaktubu shayʿan yuḍirru bi-aḥādihuma illā bi-ʿilmihī*” (al-Ṭabarsī on 2:282; 1:397. Similar comments are made by al-Ṭabari on 2:282; 3:119; and also by the fourteenth-century commentator ʿImad al-Dīn Ismāʿīl ibn ʿUmar ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿaẓīm* on 2:28, no ed. listed, 2nd printing [Beirut, 1410/1990], 1:316. Hereafter this work will be cited as “Ibn Kathīr”. On this commentator see McAuliffe, *Qurʾānic Christians*, 71-76).

<sup>18</sup> Mark of Toledo, *Liber alchorani* 2, BN Univ. F. V. 35., fol. 6vb.

<sup>19</sup>I make this case in much greater detail in my “*Tafsīr and Translation*,” *passim*.

centuries, and survives to this day in twenty-five manuscripts and two sixteenth-century printed editions: it was something of a best-seller.<sup>20</sup>

Mark's literal version enjoyed much less success —it survives in six manuscripts— but we know of it being copied and studied as late as the seventeenth century.<sup>21</sup> Given the care with which each translator approached his work, it is clear that their numerous medieval and early-modern readers were well-served in many ways.

But not in every way. For, ironically enough, the very methods that Robert of Ketton and Mark of Toledo adopted in order to insure that their Qur'āns were accurate tended in important ways to distort the Qur'ān either by cutting Latin readers off from the traditional interpretation of it, or by collapsing the text and the traditional interpretation into one undifferentiated whole.

Mark of Toledo's literal translation periodically gives the reader an accurate translation of the text without making clear how it was understood. This should be apparent already in his translation of verse 2:282 quoted just above, for his version lacks much of the specificity of Robert's translation, thoroughly influenced, as it is, by the commentaries. The same thing happens some forty verses earlier at 2:238-39a where the Arabic text reads:

(238) Hā fiẓū 'alā alsalawāt wa 'l-ṣalā al-wuṣṭā wa-qūmū li-Lāh qā nitin,  
(239a) fa-in khiftum fa-rijālan aw ruḵbānan.

[(238) Be attentive in your prayers, and (especially) the middle prayer, and stand up obediently before God, (239a) but if you are fearful, then (do so) walking or riding.]

<sup>20</sup>See N. Daniel, *Islam and the West*, rev. ed., 279-80. On the manuscripts and printed editions see d'Alverny, "Deux traductions," 108-13, and Idem, "Quelque manuscrits," passim. Theodore Bibliander's two printed editions of Robert's Qur'an together with the rest of Peter's collection as well as other works relating to Islam appeared in Basel in 1543 and 1550 under the title of *Machumetis saracenorum principis eiusque successorum vitae ac doctrine, ipseque Alcoran*. On the printed editions see Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable*, vii-ix, and V. Segesvary, *L'Islam et la réforme: Étude sur l'attitude des réformateurs zurichois envers l'Islam (1510-1550)* (Geneva, 1978), 161-99. As d'Alverny demonstrated, Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, ms. 1162 is not only the earliest manuscript, it is almost certainly the original exemplar of the collection (see her "Deux traductions," 96-98). For this reason I will cite this manuscript in the remainder of this article.

<sup>21</sup>One manuscript, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 3394, was copied in the sixteenth century, but contains an impressive collection of marginal and interlinear notes from the seventeenth century (see *Bibliothèque Nationale. Catalogue général des manuscrits latins*, vol. 4 [Paris, 1966], 339-41, and T. Burman, *Religious Polemic and the Intellectual History of the Mozarabs, c. 1050-1200*, [Leiden, 1994], 220-23). For more on the manuscripts of Mark's translation see d'Alverny, "Deux traductions," 113-14, 120; and Idem, "Marc de Tolède," 49-59.

Mark's version of these verses is as compact as the Arabic:

(238) Observate orationes et mediam orationem, et surgite Deo confitentes;  
 (239) si timueritis, pedestres aut equitantes.

[(238) Observe the prayers, and (especially) the middle prayer, and rise up professing God; (239) if you have been fearful, (do so) walking or riding.]<sup>22</sup>

Both the Arabic original and this literal Latin version tell us nothing about why someone who is fearful should pray while walking or riding. The commentaries, however, clarify this. Al-Ṭabarī, for example, tells us in an explanatory paraphrase that this means that if you are afraid on account of your enemies, "then pray walking as an infantrymen on your feet, when you are in the midst of your war and your combat and the *jihād* of your enemies, or (pray) while riding on the backs of your beasts."<sup>23</sup> Mark of Toledo's translation is correct in a literal sense, but it does not, therefore, make clear to its readers the specific circumstances in which Muslims believed this provision came into play. Robert of Ketton's commentary-inspired paraphrase, on the other hand, accomplishes this quite neatly. One must take great care to pray, he tells us,

nisi timoris locus impediatur, quo contingente pedes pede miles equo fundat orationes.

[unless the state of fear should impede, in the occurrence of which let the infantryman pour out the prayers on foot, the knight on horseback.]<sup>24</sup>

In these two examples Mark of Toledo's translation is deficient in not getting across the specific meanings that Muslims believed these somewhat vague Qur'anic passages had. Much more serious are the passages of his translation where, in failing to take into account the traditional interpretation, his literalism produces a translation that conveys a meaning that is actually different from the one Muslims recognised. His translation of the beginning of Sura 111, one of the very short suras at the end of the Qur'ān, is a good example. "Dampnificate sunt manus flammei," reads his version: "The hands of the flaming one are in-

<sup>22</sup>Mark of Toledo, *Liber alchorani* 2, BN Univ. , F. V. 35, fol. 5vb.

<sup>23</sup>"Fa-ṣallū rijālūn mushātan 'alā arjulikum wa-antum fi ḥarbikum wa-qitālikum wa-jihād 'adūwikum aw rukbānan 'alā zuhūr dawābbikum" (al-Ṭabarī on 2:239; 2:572; see also Ibn Kathīr on 2:239; 1:279).

<sup>24</sup>Robert of Ketton, *Lex Mahumet* 3, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, 1162, fol. 32ra.

jured.”<sup>25</sup> This is a (barely) allowable translation of the Arabic on strict grammatical and lexical grounds. The corresponding Arabic passage reads, “*Tabbāt yadā abī lahab.*” The subject is *yadān*, “the two hands,” which Mark has got right; these hands belong to someone or something called *abuūlahab* which literally means “the father of flame,” and in the Arabic idiom, such an expression could mean something like Mark’s “the flaming one” (*flammeus*).<sup>26</sup> The verb, however, is *tabbat*, which means “to perish” or “to be destroyed”, not “to be injured” as Mark has it (*dampnificate sunt*). But the real problem with this translation is that *Abū Lahab*, “the father of flame,” is really a proper name here and not merely a descriptive term as Mark’s translation would lead us to believe. The medieval Arabic Qur’anic commentaries normally explain quite early on in their interpretations of this passage that *Abū Lahab* was a specific person, otherwise known as ‘*Abd al-‘Uzzā*, who was called Father of Flame on account of the radiance (*ishrāq*) of his face. He was, the commentaries go on to explain, full of hatred for the prophet, and thus was to perish.<sup>27</sup>

Robert of Ketton, on the other hand, makes clear that he knows that the phrase “*Abū Lahab*” is really a name, for he transliterates it, something he does only very rarely:

Nichil unquam sua pecunia siue locrum profuit *Avileahab* quin sua manus perdita sit.

[His wealth or gain nothing ever benefited *Avileahab* to the end that his hand would not be destroyed.]<sup>28</sup>

Robert’s readers, therefore, will know that these verses concern a specific person, where Mark’s will not.

Another example of how Mark’s literalism can result in misleading translation is found in his version of verses 2:229-30. This passage is part of one of the principle discussions of divorce in the Qur’ān, a topic of considerable complexity and with plenty of room for confusion. Mark’s version follows the Arabic closely:

(229) Repudiare bis licet et retinere; honeste autem licentiarum beneficiendo; neque licet uobis ut de his que illis contulistis aliquid dematis... (230) Quod si repudiaverit [eam] non est ei licita postmodum donec cum alio contrahat uiro. Quod si repudiaverit eam non inhietur eis ut

<sup>25</sup>Mark of Toledo, *Liber alchorani* 111, BN Univ., F. V. 35, fol. 84ra.

<sup>26</sup>See W. Wright, *A Grammar of the Arabic Language*, 3rd ed., 2 vols. (pt. 1974, 1981) 2:202-04.

<sup>27</sup>See, e. g., al-Ṭabarsī on 111:1, 5:559; and Ibn Kathīr on 111:1, 4:568.

<sup>28</sup>Robert of Ketton, *Lex Mahumet* 120, Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal, 1162, fol. 138ra.



matrimonium reformat, si credunt se observaturos terminos dei et hos terminos dei demonstrabunt populo scienti. [(229) It is allowable to retain (one's wife) upon divorcing (her) twice; and it is honourable to allow her to leave with a blessing; it is not allowable that you take from them anything that you gave to them ... (230) But if he has divorced her she is not allowable for him henceforward until she contracts (a marriage) with another man. But if he (i. e. the second man) has divorced her there is nothing keeping them from re-establishing the marriage, if they believe that they will be observing of the boundaries of God, and they will demonstrate these boundaries of God to knowing people.]<sup>29</sup>

For the most part this is quite accurate, though Mark has got the last phrase wrong. The verb here is in the singular in the Arabic (*yubayyinuhā*) and God is the subject, so we should have "and [God] demonstrates these boundaries to a people who know." But otherwise there is nothing that can legitimately be objected to — nothing, that is, until we read the passage more closely. For the verses as they stand here do seem to embody something of a contradiction. We are told in 2:229 that it is allowable for the husband to retain his divorced wife after having divorced her twice, but are then informed in 2:230 that this is *not*, as a matter of fact, allowable except on condition that she first marry another man and then be divorced from him. It seems strange that Qurʾān should speak with such imprecision in connection with a relatively important point of law.

As it turns out, the Qurʾān actually is somewhat unclear here, for the Arabic of 2:230 reads exactly as Mark's Latin version does ("Fa-in ṭallaqahā fa-lā taḥillu la-hu min ba'du ḥattā tankiḥa zawjan ghayri-hu..."). But this confusion was universally addressed by the commentators who generally explain that when the Qurʾān says at the beginning of 2:230, "If he divorces her," it is referring, as al-Ṭabarsī put it, to "the third pronouncement of divorce" or "the third repudiation" (*ya'ni al-taṭliqa al-thālitha*).<sup>30</sup> For, in Islamic law, it is only when the husband has publicly divorced his wife on three separate occasions that he is unable to remarry her, until she has married another husband and been divorced from him. After the first and second times that a husband has pronounced his wife divorced, he has the right in Islamic law to take her back at any time during the requisite waiting period of three menstrual cycles before the end of which the divorce is not final. This limit on the number of times that a husband could divorce his wife and

<sup>29</sup>Mark of Toledo, *Liber alchorani* 2, BN Univ., F. 35. V, fol. 5rb-va.

<sup>30</sup>Al-Ṭabarsī on 2:230; 1:330; see also Ibn Kathīr on 2:230; 1:262.

then take her back was intended, apparently, to keep husbands from using repeated divorce pronouncements and reconciliations as a way of extorting from their wives the bride-price the wives had originally paid or some other financial penalty.<sup>31</sup> Mark's carefully literal translation of the Qur'ān's Arabic, therefore, fails to translate the verse's accepted meaning. The Latin reader consulting his Qur'ān encounters the text of these verses in isolation from their normal Muslim interpretation and thereby remains ignorant of an important aspect of Islamic law.

While Mark's literal translation sometimes obscures the Qur'ān's meaning, Robert of Ketton's typically clarifies it, relying on the very commentaries that Mark ignores. Here is the same passage in Robert's version:

(228b) *Maritis, etiam si placuerit ipsi namque presunt mulieribus, (229a) secundo derelictae nubant potius quam ceteris, (230) tertio uero sprete nequaquam usquequo maritis aliis nupserint et ab illis relictae fuerint. Tunc autem ipse uolentes prioribus maritis ante bene reconcilientur, (229b) aut nullis coacte uiribus honeste dimittantur. Aliquid primo datum illis auferre nefas est et inhonestum.*

[(228b-229a) Let women who have been forsaken for a second time marry [their original] husbands, if it pleases [the husbands] —for they remain in charge of the women— rather than others; (230) but those who have been abandoned for a third time by no means [may do this] until they have married other husbands and have been abandoned by them. Then women who desire this may be reconciled thoroughly with their prior husbands as before, (229b) or let them be sent away honourably, compelled by no men. It is unlawful and dishonourable to take from them anything given at the beginning.<sup>32</sup>

This is a wide-ranging paraphrase: Robert has linked 2:228 and 2:229 grammatically and incorporated 2:230 into the middle of 2:229, because of the similar subject matter of the first parts of both verses; and he has also made divorced women in the plural the subject of all but the last sentence, while in the Arabic this is all examined from the point of view of the man. But in the middle of these fairly radical formal changes Robert took the time to clarify these verses just as the Arab-Muslim commentators do: it is "women who have been abandoned for a

<sup>31</sup>On all this see J. Schacht, "Talāk," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., (Leiden: 1934) 4:636-40; Idem, *An Introduction to Islamic Law* (Oxford, 1964), 163-64; and Muhammad Abu Zahra, "Family Law," in *Law in the Middle East*, eds. M. Khadduri and H. Liebesny (Washington, 1955), 132-78 and 146-51.

<sup>32</sup>Robert of Ketton, *Lex Mahumet* 3, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, 1162, fol. 31va-vb.

*third time*” who are unable to marry their original husbands until they have been married and divorced from another husband. We no longer have the confusion about who can and cannot marry their divorced wives that Mark’s literal translation gave us.

Mark of Toledo’s Latin Qur’ān, therefore, is a Qur’ān that has been severed to a considerable degree from the living interpretative tradition in which it normally resides. What he offers is a Qur’ān without its readers, a Qur’ān without the accumulated reflection of the House of Islam upon it. Though much of the time this presents no real problem for his readers, at certain critical points it leads him to translate the Qur’ān in a way that conveys a meaning that no Muslim would have believed it had.

Since to a surprising degree Robert of Ketton translated the Qur’ān from within the Muslim interpretative tradition, his Latin version is much better about getting across the accepted meaning of the text; but it is not without problems of its own. Chief among these is that the text itself and the interpretative tradition have been conflated—scripture and exegesis have been collapsed into each other—so that the Latin reader cannot distinguish the one from the other. As the foregoing examples indicate, Robert does not clarify the Qur’ānic text by, say, adding glosses or a marginal commentary. Rather, he does so by actually inserting interpretative matter from the *tafsīr* tradition right into the Latin text itself.

Now Robert is hardly alone in doing this. Later translators since at least the time of Ludovico Marracci have likewise clarified the Qur’ānic text by incorporating interpretative material directly into the text, and in this their versions are rather similar to Robert’s.<sup>33</sup> George Sale’s version of the same passage reads “But if *the husband* divorce her *a third time*, she shall not be lawful for him again, until she marry another husband,”<sup>34</sup> while Marmaduke Pickthall gives us “And if he hath divorced her (the third time), then she is not lawful unto him

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<sup>33</sup>Marracci fills out his translation with an enormous number of explanatory interpolations in the text itself (these are always in italics and often placed in parentheses as well) and in the notes; and much of this material came directly from Qur’ānic commentaries which he carefully identifies. He did this, he says, in the places where “*modi quidem loquendi, qui Arabibus proprii sunt, & praesertim qui Metaphoram continent, occurrunt.*” In these cases “*eos verbis quidem propriis expressi, in Notis tamen vel in ipso Textu Alcorani diverso caractere explicare necessarium putavi.*” See his *Refutatio alcorani* (Padua 1698), vol. 2, 13.

<sup>34</sup>George Sale, *The Koran*, 6th ed. (Philadelphia, 1874), 27.

thereafter until she hath wedded another husband."<sup>35</sup> Sheik Si Boubakeur Ḥamza does much the same thing in his French version of 1972: "Si l'époux répudie [une troisième fois] sa femme, celle-ci n'est plus licite pour lui..."<sup>36</sup> In a very real way then, Robert has anticipated modern translators in his inclusion of interpretative material from the Qur'ānic commentaries.

But there is one crucial difference between his approach and that of such modern translators. In one way or another Robert's successors carefully distinguish the interpolations based on the exegetical tradition from the Qur'ānic text itself. Marracci and Sale place such interpolations in italics; Pickthall and Ḥamza surround them with parentheses or brackets. Robert does nothing of the kind. In the earliest, and apparently original, manuscript of his translation there is nothing —no underlining, no different-coloured ink, no punctuation— that distinguishes commentary from original text. And this is true of all the other manuscripts and the printed editions of his Latin Qur'ān as well. The reader of his version is getting a Qur'ān that is not divorced from the traditional interpretative tradition, but he has no notion of this: text and interpretative tradition have been merged into one.

As we might expect therefore, readers of Robert's version were unable to separate out the original Qur'ānic text from the interpretative additions. They treated both as sacred text. That this is so can be seen, for example, in a table of contents preserved in a sixteenth-century manuscript containing Robert's *Lex Mahumet* (Dresden, Sächsische Landesbibliothek, 120b).<sup>37</sup> This lengthy (thirty-six folios) list of the contents of Robert's Latin Qur'ān frequently quotes directly from the Latin text, and in many cases it reproduces passages that are substantially influenced by Arabic commentaries. We are told, for example, that near the end of the Qur'ān, there is a discussion of how a "Fountain in Paradise was prepared for Muhammad" ("Maumeti fons in paradiso iam paratus erat").<sup>38</sup> This is a paraphrase of Robert of Ketton's translation of the first verse of Sura 108: "Tibi iam fontem in paradiso preparamus."<sup>39</sup> Now what Robert has translated as "fountain in paradise"

<sup>35</sup>(Muhammad) Marmaduke Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*, Everyman's Library #105, (New York, Toronto, 1909, 1992), 54.

<sup>36</sup>Si Boubakeur Ḥamza, *Le Coran: traduction française et commentaire*, 2 vols., (Paris, 1972), 1:80.

<sup>37</sup>On this manuscript see F. Schnorr van Carolsfeld, *Catalog der Handschriften der Königl. Öffentlichen Bibliothek zu Dresden*, vol. 1, (Leipzig, 1882), 55-56.

<sup>38</sup>Anonymous, *Tabula*, Dresden, Sächsische Landesbibliothek, 120b, fol. 72v.

<sup>39</sup>Robert of Ketton, *Lex Mahumet* 117, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, 1162, fol. 138ra.

(*fons in paradiso*), however, is in Arabic *al-Kawthar*, a rare and vague word literally meaning something like “abundance”, and the subject of a great deal of discussion in the commentaries. The commentators, in fact, had a number of varied opinions regarding what exactly it meant, but the most common view was that it meant “a river in paradise” (*nahr fī al-janna*), as al-Ṭabarsī put it.<sup>40</sup> Robert’s version, therefore, is substantially influenced by this commentary tradition, but the anonymous compiler of this exhaustive *Tabula* cannot tell Qur’ānic text from what is derived from traditional interpretation: he treats the whole as sacred text.

That Robert thoroughly conflated text and commentary should not cause us to ignore the great pains he took to make his paraphrase accurate and intelligible by filling it out with glosses, explanations, and interpretations drawn from the Arabic commentaries. In fact, his willingness and ability to do this stand as a massive refutation of the widespread contemporary view that pre-modern Europeans were simply not capable of learning from Muslims themselves about what the Qur’ān means. Edward Said has asserted, for example, that Europeans did not begin “to let Muslim commentators on the sacred text speak for themselves” until the eighteenth century.<sup>41</sup> Robert could indeed let Muslim commentators “speak for themselves” about the meaning of the Qur’ān; and he did so in the twelfth century.<sup>42</sup> But because he made no distinction in his text between Qur’ān and interpretation, he made it impossible for his readers to see that he had done so.

Mark’s *Liber alchorani*, therefore, is a Latin Qur’ān largely extracted from its traditional interpretative framework; Robert’s *Lex Mahumet* conflates the two into one. For centuries, therefore, the only available Western versions of the Qur’ān either excluded or concealed the voices of Muslim interpreters. Though there is still far too much research to be done before it is possible to speak definitively about the long-term significance of all this, some tentative observations seem ap-

<sup>40</sup>See al-Ṭabarsī on 108:1; 5:549; cf. al-Ṭabarī on 108:1; 30:320-23.

<sup>41</sup>Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 1978), 117. See also Daniel, *Islam and the West*, 121, 127, 275.

<sup>42</sup>And there are other examples of medieval and early-modern Latin Christians doing likewise. Mark of Toledo himself clearly drew on the Arabic exegetical tradition occasionally (see my “*Tafsir and Translation*”). Moreover an anonymous late-medieval or early-modern translator of the Qur’ān (into Latin as well) drew heavily on the Arabic commentaries in the explanatory glosses he added to his translation. This remarkable work is found in a single manuscript, Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, Mm. v. 26, on which see *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts Preserved in the Library of the University of Cambridge*, vol. 4, (Cambridge, 1861), 335.

propriate. For the interpretative traditions that gradually build up around sacred texts are more than just the academic views of an isolated coterie of scholars. Rather in some real sense they embody and represent the extended reflection of the believing community as a whole on its holy book. If the sacred text is the origin and foundation of the community's faith, then the commentaries on it provide both believers and unbelievers with an account of that community's reflection on its holy book. The original text may well be the principle inspiration of the community of believers; but it is in the commentary tradition itself that we most clearly see the inspired community actively working through the text it reveres.

This is certainly true in the case of Arabic commentaries on the Qurʾān. To read, for example, al-Ṭabarī's massive *tafsir* is to encounter real Muslims on nearly every page. We are reminded over and over of the names and opinions of earlier authorities — Qatāda, ʿAbd Allāh Ibn ʿAbbās, Sufyān al-Thawrī, Mujāhid— who struggled to come to a deeper understanding of their Book. And every time al-Ṭabarī points out that the interpreters disagree about the meaning ("wa-ikhtalafa ahl al-taʾwīl fi maʿnan") of some term or usage —and there is probably no phrase used more frequently in his commentary— we remember that the early authorities had varying views, and that these views must be carefully considered before the correct one can be identified. Then, after examining these opinions and the traditions that are adduced as evidence, we are allowed to see al-Ṭabarī do just this — decide which interpretation or interpretations conform best with the Qurʾānic text and the Traditions of the Prophet. To read this commentary, then, is to witness generations of Muslims thinking about the Qurʾān. Here, therefore, one confronts not only the Qurʾān, but the community who venerates it: The House of Islam itself.

To cut off the Qurʾān from the *tafsir* tradition as Mark does, therefore, or to conceal that tradition as Robert does, has the effect of keeping Islam at a distance even as its Book itself is brought near and made available. The Qurʾān is visible, but Islam as a living, believing, interpreting entity is obscured. That this is so must certainly, though subtly, have influenced the ways in which their readers thought about Islam and its sacred text, and there is much work for scholars to do in trying to delineate these influences.

For now it will suffice, perhaps, to suggest one way in which all this should compel us to rethink the history of the study of the Qurʾān in Western Europe. It is notable that later translators, such as Marracci and Sale, did in fact supply their readers with the Qurʾān and allow them to confront Islam at the same time. They amplify the texts of

their translations with explanations and interpretations drawn from Muslim commentaries, and they also provide further copious notes based on these same commentaries, making clear all the while which Muslim authorities they are drawing on.<sup>43</sup> This suggests that the real difference between the medieval translators, Robert and Mark, and their seventeenth and eighteenth-century successors is not so much that these later translators were, as modern thinkers, somehow more inclined to disinterested Qurʾān study—for we have seen that Robert and Mark are both quite concerned to convey accurately the meaning of the Qurʾān—but rather that they are much more willing to provide their readers with both a sound version of the Qurʾān and the record of living Muslims thinking about it and interpreting it. Modern scholars attempting to understand the evolution of European attitudes toward the Qurʾān and Islam, therefore, would perhaps do well to focus their energies not on explaining why early-modern scholars were more objective than medieval thinkers in their approach to the Qurʾān—for they were not—but rather on understanding why these seventeenth and eighteenth-century Qurʾān translators were willing to let their readers encounter the Muslim voices that traditionally explain the Qurʾān, while their predecessors were not.

*University of Tennessee*

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<sup>43</sup>See G. Sale, *The Korān*, passim; and Ludovico Marracci, *Refutatio alcorani*, vol. 2, passim.





## A SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY HEBREW TRANSLATION OF THE QUR'ĀN<sup>1</sup>

Several years ago I wrote an article entitled "Jewish Knowledge of the Qur'ān"<sup>2</sup> in which I tried to show that many medieval Jewish authors in Islamic lands knew the Qur'ān or excerpts from it, although theoretically they were forbidden to study the Qur'ān and even the Arabic language. In that article I dealt mainly with transliterations of the Qur'ān in Arabic into Hebrew characters, and gave a description of Bodleian ms. Hunt 529. With regard to actual translations of the Qur'ān into Hebrew I mentioned that they were rare, late and inaccurate, they included polemical material about Muhammad, and were not made directly from the Arabic original.<sup>3</sup> I wish to describe here, in more detail and more accurately than I did there, one such translation from the early seventeenth century, which may well be the earliest existing Hebrew translation of the whole Qur'ān.

In my above general statement about Hebrew translations of the Qur'ān I follow mainly M.M. Weinstein's article "A Hebrew Qur'ān Manuscript"<sup>4</sup> in which he mentions, in addition to LC ms. Hebrew 99

*SCRIPTA MEDITERRANEA*, Vols XIX-XX 1998-1999, 199

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<sup>1</sup>The number of people who have helped me with this article is very large and I wish to thank all of them here, especially M.M. Weinstein in Washington and W. Heinrichs of Harvard University. I also thank the librarians at the National and University Library in Jerusalem, the Houghton Library at Harvard, the Oriental Room in the Bodleian Library at Oxford and the British Library in London for all their patience and help. Special thanks go to my former student Amir Weissbrod who helped me to read and study the mss. The final version of this paper was written in the beautiful setting of the Study and Conference Centre of the Rockefeller Foundation in Bellagio, Italy. I am very grateful to the Director and staff of this Centre for making my stay there a most pleasant and productive experience.

<sup>2</sup> See the appendix in my *Intertwined Worlds: Medieval Islam and Bible Criticism* (Princeton, 1992), 143-160.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

<sup>4</sup> Myron M. Weinstein, "A Hebrew Qur'ān Manuscript," *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore* 10 (1971/2), 19-52. The article describes and analyses the history of ms. Hebrew 99 in the Library of Congress (LC), Washington (which is a Hebrew translation of the Qur'ān, made apparently in India in the middle of the eighteenth-century), but includes also very important other material.

which he studied in detail, two earlier Hebrew translations of the Qurʾān (Bodleian ms. Michael 113<sup>5</sup> and British Museum Ms. Or. 6636),<sup>6</sup> to both of which I shall come back later. M.M. Weinstein was kind enough also to send me partial photocopies of two other Hebrew translations of the Qurʾān (INA=Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, formerly Institute of the Peoples in Asia, Leningrad, B 155 and B 234). At first the relation of these mss. to the above mentioned translations was not clear, but it seemed possible that both mss., though written in very different Hebrew characters and handwriting, consisted of the same translation of the Qurʾān as that found in the Bodleian and British Library mss., together with other Islamic material which was totally inexplicable to me, at least when I first looked at it.

The colophon of B 155 states in Hebrew: "I have copied this quickly in fifteen days in Amsterdam ... in the month of Shevat [February] of the year HTIG [1653]." The writer added that he had corrected the Hebrew language of the translation of the Qurʾān which he copied, and which was made from the Latin.

In both mss. the Hebrew translation of the Qurʾān comes only after other material which, in its exordium, includes both high praises for "the Prophet Mehmet" as well as some phrases expressing distance from him: "This is the Alkurʾano of the Yishmaelites which has been translated from Arabic to a Christian language and then to Hebrew and it [the book] is divided into chapters." Some terms used point to a Jewish author (for example, the use of the Hebrew words "Torah," "HaShem yitbarakh" ["be His Name blessed" — meaning God], or "Eretz Yitzhaq" ["the Land of Isaac"], and so on. Others obviously reflect Muslim attitudes, though not the Arabic language, when speaking about "the blessings of the light of the Prophet Mehmet," "the last Prophet" or "the undeserving sons of Isaac."

Western foreign words, neither Hebrew nor Arabic, are also used, such as "uraqulu" (oracle). Most unusual are the many personal names listed in a genealogy of Muhammad.<sup>7</sup> Some of them are clearly Biblical names taken from genealogical lists like Gen.10:21-30 (Adam, Shet, Hanokh, Noah, etc.). Others are corruptions of Biblical names that appear in the same lists ("Qanan" for Qeynan, "Bardi" for Yered, "Arpakhshu" for Arpakhshad, and so on). Still others can be identified through their place in Biblical genealogy: for example, the diffi-

<sup>5</sup> See A. Neubauer, *Catalogue of Hebrew Mss. in the Bodleian Library* (Oxford 1896), vol. 1, no. 2207.

<sup>6</sup> M.Weinstein, 20 ff.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, the first five pages of the ms.

cult Maqilu, which stands for Mehalel. There are, however, many names that seem to defy any linguistic explanation, especially among the sons of Ishmael (Bayran, Qayabir, Damil etc.), their wives ("Tahols from the Land of Isaac," Garaidah, Mashiraq, Ariaah, Adinon, etc.) and the wives of earlier Biblical personalities (Makonsilitah, wife and sister of Shet,<sup>8</sup> Baqilas, wife of Ishmael and others) and names of Muḥammad himself. Thus, for example, his name in heaven is said to be Nashmis.<sup>9</sup>

Could the text be part of some Jewish anti-Islamic literature? We have some, though not many, examples of Jewish retelling the story of Muhammad in a polemical way, in both Hebrew and Judaeo-Arabic.<sup>10</sup> This hypothesis, however, has to be discarded as the text seems to be very Muslim in its reverent attitude to the Prophet of Islam. Could it perhaps belong to some Jewish-Muslim sectarian group, in the existence of which some scholars believe, although we have only speculations to go by?<sup>11</sup> Although it may seem odd, this idea seems to fit in well with the time and place the ms. was written: in Amsterdam in 1653. It is the time of Shabbatai Zvi, the Jewish Messiah, who had a powerful impact on Jewish communities all over the world, including Amsterdam, and who converted at the end of his life to Islam.<sup>12</sup> Those of his followers who converted with him and their descendants constitute such a group, the Doenmeh sect.<sup>13</sup> Shabbatai Zvi, however, converted only in 1666, thirteen years after our ms. was finished, and at the time the ms. was written there was yet no hint of his future conversion. Also, the first Doenmeh believers were apparently only dissimulating Muslims and had no real interest in the Qurʾān and the Prophet Muhammad.<sup>14</sup> So this attractive idea has to be discarded as well; but there still may remain some connection to Shabbatai Zvi: the fact that European Jews

<sup>8</sup> It is a well known Midrashic motif that the earliest Biblical personalities married their sisters as no other women were available.

<sup>9</sup> This is apparently a corruption of his *kunya* (surname) Abūl-Qāsim (through Abū-l-Tarazim and Asmet).

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, B. Cohen, "Une légende juive de Mahomet *Ma'aseh Mohammed*," *Revue des études juives* 88 (1929), 1-17; cf. also ms. ENA 2541 (formerly 2554) in the library of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York.

<sup>11</sup> See M.M. Weinstein, esp. 29 and 41; H. Lazarus-Yafeh, 159-160.

<sup>12</sup> See G. Shalom, *Sabbatai Sevi, The Mystical Messiah 1626 1666*, trans. R.J.Z. Werblowsky (Princeton, 1973).

<sup>13</sup> G. Scholem, s.v. "Doenmeh" in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*.

<sup>14</sup> G. Shalom, "The Sprouting of the Horn of the Son of David, A New Source from the Beginning of the Doenmeh Sect in Salonica." *In the Time of the Harvest: Essays in honour of A. H. Silver*, ed. by D. J. Silver (New York, 1963), 368-386.

of his time knew about the Qurʾān and even translated it into Hebrew may have helped to mitigate the shock of his later conversion to Islam.

On closer scrutiny I became convinced that the two other Hebrew translations of the whole Qurʾān in London and in Oxford mentioned above, although slightly different from each other and from both Leningrad mss., are both copies of the same translation of the Qurʾān. They also include much other Islamic material in addition to the translation of the Qurʾān itself. (The identity of the London and Oxford mss. had already been suggested by S. D. Goitein and was accepted by Weinstein.<sup>15</sup>) The Bodleian ms., written in Italian Hebrew characters, has a colophon in Hebrew which says: "The book of the Al-Koran translated from Arabic<sup>16</sup> into the holy language (i.e., Hebrew) by the scholar, our very learned teacher and Rabbi the late Jacob from the house of Halevi, here in Venice HSZV [1636 ]." This Rabbi is identified with Jacob ben Israel Halevi who was born (?) and raised in Salonica, moved to Venice and died there in the year the ms. was copied.<sup>17</sup> Above the colophon is a Hebrew quotation from the beginning of Jes.10—"Woe to those who write evil writs and compose iniquitous documents"—which seems to express the Jewish translator's or the copier's reservation with regard to the Qurʾān. The translation begins: "The book of the Al-Koran translated from Arabic into a Christian language and then word for word into Hebrew." This seems to be closer to the truth than the corrected colophon as the translation was certainly not made from the Arabic, but clearly seems to have been made from a European language, probably Latin or Italian.<sup>18</sup>

So we have four Hebrew mss. each of which includes a translation of the Qurʾān with much additional Islamic material. It seems that none of the mss. is a direct copy from another, but that all are based on the same translation. Therefore we can suppose that there existed at least one more ms., the autograph. Two of the mss. are dated and both belong to the seventeenth century: 1636 Venice (Bodleian ms.) and 1653 Amsterdam (Leningrad B 155). The British Museum ms. seems to stem from the eighteenth century (India?),<sup>19</sup> although it was considered by

<sup>15</sup> See the end of Goitein's article "Koran" in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* and cf. Weinstein, 20.

<sup>16</sup> This is a correction written above words meaning "from a Christian language." See Weinstein, 20-21, and the colophon of ms. Leningrad B 155 quoted above.

<sup>17</sup> See Weinstein, 21 and cf. J. Hacker, "Levi (Bet ha-Levi ), Jacob b. Israel" in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Hacker believes that Jacob b. Israel himself translated the Qurʾān from Arabic into Latin or Italian and then into Hebrew.

<sup>18</sup> See Weinstein, 21.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* 21-22.

some scholars to be earlier. The second ms. from Leningrad (B 234) is apparently the latest — perhaps from the nineteenth century, according to the Hebrew characters and handwriting. We do not have the autograph. As far as we know there exists no earlier full Hebrew translation of the Qurʾān and only one subsequent translation (Washington LC 99),<sup>20</sup> before scholarly translations from the Arabic start with H. Reckendorf in the middle of the nineteenth century.

How is one to explain this curious fact and the unusual additional Islamic material in these mss.? The colophon of the Bodleian ms. shows the way. It states twice that it was made “from a Christian language,” although on the first page the word “Christian” is crossed out and “Arabic” is put above it. If we follow Weinstein in taking “Christian” to mean Italian we can easily find the Italian source: about a hundred years earlier, in 1547 in Venice, there appeared an anonymous Italian translation of the Qurʾān entitled *Al-Corano di Macometto* which, according to the title page, includes also Muḥammad’s doctrine, life, customs and law (“nel qual si contiene la dottrina, la vita, i costumi et le leggi sue”).<sup>21</sup> It was wrongly attributed to the printer Arrivabene.<sup>22</sup> According to the *World Bibliography of Translations of the Meanings of the Holy Qurʾān*<sup>23</sup> it was reprinted in 1574, in spite of the fact that the Venetian inquisition prohibited the reading of the Qurʾān in 1554. This Italian translation was made —with some changes— from the Latin,<sup>24</sup> although it also claims on the title page to be a direct translation from Arabic (“tradotto nuouamente dall’Arabo in lingua Italiana”). From this Italian translation a German one was made by Salomon Schweigger, which appeared in Nuremberg in 1616 as *Alcoranus Mahometicus, Der Türken Alkoran/Religion und Aberglauben*, and was reprinted several times in the seventeenth century. Schweigger states explicitly that his translation was made from the Italian, but he apparently thinks that the Italian was made directly from the Arabic: “Erstlich aus der Arabischen in die Italianische: jetzt aber inn die Deutsche

<sup>20</sup> Some catalogues mention other additional translations but the information may be erroneous. See Weinstein, *ibid.* 45 note 21. Other mss. may yet turn up.

<sup>21</sup> This was apparently the Qurʾān which Menocchio the miller possessed. See Carlo Ginzberg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth Century Miller*, trans. John and Anne Tedeschi (Baltimore, 1980), 43.

<sup>22</sup> See H. Bobzin, “Latin Translations of the Koran — A short overview,” *Der Islam* 70, (1993), 197.

<sup>23</sup> This publication (Istanbul 1986/1406 AH; ed. Ismet Binark and Halit Eren) enumerates all the printed translations of the Qurʾān from 1515 to 1980, but contains many errors according to Bobzin, 197, note 13.

<sup>24</sup> See Bobzin, *Der Koran im Zeitalter der Reformation* (Stuttgart, 1995), 263-268, 360-361.

Sprache gebracht."<sup>25</sup> All these translations include the same other Islamic material (in addition to the Qurʾān) as do the Hebrew mss. They all mention the same corrupted names in that material, and their translations of the Qurʾān itself show an undeniable similarity to the Hebrew mss. None of them was made directly from the Arabic; two of them (the Hebrew and the German translations) are twice removed from the original Arabic (Latin-Italian-Hebrew; Latin-Italian-German), while the anonymous Dutch translation, which was made from the German, is *three* times removed from it. (The later Hebrew translation in LC 99, which Weinstein described, is also twice removed from the Arabic original. It was made from a Dutch translation [Glase-maker] made in turn from a French one [Du Ryer]<sup>26</sup>.)

The Italian and Hebrew versions show special signs of affinity: the Hebrew mss. use Arabic words with an Italian ending like the Italian translation (Al-Korʾano in the Leningrad colophon; Qurashino in Qurʾān 106 for the tribe of Quraysh, etc.); the Hebrew mss. seem usually to follow the Italian (or earlier Latin) divergences from the Qurʾānic text, but sometimes also slightly change them, especially when the translation becomes too "Christian." Thus, for example, in Qurʾān 112:3, which states "He begetteth not nor was begotten," the Hebrew of course does not mention the "Son," as do the Italian and German translations. In addition the Hebrew mss. skip the long Italian polemical introduction. And they do not accept the Italian enumeration of the Qurʾānic *suras* (which is different from the Latin) nor the division of the Qurʾān into three books; but their enumeration is also different from the Arabic Qurʾān and not consistent with each other.

The Latin translation from which the Italian was made appeared three years earlier in Basel and had a peculiar history of its own. It was based on the translation made four hundred years earlier by Robert of Ketton for Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluny (1092-1156) during his visit to Spain.<sup>27</sup> This translation and Peter's general ironic approach to missionary efforts to convert the Muslims were never endorsed by the

<sup>25</sup> From the German an anonymous Dutch translation was made (see *ibid.* 198 which I have not seen. It has yet to be consulted as one of the Hebrew translations was copied in Amsterdam. The Hebrew, however, does not seem to show traces of the Dutch language.

<sup>26</sup> See Weinstein, 23-24. Although Weinstein accepts the supposition that Du Ryer made his translation directly from the Arabic, the additional Islamic material attached to his and Glase-maker's Dutch translation may point to some connection with the earlier Latin translation as well.

<sup>27</sup> See M. Th. D'Alverny, "Deux traductions latines du Coran au Moyen Âge," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge* 22/23 (1947/8), 69-131; J. Kritzeck, *Peter The Venerable* (Princeton, 1964); H. Bobzin, *Der Koran ...*, 46-54.

Church. The translation was never printed, although it was copied often and used by some scholars to refute Islam.<sup>28</sup> Only in the early sixteenth century was it edited, by Theodor (Buchmann) Bibliander (d. 1564), and in 1543 it was printed for the first time in Basel by the printer Oporinus — without approval of the municipal censors. The printing was halted by the municipality and the advice of experts was sought in order to decide whether the heretical Qur'ān would make dangerous reading for the general public who had no theological knowledge, or whether it would be of help in the attempts to convert the Muslims. Only after Luther himself (and apparently also some Calvinist theologians) recommended the publication of the book in order to fight "Islamisation" did the printing go on.<sup>29</sup> At the demand of the municipality the names of the city of Basel and the printer were not mentioned in the book. The translation was a success and was reprinted again in Zurich in 1550.<sup>30</sup>

The Latin translation of Robert Ketton divides the Qur'ān into 124 chapters (instead of the 114 *suras*) and is not fully literal. It includes inaccuracies, misunderstandings, "corrections" and omissions of the Arabic text. Most important is the additional Islamic material that precedes the Qur'ānic text. This material includes other Islamic, Arabic (?) books translated for Peter by other members of his entourage. Hermann of Dalmatia translated for him a book entitled *Liber generatione Mahumet et nutritia eius*. This book relates at some length the story of the divine spark of Muḥammad's light which was passed on, together with the divine law, from the first Adam through generations of prophets and saints, down to Muḥammad. The Biblical and other names mentioned here are already very corrupted but will appear slightly more distorted in the later translations into other languages. The Arabic original of this book has never been found, or perhaps never existed. Kritzek identified it with a book called *Kitāb nasab rasūl Al-lāh* (The Book of the Genealogy of the Apostle of God), written by Sa'īd b. 'Umar. But he found only a Spanish version of it written in Aljamiado (Spanish in Arabic characters).<sup>31</sup> There exists, however, a book written by or attributed to the famous historian 'Alī Al-Mas'ūdī (d. 996) that includes a Shi'ite version of the same story of the divine spark of light passing through generations of prophets down to the

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<sup>28</sup> See Bobzin, *Der Islam*, 195.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* 195-6.

<sup>30</sup> According to the *World Bibliography* it was reprinted twice, in 1550 and 1556.

<sup>31</sup> Kritzek, 84-88.

Prophet Muhammad and to ʿAlī.<sup>32</sup> This book, entitled *Ithbāt al-waṣīyya li-l-imām ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib* (Confirmation of ʿAlī as Heir [to the Prophet Muḥammad]) includes a very long and detailed genealogical list of corrupted Biblical and other names, some of which are close to those in the translations.<sup>33</sup> Other translators translated for Peter the Venerable the *Fabulae saracenorum* which includes stories from Muhammad's biography as told in the *sīra* by Ibn Ishāq-Ibn Hishām<sup>34</sup>—for example about Halima, Muḥammad's wet nurse; the angels who cleaned his heart with snow (*sharḥ al-ṣadr*); his youth in Mecca and the monk Bahira who recognised the signs of prophecy on him; etc.—as well as some later historical information about the first Caliphs.

Hermann of Carinthia translated the *Doctrina Mahumet* from the Arabic Masāʿil ʿAbdallāh, which contains a well-known polemical dialogue between Muḥammad and the Jew ʿAbdallāh b. Salām (Abdia) at the end of which ʿAbdallāh converts to Islam. Another polemical dialogue in correspondence between the Christian ʿAbd al-Masīḥ al-Kindī and ʿAbdallāh al-Hāshimī was also translated.<sup>35</sup> All these translations (together with some writings of Peter himself) came to be known among scholars as the "*Corpus Toletanum*," but in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries all this material, with some minor exceptions, was considered to be part of the Qurʾān itself. There can be little doubt that the Italian translator of the Latin Qurʾān, with the German, Hebrew, and Dutch translators following him, included all this additional material in their translations of the Qurʾān because they thought it was part of the Qurʾān itself. This also seems to be the reason why the material is included, as it appears in the Arabic sources, with great praise and many miracles attributed to Muḥammad, and without any polemical remarks from the translators. This, in spite of the fact, which has been mentioned, that the Italian translator added a polemical introduction and some general information about the Islamic ("Turkish") religion to his translation: "La vera vita di Ma-cometto;" "Della religione de' Turchi;" "Il matrimonio de' Turchi;"

<sup>32</sup> See *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., s.v. "Masāʿid" (Ch. Pellat); cf. U. Rubin, "Pre-existence and Light," *IOS* 5 (1975), 62-119.

<sup>33</sup> The book appeared in print in Nadjaf 1955. Its affinity to the book translated by Hermann of Dalmatia has yet to be studied in detail.

<sup>34</sup> Muḥammad's earliest existing biography *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh* by ʿAbd al-Malik b. Hishām was ed. by F. Wuestenfeld (*Das Leben Mohammed's nach Ibn Ishaq*; Goettingen, 1859), and translated into English by A. Guillaume (*The Life of Muhammad*; Oxford, 1955).

<sup>35</sup> See the translation *The Apology of el-Kindi* (London, 1911). This book was apparently written in the tenth century by a Christian author.



“L’afflittione de’ Christiani schiavi;” “Il conditione de Christiani ne paesi di Turchi;” and so on. But he apparently did not want to interfere with the text of the Qurʾān itself, and he must have thought that the additional material was part of it. Schweigger did not translate the long polemical (and informative) Italian introduction into German, but he stated his polemical intentions very clearly in the title of his translation: *AlCoranus Mahometicus, Das ist der türken Alcoran / Religion und Aberglauben*; and on the title page: “Auss welchem zu vernemen/ Wann und woher ihr falscher Prophet Machomet seinen ursprung oder anfang genommen / mit was gelegenheit derselb diss sein Fabelwerk / laecherliche und naerrische Lehr gedichtet und erfunden ...” etc.<sup>36</sup> Following the Italian version, he also added at the end of his translation that there were some more verses that he did not translate, and that he finished this work “zu ehren Jesu Christi / und zur verdamnuss dess Teuflischen Propheten / und Anti-Christischen vermaledeyten Botschaffters.”<sup>37</sup> Yet the Hebrew mss. include neither the long Italian polemical introduction nor any shorter polemical announcement like that inserted by both the Italian and German translators at the end (they do mention, like the others, that the Qurʾān includes some additional verses that they did not translate, which seems in any case strange as all the translations end with *suū as* 113 and 114). The Hebrew mss. start right from the beginning of the additional material and include it and the following Qurʾānic text without any polemical remarks (except perhaps the verse from Isia. 10 on the title page, mentioned above). It is therefore difficult for the reader to understand for what audience these Hebrew translations were made and for what purpose. Why would a Greek Jew in Venice (if the translator was indeed Rabbi Jacob ben Israel Halevi) translate the Qurʾān into Hebrew and for whom? Who would read the Hebrew translation, and why would Jews in Amsterdam copy this translation at least twice? Jews in seventeenth-century Venice or Amsterdam had no reason to polemicise against the “Turks” who provided them with asylum after their expulsion from Spain and Portugal, nor were they interested —like the Christians— in converting them!

Here we need to take a more general look at seventeenth-century European attitudes towards Islam. It was a century of great changes and contrasts in this regard. The deep fear of the Ottoman Turks (who were

<sup>36</sup>“The Koran of the Turks / Religion and Superstition, from which one can understand whence and where their false Prophet Muḥammad took his start and at which opportunities he invented his ridiculous and crazy doctrine . . .”

<sup>37</sup>“in honour of Jesus Christ and for the damnation of the Satanic Prophet and the cursed Anti-Christ Apostle.”

identified with the Arabs and Islam) was still very strong, based on their conquests in the Balkans and eastern Europe, and on the siege they had laid on Vienna in the previous century (1529) and were about to attempt once more at the end of this one (1683). Islam was still considered to be the archenemy and Antichrist and some Protestant writers, following Luther, took pleasure in likening the Catholic church to it. There was also fear of what one may term "theological Islamisation" and influence on Christian heretical thought<sup>38</sup> as well as of general Turkish cultural influence. This seems to have been very strong in Poland,<sup>39</sup> for example, where the imitation of Turkish habits spread very widely; but Turkish dress and other customs were also widespread in cities like Venice. On the other hand, as people learned more about Islam it came to be thought of in some circles of intellectuals as being a religion of reason and tolerance (and an admirable civilisation of unlimited eroticism!) quite unlike the repressive Catholic church with its myths and irrational dogmas.<sup>40</sup> It certainly was true that in the Ottoman Empire persecuted members of the new Protestant churches had found asylum and religious freedom while the Church was hunting witches in the European west.

To these attitudes one has to add the more general impact of the Reformation and the establishment of the new Protestant churches. The endless religious debates and the long bloody wars seem to have undermined the zeal of religious convictions on both sides<sup>41</sup> and may have helped to arouse some kind of general intellectual interest in religious issues. In some cases this was reinforced by the needs of new commercial contacts with the future colonies of European countries, such as the Netherlands' in Indonesia.

All these and other reasons combined to awaken in the seventeenth century in some European countries a new interest in Islam very different from the earlier medieval misconceptions of it.<sup>42</sup> Several new translations of the Qurʾān into Latin were made, though most of them were

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<sup>38</sup> See the excellent examples in Ginzberg, *The Cheese and the Worms*, esp. 11, 30 and 42. Ginzberg identifies certain Islamic ideas in the Miller's heretic world view, but more can be found therein. See also, above, Luther's reason for endorsing the print of the Latin Qurʾān translation.

<sup>39</sup> See S. Schreiner, "Polnische antiislamische Polemik im 16/18 Jahrhundert und ihr Sitz im Leben," *Gnosisforschung und Religionsgeschichte: Festschrift fuer Kurt Rudolph* (Marburg, 1994), 515-527.

<sup>40</sup> See F. Gabrieli, "Islam in the Mediterranean World," *The Legacy of Islam* (2nd ed., Oxford, 1974), esp. 37-42; cf. also M. Rodinson, *Europe and the Mystique of Islam* (London, 1987), 45-47.

<sup>41</sup> See, for example, Pieter Geyl, *The Netherlands in the Seventeenth Century 1609-1648* (London, 1936) and G. F. Pijper, *Islam and the Netherlands* (Leiden, 1957).

<sup>42</sup> See N. Daniel, *Islam and the West* (revised ed., Oxford, 1993).

never printed.<sup>43</sup> The most famous of these translations is Ludovico Marracci's (d.1700). It was made in a scholarly way from the Arabic and printed with the Arabic text in Padua in 1698. Its main purpose, however, was polemical ("ad refutationem Al-Corani Pseudoprophetae") and therefore each section of the translation is presented with its refutation. The Qurʾān was also printed in nice Arabic characters without any translation by Hinckelmann, in Hamburg in 1694. (He also mentions the "pseudoprophetae" on his title page.) This shows that by the end of the century the study of the Arabic language had spread, although mainly for polemical reasons. Some theological students studied it and parts of the Qurʾān in Hebrew characters (like medieval Judaeo-Arabic), perhaps because it was easier to find printers for Hebrew or in order to avoid studying the complex Arabic script.<sup>44</sup> But most of the translations of the Qurʾān made in this century and earlier were not made directly from the Arabic. Yet all of them were extremely popular and were reprinted unbelievably often in this same century (the number of books printed each time must have been low, otherwise it would be very difficult to explain for which audience these reprints were intended). Thus, for example, Du Ryer's French translation from the Arabic (1647) was reprinted in the seventeenth century at least ten times, while Glasemaker's Dutch translation made from it (1657) was reprinted in the same century eight times! An English translation from the French, made by A. Ross, was printed in London in 1648: "newly Englished for the satisfaction of all that desire to look into the Turkish vanities, to which is prefixed the Life of Mahomet, the Prophet of the Turks and author of Alcoran with a needful caveat or admonition for those who desire to know what use may be made of it or if there be danger in reading the Alcoran." It was soon reprinted twice. Schweigger's above mentioned translation of the Qurʾān from Italian into German (1616) was also reprinted several times

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<sup>43</sup> Bobzin, "Latin Translations," 200-202.

<sup>44</sup> One such widespread textbook of the Qurʾān in Arabic in the Hebrew Rashi script with a partial translation into Latin was published by Christianus Ravius, Professor of Hebrew in Amsterdam (!), in 1646. There exist several mss. of it. See, for example, Bodleian ms. Arab.e.240(8). Bound along with Ravius' textbook is other, later, material for the study of Arabic (as well as Persian and Turkish) and of Islam as well as some *sūras* of the Qurʾān in the Arabic script with Latin explanations. Another example of the Qurʾānic text printed in Hebrew characters is to be found in M.F. Beckius' Latin translation of *sūras* 30 and 48. See M.F. Beckii (Beck), *Specimen Arabicum...Bina Capitula Al-Corani....* Augsburg, 1688). Cf. also Bobzin, "Latin Translations," 204-206.

in the same century and another Dutch translation was made from it.<sup>45</sup> The seventeenth-century is also the century wherein several of the most important European university chairs for the study of Arabic were established: Leiden in 1613; Cambridge in 1632; Oxford in 1634.<sup>46</sup> Although these too adhered for some time to the old polemical and missionary theological agenda, they signify without doubt the beginnings of a new era of truly scholarly studies of Arabic and Islam in Europe. This is also the century of the purported composition of the *Letters writ by a Turkish Spy who lived five and forty years undiscovered in Paris 1642-1682, written originally in Arabick, translated into Italian and from thence into English*.<sup>47</sup> Although polemical writings, both religious and secular, against Islam continued to flourish, the seventeenth century is without doubt a century of intensive scholarly European interest in Islam and especially in the Qur'an.

European Jews and especially Italian Jews apparently were deeply influenced by this general trend and followed it. The contacts between the Jewish elite and the Gentile Italian surroundings were unusually strong even in the sixteenth century, when Jews were expelled from Napoli (1541), the Talmud was burned (1569), and the Ghettos established in Venice (1515) and Rome (1555).<sup>48</sup> In the seventeenth century these ties became much stronger and permeated even the realm of religious sermons, in which Jews used not only the Italian language but explicit Christian motifs as well, in a way unheard of in any other Euro-

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<sup>45</sup> The numbers are taken from the *World Bibliography of Translations* where the dates of print are given. Even if the data is not exact (see Bobzin's discussion cited above, n. 23) the fact remains that there were an unusually large number of translations and reprints.

<sup>46</sup> See P.M. Holt, *Studies in the History of the Near East* (London, 1973), pt. i, 27-49; A. Hourani, *Islam in European Thought* (Cambridge, 1993), 13. The first chair of Arabic studies was established in Paris already in 1539.

<sup>47</sup> The book comprises several volumes with different dates, which also do not add up to 45 years (1645-1682, 1649-1692). It was apparently composed later by different authors in various languages and was printed several times in the eighteenth century. I used the 1753 print made by A. Wilde in London. It is an amalgamation of true and concocted information about the Ottoman Empire and Islam (also about Judaism), written without doubt by a European who had some knowledge of both. See P. Hazard, *La Crise de la conscience européenne (1680-1715)* (Paris, 1935), vol 1, 20, 23 ff. According to Hazard the first book was written by G.P. Marane from Genoa (d.1692), after he had spent some time in Egypt. Cf. also R. Popkin, "A Gentile Attempt to Convert the Jews to Reformed Judaism," in *Israel and the Nations: Essays in honor of Shmuel Ettinger* (Jerusalem, 1987), English Section, xxv-xlv.

<sup>48</sup> See Ruderman's Introduction to David B. Ruderman (ed.), *Preachers of the Italian Ghetto* (Los Angeles, 1992), 1-20, esp. 1-9; and cf. M. Idel, "Judah Moscato: A Late Renaissance Jewish Preacher," *ibid.* 41-66, esp. 47-8, 51, 56.

pean Jewish community.<sup>49</sup> It should therefore come as no surprise to find a Jew from Venice (?) translating the Qurʾān from Italian into Hebrew. The fact that he did *not* translate the polemical introductory sections into Hebrew and the fact that copies were made later of this Hebrew translation in Amsterdam and elsewhere seems to be proof of the positive Jewish attitude toward the Ottoman Empire and Islam.<sup>50</sup> As always Jews followed the general trends around them but in doing so adhered also to their own Jewish agenda.

### Appendix

Here are three examples of deviation from the Arabic text in the Hebrew translation of the last short *sūras* of the Qurʾān. Some of them are to be found already in the Latin and Italian translations. Thus the word used to translate “figs” (*tīn*) into the Hebrew — “afarsekim” (peaches)— in Qurʾān 115:1 is based on the Italian (“persichi”) which is taken from the Latin (“persicos”). Schweigger’s German translation also has “pfersiche.”

In the same way the corruption of Abū Lahab’s name into the unrecognisable “AlMulākar” in the Hebrew translation of Qurʾān 111:1 is based on the Italian “Amilcar” which is taken from the Latin “Amileah.” The German has also Amilcar. It is a curious fact that many of the corrupted names in the Hebrew mss. are already corrupted in the first Latin translation. Although the additional translations corrupted them even further they are not the result of passing through several languages and scripts, as one would tend to think.

In Qurʾān 109 the number of verses is shorter and the last verse states “you persecute my religion; therefore your religion will not remain,” which seems to be very different from all the other translations.

*Hebrew University, Jerusalem*

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<sup>49</sup> See M. Saperstein, “Italian Jewish Preaching — An Overview” (*ibid.*), 22-40 and E. Horowitz, “Speaking of the Dead: The Emergence of the Eulogy among Italian Jewry of the Sixteenth Century” (*ibid.*), 129-162.

<sup>50</sup> See, for example, J. Kaplan, *From Christianity to Judaism: The Story of Isaac Orobio de Castro* (Oxford, 1989), 253. Isaac (Beltazar) Orobio (1617-1687) thought, according to Kaplan, that although Islam is “swamped with impurities and abominable features . . . it is not a barbarous faith” and that “the source of Muhammad’s teaching is divine although the Koran is a purely human product.” This, in contrast to Christianity, which was usually considered to be sheer idolatry.



Michael C. Weber

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## THE ADOPTION OF AL-FARABI'S "MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES" IN THE MEDIEVAL WEST: A Study in Cross-Cultural Borrowing

It is a truism recognised in all modern textbooks in both Western and World Civilisation that the medieval Islamic civilisation transferred the accomplishments of Greek science to the Latin West. As is well known, this was largely accomplished in Christian Spain after the *Reconquista* (i. e., after 1085) and slightly later in Sicily. Cross-cultural borrowing of this type was, as William McNeill said, "one of the principle stimuli to innovation" in the receiving civilisation.<sup>1</sup> Prior to the twelfth-century translations of Greek and Arabic texts, the Carolingian heritage in "scientific study" was of a derivative and secondary character, more likely to cite Virgil or Macrobius as authorities than any scientific writer of Anti-quity.<sup>2</sup> This was particularly evident in the sciences of the *quadrivium*, given that "All *quadrivium* studies languished in the Latin world [of late antiquity] and geometry was the most neglected subject of the four."<sup>3</sup> As the centuries passed, the situation grew even worse, primarily as the result of there being very few ancient works available to medieval scholars on any of the sciences of the *quadrivium*. However, if we look at the guidelines for the "Divisions of the Sciences" and the lists of readings required for degrees in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, we see a renewed emphasis on the mathematical sciences. It is my contention that not only was the Arabic influence decisive for this innovation, but the particular path of influence in these sciences was the result of the translation and appropriation of curricular guides that had been written by Islamic scholars for their own students who wished to study ancient philosophy and natural sciences, which they called the "Ancient" or "Foreign" sciences. By studying the translation of one of these guides we can see not only what the "new" curriculum of the Islamic scholars contained, but we can also gain insight into the limits of the scientific knowledge

*SCRIPTA MEDITERRANEA*, Vols XIX-XX 1998-1999, 213

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<sup>1</sup>William McNeill, *A World History* (New York, 1971), 127.

<sup>2</sup>Margaret Gibson, "Continuity of Learning Circa 850-Circa 1050," *Viator* 6 (1975):9-12.

<sup>3</sup>William H. Stahl, *Martianus Capella and the Seven Liberal Arts* (New York, 1971), 127.

of the Christians who translated these texts. In other words, the translating process can be a window on both the cross-cultural borrowings and a reflection of the state of Christian learning in these sciences.

Among the many of these guides that existed, the one that was considered "indispensable" in Muslim Spain was al-Farabi's *Book of the Enumeration of the Sciences*, *Kitāb Iḥṣā' al-'ulūm*.<sup>4</sup> *The Enumeration* is primarily an education text. In it al-Farabi says that he is describing the parts of all the "well-known sciences" of his day so that anyone can pick up the book and put it to good use. In the twelfth century it was felt to be the key to the science of the Arabs and thus provided a guide to the ancient philosophical works for which both scholars in the Muslim world and the Latin West felt an acute need. In part, the value of the book comes from its contents: it is, as Sā'id al-Andalusi remarked, a rather straightforward description of what makes up each individual field of knowledge.<sup>5</sup> However, one should not think of it as a textbook. Rather it is more like a syllabus or curriculum, describing in the broadest contours what a scholar would need to know: Al-Farabi tells the reader what all the subjects are that make up the "well-known sciences", then he presents the topics that one would need to study within each subject in order to know that subject. Near the end of each topical section, reference is usually made to the known books of Aristotle (some of which we now know to be written by someone other than the Stagirite) or of some other ancient authority, such as Euclid. The result is a curriculum which, if followed, would introduce the student to all the parts of classical philosophy, including mathematics, natural science, and metaphysics. For our purposes, of all the translated curricular guides it is also the most fruitful to study because it was translated into Latin by Dominicus Gundisalvus and the great Gerard of Cremona, two

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<sup>4</sup>Thus it was called by Ṣā'id al-Andalusi, *Science in the Medieval World: Book of the Categories of Nations*, tr. Sema'an I. Salem and Alok Kumārā, (Austin, 1991), 50. There is no English translation of the whole text of the *Ṭabaqāt al'Ummān* available. The most accessible edition is that of Angel González Palencia, *Catálogo de las Ciencias* (Madrid, 1953), which contains the Arabic text based upon the Escorial manuscript, a Spanish translation, Gerard of Cremona's Latin translation, and Dominicus Gundisalvus's version according to its first published edition. The two Latin translations are not critical editions. For a "critical" reconstructed edition of Gundisalvus, see M. M. Alonso, *De Scientiis* (Madrid, 1954), which also includes as an appendix the passages reproduced by Vincent of Beauvais in his *Speculum Doctrinale*. The only English translation of any of these is my own: Michael C. Weber, "The Translating and Adapting of al-Farabi's *Kitāb Iḥṣā' al-'ulūm* in Spain," (Ph. D. diss., Boston University, 1996), which has a translation of Gundisalvus's text as the Appendix. The best text of the Arabic is a critical edition published by Uthman Amin, ed., *Alfarabi: Kitāb Iḥṣā' al-'ulūm* (Cairo, 1931).

<sup>5</sup>Ṣā'id al-Andalusi, 50.



different individuals who had widely differing styles of translating. Given that we are familiar with each of their tendencies as a translator we can not only compare each man's work with the original Arabic, but we can also compare the two Latin translations and so infer something of each man's knowledge of the subjects under discussion.

So, what curriculum does al-Farabi offer? He believed a Muslim seeking after education first needed knowledge of language; second, what he simply called "Logic"; next the mathematical sciences expanded beyond the Latin *quadrivium*; fourth, the sciences of physics and metaphysics, understood in Aristotelian terms; and finally, in what must be termed the most "Islamic" chapter, one finds a discussion of law, politics, and theology, with the latter stressing the use of reason in defence of belief. In what was decisive for the student, unlike the other texts on the "Divisions of the Sciences," al-Farabi's text listed the ancient books and told where within them one could find the subject under discussion. In short, this text was a guide to the authorities of the past. But it was more than that. Of all the texts discussing the divisions of the sciences that survived into the twelfth century, al-Farabi's had a pedagogical intent: namely, to guide students from the easier subject to the harder until the student had become the type of thinker who "knew with certainty." Thus, al-Farabi presents a series of basic uses for his book: his reader would come to know what is in each branch of knowledge, know the utility of each branch and which branch to use to what end, learn how to discriminate between the branches, and, in the end, all of this would help him to distinguish the truly learned man from the phoney imitator. Most certainly, its main function in the Latin West (and in the Islamic world) was to provide a reading list to the basic student in philosophy. Whether the student recognised it or not, he was being led onto progressively higher and more speculative realms of thought. Unlike other popular texts from the Islamic world, Ibn Sina's *Shifā* and al-Ghazali's *Maqāṣid*, I believe that al-Farabi's book was the most important of these curricular guides in the Christian world because of its wider dissemination. Consequently, it is the reading and the translating of the works that al-Farabi recommends that became the cornerstone of the transformation of a liberal arts education, moving it beyond the *trivium* and through the *quadrivium*, motivating students to be *philosophi* instead of *scholares*.

In order to study the influence of al-Farabi, I want to begin by looking at the first level of appropriation of his ideas, that which his two translators made by focusing on the mathematical sciences. Second, I want to consider the effect of the translations in providing the curricular guidance to students, especially at Oxford in its early period.

When we turn to the chapter on the "Mathematical Sciences," (*fī ʿilm al-taʿālīm*) or the *sciencia doctrinalis* in Latin, we find that al-Farabi has significantly expanded the curriculum of the "mathematical sciences" beyond the old *quadrivium*, which had included music, astronomy and astrology. He adds optics, statistics, and the science of the making of mechanical devices to the base of arithmetic and geometry. Al-Farabi tends to divide the seven sciences that make up this division of human knowledge into two groups: the theoretical and the practical, contrary to his presentations of the other sciences. For him, the theoretical is the more difficult and the purer form of knowledge. In his neo-Platonic epistemology, it is by the act of the speculative, theoretical intellect that a person comes to knowledge of the intelligibles. The distinction between theoretical and practical is not simply convenient or heuristic: it represents the basic division in man's rational faculty.<sup>6</sup> The reason for this seems to be that it is with the mathematical sciences that one begins to lift the mind to pure rationality. Because mathematical (especially geometrical) realities can be represented in nature, they are concrete examples of the pure, speculative ideas that stand behind them. Hence, mathematical thought is the first step to higher level cognition.<sup>7</sup> Such thinking is the chief function of the soul.<sup>8</sup> In *Table I* I have presented the divisions of the mathematical sciences as al-Farabi enumerated them.

In his discussion of arithmetic, al-Farabi treats the subject in five short paragraphs. As was mentioned above, he divides the science into theoretical and practical and devotes most of his discussion to the theoretical. Interestingly, al-Farabi recommended no textbook for this study, probably because at the end of the discussion of geometry he says clearly that Euclid's *Elements* is the place where "one finds the principles of geometry and arithmetic." When Gundisalvus finished his initial discussion of the differences between the practical and theoretical, he tells the reader that everything about arithmetic could be easily learned from the *Arithmetica* of Nichomachus (of Gerasa). This was a well-known text, *The Introduction to Arithmetic*, which had been translated into Latin in the Roman Empire, recommended by Cassiodorus,

<sup>6</sup>See Osmin B. Baker, "The Classification of the Sciences in Islamic Intellectual History," (Ph. D. diss., Temple University, 1989): 83.

<sup>7</sup>See Muhammad Ar-Rabe, "Muslim Philosophers' Classifications of the Sciences: al-Kindi, al-Farabi, al-Ghasali, and Ibn Khaldun," (Ph. D. diss., Harvard University, 1984): 86-97. He has found many places in al-Farabi's works where he makes this implied pedagogical priority explicitly.

<sup>8</sup>See on this Fuad S. Haddad, *Alfarabi's Theory of Communication*, (Beirut, 1989), 173.

and adapted by Boethius in his *De Institutione Arithmetica*.<sup>9</sup> It is a work that Julio Samsó has characterised as a book "one would expect to be known in al-Andalus in the second half of the fourth/tenth century."<sup>10</sup> The Andalusi tradition preserved by Šāʿid enumerates Nichomachus of Gerasa as one of the fine men who deserve to be called "philosophers of Greece," even though Šāʿid misidentifies him as the father of Aristotle.<sup>11</sup> This addition indicates that Gundisalvus was aware of other textbooks beyond what al-Farabi mentioned. Moreover, Gundisalvus returns to practical arithmetic at the end of his section on arithmetic and discusses the commercial uses of math, known in Arabic as the *al-ḥisāb wa-ḥ-muʿāmalāt*, the arithmetic of commerce. Such works were not only common in al-Andalus but earlier in the twelfth century John of Seville had translated one of these into Latin. In it, Ibn al-Samh (d. 1035) actually quoted al-Khwarizmi as well as Nicomachus and Euclid. As Samsó describes its contents, it "ends with a long collection of practical problems which might be of interest to a merchant."<sup>12</sup> Thus we find one translator, Gundisalvus, describing additions to al-Farabi's list of authorities using the very books which are known now to have been in al-Andalus at that time. Gerard of Cremona characteristically only exactly reproduces the Arabic in Latin.

After discussing arithmetic, al-Farabi begins his discussion of geometry. In presenting this science, curiously neither al-Farabi nor his translators provided a textbook-style definition of geometry, although Gundisalvus knew one and utilised it in his *De divisione philosophiae* (a work he wrote later by cutting and pasting together numerous additional Arabic sources with the western traditions of Boethius and Isidore of Seville); however, there was little that he might have turned to in Latin as an alternative to the Arabic tradition on this subject. Of course, the main division of geometry is between theoretical and practical. Both translators begin as al-Farabi does with the discussion of the practical. Al-Farabi had begun his discussion with a con-

<sup>9</sup>Cf. *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 733-34.

<sup>10</sup>Julio Samsó, "The Exact Sciences in al-Andalus," in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. S. K. Jayyusi (Leiden, 1991), 953.

<sup>11</sup>*Science in the Medieval World*, 21. N.b., in the translation of Salem and Kumar they have used "Nicomack" as the form of the name, a maddening characteristic of this translation of the *Tabaqat*. See, in this regard, C. Burnett's review in *Historia Scientiarum* 3.2 (1993): 157-158.

<sup>12</sup>Samsó, "The Exact Sciences," 953. He refers the interested reader to J. Sesiano, "Le Liber mahamalet, un traité mathématique latin composé au XIIe siècle en Espagne," *Actes du premier colloque internationale d'Alger sur l'histoire des mathématiques arabes* (Algiers, 1988): 69-98.

sideration of the function of lines, planes, and solids as they appear in various materials (wood, iron, walls, land), as made by various artisans (carpenter, smiths, masons, surveyors).

While his translators reproduce this main division of the chapter, they had some difficulty translating this section because there appears to have been no standard Latin terminology available to them describing this particular science. I, for one, am not sure the basic concepts of geometry were even clear to Gerard of Cremona; for while he remained the *fides interpres*, woodenly literal in rendering the Arabic into barely comprehensible Latin, some of his mistakes would seem to indicate that he really didn't grasp the relationship of the elements of geometry to the rest of science. Dominicus Gundisalvus, on the other hand, desired to add to al-Farabi's text material that he knew from other sources. For example, instead of beginning straight away with al-Farabi's discussion of practical, applied geometry, Gundisalvus detours into a terminological presentation trying to explain the three types of land measurement found in geometry. These three modes of measure he called height measure, measure in a plane, and depth measure (Latin: *altimetria, planimetria, et profundimetria*). Some have felt that this terminology was derived from Hugh of St. Victor's *Didascalion*.<sup>13</sup> However, the terminology is not an exact match. It is more likely that it derives from an Arabic source.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup>The relevant passage is Book 2, Chs. 13 and 78 in Taylor's translation of the *Didascalion* (New York, 1962). Hugh calls the third type of measure *cosmimetria*, the term preserved in the *De divisione philosophiae* where Gundisalvus changed to that term while he copied most of his own translation of this chapter of the *De scientiis*. There are a couple of possible explanations for the alteration: it is not likely that it is a variant on any work of Hugh's, for even in his earlier geometry text, *Geometrica practica* he uses the same triad. See Roger Baron, "Notes sur les variations au XIIIe siècle de la Triad Géométrique Altimetria, Planimetria, Cosmimetria," *Isis* 48 (1957): 31. It could be taken from an Arabic source that they both had consulted. That there was such an Arabic text (so far unidentified) is clear from the work of William of Conches; see Taylor, notes 52 and 53 to Chapter 2 of the *Didascalion*, 203.

<sup>14</sup>We know that both Gundisalvus and Gerard were aware of al-Nayrizi's (Latin: Anaritus) *Commentary upon Euclid*. Interestingly, Al-Nayrizi wrote another work entitled, *On the Knowledge of Instruments by Means of Which We May Know the Distances of Objects Raised up in the Air or Set up on the Ground and the Depths of Valleys and Wells and the Width of Rivers* (*Risala fi Ma'rifat alat yu 'lamu biha ab 'ad al-ashya ash-shahisa fi-'l-hawa' wa-'l-lati 'ala basit al-ard wa aqwar al-audiya wa-'l-ahar wa-'urud al-anhar*, Referred to by A. I. Sabra, *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, X, 5-6; cf. s. v. "Al-Nayrizi," *Encyclopedia of Islam* VII: 1050).

The contents of such a work would correspond fairly exactly with the three types of measurement described in *De scientiis*, height, depth, and breadth, and seems to be a closer correspondence to what Gundisalvus wrote than Hugh's text. I cannot say for certain that Al-Nayrizi was the source for the terminology Gundisalvus introduced into

The discussion of the second portion, theoretical geometry, is straightforward, noting that this subject treats lines, planes, figures, and solids in an absolute sense, which is to say, regardless of their embodied material. This whole discussion threw off Gerard of Cremona; as he translated this section, he failed to recognise the reflexive Arabic construction and mistook one form of an Arabic verb for another (in fairness to him, an easy mistake to make). In the end, however, he finishes by producing nonsense in Latin because he did not recognise some elementary terminology. For example, in explaining the subject matter of this section al-Farabi had written, *Wayataşuru fı nasıfı al-khuṭūṭ bi-ḷ-wajhi al-ʿām*: “Lines are conceived on their own in the common manner.”<sup>15</sup> Gerard renders *fı nafsıhi* as “*in anima sua*”. If we wished to be apologetic, this might be a possible rendering; *anima* could mean “essence.” However, in this context, he stretches the meaning of *anima* beyond its bearing; “essence” is not implied by the Arabic for the *fı nafsıhi* is merely reflexive. Gerard knew that the primary sense of the word also meant “soul” and somehow here he must be using *anima* in that way even though it is nonsensical; this is the result of translating word-for-word, his *modus operandi*. This is a translating error that he makes several times in this same paragraph. Similarly, his choice of the verb *curo, curare* to translate the third form of the Arabic (*balā*) in the next sentence (which reads, “which does not take into consideration within which body they exist”), is barely adequate. While *curare* can mean “to pay attention to” I don’t think that this is what Gerard has in mind. One of the meanings of the Arabic verb is, “to care for or be concerned about,” but here it must mean “to take into consideration,” for al-Farabi’s point is that in whatever matter a geometrical form is found, that material does not effect the study of the form. While not entirely nonsense, and the careful Latin reader could make a certain amount of sense of this, the meaning is certainly obscured and does not reproduce

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al-Farabi’s discussion because I have not been able to ascertain the history of the translation of that work. The Arabic exists only in manuscript in Istanbul. However, it certainly sounds like a very close correspondence. Lemay has noticed that the identity of one book translated by Gerard, called in Latin only *Liber de practica geometrie*, remains obscure; Michael McVaugh has suggested that this might be a text of al-Karaji known as *De mensuratione terrarum* (see Richard Lemay, s.v. “Gerard of Cremona,” *Dictionary of Scientific Biography* 16: 177). Lemay further notes that the incipit doesn’t match any known work of this title but has not checked it against al-Nayrizi’s book; hence, the identification remains uncertain. I hope to investigate this further in the future.

<sup>15</sup>Al-Farabi, Catálogo, .57x.

what al-Farabi meant. Al-Farabi's whole point is that in whatever matter a geometrical form is found, that material does not effect the study of the form. Gundisalvus simply summarises the whole section by saying that theoretical geometry only considers the various geometrical forms "absolutely, without any material." As Gerard translates it, one is led to think that al-Farabi believed that geometrical forms are sensate, having souls and caring what kind of material they are embodied in!

The real test of any translator is technical terminology. In this section there are two difficult terms, neither of which was easily understood. First, in discussing the correspondences and equivalencies of geometric figures, we find the term *surdus*. Surds are, technically, "a sum with one or more irrational indicated roots as addends. Sometimes used for an irrational number."<sup>16</sup> It is in this latter sense that our translators use the term. Second, in a list of three dimensional figures we find "*cubas, pyramides, speras, columnas, serratilia, pinealia*."<sup>17</sup> All of these are clear except for *serratilia*. From its root this must mean something like, "small sawn object." It is not in any Latin dictionary but it stands for the Arabic term "manshūrāt," which means "prism."<sup>18</sup> Once again, the Latin term reflects a practice of translation according to root as, ironically, does the Arabic word that was used to represent the Greek "*prisma*"; for that noun is derived from the verb, "to saw", and means something sawn. *Manshūrāt* is its literal grammatical equivalent. However, the standard Latin term was the transliteration, *prisma*, which had been used by Capella. Fortunately, we have another twelfth century text concerned with rhythomachy which also uses this term.<sup>19</sup> While it doesn't include a definition, the text makes it clear that *serratilia* stands for the three dimensional object associated with a triangle. Charles Burnett, who has been studying this text,

<sup>16</sup>*Mathematics Dictionary*, ed., James and Beckenbock (New York, 1968) ad loc. 353. Tummers noted that Gerard is probably responsible for the introduction of this term into the Latin scientific vocabulary in the latter sense. Characteristically, this is a literal rendering of the Arabic *ṣamm* which means in its root "to be silent, be deaf" just like the Latin *surdus*; the proper term is *jadhr aṣamm* the plural of which is *ṣam*; the origin of this term is not to be found in the Greek.

<sup>17</sup>*De Scientiis*, 91; *Catalogo* (Gerard) 147, (al-Farabi) 85.

<sup>18</sup>Both Hans Wehr and J. G. Hava, Al-Fara'id, *Arabic-English Dictionary* 5th ed. (Beruit, 1982) have this meaning. Curiously, in Kazimirski's *Dictionnaire Arabe-Français* (Paris, n.d.): 2:1260, he notes the Latin equivalent *cauterium serratum*. I am indebted to Herbert Mason for this reference.

<sup>19</sup>Cambridge, Trinity College MS R. 15.16, ff. 61v-62r. Burnett is publishing it with a commentary in a forthcoming number of *Viator*. Again, he has kindly provided me with his accepted manuscript.

believes that the term was probably coined in Spain and means "a triangular base pyramid" because there are drawings of just such objects in other manuscripts and, "it would be natural for Spanish translators to use a word for the equivalent Latin root, especially since *serra* meant a mountain range, which has precisely the shape of an elongated prism."<sup>20</sup> It seems likely to me that Gerard probably coined this term as is also likely to be the case with *surdus*.

After carefully comparing these two translations with the Arabic original and the other geometrical texts available in the Latin West c. 1180 it is clear to me that most of the content of this chapter was new and unfamiliar to the translators. There was no established technical terminology and even relatively simple descriptions of theoretical geometry could lead to confusion in the mind of one of the two foremost translators of Arabic texts of the twelfth century. In short, Gerard especially appears to be unprepared by his previous training and experience to comprehend the detail of what al-Farabi had to say on this little-known subject.

In the remainder of the sections on mathematical sciences, Gerard and Gundisalvus are remarkably similar in their translations. In the Latin tradition, they were familiar with music and astronomy as components of the *quadrivium*; however, they had utterly no familiarity with optics, statics, and the science that they ultimately termed "*ingenium*," the "making of mechanical devices." Among all of them, there is only one significant addition, one revealing error, and one enduring terminological exchange. This seems to indicate that there was little else that the translators had at hand on these sciences.

In the science of optics, there is little difference in the two translations. Other than Gundisalvus' citing of Euclid as an authority in the discussion of the relations of geometry to optics, he makes no other additions to al-Farabi and only leaves out small sections that probably appeared to be redundant. Of all the chapters in these texts, this one is the most similar in the two translations. This may be because this was the only text Gundisalvus knew on optics and he had no other material to add. Even the usually expanded text of the *De divisione philosophiae* reproduces this section *verbatim*, including the figures, with only two insignificant changes.

On astronomy we find a curious exchange in terminology by the translators, and one which has endured. Al-Farabi divided the science

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<sup>20</sup>Personal correspondence with me, 2 and 3 March 1995. One strong indication that Burnett is correct is in the *Real academia diccionario* which does list *serratilia* as a medieval Spanish word; however, its meaning is given as *cordillera*, "a chain of mountains," which explains the derivation.

of the stars up into two great divisions (which he did not designate in this case as "theoretical" and "practical"). However, as he usually treats the practical first and the theoretical second, it would not be too far afield to see him encouraging us to see astrology as the practical (i.e., the lower science) and astronomy as the theoretical. The first science is the science of astrological "judgements": the knowledge of what has been, what is and what will be. The second is the "mathematical science" of the stars, the study of the heavens and the earth. While we would call the first "astrology" and the second "astronomy," Gundisalvus, who adds the titles to al-Farabi's definitions, reverses them. The confusion of these two terms did not end with Gundisalvus. Vincent of Beauvais, in his *Speculum doctrinale*, reproduces much of Gundisalvus' translation, though he attributes it to al-Farabi. In section XVIII.46 he presents the science of the stars, preserving Gundisalvus' nomenclature, and still refers to what should be called "astrology" as "astronomy" and vice versa. More significantly, St. Thomas Aquinas, who certainly was not unacquainted with the Aristotelian scientific traditions of antiquity, also reproduces this terminology. In a general listing of the liberal arts in his *Commentary on the de Trinitate of Boethius*, written between 1255 and 1259, he uses the term *astrologia* as the general term for astronomy.<sup>21</sup> The editor and translator of this text notes that this is St. Thomas' usual terminology for that science "whose subject is the heavens and the celestial bodies."<sup>22</sup> In St. Thomas' case, he certainly was widely read and could have derived the proper terminology from many sources, but he used this oft derided error of Gundisalvus as his standard. Perhaps the great Doctor respects the Toledan's nomenclature because of the reputation of Spain, and Toledo in particular, as the place where these "black arts" were well-known.

Finally, in the section on music, there is a curious error of translation. The definition of the fourth part of theoretical music is only one sentence long. It simply says that this part of music teaches about the "classes of natural rhythms" or "iqā'at." Now, all of the Latin translations show the same error and translate "rhythms" as "*casuum*"; "cases" or "occurrences" in Medieval Latin. "The classes of natural cases" or "occurrences"? This makes no sense. What appears to me to have occurred is either another example of either translating according to roots or, as is more likely, mishearing in the process of translating. The root of the Arabic verb "waqa'a" has the same root meanings as *casus* (from *cado*). The root of "iqā'at" is weak in the first root, and so may easily

<sup>21</sup>The *Divisions and Methods of the Sciences*, ed. and trans. A. Maurer, (Toronto, 1986), 44.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, 44 n. 24, quoting another work of St. Thomas in III *Metaphysica* lect. 7, n. 41



have been misheard as "ikhwāt" (from the root "khwā" "to be empty"). Otherwise, I can think of no explanation for the an intentional change of terms. In either case, it never seems to have bothered either translator that they had produced something close to nonsense nor any other Latin writer who reproduced this text.

We may be curious as to why this lack of concern for the plain sense of the text seems to have escaped not only the original translators but others who followed and read their manuscripts. It seems to me that the answer lies in the larger framework of what must have been an exciting enterprise: the scholars of Gerard's and Gundisalvus' time were pioneers, not perfecters, and it appears to me that they endeavoured to get as much Arabic material as possible into Latin, even if they understood it imperfectly. Several passages, especially in Gerard's work, look as though they received no editing at all. For example, in the chapter on grammar he consistently merely transliterates technical terminology when even a brief consultation with a grammarian would have yielded the proper Latin equivalent. This was in spite of the fact that, as we know, there was a *magister scholarum* in Toledo, who would have taught grammar at the same time Gerard was translating there. There appears to have been no interest in producing a "finished" translation. The book *per se* appears to have been the significant end-product. As Guy Beaujouan has described one aspect of the influence of the translation movement, "Change took place exactly to the extent that twelfth-century humanism attached more importance to the form of texts. The great era of translation began with Adelard of Bath, and, in the *quadrivium*, was marked by an increased emphasis upon the use of books."<sup>23</sup> And this book was, even with the errors and transliterations, a new and important source for learning the science of the Arabs. It was exactly this kind of new book, full of the knowledge of the Arabs, that Daniel of Morley wished to take back to England and that Petrus Alfonsi advertised that he could teach to the peripatetics of France.<sup>24</sup> This new knowledge slowly changed the face of higher education.<sup>25</sup> For such change to come to pass, texts were the necessary ingredient. Here Charles Burnett has observed, the *Enumeration* "provided a template for Gerard on which to pattern the programme of

<sup>23</sup>Guy Beaujouan, "The Transformation of the Quadrivium," in *Renaissance and Renewal*, eds. Benson, Constable and Latham, 464-465.

<sup>24</sup>Daniel's text is in Karl Sudhoff, ed., *Archiv für die Geschichte der Naturwissenschaften und der Technik* V. 8, 1-41 while Alfonsi's is found in John Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi and his Medieval Readers* (Gainesville, 1993).

<sup>25</sup>See Gillian R. Evans, "The Influence of Quadrivium Studies in the Eleventh- and Twelfth-century Schools," *Journal of Medieval History* 1 (1975): 151-164.

his own translations,<sup>26</sup> which not only he followed but also seemed to guide many of the Toledan translators who came after him. This is especially true in the philosophical and natural science sections of the work. Consequently, on the question of al-Farabi's curricular influence, we must remember that the scholars in the Latin West did not read the Arabic original, but rather got their recommendations from "*Alfarabius*", which meant "Al-Farabi as Gundisalvus had translated him". Of course this is how Vincent of Beauvais presents Gundisalvus' translation; but even a more disciplined scholar like Roger Bacon thought the *De scientiis* to have been written by al-Farabi. Consequently, when we turn to consider the influence of the mathematical sciences, it is the work of Gundisalvus/al-Farabi that we must consider. In mathematics he had recommended Euclid's *Elements* and the books the Latins called *al-muchabala*, (properly "*al-mu'āmalāt*" in Arabic, or "books of practical mathematics"), and Nichomachus' *Arithmetic*. Gerard translated sections of the first and at least two works on *muchabala*<sup>27</sup> even though these had been translated earlier in the twelfth century by John of Seville and the text of Euclid had been translated by Adelard of Bath.<sup>28</sup> Nichomachus' book on arithmetic had long been available and was not in need of translation by the end of the century. It is possible that Gerard was unaware of the other two translations, but this is doubtful. In addition, among his seventeen translations of geometrical texts Gerard had also translated al-Nayrizi's *Commentary on Euclid*, which included one text called simply, "On the Measurement of the Earth." So, it is fair to call Gerard the sponsor of the revival of Arabic mathematics in the Latin West, even if he was not always so recognised. In music, H. G. Farmer zealously documented the influence of both al-Farabi's *Great Book on Music* and the *Enumeration of the Sciences*.<sup>29</sup> In the other branches of the *quadrivium*, Vincent's *Speculum doctrinale* was widely read, quoting *Alfarabius* at length. Further evidence of influence is to be found in lists of textbooks used in the study of the *quadrivium* after 1200: Euclid is present, sometimes the *muchabala* presented (just as it is in the Arabic tradition often accompanying algebra), and often other composite works such as Sacrobosco, based upon Arabic sources in geometry and arithmetic.

<sup>26</sup>Charles S. F. Burnett, "Translating Activity in Medieval Spain", *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, 1045.

<sup>27</sup>Lemay, 187; See also his expanded list of Gerard's translations, 176-190.

<sup>28</sup>A. C. Crombie, *Augustine to Galileo: The History of Science A. D. 400-1650* (London, 1952), 23-30 has a nice chart of the sources of western science. It is a bit dated now.

<sup>29</sup>See Henry George Farmer, "The Influence of al-Farabi's *Ihsa' al-'ulum*," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1932): 561-592 and "*Ihsa' al-'ulum*," *JRAS* (1933):906-909.

One very early curricular list is that which Haskins believed to have been made by Alexander Neckam (1157-1217), a friend of the translator Alfred of Sarashel who worked in Spain, and who was a younger contemporary of the two translators with whom we are concerned. It contained many of the new books recommended by al-Farabi. Neckam studied and taught in England and Paris from 1180 up to his death and was one of the first scholars to be influenced by the new translations. In the quadrivium he recommends Euclid on arithmetic, Boethius on Music, Euclid again on geometry, and the Ptolemaic Tables along with al-Farghani for astronomy.<sup>30</sup> A much more important work influenced by Gundisalvus' translation of al-Farabi's *Enumeration*, though to a lesser extent, was Robert Kilwardby's *De ortu scientiarum*, which owes nothing to the Latin translation of an Arabic *opusculum* of the same name which was also believed to have stemmed from al-Farabi.<sup>31</sup> This text, written in 1247-1248, has been called the "greatest example of the genre" of divisions of the sciences and is credited with bringing the production of such texts to a halt.<sup>32</sup> Interestingly, the very first quotation—which is the very first sentence—is a précis of Gundisalvus' prologue to the *De divisione philosophiae*, which in turn is loosely modelled upon his own prologue of the *De scientiis*. This quotation even preserves the exemplum Gundisalvus had used, though it doesn't acknowledge him as the source.<sup>33</sup> This indicates to me that Kilwardby had Gundisalvus text in front of him as he began his own work. At several points in his text, Kilwardby quotes Gundisalvus' definitions or distinction in the purposes or boundaries of the sciences. These citations run the gamut, but are particularly used for the sciences of the *quadrivium*. Kilwardby often approved of Gundisalvus' definition in distinction to the other authorities he utilised. Thus, by the time Kilwardby was writing, when the whole Aristotelian corpus was available and Aristotle's "new" texts had already been banned and reinstated at the University of Paris twice, Gundisalvus/al-Farabi was still an authority on the organisation and definitions of the sciences, perhaps the first authority to whom a scholar would turn. In the development of formal courses of study in the thirteenth century, as

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<sup>30</sup>Charles Homer Haskins, "A List of Text Books from the Close of the Twelfth Century," in *History of Medieval Science*, 360.

<sup>31</sup>Kilwardby, *De ortu scientiarum* ed. Albert Judy (London, 1976), 9.

<sup>32</sup>Nancy Spatz, "Divisions of the Sciences in University Master's Inception Speeches," unpublished paper delivered at the American Historical Association Annual Meeting, January 1994, San Francisco, 2. I wish to thank her for providing me with a copy of the paper.

<sup>33</sup>Kilwardby, 9.

Weisheipl noted, "it is not easy to obtain a full picture of the normal course of studies in the medieval university. Our information is particularly meagre concerning the faculty of arts."<sup>34</sup> But, to be graduated from Oxford, a student had to have read not only the old canon, but also the six books of Euclid's *Elements*, the *Algorismus* (i.e. al-Khwarizmi), the *Computus*, and the *De sphaerae* of Sacrobosco, which was derived from Arabic texts. These were considered as accepted standards in 1268. For our purposes, though, the expanded arts —optics, statistics, tracts on quadrants and the astrolabe— and the Alfonsine Tables were represented at Oxford as an important part of the *quadrivium* that everyone needed to be a master.<sup>35</sup> When one turns to consider these new branches of the quadrivium —the truly new elements of the curriculum without roots in the Latin West— the readings called for appear as if they were read straight out of the *Enumeration* in the version preserved in the *De scientiis*. Perhaps more important still, Kilwardby "paid special attention to the relation of the mathematical disciplines to physics."<sup>36</sup> Crombie, who notes this influence, goes on to say that the sharp Aristotelian distinction between the two disciplines "slowly came to be doubted. Indeed, from one point of view, the whole history of European science from the twelfth to the seventeenth century can be regarded as the gradual penetration of mathematics... into fields previously believed to be the exclusive preserve of 'physics.'"<sup>37</sup> While he recognises this as stemming from Kilwardby, he doesn't seem to recognise the influence of al-Farabi, through Gundisalvus, upon Kilwardby. As al-Farabi taught clearly, practical geometry was, for all intents and purposes, engineering. This is made clear not only in the opening of the geometry chapter but is explicitly stated at the start of the chapter on the science of mechanics. In George Saliba's translation, "The science of mechanics is the knowledge of the procedure by which one applies all that was proven to exist in the mathematical sciences ... and the act of locating and establishing it in actuality."<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>James Weisheipl, "Curriculum of the faculty of Arts at Oxford in the Early fourteenth century" *Mediaeval Studies* 26 (1961): 145.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, 168-176 provides an extensive listing of subjects and the texts derived from the "Ancient Statutes of the University of Oxford." He does not say what text of al-Khwarizmi was being referred to.

<sup>36</sup>Crombie, 51.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>38</sup>George Saliba, "The Function of Mechanical Devices in Medieval Islamic Science," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 441 (1985): 145. This includes a translation of the section of al-Farabi's Book Three on the *ilm al-hiyal*.

Thus, while it is difficult to prove the precise and direct influence of al-Farabi's *Enumeration*, we can see its wider influence in both the divisions of the sciences and the reform of the curriculum as practised at Oxford in the thirteenth century and in earlier curricular lists created by Englishmen for the other fields of the mathematical sciences. The very interest in the divisions of the sciences, while started by Hugh of St. Victor, moved away from his basic distinction and adopted those of the Muslim philosophers instead. Inclusion of the new subjects of optics and statistics and requiring the reading of tracts on the astrolabe and quadrants as well as the Alfonsine Tables indicate the influence of al-Farabi's divisions, if not his exact curricular recommendations; but most important of all is his conception of the relations of the mathematical to the physical sciences.

In conclusion, then, even though his translators understood him imperfectly and had a limited command of the subject matter he laid out, they understood the importance of expanding the *quadriivium* in new sciences by exploring new texts that al-Farabi made known to them. It appears that they dedicated their lives to this pursuit and ultimately succeeded in introducing new knowledge so that, as Gundisalvus himself put it in one of his prefaces, a work hitherto unknown to Latin readers, since it was hidden in Greek and Arabic libraries, has now, by the grace of God and at the cost of immense labour, been made available to the Latin world so that the faithful, who toil assiduously for the good of their souls, may know what to think about it, no longer through faith alone but also through reason.<sup>39</sup>

*Northern Essex Community College*

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<sup>39</sup>Preface to *de Anima*, quoted and translated by Jean Jolivet, "The Arabic Inheritance" in *Renaissance and Renewal*, eds. Benson, Constable and Latham: 142.



## THE SORTES REGIS AMALRICI : An Arabic Divinatory Work in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem?

Until recently it has been supposed that very little Arabic learning came to the West via the Crusader States, in contrast to the massive amount that arrived through Spain, and Southern Italy and Sicily. Thanks to the work of Benjamin Kedar, Rudolf Hiestand, Bernard Hamilton and others, the situation of cultural exchange in the Middle East no longer seems as bleak as was earlier thought.<sup>1</sup> However, one work of supposedly oriental origin needs reassessing. This is the *Sortes regis Amalrici*, allegedly composed by the “doctor of the most kind King Amaury” (*benignissimi regis Amalrici medicus*) whom Charles Homer Haskins introduced as one of the very few “translators in Syria during the Crusades” in the chapter with this title in his authoritative *Studies in the History of Mediaeval Science*.<sup>2</sup> King Amaury I, Frankish king of Jerusalem (1163-74), provided Arabic materials to William of Tyre for writing his history of events in the East,<sup>3</sup> and we know of one Arabic doctor who served him.<sup>4</sup> It is attractive to think

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<sup>1</sup>B. Z. Kedar, *The Franks in the Levant: 11th to 14th Centuries*, (Aldershot, 1993) [Kedar is preparing a book-length study on the intellectual history of the Frankish Kingdom of Jerusalem]; R. Hiestand, “Un centre intellectuel en Syrie du Nord? Notes sur la personnalité d’Aimery d’Antioche, Albert de Tarse et Rorgo Fretellus,” *Le moyen âge*, 5th series, 1, 1994, 7–36; B. Hamilton, *The Latin Church in the Crusader States*, (London, 1980); *Crusaders and Muslims in Twelfth-Century Syria*, ed. M. Shatzmiller, (Leiden, 1993).

<sup>2</sup>See Chapter 7 in C. H. Haskins, *Studies in the History of Mediaeval Science*, 2nd ed., (Cambridge, MA), 1927, 130–40.

<sup>3</sup>William, Archbishop of Tyre, *Cronicon*, 19.21, ed. R. B. C. Huygens, *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis*, 63 and 63A, Turnhout, 1986, II, 892:

hec siquis plenius scire voluerit, illam legat Historiam, quam de Orientalibus principibus et eorum actibus a tem-poribus predicti seductoris Mehemeth...cum multa scripsimus diligentia, instante et rogante domino Amalri-co, inclite memorie, et exemplaria Arabica ministrante.

<sup>4</sup>This is Abū Sulaymān Dāwūd, who was sent by the Egyptians to King Amaury in the late 1160s and treated Amaury’s leprosy son; see E. Kohlberg and B. Z. Kedar, “A Melkite Physician in Frankish Jerusalem and Ayyubid Damascus: Muwaffaq al-Dīn Ya‘qūb b. Siqlāb”, *Asian and African Studies*, 22, 1988, 113-26, reprinted in Kedar, *The Franks in the Levant*, article XII. Kohlberg and Kedar suggest that Abū Sulaymān may be the same as the *regis Amalrici medicus* (p. 114); this article questions that identification. The fact that later in the twelfth century Muwaffaq al-Dīn Ya‘qūb b. Siqlāb is described as adopting

that the *Sortes* may also come from an Arabic source, as their use of Arabic lunar astrology suggests. This note explores the identity and origin of these *Sortes*, in particular in respect to whether they really do have a local Arabic origin.<sup>5</sup>

The *Sortes regis Amalrici* is a divinatory work. The client asks one of twenty-eight questions, concerning every aspect of daily life: his life-expectancy, his house, receiving knowledge, going on a journey, receiving honours, changing his clothes and so on. The practitioner then follows a set of instructions to arrive at one of twenty-eight possible answers to these questions, which include predictions such as: "Your life will be prosperous, but there will be hardship at the end"; "Age, wind and rain are ravaging your house"; "An enormous knowledge of what is good will be given to you free"; "Hasten your step until everything comes to you"; "Much unhappiness is your lot, and no honour or glory is given to you"; "Your clothing will last for a long time".<sup>6</sup> The form of the *Sortes regis Amalrici* closest to the original appears to be that in MS Oxford, Bodleian Library, Savile 21 (thirteenth century), in which a set of rules (= *Regula IIIA*) is followed by divinatory tables and twenty-eight sets of verse predictions in rhythmic hexameters, each headed by a "lunar mansion" with an Arabic name (= *Versio I*). Apparently derived from this is a shortened form of *Regula IIIA*: *Regula IIIB*, which is accompanied by the same tables and verses, but with the rhythmic hexameters reworked into Classical hexameters (= *Versio II*; MS British Library, Harley 3814, part I, fourteenth century). A truncated version of *Regula IIIA* reappears in MSS Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 46 and its copy, British Library, Sloane 3554. A further thirty or so manuscripts include one or other version of the verses, with other forms of rules that no longer mention the doctor of King Amaury.<sup>7</sup>

The circumstances of the composition of the text are described in *Regula IIIA* as follows:

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the dress of the Frankish physicians (p. 118) suggests that Frankish physicians were in the majority in the Crusader kingdom of Jerusalem.

<sup>5</sup>The present article forms an addendum to the author's "What is the *Experimentarius* of Bernardus Silvestris? A Preliminary Survey of the Material", *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge*, 44, 1977, 79–125, reprinted in Burnett, *Magic and Divination in the Middle Ages*, (Aldershot, 1996), article XVII, where full details about the manuscripts of the *Sortes*, and editions of the *regulae* and specimens of their verses, can be found.

<sup>6</sup>These are translations of the Latin verses edited in Burnett, "What is the *Experimentarius*?", 108–9.

<sup>7</sup>The preface attached to the *Sortes* in five of these manuscripts, which refers to the work as "*Experimentarius Bernardini Silvestris*" and describes Bernardinus as its "faithful translator from Arabic into Latin" ("*fidelis ab arabico in latinum interpres*"), does not appear to belong to the *Sortes*; see Burnett, "What is the *Experimentarius*?", *passim*.



- 1 A certain doctor of the most unconquered and kind King Amaury established this work of twenty-eight questions concerning fates according to the twenty-eight mansions in which the Sun delays in the whole year, considering the nature and power of the seven planets.
- 2 (He did) this for the praise of the king and as a memorial to his deeds — especially his triumph over the recently conquered Shirkuh,
- 3 who, as leader of the Persians, Turks, Turcomans, Kurds, Saracens and Arabs and many different races, with all his forces had forcibly invaded the whole of Egypt except some fortification which they call “Cassarum”.
- 4 The ruler of the Egyptians and those confined with him sent to the king and, demanding help, obtained it from him.
- 5 For King Amaury, crossing through the desert with a few men, chased a terrified Shirkuh into a very well-defended city, and forced the great number of his army to enter that city, and, by fighting him for a long time there, helped by divine power, he overcame him strongly by force of arms and drove him out of the whole of Egypt — something that seemed a marvel to all.
- 6 The Egyptians were made tribute-payers to King Amaury for ever.
- 7 After this deed the aforementioned doctor of the King arranged the aforementioned work according to the arrangement of the planets (as appears below in order) for the fifth king of the Franks reigning in Jerusalem prosperously with the protection of God.<sup>8</sup>

Shirkūh (here spelt “Syracōn”/“Siracon”), the Kurd, was the lieutenant of Nūr al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. Zangī, the Zangid sultan of Aleppo.

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<sup>8-1</sup>Quidam invictissimi ac benignissimi regis Amalrici medicus hoc opus .xx. et .viii. questionum super fata secundum .xx. et .viii. mansiones in quibus Sol in toto anno moratur, naturam et potestatem .vii. planetarum considerans instituit.

<sup>8-2</sup>Hoc autem ad regis laudem et gestorum eius memoriam et maxime triumphum nuper domiti Syraconis,

<sup>8-3</sup>qui dux Persarum, Turcorum, Turcomanorum, Cordiorum, Agarenorum et Arabum et multarum diversarum gentium, cum omnibus viribus suis totam Egyptum violenter invaserat preter quamdam municionem quam Cassarum vocant,

<sup>8-4</sup>dominus Egypciorum et cum eo inclusi ad regem miserunt et auxilium postulantes ab eo impetraverunt.

<sup>8-5</sup>Rex autem Amalricus cum paucis per deserta transiens in civitatem quamdam munitissimam Siraconem perterritus fugavit suique multitudinem exercitus intrare coegit ibique eum diucius expugnando, quod omnibus mirum fuit, divina adiutus potentia cum Marte potenter domuit ac de tota Egypto expulit.

<sup>8-6</sup>Et facti sunt Egypcii Amalrico regi tributarii in eternum.

<sup>8-7</sup>Post quod gestum prefatus regis medicus predictum opus secundum planetarum ordinem ut infra in serie apparet ordinavit et regi domino Francorum quinto in Jerusalem feliciter deo protegente regnanti

Haskins, *Studies*, 136; Burnett, “What is the *Experimentarius?*,” 117.

He eventually expelled the Franks from Egypt and installed himself there; his nephew Saladin officially succeeded the Fatimid rulers of Egypt and led the offensive against the Franks that resulted in the capture of Jerusalem in 1187. The reference here is to one of the earlier, successful, campaigns of King Amaury I against Shirkuh. There were two of these, one in 1164, the other in 1167. Haskins suggested that the reference here is "more probably, because of the mention of permanent tribute, to the Egyptian campaign against Shirko in 1167".<sup>9</sup> However, in the 1167 campaign, King Amaury was not invited by the Sultan of Egypt, who was at first perturbed by the presence of the Christians on Egyptian soil, and only afterwards was relieved and thankful that they were there because of the mobilisation of Shirkuh's forces. The tribute, too, is described by William of Tyre not as being "inaugurated" in the 1167 campaign, but rather as being "increased", and the old pacts were to be renewed.<sup>10</sup> The situation described in the *Sortes* fits much more closely that of the 1164 campaign, which William of Tyre describes as follows (the equivalent sentence-numbers of the *Sortes* are added in bold type-face):<sup>11</sup>

- 3 Shirkuh ("Siracenus"), invading a city on the borders [of Egypt] called Bilbeis, began to claim it [either Bilbeis or Egypt] firmly as if it belonged to him, signifying by deed, and perhaps arguing the same by word, that he wished to put the remaining parts of the same kingdom under his jurisdiction, [even] if this was given (?) without the consent of the Sultan and the Caliph.
- 4 Shawar [the Egyptian sultan]...with all haste sent legates and words of peace to the lord king [Amaury] in Syria, that they should immediately implement the agreements that the lord king had earlier embarked upon with Dargan [the previous sultan] not only by word, but also by deed, and also, if need be, add further conditions.
- 5 Having agreed to the conditions on both sides, the king with the whole army of his men, in the second year of his reign, took up the journey and went down again into Egypt. There Shawar met him with his Egyptians, and they besieged the aforementioned Shirkuh, as if withdrawing himself into his own fortress, in the city of Bilbeis, and they compelled him to surrender, worn out by a long siege and a lack of food.

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<sup>9</sup>Haskins, 136.

<sup>10</sup>William of Tyre, *Cronicon*, 19.17, ed. R. B. C. Huygens, II, 886: maior ei tributorum summa statueretur... Placuit ergo sibi, et idipsum nostris visum est expedire, vetera innovare pacta pacisque perpetue federa inviolabili stabilitate inter dominum regem et calipham firmare, annua quoque tributi ampliata pensione domino regi certa stipendia de erario caliphe constituerentur.

<sup>11</sup>*Chronicon*, 19.7 (ed. cit., II, 872-3).

The similarities to be noted are the invasion of Egypt by Shirkūh, the invitation to King Amaury from the Egyptian sultan, the consequent long siege of Shirkūh by Amaury in a certain city, and the eventual decisive victory of the Christian king. The differences can be attributed to exaggeration of the story as it travelled through time and space. Shirkūh has not merely captured Bilbeis, which is the first major town one comes to when entering Egypt from the North East, but has conquered the whole of Egypt except the citadel (*qaṣr*) of Cairo, in which the Sultan and his men have been isolated.<sup>12</sup> The magnitude of Amaury's victory is enhanced by the statement that his forces were small and those of Shirkūh were large. Finally, the name of the besieged city (as well as of the doctor who arranged the *Sortes*) has been forgotten.

This lack of precision (and possible running-together of two campaigns by Amaury against Shirkūh) would suggest that the *Sortes regis Amalrici*, as we have it, are at some distance from the original text compiled for the king — or, at least, that the author of the rules for the use of the *Sortes* (*Regula IIIA*) was writing on the basis of hearsay and probably not in the Crusader States. There remains the question of whether the *Sortes* themselves are the authentic article, written by the doctor of the king. One clue may be provided by the sources of the *Sortes*, which have not, up to now, been identified. The actual technique by which these *Sortes* operate is found quite widely in early medieval Latin manuscripts. It uses mechanical methods (often involving drawing a random number of dots or using a numbered wheel) to find an answer to a fixed number of specific questions.<sup>13</sup> What differentiates this *Sortes* text from that of others is that, instead of classifying the answers by birds, patriarchs, constellations of the zodiac or the like, it classifies them by the twenty-eight lunar mansions, with their Arabic names. This is the only specifically oriental aspect of the work.

The lunar mansions are the twenty-eight divisions of the ecliptic circle (the course of the Sun through the heavens) marked out by the Moon in its monthly course. It takes just less than twenty-eight days to arrive back at the same point in respect to the stars (measured from the first degree of Aries to its return to the same degree of Aries = its side-

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<sup>12</sup>For the word *qaṣr* ("Cassarum") —whose common meaning is "castle" or "palace"— being applied specifically to the citadel in Cairo see *Chronicon*, 19.18 (ed. cit., II. 887): "[The envoys of the king] *Cahere ingressi et ad palatium, quod lingua eorum cascere, accedentes...*"

<sup>13</sup>For the history of the genre of *sortes*-literature, and a full bibliography, see T. C. Skeat, in "An Early Mediaeval 'Book of Fate': the *Sortes XII Patriarcharum*", *Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies*, 3, 1954, 41-54, and further discussion in Burnett, "What is the *Experimentarius*?", 84-5.

real or tropical orbit).<sup>14</sup> These twenty-eight divisions represent an alternate way of dividing the ecliptic to that of the twelve signs of the zodiac. But this alternative was not used in Classical Antiquity. Hence, when it appears in the Middle Ages, there were no Greek or Latin names readily available to designate the lunar mansions. On the other hand, the twenty-eight division was popular amongst the Arabs already in pre-Islamic times, and the Arabic names for the lunar mansions were retained when the doctrine was transmitted to the Latin West.

In the *Sortes regis Amalrici*, however, there is a fundamental flaw. The order of the mansions is wrong. The first mansion appears in the place of the second one, and this displacement affects the whole work, with the result that the last mansion is missing. This displacement is evident throughout the text: in the headings of the verse responses, in the tables, and, above all, in *Regula IIIA*, where the position of each of the mansions in respect to the signs of the zodiac is given, and the stars which make up their constellations are depicted. In fact, the sections of the zodiac and the constellations are in the right place, but the name of the first mansion is given to the second section of the zodiac and the second constellation, the name of the second mansion is given to the third section of the zodiac and the third constellation, and so forth. A quotation from the opening of the description in *Regula IIIA* should make this displacement clear:

Indices autem fatorum viginti et octo sunt, in viginti et octo Solis mansionibus in quibus annum cursum explet. Quarum mansionum nomina hec sunt:

Almazene caput Arietis, et sunt tres stelle sic stantes [three stars are drawn horizontally]

Anatha [= the first mansion] venter Arietis et sunt tres stelle sic stantes [three stars are drawn vertically]<sup>15</sup>

The clue to the reason for this displacement is near at hand. For the first Latin texts to include descriptions of the lunar mansions belong to the "Alchandorean corpus", of which the earliest manuscript dates from the end of the tenth century.<sup>16</sup> This is a corpus of astrological works, which consists of material from several sources (including Hebrew and

<sup>14</sup>By the time it reaches this point the Sun has moved further forward along the circle, and the Moon takes another couple of days to reach the Sun (its synodic orbit, measured from New Moon to New Moon, which gives the more familiar "days of the Moon").

<sup>15</sup>Burnett, "What is the *Experimentarius?*", 118.

<sup>16</sup>A. Van de Vyver, "Les plus anciennes traductions latines médiévales (x<sup>e</sup>-xi<sup>e</sup> s.) de traités d'astronomie et d'astrologie," *Osiris* 1 (1936), 658-89 (see 667-79).

Latin as well as Arabic), and much repetition. However, one set of lunar mansions is introduced with the words:

Haec sunt nomina .xxviii. mansionum Lunae per quas aetiam omnes planete cursum suum peragunt, suntque divisa per .xii. signa que Sarraceni nuncupant ita. Almen. Zele, Anatha, Albotan, Arthuria.<sup>17</sup>

These are the twenty-eight mansions of the Moon through which all the planets also run their courses, and they are divided between the twelve signs. The Saracens name them in this way: Almen Zele, Anatha, Albotan, Arthuria.

The first of the Arabic words — “Almen. Zele” — is not a name of a mansion, but a transliteration of the Arabic term for “mansion” — *al-manzil*.<sup>18</sup> It was obviously meant to be the heading to the list of lunar mansions that follows. It is clear that the compiler of the *Sortes regis Almarici* read a similar text, and had misinterpreted the word for “lunar mansion” (here corrupted into “Almazene”) as the name of the first mansion.

There are other elements which the compiler of the *Sortes* shares with the Alchandrian corpus. These include the forms of the constellations, which are depicted in a rota in the earliest manuscript of the *Liber Alchandrei philosophi*,<sup>19</sup> and the Arabic names of the mansions,<sup>20</sup> and their distribution amongst the signs of the zodiac.<sup>21</sup> One peculiarity of the account of the mansions in the *Sortes* is that they are described as being the stopping-places of the Sun rather than of the Moon, but this, too, is not incompatible with the information in the Alchandrian corpus, which, in most cases, refers to them as “divisions

<sup>17</sup>Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 17868 (tenth century), f. 14v (within the “literary reworking” of the *Liber Alchandrei philosophi*, beginning “*Quicumque astronomie...*”).

<sup>18</sup>The extra “e” at the end is a phenomenon found in other Arabic terms transliterated into Latin; e.g. “cifre” = “zero” from Arabic *ṣifr*.

<sup>19</sup>Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 17868, f. 18v.

<sup>20</sup>The *Sortes* and the Alchandrian corpus both favour the alternative names for the sixth mansion (*al-tahāyī*) and the nineteenth mansion (*al-ibra*), rather than “*al-han'a*” and “*al-shawla*”, which are found in most other Latin versions of the Arabic lunar mansions. In the matter of transliteration the correspondences are less clear, since there is already considerable variation within the Alchandrian corpus, with different characteristics apparent in the transliterations in the *Liber Alchandrei philosophi*, in the text beginning “*Quicumque nosse...*” and in the *Proportiones competentes in industria stellarum* (the last exhibiting contamination by Hebrew script). Conclusions on the route of transmission of the names of the lunar mansions must await the edition of the relevant sections of the corpus being prepared by Silke Ackermann and the author.

<sup>21</sup>This is within the *Liber Alchandrei philosophi*; see Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 17868, f. 5r. The only conspicuous difference in this respect is the occasional use in the *Sortes* of the Greek word “*soma*” (“body”), instead of “*ventr*” for the middle part of the sign of the zodiac.

of the sky" rather than "mansions of the Moon".<sup>22</sup> The first occasion on which they are introduced in the Alchandrian corpus is particularly reminiscent of the language of the *Sortes*, especially in respect to the use of the term "*fata*":

Haec sunt .xxviii. principales partes vel astra, per que omnia fata disponuntur, et indubitanter tam futura quam presentia pronuntiantur, a quocumque itus, reditus, ortus, occasusque horum horoscopiorum iocundissimo auxilio diligenter providentur. Nec frustra huiusmodi ratio colligitur, cum tempora omnia temporibus sic ordinante sapientissimo Deo distinguantur. Omnia enim tempora tempus habent, et per .xxviii. temporum mutationes vel mansiones sibi invicem succedunt.<sup>23</sup>

These are the twenty-eight principal parts or constellations through which all fates are disposed, and both future and present things are foretold in a way free from doubt by anyone who carefully observes the comings, returnings, risings and settings of each one of these ascensions (?), as a most pleasurable help. Nor is the reason for this considered to be in vain, since all times are differentiated from each other according to the arrangement of the most wise God. "All times have their time"<sup>24</sup> and through the changes or "staying-the-same"<sup>25</sup> of these twenty-eight, (times) succeed each other.

There is, therefore, no reason to suppose that the compiler of the *Sortes regis Amalrici* had direct access to an Arabic source for the lunar mansions. An elementary knowledge of Arabic would have prevented him from making such a glaring mistake as to confuse the Arabic word for "mansion" with the name of the first mansion. On the other hand, there are several manuscripts of the Alchandrian corpus dating from before the mid-twelfth century, and our author could easily have had access to this material, especially in a French centre.<sup>26</sup> It is, of course, possible, that the author of *Regula IIIA* was different from the "doctor of King Amaury" and introduced the classification of the responses according to the lunar mansions and the corresponding description of those mansions in the rules for use. But once this element is discounted, nothing Arabic or "oriental" remains in the *Sortes*. They turn out to be lists

<sup>22</sup>The following are the terms used to describe the mansions in the *Liber Alchandreii philosophi*: "*principales partes*", "*astra*", "*temporum mutaciones vel mansiones*", "*mansiones Lunae per quas aetiam omnes planete cursum suum peragunt*", "*de celi spera continente .xii. signa necnon .xxviii. receptacula*", "*.xxviii....hospicia*".

<sup>23</sup>Paris, BN, lat. 17868, f. 5r with variants from London, British Library, Add. 17808, f. 90r and Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, clm 560. The London and Munich manuscripts give as the last phrase: "et per .xxviii. temporum permutationes sibi invicem succedunt".

<sup>24</sup>Cf. Ecclesiastes, 3.1: "*omnia tempus habent*".

<sup>25</sup>A pun on "*mansio*" is implied.

<sup>26</sup>For manuscripts of the corpus see Van de Vyver, 666.

of answers to specific questions, belonging to a genre that was well established in the West; these lists have been arranged under the exotic names of Arabic lunar mansions which had also been known in Latin since at least the late tenth century. The "doctor of King Amaury" could be a fiction, added to lend a touch of exoticism to the divinatory text. But even if a doctor of King Amaury was really responsible for the verse responses and their arrangement, he was not drawing on the local divinatory techniques. Rather he provides another example of the prevalence of Frankish culture in the Frankish colony of the kingdom of Jerusalem.<sup>27</sup>

*Warburg Institute*

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<sup>27</sup>See Kedar, *The Franks in the Levant: 11th to 14th Centuries*, passim.





## BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARIES AND SOCIAL HISTORY OF AL-ANDALUS: Trade and Scholarship

### 1. *Biographical dictionaries and social history*

Biographical dictionaries are one of the most distinct and original literary contributions of Islamic culture. Written by ‘*ulamā*’ and for an audience of ‘*ulamā*’, biographical dictionaries are the depository of scholars’ collective memory, transmitting for future generations the names and deeds of thousands of individuals.<sup>1</sup> They constitute, therefore, a source of primary importance for the knowledge of the urban elites in pre-modern Islamic societies and in some cases, they are almost the only available written source for the study of intellectual and social life in these societies.

This is particularly true for the history of Islam in the Iberian peninsula. As in other medieval Islamic societies, no archival documents from al-Andalus have been preserved. Historical chronicles, geographical accounts and literary compilations have all contributed to the establishment of a long-standing historiographical tradition that has aimed, mainly, at the reconstruction of “political” history. New perspectives for the study of al-Andalus have appeared in the last decades from the renewed exploitation of long-known sources to which new methodologies have been applied. These sources are basically archaeological or literary (juridical texts and biographical dictionaries) in character. Whereas the former have benefited from new approaches and extensive field work throughout Spain and Portugal,<sup>2</sup> for the latter, the increasing number of editions of *fatāwā* compilations published since the beginning of the eighties, has opened the door to a new and fascinating field of enquiry in which the combination of legal theory and practice provides a unique view of some aspects of social life.

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<sup>1</sup>See one of the most recent appraisals of biographical dictionaries in W. Al-Qadi, “Biographical Dictionaries: Inner Structure and Cultural Significance,” In *The Book in the Islamic World: The Written Word and Communication in the Middle East*, ed. G. N. Atiyeh, (New York, 1995): 93-122.

<sup>2</sup>See a detailed account of this work in T. F. Glick, *From Muslim Fortress to Christian Castle: Social and Cultural Change in Medieval Spain*, (Manchester, 1995).

Biographical dictionaries began to be edited in the last decades of the nineteenth century, when Francisco Codera (the founder of the modern Spanish school of Arabic studies) initiated the publication of the *Bibliotheca Arabico-Hispana*, a pioneering enterprise for his time. Codera, with the help of a younger scholar, Julián Ribera, edited the biographical dictionaries of Ibn al-Faraḍī (d. 403/1013; *Taʾriḫ ṣulamāʾ al-Andalus*), Ibn Bashkuwāl (d. 578/1183; *Kitābal-Ṣila*), al-Dabbī (d. 599/1203; *Bughyat al-multamis*), Ibn al-Abbār (d. 658/1260; *Kitāb al-Takmila*) and the bio-bibliographical works of Ibn Khayr (d. 575/1180; *Fahrasa*) and Ibn al-Abbār (*Al-Muʿam li-ssḥāb Abī ʿAlī al-Ṣadafī*).<sup>3</sup> Working under very difficult conditions, Codera and Ribera were nevertheless able to put the bulk of the biographical legacy from al-Andalus at the disposal of future scholars. Subsequently, the works of al-Ḥumaydī (d. 488/1095; *Jadhwat al-muqtabis*), al-Qāḍī ʿIyād (d. 544/1149; *Tartīb al-madārik*), Ibn ʿAbd al-Malik al-Marrākushī (d. 703/1303-1304; *al-Dhayl wa-l-takmila*) and Ibn al-Zubayr (d. 708/1308; *Kitāb Ṣilat al-ṣila*) were edited in Morocco, Lebanon and Egypt, thus completing the establishment of a series of texts covering the joint North African and Andalusī biographical memory of Islamic scholarship. The last contribution to this century-old enterprise has been, paradoxically, the edition of the oldest biographical dictionary still preserved: the *Akhbār al-fuqahāʾ wa-l-muḥaddithīn* written by the Qayrawānī scholar Ibn Ḥārith al-Khushanī (d. 361/971),<sup>4</sup> on his colleagues from al-Andalus, where he lived and died.

Biographical dictionaries relating to al-Andalus are plentiful, as can be seen from the above-mentioned list, and they cover nearly the whole period of the country's existence as an Islamic society.<sup>5</sup> This abundance contrasts sharply with neighbouring countries such as Morocco, where the biographical tradition appeared much later in history. In al-Andalus, the first biographical compilations can be dated already in the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century. Although texts from this period are no longer extant, they are reproduced, fragmentarily, in the works of authors from the 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>6</sup> It would seem that early on Andalusī

<sup>3</sup>All of these works were published between 1882 and 1895.

<sup>4</sup>Published in Madrid, 1992, as Volume 3 of the series *Fuentes Arábico-Hispanas*. Other biographical texts still in manuscript form are those by Ibn ʿAskar (ʿUdabāʾ Mālaqa) and al-Sāhili (*Bughyat al-sālik*). See both M. I. Calero Secall and V. Martínez Enamorado, *Málaga, ciudad de al-Andalus*, (Málaga, 1995), p. 38 and 47.

<sup>5</sup>Other works containing valuable biographical data are those of Ibn Saʿīd (*al-Mughrib fi ḥulā al-Maghrib*) and Ibn al-Khaṭīb (*al-Iḥāṭa fi akhbār Gharnāṭa*).

<sup>6</sup>See M. L. Ávila, *La sociedad hispanomusulmana al final del califato: aproximación a un estudio demográfico*, (Madrid, 1997).

'*ulamā*' had a strong consciousness of their own role in society and wished to transmit and perpetuate their self-image in a long chain of biographical dictionaries. Authors of this kind of work were also aware of the fact that each of them was contributing to a centuries-old written tradition, as the titles of many dictionaries attest: *sila* ("connection," "link"), *takmila* ("complement"), *dhayl* ("supplement"), and so on.

However, the richness and abundance of Andalusī biographical dictionaries did not attract the attention of scholars until recent times. The repetitive character of much of the documentary material offered by dictionaries, and its apparent dryness (unending lists of names of masters and disciples constitute a great part of the information found therein) may explain why researchers have generally viewed Andalusī dictionaries as work tools, useful to locate and date Andalusī scholars, and little else. Exceptions to this paradigm can, of course, be mentioned, and Francisco Codera was the first to note the potential value of the information contained in dictionaries. One of Codera's main scholarly concerns was the interaction between Islamic and Christian cultures in al-Andalus and he collected onomastic data from biographical dictionaries. Thus he was able to show how Andalusī scholars had used surnames of Latin and Romance origins.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, he began the titanic task of card-indexing the biographical information contained in the dictionaries he had edited. The results of this work were never published, although Codera and his disciples used it for their research on the history of al-Andalus.

It was not until the seventies of this century that the possibilities offered by "quantitative history" began to be applied to the Islamic biographical tradition. As Richard Bulliet put it in the introduction to his trail-blazing *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period: An Essay in Quantitative History*:

Muslim biographical dictionaries [...] hold] the promise of greatly revising our notions about Middle Eastern history. Utilising the data contained in these compilations is not an easy task, however. Several approaches, both quantitative and non-quantitative, have been advanced by myself and others in earlier publications.<sup>8</sup>

In Spain, the work of María Luisa Ávila (*La sociedad hispanomusulmana al final del califato: aproximación a un estudio demográfico*,

<sup>7</sup>See F. Codera, "Apodos o sobrenombres de moros españoles" In *Mélanges H. Derenbourg*, (Paris, 1909): 322-334.

<sup>8</sup>R. Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period. An Essay in Quantitative History*, (Cambridge MA, 1979), p. 5.

Madrid, 1985), brought a renewed approach to the biographical materials. Using the methodology of "quantitative history," Ávila opened a new field of work, in which individual biographies of 'ulamā' were taken as samples of a social group living in Andalusí cities. Going beyond their character as Muslim scholars, Ávila took data from biographies of 'ulamā' that related them to a more general social landscape. This approach allowed her to offer new conclusions in subjects such as the average age of death of Andalusí scholars.<sup>9</sup>

In 1989, the first volume of the series *Estudios Onomástico-Biográficos de al-Andalus* (E.O.B.A.) was published in Madrid. The aim of the collective work then initiated was precisely to use biographical dictionaries as a new source for the intellectual and social history of al-Andalus. Following, in a certain sense, the pioneering work of Francisco Codera, one of the aims of the collective work behind this series was the establishment of a *Dictionary of Andalusí 'Ulamā'*.<sup>10</sup> Partial lists of this kind of materials have appeared in different E.O.B.A. volumes and elsewhere, thus laying the foundation for an indispensable work that is now drawing to completion in the *School of Arabic Studies* (C.S.I.C., Granada, Spain). Computerisation has undoubtedly helped to implement what was in Codera's time a nearly impossible task: to put together, after a careful comparison and cross-reference work, the wealth of data found in the rich tradition of Andalusí biographical literature.

The eighth volumes of E.O.B.A. published to date, however, contain much else besides prosopographic lists of 'ulamā'. They reflect a collective effort in the field of "quantitative and non-quantitative history," and deal with the historiography and sources of biographical dictionaries, as well as with their use as sources for the knowledge of urban topography, the ethnic origins of 'ulamā' and the patterns of their travels to the Islamic East. A significant number of studies published in E.O.B.A. relate to the study of individual and outstanding figures (such as Mu'āwiya b. Ṣāliḥ, Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Salām al-Khushanī or Yaḥyāb. al-Ḥadīdī). But the subject which has perhaps attracted more attention has been that of families and family networks in the world of 'ulamā'. Information about kinship relationships is not always evident in biographical dictionaries, which are, by definition, compilations of isolated biographies. By carefully linking genealogical

<sup>9</sup>Ávila's conclusions in this respect should be compared with those reached by J. Zanón, "Demografía y sociedad: la edad de fallecimiento de los ulemas andalusíes," in *Saber religioso y poder político en el Islam*, (Madrid, 1994): 333-35.

<sup>10</sup>In what follows, I am giving an abstract of the introduction to the eighth volume of *Estudios Onomástico-Biográficos de al-Andalus* [E.O.B.A.] (Madrid, 1997).

chains, however, it is possible to reconstruct lineages which, in many cases, cover several centuries of Andalusí history. Once this primary work is completed, it is easy to see how, in several Andalusí cities, administrative and/or judicial positions were controlled by a family or a group of families. In this light urban elites acquire a new significance for the history of al-Andalus. Moreover, analysing individual biographical information in the context of its inclusion into a family network provides a new and different understanding of family structure, ethnic affiliation, and last but not least, the curve of conversion to Islam in al-Andalus.<sup>11</sup>

Using biographical dictionaries as a source for the social history of al-Andalus should not lead the researcher to forget that these works were written without such an intended use. In other words, authors of dictionaries did not wish to convey a picture of the society in which *‘ulamā’* lived and died. Their aim, as is well-known, was to retrace the chain of transmission of Islamic knowledge. To complete such a task, it was necessary to establish the “cartography” of this transmission, made up of the infinite networks of scholarship. As a consequence, what is of paramount importance for the biographer is the list of masters a scholar has studied with, and, secondarily, the list of his disciples. Data about times and places and, occasionally, other biographical notes are only offered in order to establish the chronological map of transmission.

The social historian of today may find useful data in the “extensive list of first names extending over a long period of time,”<sup>12</sup> or, as has already been noted, in the comparative study of scholars’ dates of birth and death. The quantitative approach benefits from the accumulation of biographical information of a “neutral” nature: that is to say, everything that is included in a biography without bearing any relation to the scholarly character of its subject. As for the non-quantitative approach, it has to rely on the scraps of information provided by the biographer only when he felt it necessary to underline or emphasise some aspects of the activity of a given *‘ālim*. This kind of data normally appears either in the form of small narrative units, or as short explanatory comments. A well-known example of the latter appears in the last lines of many biographies, where information is given about

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<sup>11</sup>See Luis Molina, “El estudio de familias de ulemas como fuente para la historia social de al-Andalus,” *Saber religioso y poder político en el Islam*, (Madrid, 1994): 160-173; M. Fierro, “Árabes, beréberes, muladíes y *mawālī*: algunas reflexiones sobre los datos de los diccionarios andalusíes,” *E.O.B.A.* 7 (Madrid, 1995): 41-54; M. Marín, “Parentesco simbólico y matrimonio entre los ulemas andalusíes,” *Al-Qanṭara*, 16 (1995): 335-356; H. de Felipe, *Identidad y onomástica de los beréberes de al-Andalus*, (Madrid, 1997).

<sup>12</sup>Bulliet, *Conversion*, p. 6.

the burial circumstances of scholars. There we find explanations about the whereabouts of cemeteries, the situation of tombs of famous scholars within the cemeteries, and the ritual followed during the burial ceremonies. While this kind of information has a "factual" character, and as such can be used as non-biased evidence, the narrative units pose a different set of problems.

The presence of anecdotes or short stories in biographies of *‘ulamā’* is never unjustified or gratuitous. The selection depends, obviously, on the compiler of the dictionary, who may even decide to suppress this kind of text or limit their number to a minimum. The last choice was preferred by Andalusī compilers of dictionaries, who followed the model established in the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century by Ibn al-Faraḍī. The North African biographical tradition, however, tended to include in its biographical approach a substantial amount of narrative material. Ibn Ḥārith al-Khushanī, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ and Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik al-Marrākushī are outstanding examples of this tradition.<sup>13</sup> Why Andalusī authors chose to restrain the number of anecdotes in their dictionaries is still not clear, but it seems obvious that for them, quantity was more important than quality, as is shown by the fact that the later in time a dictionary is, the larger is the number of biographies it contains for the same chronological period.

Faced with the narrative material, the first reaction of the contemporary reader is one of delight. There, at last, one can see the *‘ulamā’* as real persons, dealing with each other and endowed with individual biographical traits. The weight of the collective archetype, so pervasive in the Islamic biographical tradition, seems to recede before the possibilities of individuation offered by anecdotes. These short narratives frequently include dialogues, through which it is possible to apprehend personal reactions and attitudes. Moreover, they may integrate in their portrayals persons and situations difficult to find in other written sources like historical chronicles. In this respect, it is interesting to note the occasional presence of women in anecdotes connected with *‘ulamā’*.<sup>14</sup>

This richness of information has to be put, however, in the context of the biographical dictionary's intended purposes. As has been noted above, the presence of anecdotal material is not casual. Whoever uses it for a qualitative approach has to bear in mind that, again, authors of biographical dictionaries were not concerned with daily life or with

<sup>13</sup>See Ávila, "El género biográfico en al-Andalus," *E.O.B.A.* 8 (Madrid, 1997): 33-51.

<sup>14</sup>I have presented some examples of the appearance of women in biographies of *‘ulamā’* in my article "Mujeres veladas: religión y sociedad en al-Andalus," *Arenal* 4 (1997): 23-38.

the description of social mores. Anecdotes were used to illustrate behaviour sanctioned by the collective body of *‘ulamā’*. Conversely, they may show how established rules are transgressed — and the dangers of doing so. It may be said, then, that anecdotes fulfil one of the expected roles of biographical dictionaries, in the sense that they underline, through individual situations, the collective image of Islamic scholarship.

Yet biographical literature, in all the complexity I hope to have shown, is one of the most fruitful sources at the disposal of researchers on the social history of al-Andalus. The biographies should be used with a clear consciousness of their limitations, but they offer insights difficult or impossible to find in other kinds of written or material evidence. In what follows, a case-study based upon biographical data may help to understand both their limits and perspectives.

## 2. Trade and scholarship

In two recently published studies,<sup>15</sup> I have explored the potential of information contained in the onomastics of Andalusī *‘ulamā’* for the knowledge of their economic and, to some extent, social backgrounds.<sup>16</sup> A scholar’s use of an occupational *laqab* not directly related to his scholarly activities may be taken as an indication that, apart from his interest in Islamic science, he earned his livelihood from a “secular” activity. Onomastic evidence shows that Andalusī *‘ulamā’*, could bear *laqabs* such as al-Dabbāgh (tanner), al-Ḥaddād (ironsmith) or al-Qazzāz (silk maker, weaver). More than a hundred different surnames of this kind were found in Andalusī biographical dictionaries.<sup>17</sup> They appear in the biographies of two hundred fifty-six *‘ulamā’*, for a period going from the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century to the 7<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>18</sup> A quantitative analysis of this material shows that they are mostly related to two areas of activity: manufacturing and trade, with a preference for textiles

<sup>15</sup>M. Marín, “El oficio de la ciencia y otros oficios: en torno a la onomástica de los ulemas andalusíes,” *E.O.B.A.* 7 (Madrid, 1995): 377-436 and Idem, “Anthroponomy and Society: the Occupational *Laqab* of Andalusian *‘Ulamā’*,” in *Romania Arabica*, ed. J. Lüdtker, (Tübingen, 1996): 271-279.

<sup>16</sup>The first example of this type of work is that of Cohen, “The Economic Background and the Secular Occupations of Muslim Jurisprudents and Traditionists in the Classical Period of Islam (Until the Middle of the Eleventh Century),” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 13 (1970): 16-61.

<sup>17</sup>See Marín, “Oficio.”

<sup>18</sup>A greater number of *‘ulamā’* bear this type of *laqab* under the form “Ibn al-” (e.g.: Ibn al-Qazzāz, Ibn al-Bazzāz).

and drugs.<sup>19</sup> For a similar period of time in the Islamic East, Cohen<sup>20</sup> found a number of ‘*ulamā*’ with secular occupations noticeably greater than in al-Andalus. The number of biographies he could include in his analysis was, however, much larger, because the population of scholars in the East was larger than it was in al-Andalus.

It is difficult to push the quantitative approach beyond these first assertions. The number of biographies with an occupational *laqab* is relatively small and they are too dispersed through the history of al-Andalus to allow us to reach a more than two basic conclusions. First, there was a connection between the world of scholarship and the professional spheres of trade and manufacturing. Second, this connection was steadily maintained from the 4th/10th century to the 6th/12th century. The very small number of scholars with this kind of *laqab* during the 3rd/9th century reflect the characteristics of what was the formative period of the world of Andalusī scholarship, and of the state of the biographical tradition at the time. At the other end of the chronological span, a similar phenomenon can be observed. But the diminished number of occupational *laqabs* in the 7th/13th century may be explained, too, by the general recession of Andalusī society, the territory of which was drastically reduced in this century.

To enlarge the picture obtained through the analysis of onomastic data, it is necessary to resort to other information provided by biographers, that is, anecdotes or short explanations about the personal character and activities of ‘*ulamā*’. Bearing in mind the previously stated considerations on the exemplary nature of many of these anecdotes, it may be useful to explore the image biographical dictionaries present of scholars who worked as traders or as craftsmen and merchants in the market. In the cases which follow, biographical material of this kind will be examined, for the period going from the beginning of the history of al-Andalus (2nd/8th century) until the end of the 4th/10th century.

Two portraits of ‘*ulamā*’ with very different social background may serve as an introduction to the general question of what was held to be the ideal occupation for a scholar. Of these two biographies, the first concerns a man called ‘Arīf,<sup>21</sup> who was a captive of war of Christian origins.<sup>22</sup> Having been carried off when he was a child, ‘Arīf was

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<sup>19</sup>See Marín, “Anthroponomy.”

<sup>20</sup>See note 16.

<sup>21</sup>Ibn Hārith al-Kushanī, “Akhbār al-fuqahāa” *Fuentes Árabe-Hispanas*, vol. 3, (Madrid, 1992), nr. 392.

<sup>22</sup>In the Arabic text, *ifranj*, used for people living to the north of al-Andalus, either in the Iberian Peninsula or in other European countries. See E. Lapidra *Cómo los musulmanes*



taught how to read and write by his master, Layth b. Fuḍayl al-Bajjānī,<sup>23</sup> who noticed that the boy was bright and intelligent. ‘Arīf learnt the Qur’ān in a short time and showed such aptitude for science that his master helped him to pursue this profession, abandoning his first intention of making his slave work as a trader or a craftsman. It was thanks to his natural qualities that ‘Arīf could become a member of the world of ‘ulamā’, following the usual steps of learning locally with masters from Bajjāna (Pechina) and later going to Egypt. On his return to al-Andalus, ‘Arīf established himself in Bajjāna, and later in Majorca, where he died in 336/947-48.

The short biography of ‘Arīf exemplifies several possible ways of incorporating outsiders into an Islamic society such as al-Andalus. Being a slave and intelligent, ‘Arīf was destined by his master to become a craftsman or a trader. Instead, he entered the world of scholarship and followed the necessary steps in the career of an ‘ālim. He became an expert in Islamic law and excelled in matters such as juridical questions (*masā’il*). His integration into Islamic scholarship was complete when his biography was recorded in written form and his name added to those selected by the compiler of a biographical dictionary. The implicit message in ‘Arīf’s biography is that his position in society, as a scholar, was much better than it could have been as a trader or a craftsman.

Another earlier biography presents similar implications. The social background, however, is very different. Instead of a slave, the hero (‘Ubayd Allāh b. Yaḥyā) is a member of one of the most illustrious families of Cordoba: the Banū Abī ‘Īsā.<sup>24</sup> Of Berber origins, this family reached a high degree of Arabisation and Islamisation, and in the reign of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II (206-238/822-852) ‘Ubayd Allāh’s father, Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā (d. 234/848) was one of the dominant figures in the

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*llamaban a los cristianos hispánicos* (Alicante, 1997) on this and other terms used by Andalusis for their Christian neighbours.

<sup>23</sup> Ibn al-Faraḍī, *Ta’rīkh ‘ulamā al-Andalus*, ed. F. Codera, (Madrid, 1891-1892), nr. 1003 and Qāḍī ‘Iyād. *Tartīb al-madārik*, (Rabat: no date — 1983), vol. 6, p. 168, give a very different account of ‘Arīf’s life. Their common points with Ibn Ḥarīth’s biography are ‘Arīf’s name, his relationship of walā’ (of which no explanation is offered) to Layth b. Fuḍayl and the place of his death. According to Ibn al-Faraḍī (who is followed closely by ‘Iyād), ‘Arīf was from Lorca and he studied in Bajjāna and Ilbira. He became a well known jurisprudent in Lorca and died at an early age, struck by lightning in 328/939-40.

<sup>24</sup> See Marín, “Una familia de ulemas cordobeses: los Banū Abū ‘Īsā,” *Al-Qanṭara* 6 (1985): 291-320.

field of Islamic scholarship.<sup>25</sup> It was said that Yaḥyā was a soldier and a trader at the beginning of his career,<sup>26</sup> although he devoted himself to scholarship after his trip to the East. ‘Ubayd Allāh b. Yaḥyā made this journey in the double capacity of pilgrim and trader,<sup>27</sup> but his introduction into the world of scholarship met with some difficulties, as recorded by Ibn Ḥārith al-Khushanī, who heard the following account:

Abū Muḥammad Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā dissuaded his son ‘Ubayd Allāh from taking the way of learning and did not show it to his son. On the contrary, he encouraged him to become a trader. Yaḥyā was blamed for this reason, but he answered to his critics: “How can I desire for my son an activity to which I have dedicated myself to the destruction of my rank (*jāh*)?”

Nevertheless, ‘Ubayd Allāh followed in his father’s path after his death.”<sup>28</sup>

‘Ubayd Allāh b. Yaḥyā was a young man when his father died, and at the end of his long life (he died in 297/909) he was acknowledged as the most important transmitter of his father’s legacy, that is, his re-cension of the *Muwaṭṭā’* of Mālik b. Anas. The anecdote recorded by Ibn Ḥārith is the only indication of Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā’s opposition to his son’s scholarly interests, and it is not easy to interpret. Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā had suffered for his involvement in the jurists’ activities against the emir al-Ḥakam I, to the point that he was obliged to escape from Cordoba and lived as an exile in Toledo. But by the time his son was of the age to choose a career, he had regained a position of privilege in the Andalusī capital, and he was the paradigm of a successful scholar, both in social and in intellectual terms.<sup>29</sup> So, why should he complain of a loss of rank because of his dedication to learning? A possible explanation of this puzzling statement lies in the history of the family of the Banū Abī ‘Īsā. Yaḥyā’s ancestors were military men, linked to the Umayyad ruling family since the time of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān I, and held high positions in the administrative apparatus of the state. The specialisation of the family changed, precisely, with Yaḥyā’s generation. He was the first to abandon trade and military service for the world of

<sup>25</sup>See Fierro, “El alfaquí beréber Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā al-Layqā (m. 234/ 848), “el inteligente de al-Andalus,” in *Biografías y género biográfico en el Occidente islámico E.O.B.A. 8*, Madrid (1997): 269-344.

<sup>26</sup>See Fierro, “Alfaquí,” p. 281, quoting the text by Ibn Ḥayyān about the commercial activities of Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā in the region of Ilbra.

<sup>27</sup>al-Kushanī, p. 229; Ibn al-Faraḍī nr. 762 and Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ, *Tartīb bī’-madārik*, vol. 4, p. 421.

<sup>28</sup>al-Kushanī, p. 230.

<sup>29</sup>See below, the anecdote concerning ‘Abd al-A’lā b. Wahb.

scholarship,<sup>30</sup> a decision that he may have eventually regretted, if the anecdote found in the *Akhhbār* by Ibn Ḥārith truly reflects his own feelings.

Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā's activity was in fact instrumental, as M. Fierro has shown, in building a new image of the scholar and his role in Andalusī society.<sup>31</sup> His efforts in this direction were not in vain, and the biographical literature is one of the proofs of Yaḥyā's success. The archetype of the "good scholar," as established by Yaḥyā, dominates biographies of 'ulamā' such as that of 'Arīf. It is not by accident that the anecdote showing Yaḥyā's ambivalent attitude to learning is preserved only in the oldest biography of his son 'Ubayd Allāh. Later compilers, like Ibn al-Faradī (d. 403/1013), ignored it, and they only noted that 'Ubayd Allāh travelled to the East as a pilgrim and a trader. By the time Ibn al-Faraxdī wrote his dictionary, portraits of 'ulamā' were much more stereotyped than they had been before and, as was clear in 'Arīf's biography, if a choice has to be made between trade and scholarship, the later would be preferred.

Trading, however, was not uncommon among Andalusī 'ulamā'. Besides the onomastic evidence mentioned above, biographies of scholars who combined their interest in science with the practice of commerce are registered in dictionaries since the 3rd/9th century. The oldest mentioned case is that of Bakr b. al-ʿAyn, from Cordoba, who travelled as a trader to Iraq, where he became a disciple of 'Abbās b. Muhammad b. Ḥātim al-Durī (d. 271/884-85).<sup>32</sup>

It is not surprising to find a small group of scholars/traders native of Bajjāna, a seaport and commercial city in the south-eastern corner of the peninsula.<sup>33</sup> Mas'ūd b. 'Alī b. Marwān, a disciple of the famous Cordovan master Ibn Waḍḍāḥ (d. 287/900), travelled to the East as a pilgrim and a trader, and studied in Egypt. After his return to al-Andalus, he taught in the mosque of Bajjāna.<sup>34</sup> Another Bajjānī trader was Qāsim b. 'Aṣim b. Khayrūn b. Sa'īd al-Murādī, who studied in Baghdad. His (unnamed) son developed an interest in scholarship and be-

<sup>30</sup>See M. Fierro, "Alfaquí," p. 272-277.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 322-324.

<sup>32</sup>Ibn al-Faradī nr. 285. On al-Durī see M. Marín, "Los ulemas de al Andalus y sus maestros orientales," *E.O.B.A.* 3 (Granada, 1990): nr. 3.

<sup>33</sup>On the 'ulamā' of Bajjāna, see M. Fierro and M. Marín, "La islamización de las ciudades andalusíes a través de sus ulemas (ss. II/VIII-comienzos s. IV/X)," In *Las ciudades islámicas en la Alta Edad Media*, (Madrid: at press), where the authors underline the relationship between Bajjāna and al-Qayrawān.

<sup>34</sup>Ibn al-Faradī, nr. 1424.

came an expert on *masā'il*. Qāsim b. ʿAṣim died in 300/912-13.<sup>35</sup> Aḥmad b. Wāḍiḥ (d. probably before 347/958-59) travelled frequently from Bajjāna to the East, both as a pilgrim and as a trader and student of science.<sup>36</sup> Finally, Masʿūd b. Khayrān (d. 371/981-82) was a trader from Bajjāna who, after his return from the East, established himself in Cordoba. His biographer, Ibn al-Faraḍī, went to see him, but he did not greatly appreciate his learning. "I noticed," he wrote, "that he had many books, but he was not a man of science, but a trader."<sup>37</sup>

The last remark by Ibn al-Faraḍī appears under different forms in other biographies of traders who had an interest in scholarship. Such are the cases of Qāsim b. Asbagh al-Ḥajārī, from Seville,<sup>38</sup> of Aḥmad b. Khālid b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Judhāmī al-Tājir (d. 378/988-89), a man of little understanding, who nevertheless brought to al-Andalus many interesting books,<sup>39</sup> and of Iṣḥāq b. Ghālib b. Tammām al-ʿUṣfurī (d. 389/998-99), who traded in Egypt and Aden, but was a weak transmitter of *ḥadīth*.<sup>40</sup> For other scholars living in al-Andalus, traders' interest in scholarship, however superficial, had value by way of their access to books written in the East and their personal contacts with leading Eastern scholars. Thus, the very short biography of the trader Muḥammad b. Muflit contains only two pieces of information, namely, that he had encountered Muḥammad b. Zakarīyyā' al-Rāzī in 307/919-20 and that Caliph al-Ḥakam II received learning from him (probably when he was still the heir to his father al-Nāṣir).<sup>41</sup> The future Caliph's passion for books and intellectual novelties is well known,<sup>42</sup> and this contact with somebody who had met al-Rāzī was not a unique event in his life. Al-Ḥakam had great esteem for another trader, Muḥammad b. Marwān b. Ruzayq Ibn al-Ghashshā, from Badajoz (d.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., nr. 1053. Cf. M. Marín, "Nómina de sabios de al-Andalus (93-350/711-961)," *E.O.B.A.* 1 (Madrid, 1988): nr. 202.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., nr. 132; Qāḍī Iyāq; vol. 6, p. 156.

<sup>37</sup>Ibn al-Faraḍī, nr. 1425.

<sup>38</sup>He lived in the first part of the 4th/10th century (Ibn al-Faraḍī, nr. 1064).

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., nr. 184.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., nr. 235.

<sup>41</sup>Ibn al-Abbār, *al-Takmila li-Kitāb al-Ṣila*, ed. al-Ḥusaynī, (Cairo, 1955), nr. 972. On the transmission of al-Rāzī's works through Ibn Muflit, see J. Vernet, *La cultura hispanoárabe en Oriente y Occidente*, (Barcelona, 1978), pp. 21, 81.

<sup>42</sup>See D. Wasserstein, "The Library of al-Ḥakam II al-Mustansir and the Culture of Islamic Spain," *Manuscripts of the Middle East* 5, (1990-91): 99-105.

339/950-51), who travelled to the East in 309/921-22 and studied in Egypt and Iraq.<sup>43</sup>

All of these merchant/scholars worked in the international trade circuit linking al-Andalus to North Africa and the Eastern lands of Islam.<sup>44</sup> Most of them travelled to Egypt and Iraq, but some reached far-away places like Kirmān, Biṣṭām, Nīsābūr, Jurjān and Khurāsān.<sup>45</sup> Trade contacts with India are also documented through scholars' biographies.<sup>46</sup> On the other hand, merchants working in Andalusian territory are not specifically mentioned as such in biographical dictionaries, unless they worked in the *sūq*, as will be shown below. Traders in the international circuit belonged to the category of wealthy men, with good social connections or related to highly placed families. Muḥammad b. Mu'āwiya Ibn al-Aḥmar was a scholar of good reputation; he reached India as a trader and he was also a member of the ruling Umayyad family.<sup>47</sup> Ibn al-Aḥmar, then, was in a better position than Ṣāliḥ b. Muḥammad al-Murādī (d. 302/914-15), from Huesca, whose merchandise was stolen in al-Qayrawān, where he studied with Yaḥyā b. 'Umar (d. 285/898 or 289/901-902). After this event he was forced to return to al-Andalus.<sup>48</sup> International trade required the disposal of large sums of money, as it is clearly explained in the biography of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ziyād b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ḥabīb, the judge of Cordoba (d. 312/924-25), who was a rich man and who owed his wealth to the judge Ibn Aswad.<sup>49</sup> When Ibn Aswad encouraged al-Ḥabīb to seek wealth (*rizq*) and suggested to him that he become a trader, al-Ḥabīb complained of his lack of capital, necessary in trade to obtain gains. The judge lent him a huge sum, taken from the *awqāf*

<sup>43</sup>Ibn al-Faraḍī, nr. 1249.

<sup>44</sup>See on this respect O. R. Constable, *Trade and Traders in Muslim Spain: The Commercial Realignment of the Iberian Peninsula 900-1500*, (Cambridge MA, 1994).

<sup>45</sup>Muḥammad b. 'Isā al-Bayyānī (d. 338/949-950); Ibn al-Faraḍī nr. 1241. (See also nr. 755).

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., nr. 1287. See another example in M. Marín, "Rihla y biografías de Ibn al-Qallās (m. 337/948)," *Homenaje al Profesor José María Fórneas Besteiro*, vol. 1, (Granada:1995): 581-591.

<sup>47</sup>See M. Marín, *Individuo y sociedad en al-Andalus*, (Madrid, 1992): 160-161.

<sup>48</sup>Qaḍī 'Iyāḍ, vol. 5, p. 251. Cf. M. Marín, "Nómina," nr. 632 and Constable, p. 81.

<sup>49</sup>See his biography in M. Fierro, "Tres familias andalusíes de época omeya apodadas «Banū Ziyād»," *E.O.B.A.* 5 (Madrid, 1992):119-128,129 on the possible non-Arab origins of his family.

("pious foundations"), and he offered him the free use of the gains derived from his investments in trade.<sup>50</sup>

Summing up, biographical materials related to scholars who were also traders allow different levels of interpretation. A certain mistrust towards traders can be detected in some biographies, mainly those recorded by Ibn al-Faraḍī. This attitude may be explained, in some cases, because of the low standard of scholarship found in some of these 'ulamā', whose interest in learning was secondary to their professional activity in trade. More generally, the establishment of an ideal image of scholarship and scholars, from the 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century onward, would explain the priority given to science as the best choice for an intelligent and pious Muslim. Correlatively, ascetic trends would emphasise the value of abandoning worldly concerns, the pursuit of gain and the acquisition of high rank and wealth.

Notwithstanding this evolution in biographical literature, compilers of biographies recorded a series of objective facts. Among them was the continuous presence of scholars who earned their livelihood from practising trade and crafts. Some of these biographies have already been quoted in this paper, namely those of men who travelled to the Islamic East. Others, however, practised their trade in the local marketplaces. Onomastic evidence, as has been noted, points to a consistent number of 'ulamā' working as vendors or manufacturers of goods in the *sūqs*. Biographical data for the period in question is not plentiful, but it confirms the link between the world of learning and the world of the *sūq*.

Four of the six biographies in which trade in the market-place is mentioned refer to men of *mawlā* origins. They were, most probably, descendants of Christian converts to Islam or *muwalladūn* (the case of 'Arif, recorded above, is that of a *mawlā* who was a slave freed by his master).<sup>51</sup> Sa'īd b. Khumayr b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ru'aynī (d. 301/913), a *mawlā* from Cordoba, was a goldsmith (*sā'igh*) by trade who also pursued a scholarly career and travelled to the East in search of knowledge.<sup>52</sup> In other cases, the link between trade in the *sūq* and learning is emphasised by biographers, who pinpoint the fact that learned craftsmen used to give juridical advice to other "people of the *sūq*." It may be supposed that most of this advice would be related to

<sup>50</sup>Qaḍī 'Iyāḍ, vol. 5, p. 189-90. The text quoted by Constable, p. 74, is that of Ibn Hārith al-Khushanī, *Quḍāt Quruba*, ed. and trans. J. Ribera, (Madrid, 1914), pp. 175-6/216-7, where no mention is made of the awqā f.

<sup>51</sup>See Fierro, "Árabes, beréberes."

<sup>52</sup>Qaḍī 'Iyāḍ, vol. 5, p. 162. Cf. M. Marín, "Nómina," nr. 632.

commercial matters, although it may have covered other areas of social and family life. Biographical dictionaries mention the names of Muḥammad b. Fayṣal (or Fuḍayl) b. Hudhayl al-Ḥaddād (d. 327/938-939), a trader in the *sūq* of the ironmongers, who gave *fatāwā* to the "people of the *sūq*" in Cordoba, and of Yūsuf b. Samaw'al al-Zayyāt, who fulfilled the same function.<sup>53</sup> Learned craftsmen, such as these two, (one an ironmonger, the other a seller of oil) probably used their knowledge in very practical ways, helping people around them to understand the intricacies of Islamic law. A similar and sensible approach can be appreciated in the biography of 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Ṣābūnī (d. 378/988-989), known as Ibn Baraka (from the name of his mother), a juridical counsellor (*mushāwar*) in Cordoba, very apt in reaching agreements between litigants. He was not, according to Ibn al-Faraḍī<sup>54</sup>, a very learned man. His livelihood came from two shops (*dukkān*) where his servants produced soap, hence his surname "al-Ṣābūnī."<sup>55</sup>

These biographies, in their brevity and similarity, offer a view of daily life and dealings in the market of the capital city of Cordoba. Conflicts and problems in commercial relationships, as in other areas of social life, could be dealt with inside the circle of professional men, some of whom had acquired enough knowledge in the field of Islamic law. Reaching an agreement between contesting parties could be easier if the juridical counsellor was a man with personal experience in trade. Thus, the theoretical requirements of the law could adapt themselves to new situations, and conversely, daily transactions would be expected to follow rules endorsed by the authority of scholars who were also, if not mainly, experts in trade and crafts.

The shift between the two worlds of trade and scholarship is exemplified in the biographies of two outstanding scholars who lived in the 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century. Both of them began their careers in the *sūq*, a place they left to acquire fame and renown as 'ulamā'. For the compiler of their biographies, the stories in which their commercial activity is recorded are used to underline the high rank they later acquired in the world of knowledge. For the contemporary reader, however, these stories show how social boundaries could be crossed. If traders would become scholars, as we have seen, and maintain their position in both

<sup>53</sup>Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ, vol. 6, pp. 118,148; cf. M. Marín, "Nómina," nrs. 1305 and 1594. For other 'ulamā' who specialised in giving *fatwās* for the people of the *sūq*, see M. Marín, "Oficio," p. 380.

<sup>54</sup>Ta'rikh, nr. 741. Cf. M. L. Ávila, "Sociedad hispanomusulmana," nr. 51.

<sup>55</sup>Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ, vol. 6, p. 302 and vol. 7, p. 202.

scholarship and trade, others would choose to abandon the latter. In doing so, biographical dictionaries imply that they were attaining a higher situation in the ideal social hierarchy. For one of these two scholars, this choice involved an upward social movement. For the second, however, it meant an economic loss and a difficult decision to be made.

The first of these two *‘ulamā’* was Abū Ibrāhīm Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm b. Masarra (d. 352/963), a well known ascetic man from Toledo who held the post of juridical counsellor in Cordoba, where he had lived since his youth.<sup>56</sup> Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm’s life is presented by his biographer as an example of asceticism and renunciation of worldly concerns.<sup>57</sup> He came from a humble family, and his career began in the *sūq* of flax. A story recorded by Qādī ‘Iyād shows Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm as a small shop-owner who did not earn much from his trade. In fact, according to anecdote, his daily income was barely enough to buy food for himself and his mother with whom he lived.<sup>58</sup> By this time he was already a learned man (his brother, who complained to their mother about Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm’s lack of response to this demand of help, called him a *faqīh*). Although Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm’s biographer does not explain the circumstances by which he attained his later position, it seems obvious that at some point he was able to abandon his shop in the market and devoted himself to scholarship. He became a man of high standing in juridical and learned circles<sup>59</sup> and attended scientific gatherings presided over by Caliph al-Ḥakam II. It may be supposed, then, that Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm was able to support himself and his family (a son of his, Aḥmad, is mentioned in his biography) thanks to his knowledge and learning.

The second scholar whose case illustrates the shifting boundaries between trade and scholarship was a disciple of Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm, and who was encouraged by the latter to carry on with his studies. Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Malik b. Hāshim, known as Ibn al-Makwī (d. 401/1010),<sup>60</sup>

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 6, pp. 126-134.

<sup>57</sup> On his dealings with Caliph al-Ḥakam II, see M. Marín, “Inqibād ‘an al-sultān: ‘ulamā’ and political power in al-Andalus,” In *Saber religioso y poder político en el Islam*, (Madrid 1994): 134-135.

<sup>58</sup> A quarter of flour and one-eighth of oil” was all he could buy at the end of a day of work (Qādī ‘Iyā ḍ, vol. 6, p. 130).

<sup>59</sup> See Fierro, “Los mālikīes de al-Andalus y los dos árbitros (*al-‘akamān*),” *Al-Qanṭara* 6 (1987): 79-102 and *La heterodoxia en al-Andalus durante el periodo omeya*, (Madrid, 1987), pp. 152-153.

<sup>60</sup> Ibn al-Makwī’s biography has been the object of some recent studies (cf. S. Peña, “Ibn al-Makwī,” *E.O.B.A.* 6 [Madrid, 1994]: 353-383). The longest biography of Ibn al-Makwī is found in Qādī ‘Iyād, vol. 7, pp. 123-135.



earned his living as a trader of silk in the *sūq* while he completed his studies. When he became known for his extensive learning and his intelligence, he was appointed as juridical counsellor in 365/975, on the recommendation of the judge Ibn al-Salīm. He then abandoned his trade in the *sūq*. As a consequence, his earnings diminished greatly. Ibn al-Salīm informed the Caliph al-Ḥakam of his situation, but when the Caliph offered Ibn al-Makwī a gift of one thousand dīnārs, the erudite refused it.

Ibn al-Makwī found himself in an ethical quandary which occurred again in other moments of his life: whether to accept a monetary offer from the *sultān* in exchange for or as a compensation for his learned services or whether to refuse it on the moral grounds of the inherent "evil" of such compensation.<sup>61</sup> Ibn al-Salīm, the judge who tried to help Ibn al-Makwī,<sup>62</sup> is another example of the dilemma in which some scholars found themselves: how to earn a livelihood out of their knowledge without receiving a financial compensation from the political power of the day. Having abandoned his professional activity in the *sūq*, the offers made to Ibn al-Makwī were generous, and many others before and after him accepted such favours. Ibn al-Makwī's ethical scruples illuminate the difficulties felt by some learned men, who did not find any problem, however, in linking trade and scholarship.

These scruples were not felt by a famous contemporary scholar of Ibn al-Makwī, Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh b. Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Jaʿfar al-Aṣīlī (d. 392/1002).<sup>63</sup> Abū Muḥammad al-Aṣīlī spent thirteen years in the East, where he acquired great knowledge. Having heard of the man, the Caliph al-Ḥakam invited al-Aṣīlī to return to al-Andalus. But al-Ḥakam died by the time that al-Aṣīlī had reached Almería. His hopes were consequently destroyed, and he stayed for a while in Almería, baffled and confused. Afterwards he went to Cordoba, where he gave lessons but felt lost, to the point that he decided to return to the East. Fortunately for him, news of his learning had reached the *hājib* al-Mansur,<sup>64</sup> who ordered a salary to be given to him. After that, al-Aṣīlī's situation improved, and he was later appointed *mushāwar* and enjoyed a successful career.

<sup>61</sup>See S. Peña, p. 358-359.

<sup>62</sup>Qaḍī ʿIyād vol. 6, pp. 280-289.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., vol. 7, pp. 135-145.

<sup>64</sup>See on al-Mansūr the recent study by C. de la Puente, "La caracterización de Almanzor," In *Biografías y género biográfico en el Occidente islámico*, E.O.B.A. 8 (Madrid, 1997): 367-402, and the bibliography presented therein.

These kinds of anecdotes, as they have been preserved in biographical dictionaries, seem to point in different directions. As scholars, compilers of these dictionaries tend to promote a view of scholarship as the best possible occupation for a Muslim. But, leaving aside the cases of scholars from wealthy families, others needed to sustain themselves through a salary. Their income could only originate either in their integration into the juridical and administrative apparatus or in practising a trade not related to learning. The ascetic tendency that disapproved of accepting salaries from the *sulṭān* was acclaimed as an "ideal" position, but few would be prepared to follow it. Biographical anecdotes to this effect abound, and they show mainly scholars renouncing their inherited wealth or their earnings from trade, and embracing an ascetic way of life. This abundance, however, should not obscure the presence of another set of stories, in which the prestige and high social standing of the scholar is directly linked to his personal merits and the consideration he enjoys in the circles of power. One of the most revealing texts of this type is found precisely in the biography of a man widely known for his asceticism, ʿAbd al-Aʿlā b. Wahb (d. 261/874 or 262/875).<sup>65</sup>

As ʿAbd al-Aʿlā himself put it,<sup>66</sup> when he was a young man living in Cordoba he had a neighbour called Ghayth. This Ghayth worked as a gate-keeper in the royal palace (in Bāb al-Jinān), and was a freed slave of the Caliph<sup>67</sup> al-Ḥakam and could not speak Arabic properly<sup>68</sup>. Ghayth used to watch ʿAbd al-Aʿlā while he was studying and working to become a scholar, and he commiserated with him, saying: "You poor one, it would be more useful for you to work in trade for your livelihood. I wish you to mount a mule like that of Yaḥyā [b. Yaḥyā], and to wear silk dresses like he does, and to be asked to the palace to visit the emir." Ghayth's comments, repeated again and again, irritated ʿAbd al-Aʿlā, but he was able to take his revenge on Ghayth some years later. By then, he had been in the East, and on his return to al-Andalus, the emir commissioned him to his council and sent for him. On

<sup>65</sup>See M. Marín, "Inqibād ʿan al-sulṭān," p. 133.

<sup>66</sup>The story is transmitted from ʿAbd al-Aʿlā to Muḥammad b. Waddāḥ to Aḥmad b. Khālid to Ibn Ḥārith al-Khushanī (*Akhbār al-fuqahā*, p. 263).

<sup>67</sup>*Sic.* The text alludes to the emir al-Ḥakam I (r. 190-206/796-822). Writing under the reign of an Umayyad Caliph, Ibn Ḥārith al-Khushanī dispensed this same title to his predecessors, who were emirs of al-Andalus.

<sup>68</sup>Al-Ḥakam I used as personal guards war captives and slaves from Christian lands. As they could not speak Arabic properly, they were called *akhrās/khurs* ("dumb"). See E. Lévi-Provençal, *España musulmana hasta la caída del califato de Córdoba*, (Madrid, 1950), pp. 121-122.

this occasion ‘Abd al-A‘lā dressed exactly like Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā, wore a *qalansuwa* like his, and mounted a mule like Yaḥyā’s, and waited until the latter came along to accompany him to the palace. There ‘Abd al-A‘lā asked Ghayth, who was at the gate, what his opinion was of his appearance. Quite naturally, Ghayth was reduced to saying that he would make no more comments in the future on the career chosen by ‘Abd al-A‘lā.

This last story brings the argument of the second part of this paper back to its initial steps. Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā had worked throughout his life to impose a model of behaviour for ‘ulamā’, and this was a model which implied an acknowledgement of the social rank and prestige of scholars. Their visual appearance, as established by Yaḥyā, included wearing specific dress and headgear, and riding a mule. All these were marks of a position that could be appreciated by common people, as well as by other social groups competing for upward mobility. Through these external marks, ‘Abd al-A‘lā showed his former neighbour that his preference for scholarship above trade was rewarded by social success. The story is therefore recorded for future generations of ‘ulamā. Those who were lured into the practice of trade should know that science was, in the long run, more rewarding in terms of social prestige, if not of economic gains.

Biographical anecdotes, like those presented here, may seem to reflect contradictory attitudes. But, in fact, this material serves to underline the evolution of social practices, the variety of attitudes inside the world of scholarship and the construction of ideals of behaviour. Biographical anecdotes document the conflict between personal ambition and ethical exigency fairly extensively, a conflict conditioned to some extent by the different social origins and economic position of scholars. Finally, concepts like rank, prestige and fame have to be taken into account for the analysis of how ‘ulamā’ accepted social and intellectual constraints or reacted against them.



## IBN SABĪL: Crossing Boundaries in the Biography of Asad ibn al-Furāt

While attending a class of the eminent Ḥanafī scholar, Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī (d. 189/805)<sup>1</sup> one day, Asad ibn al-Furāt heard a voice outside calling out and offering water to travellers. Asad jumped up immediately, went out and accepted the water. When he returned to the class, his teacher asked him in surprise: “O, Maghribī [Arab from North Africa], have you drunk the water for travellers?” Asad answered emphatically: “May God keep you! I am indeed a son of the road (*ibn al-sabīl*).”

Later that evening, Asad was visited by a servant of Muḥammad who conveyed his master’s greetings and handed him a small basket. He said: “My lord only learned today that you are a son of the road. Take this stipend and use it for whatever you need.” Asad recounts that he accepted the purse happily thinking that it was full of [silver] dirhams. When he went back into the house he opened the basket and was delighted to find eighty [gold] dinars.<sup>2</sup>

The appellation of *ibn sabīl* (son of the road) conjures a wide range of images and meanings in Arabic. E.W. Lane writes:

...the son of the road; he whom the road has brought forth; the wayfarer, or traveller: or he who travels much or often: or the traveller who is far from the place of his abode... or the person to whom the way has become short [so that he is unable to continue his journey]; ... who desires the return to his country, or town and finds not what will suffice him; or the traveller who is cut off from his property: or the person who desires a country or town, other than his own, for a necessary affair; or according to Ibn ‘Arafah, the guest who has become disabled from proceeding in his journey, his means having failed him...<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ḥanafī, disciple of Abū Ḥanīfa, and along with Abū Yūsuf (d. 182/798), is considered among the founders of the Hanafī school of Islamic law. He is best known for his book, *al-Siyar al-Kabīr*, a pioneering work on “international” law. See M. Khadduri, *The Islamic Law of Nations: Shaybani’s Siyar*, (Baltimore, 1966).

<sup>2</sup>Abū Bakr ‘Abd-Allāh al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ al-Nufūs*, Ḥ. Mu’nis, ed. (Cairo, 1951), vol. 1, 175-6. It is al-Mālikī’s biography that forms the basis of this study.

<sup>3</sup>E. W. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, (Beirut, 1980), vol. 4, 1302.

In the Qur'ān, the wayfarer enjoys the status of someone deserving special consideration in receiving charity:

They ask you of what they should give in charity. Tell them: "What you can spare of your wealth as should benefit the parents, the relatives, the orphans, the needy, the wayfarers, for God is not unaware of the good deeds that you do."<sup>4</sup>

The image of a struggling scholar, exhausting all his money and worldly possessions on the road in search of all that there is to learn, appears frequently in the biography of Asad ibn al-Furāt, and is one that serves as a central metaphor of his illustrious life, his career, and his legacy in Islamic history.

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Abū 'Abd-Allāh Asad ibn al-Furāt (son of the Euphrates) ibn Sinān was born in the Mesopotamian town of Ḥarrān in 142/759. He came to the city of Qayrawan (Ifriqiyya: modern Tunisia) when he was two years old with his father, Sinān, who was a soldier (*mujāhid fī Sabīl Allāh*) in the Muslim forces conquering and settling North Africa. His earliest biographers report that the family originated in the city of Nishapur in the province of Khurasan (northeast Iran).<sup>5</sup>

Being the son of a professional soldier, Asad learned early on the hardships and rewards of being on the road in pursuit of a higher cause. His particular mark of distinction, however, would not be made in military service, but rather in scholarship. But fate would have it that Asad ibn al-Furāt was to be best remembered in Islamic history as the commander of the Islamic forces that invaded, conquered, and settled the island of Sicily, bringing it into the fold of the Islamic empire for two centuries.<sup>6</sup>

When Asad was eighteen years old, he decided on a career in scholarship, and in true Muslim fashion he set out on a journey (*riḥla*), which was, along with the pilgrimage to Mecca and commerce, an important venue for the exchange of ideas and goods throughout the vast

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<sup>4</sup>Qur'ān 2: 215.

<sup>5</sup>*Riyāḍ* „, 172.

<sup>6</sup>Muslim rule over Sicily lasted from the conquest of 217/827 until its downfall in 445/1053.

Arabo-Islamic culture survived throughout Norman rule, and the last colonies of Muslims in Sicily survived well into the reign of Frederick II (1220-50). For two historical studies on Asad ibn al-Furāt, see M. Amari, *Storia dei Musulmani de Sicilia*, C. A. Nallino, ed. (Catania, 1933), 382-417; and U. Rizzitano, "Asad Ibn al-Furāt giureconsulto dell'Ifriqiya" in *Storia e cultura nella Sicilia saracena*, (Palermo: 1975), 3-17.

Islamic empire. The importance of *rihla* lasted throughout the entire period of classical Islam and is underscored by the fourteenth-century Arab historian Ibn Khaldun, who in his *Muqaddimah*, stresses the necessity of making personal contact with as many acknowledged authorities in one's field as possible.<sup>7</sup> Thus his great quest was to seek out the most prestigious scholars in the great academic centres of the medieval Islamic empire. Having grown up in Qayrawan and Tunis, where the legal writings of Mālik Ibn Anas (d. 179/795) were having a great impact on Islamic religious education, Asad travelled to Medina to study directly under the grand master himself. His unquenchable thirst for knowledge and his persistence in exceeding its boundaries and venturing into the unknown tested the patience of his revered professor, Mālik, who suggested that he go to Iraq if he preferred the methodologies of reasoning and speculation to those of traditional learning.<sup>8</sup>

Following the advice of the master, Asad set out on the road once again. Although he would remain loyal to the teachings of Mālik, and would forever be counted among the great jurisconsults of the Maliki school of Islamic law, Asad made considerable forays into the intricate world of "opinion" scholarship (*al-ra'y*) where individual reasoning (*ijtihād*) and analogical reasoning (*qiyās*) accented the writings of the disciples of Abū Ḥanīfa in Kufa and Baghdad. Thus it was more than geographical boundaries that Asad crossed in his pursuit of learning all that there was to learn: he crossed the boundaries of the politics and institutions of learning, and he bridged the worlds of the strict traditionalism of the Medinese (Malikis) and the intellectual adventurism of the Iraqis (Hanafis).

There is an anecdote in the biography of Asad ibn al-Furāt related by a certain Ibn al-Haddād<sup>9</sup> about a young man who used to come and study with Asad. During a session one day, Asad asked the student about his profession. After the student responded, Asad told him to get up [and leave]. The student was shocked and told his professor that he would give up his job if he disapproved of it. Asad responded that it was not the work he objected to, but the student's absence from it. He went on to explain to the student that the "shop" which he owned was the means of his livelihood and the source for subsidising his education. He told him that as a businessman he had certain obligations to his clients, and if he was not there to serve them, they would take

<sup>7</sup>Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal, 3 vols. (Princeton, 1967), vol. 3, 307-8.

<sup>8</sup>"In aḥbabta al-ra'ya fa'alayka bi-'l- 'irāq." *Riyād*", 174.

<sup>9</sup>For an account of the story and genealogy of Ibn al-Ḥaddād, see *Riyād*, 185 and n. 1.

their business elsewhere. He then recommended that the student spend one or two days per week in lessons and the rest tending to his business, and that he should inform his clients when he would be absent.

This story not only underlines the practical side of Asad but also his ability to cross the line, wherever necessary. It also reflects his profound appreciation not only for the suffering one must bear and the sacrifices one must make in the pursuit of knowledge, but the benefits and rewards that it may yield as well. This appreciation led Asad to cross the boundaries and straddle the worlds of scholarship and politics.

Asad's return to Qayrawan at the end of the second Islamic century was received with great enthusiasm, especially in academic circles. He brought with him his famous work, *al-Asadiyya*, a compendium of Islamic law that included notations on questions and answers he pursued in Cairo with the eminent Egyptian scholar, 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn al-Qāsim. This work gained immediate and widespread popularity in all the centres of learning throughout much of North Africa. Although the *al-Asadiyya* would eventually be eclipsed by *al-Mudawwana*, a more comprehensive work by his rival and medieval North Africa's premier scholar of Maliki law, Saḥnūn Ibn Sā'id (d. 240/854), Asad's reputation was nonetheless firmly established. He was celebrated for the breadth and depth of his knowledge, his extensive travels, the impressive list of his famous teachers, and the unusual distinction of being a scholar in the traditions of both Mālik and Abū Ḥanīfa. No sooner had he returned to Qayrawan than the list of his students, coming from every direction to study under his tutelage, grew to impressive numbers. Those familiar with his biography are immediately reminded of a story he told, and reported at the beginning of his biography, about a dream his mother had when he was a boy. In the dream she sees animals grazing on grass that has grown on Asad's back. The following day she consults a man who interprets dreams and he tells her that her son will have extensive knowledge that people will seek.<sup>10</sup>

Even though Asad suffered something of a defeat in his rivalry with Saḥnūn, he emerged as a powerful figure within the ruling circles. The *amir* of Qayrawan, Zitādatallah (201-23/816-38), aware of his academic credentials and intellectual abilities, appointed Asad as the second chief-judge of Qayrawan—an unusual appointment, according to the historians—not long after his return. Asad quickly asserted himself in his new position, assuming the role of the outsider fighting against the mainstream, and a staunch defender of his beliefs and principles. At a time when the free-thinking, rationalist sect of

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<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, 172.



Mu‘tazilism was in vogue, both in the intellectual circles of Baghdad and by extension, those of Qayrawan, Asad aggressively attacked the sect’s essential positions and labelled its adherents as heretics, arguing against their speculative views of the created Qur’ān and upholding the traditionalist position on divine attributes, which they disavowed.<sup>11</sup> One story has it that a certain Sulaymān al-Qurrā’, of Iraqi origin, was sitting at the back of the mosque one day during one of Asad’s lectures and challenged the teacher openly when he quoted a prophetic tradition that spoke of seeing God in the hereafter. Obviously moved by anger, Asad approached the man, seized him by his collar, pulled on his beard, and hit him with his shoe, causing the man to bleed.<sup>12</sup> Not wanting to miss an opportunity to show off the firmness of his convictions, however unpopular they were among many of the cultural elite, Asad seized the moment to express solidarity with the profound conservatism of the masses and their supporters among the jurists.

One of Asad’s first assignments as chief-judge was to put an end to a wide-scale rebellion that had erupted in the military ranks and succeeded in laying a twelve-year blockade around the city of Qayrawan, holding the Aghlabid princes as virtual prisoners at the royal palace. Accompanied by his co-chief-judge, Abū Muḥriz, Asad ventured outside the gates of the city to confront Maṣṣūr al-Tunbudhī, the leader of the rebellious forces. The rebel leader received the chief judges and invited them to break rank with the government and join forces with the rebellion, pointing out the list of injustices committed by the court. When he called the Aghlabid ruler the scourge of all Muslims, a very frightened Abū Muḥriz quickly added that he was the scourge of Jews and Christians as well.

By contrast, Asad confronted al-Tunbudhī and reminded him that he had once been close to the palace. He suggested that he was equally responsible for many of the injustices, and pronounced that he would not renounce the Aghlabid court without renouncing him.<sup>13</sup> Although a rebel soldier started to attack Asad, the two judges managed to escape safely. In the end, Asad emerged as a hero from this very difficult situation.

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 181-2.

<sup>12</sup>The story is first told to Abū ‘Arab, who gives the man’s name as Sulaymān al-Qurrā’, *Tabaqāt*, 82, and later embellished by al-Maliki, who calls him Sulaymān the Iraqi (*Riyāḍ*, 182).

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 186.

Asad's bravery, as opposed to Abū Muḥriz's weakness, would remain a dominant feature in his biography. After the al-Tunbudhī incident, which ended in the defeat of the rebel forces, Asad ibn al-Furāt became the nemesis, the binary opposite of Abū Muḥriz.<sup>14</sup> Whereas Abū Muḥriz was to be cast as the insider, the strictly conservative, mainstream traditional *faqīh*, operating by the book, cautious and wavering, Asad was portrayed as the outsider, the crosser of boundaries, the adventurer and risk taker who relished in going against the mainstream, but one who was astute in sniffing out the potential for personal gain in every situation. An anecdote from the biography of Abū Muḥriz, transmitted by a certain Muhammad ibn Zarzar, recounts the following:

One day the *amir* Ziyādatāllah asked his two chief-judges their opinion on his bringing of slave girls to the baths. Asad quickly responded that since they were his concubines he had the legal right to look at them, even their private parts. Whereupon, Abū Muḥriz predictably took the opposing view, arguing that even if he had the right to see them as such, they themselves did not have the right to see the nakedness of others.<sup>15</sup>

Once again Asad rose to the occasion and told the *amir* what he wanted to hear. At the same time that he was evolving into a statesman, a politician who could please the palace and the crowds as well.

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In the early months of 212/817, a renegade Byzantine general from Sicily, Euphemius, sent word to the Aghlabid court offering vital military information in exchange for overthrowing his enemies in Sicily. The information was extremely valuable to Ziyādat-Allāh, considering his domestic problems with a restless army, an aggrieved population, and a critical religious leadership. However, the matter was not simple since Ziyādat-Allāh was bound to a peace treaty with Byzantine Sicily that had been concluded by his successor and was still in effect. In a quandary, Ziyādat-Allāh summoned his court advisors and chief judges and sought their opinions. Even though the court had been told that Muslim soldiers were held prisoners in Sicily—a violation of the terms of the peace treaty—Abū Muḥriz counselled caution and pleaded for a wait-and-see strategy. His position was overwhelmingly supported by the religious leaders. Asad took the opposite position, and

<sup>14</sup>Asad ibn al-Furāt is mentioned frequently in Abū Muḥriz's own biography which follows that of Asad. See *ibid.*, 189-96.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, 190. My paraphrasing is a polite version of the original!

citing a verse from the Qur'ān: "So do not become weak-kneed and sue for peace, for you will have the upper hand; as God is with you, and he will not overlook your deeds,"<sup>16</sup> he recommended that Ziyādat-Allāh launch an attack.

Perhaps sensing that such an attack on Sicily would clearly satisfy a restless army, and secure riches in the way of booty, ransom taxes, and slaves that would find their way back to the Ifriqiyan economy,<sup>17</sup> or simply seeing it as another venture, another journey in pursuit of a higher goal, Asad once again chose to go his own route, being the lone voice in support of the attack against the opposition of the palace advisors. Moreover, his appointment as commander of the army that would invade Sicily, while maintaining his title as chief-judge, was yet another crossing of boundaries, from the judicial to the military.

The appointment of commander of the invading forces of Sicily undoubtedly had several meanings for Asad. First of all, it reconnected him to his own heritage as son and grandson of holy warriors (*mujāhidīn*) who participated in the Islamic wars of conquest, thus allowing him to follow in a sacred family tradition. Secondly, this appointment would be the supreme fulfilment of a wish that his revered professor, Mālik ibn Anas, extended to him on his departure from Medina approximately thirty-five years ago. Asad tells the story that he and two colleagues went to pay a visit to Mālik to bid him farewell. The two colleagues ask the grand master for his words of advice to which he kindly obliged. Then he turned to Asad and topped the advice he gave to the two colleagues by telling him to fear God, [live by] the Qur'ān, and be an earnest and faithful servant to the Islamic community (*umma*). His teacher in Egypt, Ibn al-Qāsim, would later give Asad his own version of Mālik's advice by telling him to fear God, [live by] the Qur'ān, and spread [the wealth of] his knowledge.<sup>18</sup>

Thirdly, and most significantly, this appointment would grant to Asad the opportunity to embark upon his greatest journey, i.e., that of holy war (*jihād*) in the pursuit of the highest cause, which is the spread of Islam, in the service of God (*fī sabīl Allāh*). The manner in which Asad chose to execute his duties as commander of the holy war-

<sup>16</sup>Qur'ān 47:35. The translations of all Quranic passages are from Ahmed Ali (Princeton, 1988).

<sup>17</sup>Muḥammad Talbi discusses these economic benefits: "The invasion of Sicily brought in booty and enriched the public treasury as well as private coffers; it stimulated the slave trade, and for a variety of reasons stimulated the flow of money..." (Translation is mine). See M. Talbi, *L'emirate Aghlabide 800-909*, (Paris, 1966), 213-4.

<sup>18</sup>Riyāḍ, 174.

riors tells us as much about the nature and vision of a classical medieval Muslim scholar as it does about the essence of *jihād* in its most complete sense.

According to his biographers, Asad ibn al-Furāt, Qayrawan's chief-judge and commander-general, appeared in public on a June day in 212/817 with a cavalry of ten thousand soldiers. In a dazzling procession, crowds of Ifriqiyya's most eminent scholars and dignitaries, along with all of the palace advisors and government officials, escorted the holy army to the coastal town of Sūsa (Sousse) from where the campaign would be launched. With masses of people surrounding him in every direction, and in the midst of the neighing of horses, the rolling of drums, and the waving of banners, Asad addressed the crowd:

There is no god but God himself. He has no partners. I swear to you by God, O people, that neither a father nor grandfather created a state for me nor chose me to rule. No one before me has even seen such a sight, and I have only read about what you now see. Exert your minds and labour your bodies in the search and pursuit of knowledge; increase it and be patient with its intensity, for you will gain with it this world and the next.<sup>19</sup>

Asad's short speech speaks volumes. In sum, it tells us how a Muslim of any origin could achieve greatness through the pursuit of higher goals. It tells us much about his own life, about his own pursuits, and the extensive efforts he exerted in learning all that there was to know. His speech evinces the values of hard work and an aesthetic of self-sacrifice that were at the heart of a Muslim intellectual. He exerted his mind and his body; he endured much, with patience and persistence, in order to rise to the highest ranks of society. It tells us of his vision and the broad horizons he struggled to expand to the greatest extent possible.

Asad's speech also tells us of his profound understanding of the true meaning(s) of the Islamic *jihād* and his quest to cross the boundaries of its spiritual and physical sense. Since *jihād* means firstly the exertion of great effort, of suffering or sacrificing oneself (or one's wealth) in the pursuit of a higher cause, or in the service of God and the spread of His truth, Asad spent his life in a constant state of such an exertion. *Jihād's* second, or evolved meaning, i.e., the physical *jihād*, implying the defence of Islam and the spread of its message, was not lost on him when he accepted to cross his last boundary, from the abode of Islam (*dār al-Islām*) to the abode of the non-Muslim world (*dār al-ḥarb*). Central to

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 187-8.

Asad's execution of his duty of *jihād* was his ability, as his speech shows, to fuse its spiritual and physical dimensions to embark upon a journey that had, as I have argued elsewhere, tremendous political and historical implications.<sup>20</sup>

Although Asad ibn al-Furāt died a martyr in the first year of his *jihād* in Sicily, he succeeded, in the short term, in restoring a great deal of political legitimacy and prestige to the faltering Aghlabid rulership in Ifriqiyya. In the long term, he succeeded in securing for himself a special place in Islamic history for his last great crossing, one which began a long and rich chapter that would come to an end at the court of Frederick II four centuries later.

*Harvard University*

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<sup>20</sup>W. Granara, "Political Legitimacy and Jihad in Muslim Sicily," (PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1986).



Harry T. Norris

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## EARLY MEDIEVAL ISLAMIC FOLK EPIC AND ROMANCE AMONG THE MUSLIM PEOPLES OF THE CAUCASUS REGIONS OF EASTERN EUROPE

From the very limited documentary sources which we know of, it would seem that the earliest folk-epics of the medieval Muslim peoples of Eastern Europe (specifically the Circassians, the Daghestanis, the Pechenegs, the Bashkirs, the Volga Bulgars and the Qipchaq Tatars) were a selection of varied tales (part Arab, part Turco-Persian, part indigenous) and a *corpus* of folk-epic and legend which were blended to compose a myth of their origin which often attached them to the ancient Arabs, either to the pre-Islamic Arabs from the age of the pagan ʿĀdites, or to the early Muslim warriors, led by Arab commanders in the days of the earliest Islamic conquests and who had imposed their faith upon parts of Asia Minor adjacent to Byzantium and upon the Caucasus. It then spread within the empire of the Khazars and parts of the Volga region and along the routes that led from Central Asia to China.

Evidence of this is to be found in Wahb b. Munabbih's/Ibn Hishām's, *Kitāb al-tijān* (AH 218/AD 833) where the long march of the Koranic, Dhū'l-Qarnayn (in his Yemenite Pseudo-Alexander guise) is described. It is suggested by ʿUbayd b. Sharya, the storyteller, that the source of his information was derived from Turcic peoples who lived to the north-east of the Khazars. He remarks:

The king desired to raid China and he swore on oath that he would do so. He made ready for the raid against it and he marched with his army and his people from the people of the Yemen. He marched along the coastal tract until he went forth along the route which was taken by his grandfather, al-Rāʾish, who had taken it when proceeding to the Orient. When he reached Khurasan he marched to the right, as his grandfather had done, until he came to the "thin and puny men" (*al-rakāʾik*) and the "wearers of black cowls" (*aṣḥāb al-qalānis al-sūd*) and he entered China. He looted it, he slew many, he took captives and he ruined much there. Seven years and ten months elapsed during the course of his march, his sojourn and his return from that raid of his. He returned homewards and he left behind in China a man who was from amongst the elite of his companions. He was called Bāriq b. al-Nabat, and with him he had

twelve thousand knights, among the best. They were a band (*rābiṭa*) in league together in a company with him wherever he was in the country. Then it was that the *Tubbaʿ* swore that he would not leave a land which his forebears had previously encompassed from those of the non-Arabians (*al-aʿājim*) and of others, but therein he would establish a league and a garrison from those of his own men and soldiery. That took place at the time of his return from China.

Muʿāwiya [the Caliph] said, "May your father belong to God, O ʿUbayd. Is it known whom he left behind as his successor in China?!" ʿUbayd said, "O Commander of the Faithful, they are the Baynūn<sup>1</sup>, Turk (?) and Iram (?) (Arim)"<sup>2</sup>. When asked, they report that they are of Arab origin. They say that they have a temple (*bayt*) wherein they worship their Lord. They perambulate it seven times<sup>3</sup> and here they make sacrifices. That takes place during one month in the year." He added, "When the foe are in great number amidst the structure of that temple, as in our wont, we go forth to it out of reverence for it. We isolate ourselves without. When the first amongst us [Muslims] beheld that [ritual] they placed in their land, and in the locality where they dwelt, a temple like unto it. We, to this day, reverence it and we perambulate it seven times and we sacrifice there for the sake of it during one month in the year and whosoever comes from the people adores and shows reverence there for three days."

Muʿāwiya [the Caliph] said, "O ʿUbayd, who informed you of that?" He said, "I raided, O Commander of the Faithful, the land of the Turks via this direction." He said, "From which direction?" He said, "From the direction of the Khazars. There are people amongst them who are scholars and who profess a [revealed] religion. I enquired about them and about those who were adjacent to them. This is what they mentioned to me." Muʿāwiya [the Caliph] said, "I have been told of this report regarding the Turks of the *Tubbaʿ* I do not know who amongst the *Tubbaʿ* left a people from the Yemen in China?" He said, "This is the explanation for that tradition (*hadīth*)."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Baynūn. This is a Yemenite name that could bear a likeness to a tribal name or a toponym in Central Asia or on the Chinese borders. See Nabih Amin Faris, *The Antiquities of South Arabia*, (Princeton, 1938), 21, 25, 37, 40, 53, 56, 71.

<sup>2</sup>ʿArim, or ʿIram, *ibid.*, 25, 85-6.

<sup>3</sup>*Perambulation (ṭawāf)*. On similarities between the Arabian *Kaʿba* and its perambulation and pilgrimage rites and those of pre-Islamic religions in Arabia, Israelite ritual and those of non-Islamic religions, in general, see F. Buhl's "Ṭawāf," in the *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, (Leiden, 1953), 585-6.

<sup>4</sup>Wahb b. Munabbih, *Kitāb al-tiḥjān fī mulūk ḥimyar*, (Yemen, 1347 AH), 450-1. There may appear to be some connection between these expeditions, which are referred to in the *Kitāb al-tiḥjān*, and the accounts of the relationship between the Arabs and the Tibetans; see Denis Sinor, *The Cambridge History of Early Asia*, (Cambridge, 1990), 382-5.



The nature of the religious building perambulated which is described in 'Ubayd's narrative, above, is not clear. It suggests some sort of Meccan ka'ba in the Arab mind, hallowed, it was believed, by Arabian expatriates who had wandered into Central Asian regions at a date prior to the reign of Mu'āwiyā, the Umayyad. Conceivably, they might be Manichaens or Christianised Huns, who had been converted and settled in villages by Nestorian or Syrian or Armenian missionaries. Alternatively, the account may have some connection with the reported wanderings of 'Alid fugitives, such as the descendants of 'Alī's son, Ḥusayn, whom some had allegedly met and seen in the region of Khotan.<sup>5</sup> The *terra incognita* of the North and the East slowly took shape in the minds of Arab and Persian geographers, as has been argued by Minorsky,<sup>6</sup> it was to include a "town of the 'Alids'" (*balḍat al-'alawiyya*) and a "town of Women" (probably Amazons or Sauromatae), which, as "the Island of Women" (*jazīrat al-nisā'*) came to be sited by many later Muslim geographers in Turkic regions, or within

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<sup>5</sup> On the 'Alids in Khotan, see Sharaf al-Zamān, *Ṭāhir Marvazīon China, the Turks and India*, Arabic text (c. AD 1120), with an English translation and commentary, translated by V. Minorsky (London, 1942), 17, which says:

Near the city there is a river, one of the greatest in existence; in the middle of it there is a large island and on it a large castle inhabited by Ṭālibid 'Alid Muslims who act as middle men between the Chinese and the caravans and merchants coming to them. These Muslims come forth to meet them, examine the merchandise and goods, carry them to the Lord of China and come back with their equivalents when these latter have been established. One after the other the merchants enter the castle with their goods and often remain there for several days. The reason why the said 'Alids are found on the island is that they are a party of Talibids and had come to Khorasan in the days of the Omayyads and settled there. But when they saw how intent the Omayyads were finding and destroying them, they escaped in safety and started eastwards. They found no foothold in any Islamic country because of fear of pursuit. So they fled to China, and when they reached the banks of the river the patrol, as is the custom, prevented them from crossing, while they had no means of going back. So they said: "Behind us is the sword and before us the sea." The castle on the island was empty of inhabitants because snakes had grown numerous in it and overrun it. So the 'Alids said: "To endure snakes is easier than to endure swords or be drowned." So they entered the castle and began destroying the snakes and throwing them into the water until in short time they had cleared the castle (of them) and settled there. When the Lord of China learnt that (for him) there was no trouble behind them and that they were forced to seek refuge with him he established them in this place and comforted them by granting them means of existence. So they lived in peace and security, begot children and multiplied. They learned Chinese and the languages of the other peoples who visit them, and became their middlemen.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p.66.

remote Baltic areas, especially in Wenland, Poland, Estonia and Finland<sup>7</sup>.

The earliest instances for much of the substance of the above tale may be gleaned from the accounts of the early contacts between the Arabs, the Khazars and the Caucasians. This may be illustrated from the several instances that are to be found in al-Mas'ūdī's *Murūj al-dhahab* (AH 336/AD 947). He was writing about a century later than Wahb/Ibn Hishām:

The Muslims dominate in Khazaria since it is they who form the royal army; they are known as the Arsiyya. Originating from the neighbourhood of Khwārazm, they came a long time ago in order to establish themselves in the kingdom of the Khazars, a little after Islam first appeared, fleeing from the double scourge of drought and plague which swept through their land. They are powerful and courageous. Upon them the Khazar king bestows his trust and confidence during times of war.

In establishing themselves in his empire, they have stipulated amongst the conditions that they will be free to exercise their religion, that they can have mosques and recite the call to prayer openly and that the king's minister will always be selected by them. The one who today fulfils these high functions is a Muslim, in fact, who is named Aḥmad b. Kūyah. Every time that the Khazar king wages war against Muslims, they [those who serve in his army] stay aloof. They do not fight their coreligionists, however, they march against all infidels. Today, some seven thousand amongst them form the units of the mounted archers of the king. They wear the breastplate (*jawshan*), the helmet and the hauberk. Equally amongst them are to be found lancers who are equipped and armed as in the common practise amongst the Muslims<sup>8</sup>.

Such a description of these mercenary Muslim Khwrāzms highlights a role that was to be played in a later age by Muslim warriors in medieval Hungary, by the Cumans and Polvtsi in Russia and the Ukraine and, at an earlier date, by elements of the Bulgars of the Volga region and the Danube basin (at times the distinction is obscure, just as these peoples were loosely incorporated in the term "Slav" (*ṣaḡālība*) whose own contribution is made clear in several sections of al-Mas'ūdī's account.

<sup>7</sup>On the 'Island' or 'City of Women', which was believed, in the World of Islam, to be located in the remotest areas of the globe, see Minorsky, *Ibid.*, 38, 66, 67, 122 and Séamas Ó Catháin, Páraig O Héalaí, *The Heroic Process, Form, Function and Fantasy in Folk Epic*, ed. Bo Almquist, (Dublin, 1987), 542-45, in my chapter devoted to 'Folk Epic in the Wilderness, Arabia and the Nordic World.'

<sup>8</sup>al-Mas'ūdī (d. 345 AH/956 Ad) in *Murūj al-dhahab (Les prairies d'or)* trans. Barbier de Maynard and Pavet de Courteille, revised and corrected by C. Pellat, vol. 11, (Paris, 1965), 162, para. 450.

He shows, for example, the territorial, commercial and religious links between these Bulgars, the Khazars, the Khwārazms, the Russians and the Arabs, via the Caucasus, Central Asia and the gateways to the Balkans:

As we have previously said, Burtās is also the name given to a Turkish people who are established on the banks of this river to which they owe their name. It is from its territory that one exports the skins of black or ruddy foxes, known as *burtāsī*. It is above all the black pelts which are worth one hundred *dīnārs* or more. Those that are red are of a lesser worth. The first are worn by the kings of the Arabs and non-Arabs who willingly adorn themselves and hold them in high regard. They do so more than the sable (*sammūr*)<sup>9</sup>, the ermine (*fanak*) and the other furs of this kind.<sup>10</sup>

Al-Mas‘ūdī continues:

The Volga (*nahr al-Khazar*), in the upper part of its course, is linked by one of its arms with a gulf of the Sea of Azov, known also as the Russian Sea, since these latter, who are the sole navigators of it, inhabit one of its banks. They are a nation who are many in number and who recognise no authority, nor revealed law. Several of their number who engage in commercial transactions carry on trade with the Bulgars. In their country, the Russians possess a silver mine which is similar to that which is situated in the mountain of Banjhīr in Khurasan. The Bulgars have their capital beside the Sea of Azov.<sup>11</sup> These people who are a type of Turk inhabit, if I am not mistaken, the Seventh Clime. Caravans leave continuously for the Khwārazm country, which depends upon Khurasan, or they return from thence. As this route crosses the localities where other Turks are encamped they are obliged to put themselves under their protection. At the moment (AH 332/AD 943), the king of the Bulgars is a Muslim who became converted having a dreamt a dream. It was in the reign of al-Muqtadir bi-‘llāh, after the year AH 310/AD 943. One of his sons has made the pilgrimage and while on his way, the Caliph in Baghdad delivered a standard to him, a robe of office black in colour and silver money. These people have a great mosque. Their king carries out raids

<sup>9</sup>*Sammūr*. According to E. W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, (London, 1863) (Cambridge, 1984), part 1, 1426, "Sable, *mustela zibellina*, or *viverra zibellina*. A certain beast or animal well known, found in Russia beyond the country of the Turks, usually resembling the ichneumon, in some instances of a glossy black red."

<sup>10</sup>H. T. Norris (n. 7), *Ibid.*, 537-8 and Minorsky, *Ibid.*, passim.

<sup>11</sup> al-Mas‘ūdī, p.164, para. 455.

on the territory of Constantinople at the head of a cavalry which numbers some fifty thousand men"<sup>12</sup>.

Elsewhere, al-Mas'ūdī refers to the Bulgars and to their cavalry as being involved in raids well within the Mediterranean region, boarding ships moored in Tarsus. He gives high praise to the bravery of the "Muslim Bulgars" who, individually, could stand up to "one hundred, or even two hundred, infidel cavaliers." It is probably in the context of the early accounts of the Khwāzrmian mercenaries in the Khazar court and the martial valour of cavalry of the Islamised Volga or Danube Bulgars that one should interpret the identification by Ahmad Nazmy (citing al-Ṭabarī) of a "Bulgar warrior" from Antioch called Salsāq, the commander of the "Slavs" (*ṣqāliba*) in the battle of Qinnaṣrīn,<sup>13</sup> during the last days of the reign of the Umayyad Marwān II. Salsāq (variant of *Salsāk* or *Saltak*) itself signified "warrior". Here we have a non-Arab Muslim hero, associated with Antioch, who combined the role of Sayyid Baṭṭāl, also of Antioch, with the Saljūq hero of the Gagaouz, the heterodox dervish, Sārī Saltūq, whose town Ibn Baṭṭūta allegedly visited in the fourteenth century to the north of the Black Sea or in the Qipchaq Steppes.

But despite the presence of Bulgars, it is overwhelmingly with the peoples of the Caucasus that the settlement of Arabs and the exploits of Arab commanders figure in al-Mas'ūdī's records. There were Arabs, it was alleged, in the Derbend region of Daghestan.

Between the Kingdom of Khaydhān (Khaydhāq) and Derbend, were to be found Muslims who were Arab in origin and who know no other language save Arabic. They live in villages in a region covered with thickets and marshes, valleys and great rivers. They have established themselves there since the time when the Bedouin Arabians invaded it as conquerors.<sup>14</sup>

The Arabs and others had contact with the local fabricators of weaponry.

<sup>12</sup>The King of the Bulgars who had been converted to Islam is presumably the ruler of Bulghār, on the Volga. The Bulgars who raided Byzantine territory are most likely to have been Bulgars of the Danube region.

<sup>13</sup>Ahmad Nazmy, "Some aspects of military relations between the Arabs and the Slavs (as-Ṣaqāliba) during the Umayyad dynasty 40 AH/661 AD to 138 AH/750 AD," *Studia arabistyczne i islamistyczne*, 3 (1995): 36.

<sup>14</sup>For an unusual view of the relationship between conquering Arabs, the Khazars and the Christian Caucasians, see "The Passion of St. Abo of Tiflis" (written soon after St Abo's death in the eighth century) in D. M. Lang's *Lives and Legends of the Georgian Saints*, (London, 1956), 115-33.

Near to Ghūmiq, still in the same direction as the mountain, and of Sarīr, is situated the kingdom of the Zirigarān (Zirigarān/ Zirih Gārān), a (Persian) word which means "those who manufacture hauberks of mail". In fact, most of its inhabitants manufacture hauberks, stirrups, bits, swords, and other instruments of warfare. They are of varied belief, amongst them are Muslims, Christians and Jews. Their country is of a difficult access and this protects them against the activities and the violence of their neighbours.<sup>15</sup>

The kingdom of the Alains had associations with ancient Persian heroes. After the triumph of Islam, under the Abbasid dynasty, the Alain princes, who were formerly infidels, embraced Christianity. After AH 331/AD 931, they forsook their new religion and they banished the bishops and the priests which the Byzantine Emperor had sent to them. Between the kingdom of the Alains and the Caucasus there is a citadel and a bridge which is upon a river of some considerable size. The castle is called *Qal'at Bāb al-Lān*. It was built by a Persian king of ancient times at the very beginning, namely Isbāndiyār, the son of Hystaspe (Bistāsf)<sup>16</sup> The latter hero was to become integrated into the Muslim vision of Dhū'l-Qarnayn from the Yemen, on the one hand, and with the Arab commander Maslama b. cAbd al-Malik, on the other.

#### Al-Mas'ūdī continues,

This latter prince (Isbāndiyār) had to sustain numerous wars against the different peoples of the Orient. He penetrated into the remotest regions of the Turkish lands and he destroyed the *City of Brass (Madīnat al-Sufīr)*<sup>17</sup> which was such an inaccessible locality that it seemed to defy all attacks. Its resistance had become proverbial amongst the Persians. These great deeds and the other exploits of Isbāndiyār, about which we have spoken, are to be found explained in detail in the work which bears the title *Paykār-nāme (Kitāb al-*

<sup>15</sup>al-Mas'ūdī, p.172, para. 477.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, p.180, para. 499.

<sup>17</sup>The legend of the 'Copper City', or 'City of Brass', which appears widely in Oriental literature, in most cases in the Arabic sources is located in North Africa or in Spain. In Persian and Central Asian traditions, this city is located in the Caucasus, in Iran or in Central Asia. See Annette Destrée, "Quelques reflexions sur le heros des recits apoclyptiques persans et sur le mythe de la Ville de Cuivre," in *Acts of the International Conference on the Theme La Persia nel Medioevo (Rome 31 March-5 April 1970)*, *Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei Quaderno* 160 (Rome, 1971): 639-53. This copper fortress (*dez-i-royin, royindiz*, etc.) at times brings together stories about the iron underground citadel of Afrasiāp. Bukhara was said to have underground chambers for the processing of the bodies of the dead, akin to the account of Abū Hāmid in regard to the Zirih Gārān in Daghestan. A sacred "Copper Mountain" is to be found in Tibetan Lamaist tradition. The subject, viewed from the North African account, is discussed in Charles Genequand, "Autour de la Ville de Bronze: d'Alexandre a Salomon," *Arabica* 39 (1992): 328-45.

*baykār*), which has been translated into Arabic by Ibn al-Muqaffa'.<sup>18</sup> When Maslama b. 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān arrived in the country and its inhabitants had submitted to him, he placed an Arab garrison in the citadel. The descendants guard this position up to the present day.

This garrison received its supplies from the city of Tiflis. Georgia was the centre and its prince, known as al-Manbaghī resided in a place known as The Mosque of Dhu'l-Qarnayn (Mtskheta). In Tiflis, itself, the Arabs had an ally in a certain Ishāq b. Ismā'il, later to be deposed and slain during the reign of al-Mutawakkil. According to al-Mas'ūdī<sup>19</sup>, Ishāq claimed to be one of the Quraysh. The kingdom of the Sanarians (*al-Sanariyya*), although Christian by faith, claimed to be Arabic and descended from Nizār b. Ma'add and a fraction of 'Uqayl. In short, they claimed to be Yemenites and al-Mas'ūdī notes that "the Sanarians claim, in tales which are very detailed, that they separated themselves (from the rest of their tribe) at the same time as these Banū 'Uqayl from the country of Ma'rib [in the Yemen] whom we have just mentioned."<sup>20</sup>

Something of this same Yemenite tradition was to be traced elsewhere, on its western side, in the region of the Circassians. Al-Mas'ūdī's information was merely hearsay, but they were said to have lived in a region called the Seven countries (*Sab' Buldān*). An adjacent group, separated from the Circassians by a river, were called Iram,

<sup>18</sup>Ibn al-Muqaffa' (see the article by J. D. Latham in *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature*, 'Abbasid Belles Lettres, [Cambridge, 1990]: 48-77), translated a number of Persian and Indian works into Arabic. From al-Mas'ūdī's account it would appear that he was not only an important source for the importation of the expeditions of Isbandiyar into Arabic but also that the Asian settings of the "Copper City" legends in the Kitāb al-baykār appear to be wholly distinct from those in the Muslim West where Mūsā b. Nuşayr is the warrior hero.

<sup>19</sup>al-Mas'ūdī, p.180, para. 498.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, On the Sanariyya, p.180, para 499. On Daghestan in general, and on the Arab presence there see the article 'Daghistan', in *EI* (2nd edition), by W. Barthold and A. Bennigsen, V. Minorsky, *A History of Sharvan and Darband in the 10th-11th Centuries* (Cambridge, 1958), 166-7, M. N. De Khanikoff, "Mémoire sur les inscriptions musulmanes du Caucase," *Journal Asiatique* 20 (1962): 60ff., (in particular, pp 78-98). On p. 82 is found a folk epic of Abū Muslim. This text, together with translation, continues until p. 98. An Arabic poem, of uncertain date, on p. 80, attributed to Saraqa b. 'Amr, in verse 5 (wa-al-ḥamanā'l-jibālu jibālu qubḥ wa-jāwara dūrahum minnā diyāru) may be read as, "the mountains, hideous to behold (?) the Caucasus (?) bound us together (?) (gave us our food?) and our camps and their dwellings became neighbours one to another." This article should be consulted in conjunction with the recent study of Arabic inscription in the region by A. R. Shikhsaydov, *Epigraficheskiye pamyatniki dagestana X-XVII, kakistoricheskii istochnik*, (Moscow, 1984).

which also had a nominal link with pre-Islamic Yemenite tradition. They had pagan beliefs that were associated with a magic fish, the body of which was sacrificed to feed the tribe each year and which was revered by them.<sup>21</sup>

In the Caucasian traditions discussed, two in particular emerge as of primary importance for the myths of origin that were to be constructed in later ages. The first of these was that of the founding "Companion", usually Maslama b. 'Abd al-Malik, the other was that of descent from an Arab exile (often from the Yemen) whose origins were to be associated with the pagan, pre-Islamic, 'Ādite giants, and whose archeological remains or whose living descendants were reported to have been found or met by the Muslim travellers in the northernmost regions of the globe where outposts of Islam were located.

By far the most detailed and dramatic account of the heroic Caucasian view of the warrior and Companion of the Prophet, Maslama b. 'Abd al-Malik (whose defeat in the siege of Constantinople is well known) is found in the composition entitled *The Gift of Hearts and Minds* (*Tuḥfat al-albāb*) by the Arab Abū Ḥāmid al-Andalusī of Granada (d. AH 565/AD 1169) who, on the way to and from his sojourns in Hungary and the Orient, passed through the region of Derbent and Daghestan. In the following passage he takes up the brief mention by al-Mas'ūdī, quoted above, and he offers an exotic scenario for a tale that did not escape the eye of the literary composers and compilers of the famous *Romance of Antār* (*Sirat 'Antara*), which did not achieve its final forms until a far later date.<sup>22</sup>

In the town of Derbent (namely *Bāb min al-Abwāb*, or *Bāb al-Abwāb*) there is a nation called al-Ṭabarsalān. In their territory, there are twenty-four districts. In each of them is a chief (*sarhang*), like an *amir*. They are Muslims, converted during the time of Maslama b. 'Abd al-Malik, when Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik became Caliph and he sent him to conquer *Bāb al-Abwāb*. Many nations embraced Islam at his hand, amongst them also al-Lakzan, the Q (F)ilān and the Khaydaq and the Zaqlān and the Ghariq and the Darhah. There are seventy nations amongst them. Every nation has a language. When Maslama wished to leave, having settled in Derbent twenty-four thousand families from the Arabs from Mosul, Damascus, Homs, Palmyra, Aleppo and other towns of Syria and the Jazīra [of Iraq], the Tabar-salān said to him, "O *Amir*, we are afraid lest, when you leave us, these nations will apostatise

<sup>21</sup>al-Mas'ūdī, pp.174-5, para. 483.

<sup>22</sup>H. T. Norris, "From Asia to Africa: the *Tuḥfat al-albāb* by Abū Ḥāmid al-Gharnāṭī (473/1080-565/1169) as a source for the chronology and content of the *Sirat 'Antar* b. Shaddād'," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 57, pt. 1, (1994): 174-83.

and we shall suffer hardship and wretchedness in their neighbourhood." So Maslama unsheathed his sword, and he said, "My sword is between you. Leave it here. As long as it is between you, none of these nations will rebel." So they converted his sword into a sort of *mihrāb* out of the rock. They set it upright in the middle of that rock like a [mound] where it was established. Now it remains in that land. People visit it. Whosoever makes it his destination, if it be in winter, he is not prevented from wearing blue clothes and other attire. But, if his visit be during the harvest time, one is not allowed to visit it unless one is clad in a white garment. If one visits it and the garment one wears is not white in colour then heavy rain will come and the crop will be ruined and the fruit will be spoilt. This is a matter which is widely observed amongst them.

*Near to Derbent*, is a huge mountain at the base of which there are two villages. In these dwells a nation called Zīrīh Gārān which means "armourers and makers of mail". They handle all instruments of war and weaponry, be they hauberks, breast-plates, helmets, swords, spears, bows, arrows and daggers, and all kinds of copper implements. They include all their women folk, their sons and daughters and their male and female slaves, all of whom are engaged in these crafts. They do not plough, nor are there gardens, yet they are the folk who are the most well off and have most money. People go to them with all their gifts from every quarter. They have no religion, nor do they pay the poll tax. If one of them dies, and if he be a male, then they hand him over to the men who dwell in underground houses. They collect his flesh and they give it as food to the black crows. They stand with bows and they prevent other birds from devouring his flesh. If the deceased is a female then they hand her over to the men who dwell underground. They extract her bones and they give her flesh to a sparrow hawk and they stand with their arrows preventing other birds approaching her flesh. I said to the *Amīr*, "Isfahslar 'Abd al-Malik b. Abī Bakr in Derbent how was it that they left this nation alone since it had not embraced the religion of Islam, nor did they pay either the poll tax or the land tax?" He said, "They are the grief of the king. The *Amīr*, Sayf al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Khalīfa, the Sultan and the lord of Derbent, may God have mercy upon him, commanded me, I being his stipendiary. He has honoured me, may God reward him with good. I left and I assembled together nations of the Turks and others. The *Amīr* left with the people of Derbent and the nations of the mountains, the Lakzan and the Filān and others came and we were in any army like a rock and we made for those two villages. They have no fortress, nor castle and they locked their doors. I was the first to enter one of the villages and from underground out came a group of men who were unarmed and they stood, pointing with their hands towards the mountains and they spoke words which I did not understand. Then they vanished underground. A cold wind buffeted us and huge falls of snow and hail. We left with no idea in which direction we were heading, neither I nor the others. Some of us killed each other due to the fact that one horse battered against another that was weak. So the latter fell and with it the rider of that horse so that the people trampled upon him and he perished together with his



horse!" He said, "Somebody of whom I was unaware hit me with his arrow in my left shoulder and it came out from below my arm-pit and I almost died. I kept a firm grip until we were far away from them at a distance of several *farsakhs*. That snow, wind and hail abated in regard to us when we had lost many men amongst the army. I drew the arrow out of my shoulder and I remained sick for four months as a result. We were not able to take even a loaf from them nor did we engage in combat with a single one of them. That was only due to magic, used by those who extract the bones of the deceased and who place their bones in the bags of the rich. As for the lords, their bags are made from golden Byzantine brocade and as for the slaves, male and female, they are of sacking and material for clothing of a similar type. They hang them up in the houses and upon every bag they write the name of its occupant and this is a great wonder."<sup>23</sup>

In the vicinity of Khwārazm there is a mountain upon which there are many castles. It has its own districts. It is a mighty mountain and it stretches within the country of the infidels until it reaches Balkshān (Badakhshān). Near to Khwārazm, in that mountain, there is a gorge in which there is mound-like hill. On that hill there is a large dome. It has four doors which open on large vaults. Within it there are bricks of red gold which are stacked, some upon others, up to a number which is unaccountable and it fills the plot in that locality. This resembles the dome which is upon that mountain, to the eye the height of the gold being more than five cubits. Around that hill whereon the gold is located, there is stagnant water and it is turbid, having no content other than rain water and snow. Upon the ground there is found a scum. No one is able to cross over it. If anyone should enter it, he becomes stuck hard in it and is sucked down and no-one extricates him from it. If a skiff be cast into that water, or any other thing, it is gone for ever and nobody may take it out from there."

It should be noted that, despite the relatively late date of Abū Ḥāmid's accounts of these marvels of the Caucasus, the Caspian region and beyond, nothing is said by him to suggest that the local heroic tales had already been influenced to any degree by Turco-Iranian tales and the folk epics, characteristic of the fourteenth century. These latter habitually confused Maslama with Abū Muslim, "*Le Porte Hache*" of Khurasan, who on June 9th, AD 747, unfurled the black banner of the Abbasids near Merv. To cite R. Nicholson, "The triumphant advance of the armies of the Revolution towards Damascus recalls the celebrated campaign of Caesar, when after crossing the Rubicon he marched on Rome. Nor is Abū Muslim, though a freedman of obscure parentage —

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<sup>23</sup>Gabriel Ferrand, *Journal asiatique* 207 (1925): 82-6 and Ana Ramos, Abū Ḥāmid al-Gharnāṭī (m 565/1169), *Tuḥfat al-albāb* (El regalo de los espíritus) (Madrid, 1990), 56-8.

he was certainly no Arab — unworthy to be compared with the great patrician".<sup>24</sup>

Irene Mélikoff, has pointed out such a confusion of these personalities in the later *Azerbayčānnāme*:

This work was probably inspired by the Arab expeditions in Sirvan and in Daghestan under the command of Maslama who captured Derbend in 723, subjugated the princes of Sirvan and established a colony of 14,000 Syrians in the region. In 731, he was replaced by Mervān who waged war in the Caucasus until he came to the throne. Maslama's conquests have been attributed to Abū Muslim in popular tradition by reason of the great expansion of the romance of Abū Ṭāhir amongst the Daghestan mountaineers. Perhaps, also, the similarity between the names of Maslama and Muslim, very similar to one another in Arabic calligraphy, contribute to this confusion.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup>Reynold, A. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs*, (Cambridge, 1969), 251-2.

<sup>25</sup>Irene Mélikoff, *Abū Muslim, le 'Porte Hache' du Khorasan*, (Paris, 1962), 78-9 and De Khanikoff, 81-98.

According to the Russian scholar, Anna Zelkina, (Open University), who is currently completing her thesis on the later Islamic movements in Chechnia and Daghestan, to quote the unpublished comments which she gave at a seminar, when in Oxford:

"The Lacks claim that they have been converted to Islam in the seventh century and directly from Abū Muslim, whom they confuse with Maslama and whose false tomb they are very keen to show in Kazi-Kumuh until now. They also trace their later rulers who had title Shamhal to the Arab conquest and claim that it is derived from the Arab word "Sham" — Syria and explain it by the fact that the first vice-regent; appointed by Maslama in their lands, came from Syria, from the place called Hal and thus was called Sham-Hal. The Avars claim to be the second people in Daghestan after the Lacks to accept Islam, also directly from Maslama and also trace their rulers of later times to Arab roots. The Dargins also believe that the *aul* Kurush was founded by some Kureish Arab at approximately the same period.

That is, however, no more than an attempt to place the later events into the earlier period. In fact, though Maslama had founded mosques and appointed qadis in some areas on the plain, like Derbent, Tabarsalan, Kijtak, and in the foot-hill areas of Kura, it is most unlikely that he could have done that in more remote areas like Akusha, Khunzah, Kumuh, or even in Ashty. And even in the areas where he tried to impose Islam, the Islamisation was by no means deep and profound. His conquest was also very short-lived. Half a century later all the areas above the Derbent were liberated by the joint effort of the Khazars and Daghestanis themselves. Even Derbent was for a short time conquered by the Khazars in 799 AD. The second wave of the Arab conquest was led by Marwan, who pursued quite a different tactic towards the conquered peoples. Unlike Maslama, he did not force them to convert to Islam, but he taxed with a special tax (*Kharāj*). The Marwan conquests also proved to be very superficial and short-lived. They succeeded only in Derbent and the rest of Daghestan practically remained independent. And after death of al-Mutawakki Derbent was ruled by an independent dynasty of Hashimite Khalifs. It in fact submitted to the Shirvan-shah, though occasionally pursued an independent policy. The rest of Daghestan, even if nominally, was independent of the Arab rulers."

Later examples of this continuous tradition may be read in Mirza A. Kazem Beg's edition of the *Derbent nāmeḥ* (the so-called *History of Derbent*) which was printed in St. Petersburg in 1851. Turkish sources which drew, in turn, upon earlier Arabic sources were used. The latter include the fifth part of al-Ṭabarī's *Annals* (d. 923). Maslama b. 'Abd al-Malik is the central heroic figure who was the lieutenant in the Caucasus of the Caliph 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb.

The account given by Kazem Beg, seemingly derived from al-Ṭabarī, <sup>26</sup> reasserts the same stories which are cited by al-Mas'ūdī and Abū Hāmid:

One day, *Abdur-rahman* said to *Shehrizar*: "I will pass beyond these *derbents* with an army, and will make war with infidels and establish Islam in the city of these *derbents*" (i.e. in the capital of those passages, which was the actual Derbend). For *Shehrizar* had said that it was difficult to lead an army beyond those *derbents*:— that when one passes over the *wall* and *Khazaria*, there are many cities and principalities: the country is called *Bulkher*, it includes the climates (countries) of *Russ* and *Yadžudi* and *Madjuj*; that it was the country where *Iskender dul-gkernein* had constructed the wall; and he (*Abdul-rehman*) could scarcely pass to that country, for those quarters are very strong." *Abdul-rehman* answered him: "I (will) make industry my companion; I hope to pass then with my army even to the boundaries of *Bulkher*, see those places and make war for religion."<sup>27</sup>

One might assume that Volga Bulghar, or the Bulgarians of the Danube, are meant here, though Balkhar is one of the Circassian regions to the North-West of Ossetia. Balkhar and Bulghār have ethnic links and could easily be confused. Marvazī (circa 1120) speaks of Burtās cavalry in the service of the Khazar king making the raids on the Blkār (more likely Bulghār and the Pechenegs). Geographical exactitude was not important in the story teller's mind. It should also be noted that, in this account, Maslama's role has been usurped, or assigned, allegedly by the Caliph, to quote another Arab or Muslim commander. A proliferation of names and eponyms is to be observed in the writings of Arab and non-Arab Muslim writers. Thus, mini pseudo-epics were composed, with variants, which are at the heart of the inflated late medieval accounts, especially in the Mamlūk and Mongol eras. These tell of Arabian links with the Circassians, with the peoples of Bulghār, the Qipchaq Tatars and the Saljūq *émigrés* into the nomadic

<sup>26</sup>Kazem Beg, *Derbent Nameh, or the History of Derbent, Translated from a Turkish Version*, (St Petersburg, 1851), xix-xx.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, 26-7 and 161-2.

regions of the Dobrudja in Orthodox Bulgaria and Romania. Stories circulated in the Volga region, in Bashkiria and amongst the Spanish Muslim merchants in Hungary (Abū Ḥāmid amongst them) and in the Danube region. A variant cycle of tales of Arabic, Persian and Turcic inspiration was to gradually pervade the eastern region along sundry routes, some ancient, which led north from the Crimea, from Asia Minor, across the Qipchaq steppes and the Caucasian and trans-Caucasian region. They explain much of the content of the wars of the dervish hero, Sārī Salṭūq, in the Romanian Dobrudja, in the Crimean peninsula and in Southern Russia. No doubt the religious and crusading spirit increased on account of the close proximity of Genoese settlement near the Danube's mouth.

In the sixteenth century, when the cultural links between the rulers of Bulghār, the Qipchaq desert and Transcaucasia had long been established, the Circassian Mamlūk ruler of Egypt, Sulṭān Qānṣawh al-Ghawrī brought to light, in the following passage, which is to be found in the *Majālis al-sulṭān al Ghawrī*<sup>28</sup>, an Arabian pedigree for his Caucasian people:

Our Lord, the *Sulṭān*, said, "the origin of the Jarkas (the Circassians) is Šarkas. He came with the Banū Ghassān during the Caliphate of 'Umar, may God be pleased with him. They [the Circassians] became Muslims and they performed the pilgrimage. Their *Sulṭān* perambulated the *Ka'ba*. A poor man came up to him. So he pushed him aside and the poor man fell. He died. A group of the poor folk came and they sought for the blood of the slayer. 'Umar ruled that he should be given the death penalty, or else that he satisfy them. But they were not appeased unless his life was forfeited. The *Sulṭān* of the Circassians] said "Grant me a three day respite." That night he fled and he came to Heraclius, the ruler of Byzantium (*al-Qayṣar*). He embraced Christianity. So Heraclius sent them to the Qipchaq desert. The Circassians are their descendants.

There are points in the above story that suggest source material common to the accounts of the Dobrudja Gagaouz and the Turcic groups who accompanied the dervish Sārī Salṭūq to Byzantium and later to Dobrudja<sup>29</sup>. An Arabian calque that emerges here is that of the tribesman

<sup>28</sup>Ṣafahāt min ta'rikh Miṣr fi'l-qaran al-‘āshir al-hijrī, ed. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb‘ Azzām, (Cairo 1360/1941), p.85. According to Ahmad al-Rubā ‘yah (University of Yarmouk, Jordan), in an article on the subject of the Circassians in Jordan, entitled "Māzāhir al-taghayyur fi ‘ādāt al-zawāj lada'l Sharākisa fi'l-mujtama‘ al-urdunni: dirāsa fi'l-tamaththul (al-indimā) al-thaqāfi wa'l-jtimā‘i", in *Dirāsāt* (Amman) 14 (July, 1987): 204, n. 1. *Jarkas*, or *Sharkas*, is a deformation of *Karkat*, the ancient Greek nomination.

<sup>29</sup>P. Witteck, 'Yazijioghlu 'Ali on the Christian Turks of the Dorbruja', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 14 (1952): 654-58.

who flees from Arabia under threat of his life. A. Y. al-ʿUdhari, in his thesis, "Jahili Poetry Before Imru al-Qais,"<sup>30</sup> says that Sāma b. Luʿayy, a fourth-generation Qurayshite, had an argument with his brother ʿĀmir, and in a fit of anger he slapped his face and blinded one of his eyes. Fearing retribution, Sāma left Mecca and settled in Oman where he married a local girl. Al-Musayyab b. ʿAlas recorded the life of Sāma in a long narrative poem, fifteen lines of which are quoted in Abū Ubayd's *Muʿjam māʿastaʿjam*. Such stories explain the wars of the *Ayyām al-ʿarab*, which, in the opinion of W. Caskel and F. Gabrieli have little value as historical accounts, though they have an undoubted literary value within the Arabian society concerned.<sup>31</sup>

A considerably expanded and comparable account about the Arabian—in this instance Qurayshite—origin of the Circassians may be found in a latish Arabic work which was composed to glorify the lineage of the Mamlūk *Amīr*, Riḍwān Bey<sup>32</sup>. This was dated AH 1041/AD 1632 although it is obviously based on earlier versions. The manuscript in the John Ryland's Library, which has been studied by P.M. Holt, is dated AH 1092/AD 1681. Hence it was composed a century later than al-Ghawrī's text, translated above. In this version, a Qurayshite of the Banū ʿAmir (compare with the story of Sāma b. Luʿayy above), Kisāʿb. ʿIkrima was compelled to flee from Arabia during the reign of ʿUmar, having blinded a fellow Arab in a sporting contest. He had fled to the Greeks and he was granted asylum by Constantine (possibly the son of Heraclius in al-Ghawrī's account) and he was allowed to choose the locality of his exile in the lands that stretched beyond Byzantium. These are specifically identified in the copies consulted by Holt.

So he passed beyond with his people and he withdrew to the waste land that lay to the east and to the west of Constantinople. He found the country of al-ʿAbūbān, formerly known as the land of al-Niyāriq, in the land of Bulghār. It was once in the possession of the Armenians. The Byzantine Greeks (*al-Arwām*) overcame them... In it he found the remainder of the Armenians in numerous groups. He fought and he defeated them and made his home in their country. His kinsmen said to him, "We wonder at the speed with which the

<sup>30</sup>Abdullāh ʿAlī Yaḥya al-Udhari, "Jahili Poetry before Imru al-Qais," unpublished thesis submitted at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, March, 1991, 103-4.

<sup>31</sup>Francesco Gabrieli, "Elementi epici nell'antica poesia araba," in *Atti del convegno internazionale sul tema: La poesia epica e la sua formazione*, (Rome, 28 March-3 April 1969), (Rome, 1970), 751-8.

<sup>32</sup>P. M. Holt, *Studies in the History of the Near East*, (London, 1973), 220-30.

territories submit to us", so he said to them, "It is because of the strength of our courage (*min quwwat bainā*). (They asked him), "what shall we call this abode?" He said, "*Baṣna* (Bosnia?). So it received its name and it became a land which was pleasant in its climate, plentiful in its soldiery and now it is known as the land of the Jarākisa (Circassia)."

In the same passage there is to be found a reference to Albania and to the settlement of "Arabs" of the Banu Ghassan there, hence some confusion between Circassia, and even Bosnia, cannot be excluded.

In another copy of the opening pages of this same work, earlier in date, tracing the Qurayshite origin of the Circassians down to the Mamlūk rulers in Egypt, al-Ẓāhir Barqūq b. Anas al-Jarkasī is also stated to be from "Bulghār" (*al-Bulghārī*) although Holt believes that this is a copyist's mistake for *Yalbūghāwī* (Mamlūk of *Yalbūgha*). He also points out that the great Arab historian, Ibn Khaldūn, attributed a Ghassānid origin to the Circassians, thus bringing his statement into line with the earlier assertion of Sulṭān Qānṣawh al-Ghawrī.

The Turco-Iranian folk-epic of Abū Muslim, which is seemingly a variant of the early Arabic folk-epics of the exploits in the Caucasus of Maslama b. ʿAbd al-Malik, extend far beyond the Caucasus itself, embracing both Central Asian Khwārazm and Volga Bulghār. As Mélikoff has pointed out, its impact extends northwards into the Qipchaq steppes, and the Volga region and beyond:

It is pertinent to add a geographical fact: amongst the countries which border Khwārazim, in the Romance of Abū Muslim, are cited the land of *Bulgār*, separated from Khwārazim by the Bulgār desert, the steppe (*dast*) of the Kipcaks and Turkestan. Now the Bulgār empire of the Volga was destroyed by two Mongol invasions; a first in 1236, a second in 1241; as for the Kipcaks, they appeared in the eleventh century in the steppe, to the north of Khwārazim and of the territory then occupied by the Oguz Turks, and they maintained themselves there until the Mongols arrived.<sup>33</sup>

To pursue the theme of the Arabisation of folk tale into the Islamised regions of the Volga, and the northern territories beyond, is a fascinating topic that demands a far wider range of sources and as much hypothetical guess-work as analysis of the sparse documentation. I shall leave this for another occasion. That these influences were there and even at work later in the Kazan Khanate of the Golden Horde is undeniable and demonstrable. It is sufficient here to draw attention to the earliest sources and to the light that they shed on the first contacts

<sup>33</sup>Mélikoff, *Abū Muslim*, 34.

between the Christian and the Muslim Arabs, the Caucasians and the peoples to the north of the Caspian, to identify the perennial themes and to illustrate the persistence of variants of these legends over many centuries. The manner in which the Caucasian and proto-Bulgar peoples, who were non-Muslim, adopted, neglected or countered these Muslim *apologia* is a subject for further research.<sup>34</sup>

*University of Leeds*

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<sup>34</sup>Irène Mélikoff, "La geste de Melik Danişmend", *Étude critique du Danişmendname*, vol. 1. *Introduction et traduction*, (Paris, 1960), p.43. This study also contains considerable detail in regard to the heroic exploits of Sayyid Baṭṭal who is associated with Maslama b 'Abd al-Malik and also Sārī Salṭūq (see n. 29, above).





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## CONTRIBUTORS

### *Suzanne Conklin Akbari*

Educated at Johns Hopkins and Columbia, she is Assistant Professor of English and Medieval Studies at the University of Toronto. The article presented here is part of a work in progress called, "Orientalism in Medieval Literature from the Twelfth Century to 1492."

### *Thomas E. Burman*

Thomas E. Burman received his Ph.D. from the Centre for Medieval Studies at the University of Toronto in 1991, and is currently an associate professor of history at the University of Tennessee. His research has focused on the intellectual and religious relations between medieval Christendom and Islam. His study of the intellectual history of the Arabic-speaking Christians of Spain, *Religious Polemic and the Intellectual History of the Mozarabs, c. 1050-1200*, was published by E. J. Brill in 1994. Currently he is working on a book-length study of how medieval and early-modern European Christians read and interpreted the Qur'an, a topic he explored in his most recent publication, "Tafsir and Translation: Traditional Qur'an Exegesis and the Latin Qur'ans of Robert of Ketton and Mark of Toledo," *Speculum* 73 (1998):703-32.

### *Charles Burnett*

Charles Burnett (born 1951), undergraduate, research student and research fellow at St John's College, Cambridge (1969-79), Senior Research Fellow, Warburg Institute, (1979-82), Leverhulme Research Fellow, Sheffield University (1982-4), Member of the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, (1984-5), Lecturer in the history of Arabic/ Islamic Influence in Europe in the Middle Ages at the Warburg Institute (1985 to present). Published extensively on the transmission of Arabic learning to the West, including editions of Hermann of Carinthia's *De essentiis* (Leiden, 1982), and Abu Ma'shar's *The Abbreviation of the Introduction to Astrology* (with M. Yano and K. Yamamoto), in Arabic, English and Latin (Leiden, 1994), and books on *Magic and Divination in the Middle Ages: Texts and Techniques in the Islamic and Christian Worlds* (Aldershot, 1996) and *The Introduction of Arabic Learning into England* (London, 1997).

### *Arnold Cassola*

Teaches Maltese and Comparative Literature at the University of Malta, having previously taught at the Universities of Catania and Rome "La Sapienza." Author and editor of various works including *The Biblioteca Vallivelliana "regole per la lingua maltese"* (Malta, 1992), *Mediterranean Island Literature* (Malta, 1994), *The Great Siege of Malta and the Istanbul State Archives* (Malta, 1995), *Il*

"Mezzo Vocabolario" *maltese-Italiano del '700* (Malta, 1996), *L'italiano di Malta* (Malta, 1998) and (in collaboration with I. Bostan and T. Scheben) *The 1565 Ottoman "Malta Campaign Register."*

#### Brian Catlos

A gradute of the Centre for Medieval Studies at the University of Toronto, he completed his dissertation, "The Victors and the Vanquished: Christians and Muslims of the Ebro Valley, ss. XI-XIII" under the direction of Dr. Andrew Watson. His current project "Conflicts of Interest: Individual and Community Minority Self-Administration in the 14th-Century Crown of Aragon" is supervised by Thomas F. Glick of Boston University. He has published articles on topics relevant to his dissertation as well as on Christian-Muslim relations in Crusade-era Egypt, a translation of a tenth-century Andalusí work on women in Islam, and a number of shorter articles and reviews.

#### Maria Teresa Ferrer i Mallol

Born in Barcelona in 1940, she taught various courses at the University of Barcelona where she had received her doctorate, until appointed to the Institució Milà i Fontanals of the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas in Barcelona in 1989. Since that time she has worked in a number of capacities there, including a period as director; currently she is director of several journals including the *Anuario de estudios medievales* and *Miscel·lànea d'estudis medievals*. Her research interests include the study of the *mudéjars* of the Crown of Aragon, and the relationship of the Crown to the Islamic world. Among her numerous books, articles and editions are *Els sarraïns de la Corona catalano-aragonesa en el segle XIV* (Barcelona, 1987), *La frontera amb l'Islam en el segle XIV. Cristians i sarraïns al País Valencià* (Barcelona, 1988), and *Organització i defensa d'un territori frontera. La governació d'Oriola en el segle XIV* (Barcelona, 1990).

#### Oliver Friggieri

Born in Malta in 1947, he is Full Professor and Head of the Department of Maltese, University of Malta. In addition to numerous scholarly articles published in academic journals, he has written poetry, novels, short stories and critical essays which have been translated into a variety of languages.

#### William Granara

William Granara is Professor of the Practice of Arabic at Harvard University. He is former director of the Arabic Field School, American Embassy, Tunis, Tunisia; and director of the Centre for Arabic Study Abroad at the American University in Cairo. He received a Ph.D from the University of Pennsylvania in 1986 and wrote a dissertation on Muslim Sicily. He is the author of "Jihad and Cross Cultural Encounter in Muslim Sicily," *Harvard Middle East and Islamic Review* (HMEIR), Spring/Fall 1996, v.4, nos. 1-2; and "Remaking Muslim Sicily: Ibn Hamdis and the

Poetics of Exile," forthcoming in EDEBIYAT. He also works on contemporary Arabic literature.

*Hava Lazarus-Yafeh*

Professor of Islamic Civilization at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, she is the author of many publications in Hebrew and English, among them *Studies in Al-Ghazali* (Jerusalem, 1975) and *Intertwined Worlds, Medieval Islam and Bible Criticism* (Princeton, 1992). In 1993 she received the distinguished Israel Prize.

*Karla Mallette*

Mallette wrote her dissertation on Sicilian literary history during the Norman and Hohenstaufen eras, and received a Ph.D. from the University of Toronto's Centre for Medieval Studies in 1998. She contributed an article on twelfth- and thirteenth-century Sicilian literature to the upcoming volume *Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: Al-Andalus*.

*Manuela Marín*

Manuela Marín is a Senior Research Fellow in the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Madrid. Her fields of research include social and cultural history of al-Andalus, food in Muslim medieval societies and Arabic travel accounts. She is the author of *Individuo y sociedad en al-Andalus* (Madrid, 1992) and the editor (with David Waines) of an anonymous medieval cook book of Egyptian origin (Beirut-Stuttgart, 1993), and of many articles on these subjects.

*María Rosa Menocal*

Appointed R. Seldon Rose Professor at Yale University, she is the author of *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History: A Forgotten Heritage* (1987), *Writing in Dante's Cult of Truth from Borges to Boccaccio* (1991), and *Shards of Love: Exile and the Origins of Lyric* (1993). Currently she is co-editing the Al-Andalus volume of the *Cambridge History of Arabic Literature*.

*Harry T. Norris*

Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Leeds, he has a general interest in Arabic language and literature of all periods and in all Arabic and Muslim countries from Senegal to Singapore. Special interests include Saharan studies, the history and culture of the Berbers and southern Arabia and also early Scandinavian history, culture and art. Among his long list of books and articles are *The Berbers in Arabic Literature* (Warminster, 1977), *The Arabic Conquest of the Western Sahara* (London, 1986) and *Islam in the Balkans* (1994).

*Patrizia Onesta*

Born in Ancona in 1968 and graduated *cum laude* from the University of Macerata in 1993 with her thesis in Romance Philology "La poesia d'amore in Provenza

e in Al-Andalus. Dall'analisi al confronto" and followed this with further studies in Modern Literature (English, German and Castilian) at the same university. Currently she teaches Latin and Italian language and literature at the Liceo Scientifico di Parabiago (Milan) and is a collaborator in the project "Leopardi e L'Oriente" on the occasion of the bicentennial of the birth of the poet Giacomo Leopardi a Recanati.

#### *Antonino Pellitteri*

Born in Palermo in 1949, from 1992 he has been Associate Professor of the History of Arabo-Islamic Civilization at the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters of the University of Palermo. He studied Arabic and Islamic literature under Professor Umberto Rizzitano and followed this up with study in Cairo and Damascus. From his research on the history of the evolution of Islamic thought in the late nineteenth/early twentieth centuries he has produced *Il Riformismo Musulmano in Siria (1870-1920)* (Naples, 1987), *Nazionalismo Arabo Siria-Libano (1900-1950)* (Palermo, 1992), and *3Abd al-Rahmàn al-Kawàkibì (1835/54-1902). Nuovi materiali bio-bibliografici* (Rome, 1996). Relative to the Islamic presence in medieval Sicily, he has published *I Fatimiti e la Sicilia (sec. X). Materiali per uno studio sulla Sicilia thagr e terra di gihàd con particolare riferimento a fonti ismailite dell'epoca* (Palermo, 1997).

#### *Elizabeth Pérez*

A recent graduate of Hampshire College, where her undergraduate thesis was entitled, "Cosa Sabrosa: the Writing of Saint Teresa of Àvila," she is currently a Mellon Fellow in Religious Studies at the University of Chicago Divinity School. She has published in various journals, including the *Bilingual Review*, and in the anthology *El Coro: A Chorus of Latino and Latino Poetry*, published in 1998 by the University of Massachusetts Press and intends to focus on Afro-Caribbean religious traditions, and more specifically on those which derive from Roman Catholicism and Yoruba spirituality.

#### *Cynthia Robinson*

Cynthia Robinson received her doctorate in Art History from the University of Pennsylvania in 1995. The Middle East Studies Association granted her an Honourable Mention in the 1996 Malcolm H. Kerr Dissertation Competition for her thesis on the culture of the Taifa kingdom. Currently she is an Adjunct Professor at the University of Pennsylvania and the New School for Social Research.

#### *Haun Saussy*

Haun Saussy teaches Chinese Literature and Comparative Literature, with an emphasis on poetics and hermeneutics, at Stanford University. His publications include a number of articles on issues of oral and literate composition, the place of women writers in imperial China, and problems of intercultural interpretation.

*Michael Weber*

Earned M. Div. And S. T. M. degrees from Yale, after which he worked as Campus Minister and part-time instructor in Religion. Earned his M.A. and Ph.D. at Boston University under the direction of Thomas Glick with a dissertation entitled, "The Translating and Adapting of Al-Farabi's *Book of the Enumeration of the Sciences* in Spain." Currently he is Adjunct Professor of history and humanities at North Essex Community College and is completing a translation of the *Enumeration*.

*Otto Zwartjes*

Since studying Spanish Philology at the University of Amsterdam and at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, he has worked as a researcher and university instructor. At present he is a professor of Spanish language at the University of Oslo. Currently, he is working on a project concerning grammatical and linguistic theory in sixteenth and seventeenth-century New Spain.



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