

'His Pen and Ink Are a Powerful Mirror'

Christians and Jews in Muslim Societies

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'His Pen and Ink Are a Powerful Mirror'

*Andalusi, Judaeo-Arabic, and Other Near Eastern
Studies in Honor of Ross Brann*

Edited by

Adam Bursi

S.J. Pearce

Hamza M. Zafer



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Contents

- Acknowledgments IX
Notes on Contributors X
Note on Transliterations and Translations XV
Bibliography of Ross Brann's Publications XVI
- Introduction 1
- 1 Legislating Borders: Naturalized Genoese and Sefardi Merchants in the Ottoman Mediterranean 9
Ali H. Akhtar
- 2 The Headings of the Psalms: A Case Study in Medieval Exegesis and Translation 35
Esperanza Alfonso
- 3 An Iberian Braid for Ross 63
Peter Cole
- 4 Panegyric as Pedagogy: Moses ibn Ezra's Didactic Poem on the "Beautiful Elements of Poetry" (*maḥāsīn al-shi'r*) in the Context of Classical Arabic Poetics 65
Jonathan Decter
- 5 Sefarad in Tzarfat: Sefardi and Sefardi-Style Piyyutim in MS Bernkastel-Kues 313 94
Elisabeth Hollender
- 6 Solomon vs. Solomon: The Fabrication of a Hebrew-*shu'ūbite* Polemic 118
Uriah Kfir
- 7 "His (Jewish) Nation ... and His (Muslim) King": Modern Nationalism Articulated through Medieval Andalusī Poetry 140
S.J. Pearce
- 8 Inscribing the Good News: The Run-Up to Mark 163
F.E. Peters

- 9 Fifteenth-Century Hebrew Literature: Some Reflections on Textual Transmission for a Modern Edition 180
Arturo Prats Oliván
- 10 Desert and Palace: Poetics of Place in Naṣṣid Poems to the Prophet 198
Cynthia Robinson
- 11 The Story of the Crooked Preacher by Jacob ben El'azar 231
Tova Rosen
- 12 *Ohev Nashim* and *Minḥat Yehudah Sone' ha-Nashim*: New Fragments of a Debate 259
Aurora Salvatierra Ossorio
- 13 Ḥever the Pious: Some Aspects of Religion in the *Taḥkemoni* by Judah al-Ḥarīzī 282
Raymond P. Scheindlin
- 14 Well-Ordered Growth: Meanings and Aesthetics of the Almohad Mosque of Seville 298
Jessica Renee Streit
- 15 A Translation of Q Luqmān/31 326
Shawkat M. Toorawa
- 16 The Story of the Female Jewish Wine Merchant: An Example of Cultural Translation in Medieval Hebrew Literature 329
David Torollo
- Index 351

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Note on Transliterations and Translations

Hebrew text is transliterated according to the JQR system and Arabic text according to the IJMES system. Sources for translations are as indicated in each individual chapter.

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Introduction

This is a volume of essays and texts published in honor of Ross Brann's 70th birthday by his students and friends. The contents of the volume are wide ranging but united thematically by contributions concerned with literature, religiosity, and ideas in al-Andalus, the Islamic West, and the wider Mediterranean basin, with the multiconfessional, multilingual cultural history of the region and its inhabitants. What is remarkable about this volume is that its authors are exactly the scholars, thinkers, and translators one would have solicited for a volume designed to showcase the cutting edge of scholarship in these areas even absent their connections to the honoree. That these are all individuals who have been taught and mentored by Ross and have been his colleagues and carried out research alongside him is itself evidence of his role in shaping the intellectual work that has come to define our understanding of the literary and cultural history of the medieval Judaeo-Islamic world with Spain at its center.

Ross's work in Islamicate and Andalusī medieval literary and cultural history altered the trajectory of the field by insisting upon a holistic approach that does not separate Islam and its cultural framework from Christianity and Judaism and sees the high culture and day-to-day lives of adherents of all three religions as embedded in that cultural framework. Such an attitude characterized Ross's career from the very beginning, as he left his first professorial post on principle, to object to New York University's decision in the early 1980s to separate the fields of Islamic studies from Jewish studies, creating two new departments out of the one—then known as Near Eastern Languages and Literatures—that they had previously inhabited jointly.

Along these lines, Ross's first book, *The Compunctious Poet*, published in 1991, changed the paradigm for our understanding of the cultural and social role of Hebrew-language poets in an Arabizing and Islamicate Andalusī society. Through paradigmatic case studies of three "compunctious" poets—Moses ibn 'Ezra, Judah Halevi, and Todros Abulafia—the volume explores, on their own terms, the seeming contradictions of the Arabizing Hebrew poetry of al-Andalus and the apparently competing contemporaneous opinions about its development. In doing so, the volume ultimately elucidates the poetic typology that allows these bards and their verse the flexibility to inhabit a single world that only appears to be divided in two along the lines of religion and language. The book challenged the conventions of scholarship at that time, which held that the poets were partisans and their lives the static subject of either Hebrew or Arabic biography and criticism, and ultimately it is a vindication of literature as an identity measure and a historical force.

In 2002, he again revolutionized the study of medieval Arabizing Hebrew poetry in its cultural and historical contexts with his second monograph, *Power in the Portrayal*. Predicated upon a between-the-lines reading of classically cast historical polemical texts, the volume offers an interpretation that moves beyond the conservatism of its Straussian origins to demonstrate the value of literary texts for cultural history. By setting writings by and about Jews into its Islamicate context, *Power in the Portrayal* argues to its readers that al-Andalus was a literary and cultural world in which authors and readers could offer a word-perfect performance of their roles while simultaneously subverting them, and in which the distance between Jews and Muslims reflected in their polemics against each other was predicated on their closeness and perhaps even their mutual appreciation. Through this reading, al-Andalus comes into focus as a historical reality in which only by knowing each other could individuals be self-critical about their place in the world and could writers speaking on behalf of their self-identified smaller societies both pillory and praise each other with the same level of detail and skill. Perhaps more importantly, it marks a methodological sea change in the field, realigning the relationship between historical and literary writing in the Middle Ages that had previously seen historiographic overlap only incidentally and in a more limited fashion. By insisting upon a historiography and a poetics of both-and rather than either-or, and through a historicizing contextualization of close and careful readings of text, the body of Ross's work has broken through walls that exist within the academy and has expanded no less than the visible horizon of Spain itself.

His work also extends to scholarship on the reception of medieval Spain in the modern world and to teaching Cornell students in such diverse areas as the literature of the contemporary Arab world, the modern evolution of the concept of holy war from its origins in late antiquity and the medieval period, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He has written for both scholarly and lay audiences on modern topics, with work ranging from an academic article defining and defying the mythology of the misbegotten term *moor*, to a popular presentation designed for students of Andalusí cultural history and its impact on the modern world. In the classroom, too, rather than falling into the easy trap of teaching only in his most immediate area of research, Ross has dramatically amplified the reach of the Department of Near Eastern Studies by teaching historically grounded, timely, topical courses that draw in hundreds of students; he has also taught the wider community in New York State, offering regional workshops to the general population at critical times—such as in the wake of September 11, 2001—when knowledge outside of the academy of the Mediterranean and the Near East has been in short supply but more necessary than ever.

Understanding the value of community life in education, Ross devoted the better part of fifteen years to the development of Cornell's residential house system and ultimately served as the first Dean and House Professor of the first house, named for Cornell emerita professor and labor historian Alice Cook—it was at Ross's urging that all the houses are named for distinguished Cornell faculty. At a Passover seder that he and his family hosted at Alice Cook House one year for Jewish students in the House and the Department of Near Eastern Studies, one undergraduate student let on that a third of the students in the three-hundred-person lecture on holy war that Ross was teaching that semester thought he was Christian, one third thought he was Muslim, and one third thought he was Jewish. "That means I'm doing my job right," Ross answered, living and modeling to his students a fully integrated life of the mind that offers no quarter to partisanship or factionalism.

Similarly, his insistence in the classroom that students of Arabic learn Hebrew, too, and vice versa, enriches the intellectual lives of his students and has helped to make the academic programs in Cornell's Department of Near Eastern Studies among the most integrative and innovative in the country. The breadth of his work, interests, commitments, and investments speaks not only to an exceptional intellect but also to an unrivaled generosity of magisterial spirit and skill.



Thus, this volume seeks to honor Ross's career as a researcher and teacher and herald its next decades through a set of studies, essays, text editions, and translations that showcases the breadth of his impact on a wide range of academic fields—Judaean-Arabic language and literature, Hebrew poetry, Mediterranean cultural history, and religious studies, among others—written not only by his friends and teachers, and by his colleagues and cohort, but also by his students and the younger generation of scholars he has taught and mentored in his more than three decades at Cornell University. Ross's vision of the Middle Ages is an organic one that refuses to accept the borders and boundaries imposed on it by post-Enlightenment thought. His work insists on a unity of both or of all, rather than the academy's more traditional insistence on either-or. The inclusion here of work that might be considered traditionally and exclusively the purview of Islamic studies, such as a translation of the Qur'ān by Shawkat Toorawa, and of an essay on early Christian textual history by F.E. Peters alongside fourteen studies on various aspects of Andalusī, Andalusī-diaspora, and Judaean-Arabic literature, is designed to show that the literature of al-Andalus and of Arabophone Jews and Muslims at once stands

as its own coherent unit and as a part of a broader literary and historical continuum. This is not simply a book of *sic-et-non* but a literary-historical mosaic on an even grander scale.

Jonathan Decter's chapter makes precisely that point by illustrating how Moses ibn 'Ezra's *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara* can be read as an apologia for Hebrew verse grounded fully in Arabic poetics. Through a first-of-its-kind reading of the "model poem" appended to the end of the work, Decter offers many new insights into Ibn 'Ezra's engagement with his Arabic sources (in particular the understudied *Ḥilyat al-muḥāḍara* by al-Ḥātimī) and opens up new avenues for the study of *badī'* in Andalusī Hebrew verse. Cynthia Robinson's chapter, too, demonstrates the ways in which Andalusī artists and poets began with raw material from the Islamic East and transformed it into something wholly and distinctly Andalusī. By integrating a study of the material remnants of *mawlid* celebrations in Naṣrid Granada with a reading of the Arabic poetry written and recited to mark those festivals, Robinson shows that court poets writing to mark the Prophet Muḥammad's birthday evoke a landscape that draws upon eastern descriptions of the Najd and leverages that choice (different from that of the eastern poets, who often set their *mawlid* poetry to evoke the Ḥijāz) to create a uniquely Andalusī form connected both to the Iberian Peninsula and its material culture, to the point that these ceremonies so deeply suggested the place that they were ultimately used to legitimate Naṣrid rule in Granada against Marinid encroachment from North Africa. Along a different geographic axis, Jessica Renee Streit likewise illustrates the ways in which Andalusī materials draw upon other parts of the Islamic world and make them their own. In her chapter, Streit demonstrates the centrality of North African aesthetics in Andalusī architecture in the Almohad period, while also showing that it was natively Andalusī philosophical and aesthetic thinking that helped architects and artisans make the building particularly local to Seville.

Ali H. Akhtar's study demonstrates that economic and social life in the literary and historical continuum of the Mediterranean often requires tremendous creativity in the face of legal and social pressures. His chapter explores the parallel and interconnected pressures faced by sixteenth-century Sefardi-Jewish and Catholic merchant families whose lives and businesses were conducted in the limen between the republic of Venice and the Ottoman Sultanate; he demonstrates that both communities were swept up in the larger political entities' desires to assert their sovereignty and that as they adopted different strategies to work around new limitations that altered the legal and commercial realities in which they lived, ultimately transforming themselves from religious minorities within a particular realm into transimperial citizens.

Geographic and temporal boundaries are also crossed within the realm of Hebrew poetry and poetics. Elisabeth Hollender highlights the fascination of northern French readers with Andalusi-style piyyutim as reflected in a particular manuscript witness, the liturgical manuscript now known as Bernkastel-Kues 313. In her chapter, she shows that the collection of nonobligatory piyyutim included in the manuscript demonstrates positive French attitudes of desire toward Andalusi-style liturgical poetry, in contrast with well-documented negative attitudes in the region, insulating French religious law and reasoning from its Andalusi counterpart. S.J. Pearce's chapter explores the reception of Andalusi poetry across temporal, rather than geographic lines through a reading of an essay written by a young Yehuda Amichai that argues for the inclusion of Samuel ibn Naghrila's poetry within a fully Spanish literary canon. She argues that Amichai's essay represents an early attempt at a poetics in which modern Hebrew writers could recourse to Andalusi poetry and its history in order to situate themselves as both national poets and poets within a trans-national Jewish poetic tradition. And Esperanza Alfonso's chapter examines the headings of select Psalms in a heavily glossed biblical codex now part of the collection of Oxford University's Bodleian Library with particular interest the Romance words in those glosses as an interpretive cipher for later readers; by rejecting a culturally artificial distinction between Romance and Semitic languages within the Andalusi and post-Andalusi ambit, she is able to lay out the traces of late medieval readers as they struggled to make sense within the liminal space between the two.

Hebrew rhymed prose *maqāmāt* are the most widely discussed object of study in this volume. The contributions on this topic reflect all phases and types of investigation: Aurora Salvatierra Ossorio presents the first published edition of newly-discovered stories while Tova Rosen offers a new reading of an already well-known text. Salvatierra introduces new manuscript evidence that confirms what scholars have only been able to speculate about in the past, namely that even medieval readers saw a close connection between Yehudah ibn Shabbetai's *Minḥat Yehudah Sone' ha-Nashim* (The offering of Judah the Misogynist) and Yedaiah Bedersi's riposte, *Ohev Nashim* (The woman-lover), and understood the two texts to form part of a single literary conversation. Salvatierra's analysis of Jewish Theological Seminary MS 10774 offers codicological proof for the intertextuality at which the texts themselves hint. Her edition of the manuscript's version of Ibn Shabbetai's texts makes available another important manuscript witness to the text, with some significant variations from the versions already edited and published. Rosen's introduction to the eighth *maqāma* in Jacob ben El'azar's *Sefer ha-Meshalim* makes important Hebrew-language scholarship available for the first time to an Anglophone audience

while simultaneously updating it with insights based in the theories of language and discourse of Mikhail Bakhtin; her translation of the chapter reflects that new theoretical perspective. Raymond P. Scheindlin's innovation in reading Judah al-Ḥarīzī's collection of *maqāmāt* entitled *Sefer ha-Taḥkemoni* comes in viewing it with the eye of a historian of religion, demonstrating the ways in which various exempla within the collection draw upon Islamic, Neoplatonist, and Jewish thought to create a recognizable and complex Jewish substratum within a work that is usually read for its entertainment or literary value, thereby demonstrating the inseparability of religious considerations from aesthetic ones and the subtle interaction of many spheres within this cultural context.

Both David Torollo and Uriah Kfir demonstrate the ways in which secular Hebrew literary texts grow up natively within an Arabo-Islamic context, while Arturo Prats Oliván sets them in their Romance context, as Alfonso does earlier in the volume. Prats Oliván issues a clarion call to the field at large to consider and to work with late texts from and around the Aragonese city of Zaragoza that reflect Andalusī memory within a Christian context through full literary engagement with both of those religio-cultural environments. Torollo's analysis and new translation of a single story from a collection of *maqāmāt* similar to the one authored by Jacob ben El'azar, the anonymous *Mishle he-'arav*, identifies a typology of storytelling that draws his analysis to the sources, broadly construed, of the particular story of the female Jewish wine merchant; through that typology and source-critical analysis, he demonstrates the engagement of Hebrew-language literary writing for a Jewish audience with the Arabo-Islamic legal tradition in which it grew up. And finally, returning to our starting point, Uriah Kfir approaches Ibn Gabirol's poetry following a methodology that resembles Torollo's, showing that the "matrix of similes" found in an early Ibn Gabirol poem emerged and developed from a starting point in eastern Arabic poetry and underwent a process of Andalu-cization, similar to the process in poetics discussed by Decter and in art by Streit. Kfir's chapter demonstrates that even when Arabic and Hebrew literary traditions are in tension with each other, they nonetheless represent parts of a unified literary culture in which Jewish tradents could be full participants.

Although in this introduction we have grouped the chapters according to one set of thematic criteria, we have organized them within the volume alphabetically by author rather than thematically in order to allow readers to draw the many kinds of connections that exist among all of the different papers in this volume rather than preconditioning them to see some chapters as more related to some than to others. Allowing each reader to trace his or her

own path through the volume rather than insisting on an authorized reading seemed an approach to curating this volume befitting its recipient.



The title of the volume, *His Pen and Ink Are a Powerful Mirror*, comes from a poem, *Ha-Shir zo'eq* (Poetry wails) written in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century by the Castilian exile Isaac al-Aḥḍab, who took up residence in Sicily after the violence directed against northern-Spanish Jewish communities in 1391; it is a review of the history of Hebrew poetry in Spain from the perspective of a poetic voice who sees itself already past the end of an age. Yet rather than joining in the mourning for the literary form, the voice instead lauds its great practitioners not only as the poets who forever changed the literary landscape but as mourners of Zion caught between the sacred and the secular and as the political leaders of Spain itself who could command by the pen:

Ibn Ghiyyat's thinking was swift:
 he carved out the lines that we still hear.
 How deep they were, and how they soared,
 taking their place on high with the spheres!
 And the poems of Halevi are milk and honey,
 with manna beside them, a sheer delight—
 smooth and pleasing, precious vessels,
 their discourse sweet, their texture tight.
 The Ibn Ezras were like commanders
 who harnessed their chariots in armies of song—
 verse their vehicle, they were riders,
 bearing bows along with their swords.
 All these in each generation
 were viziers of song, whose bread was words.¹

Yet al-Aḥḍab precedes all of these with Ibn Gabirol, who was a nostalgic muse of sorts to many of the late fifteenth-century poets:²

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- 1 All translations of the poem cited here are from Peter Cole, *The Dream of the Poem: Hebrew Poetry from Muslim and Christian Spain, 950–1492* (Princeton: University Press, 2007), 322–323. The edition of the Hebrew text may be found in al-Aḥḍab's *diwān: Poetry of Isaac ben Solomon al-Aḥḍab* (Hebrew), ed. Ora Ra'anan (Lod: Haberman Institute for Literary Research, 1988).
 - 2 Similar to al-Aḥḍab's lament over the state of the art, his near-contemporary Shelomo Bonafed wrote both in imitation of and lament over Ibn Gabirol's rhetorical prowess: Cole, *Dream*

Shelomo led in Spain at the start
 with sacred currency and figures of splendor.
 Poetry crowned his kingdom and rule.
 His pen and ink were a powerful mirror.

With his reference to the “sacred currency” (*shiqlei qodesh*) of Ibn Gabirol’s language, al-Aḥḍab places his predecessor at the center of the Andalusī Hebrew poetic canon; the phrase suggests a double meaning referring to the sacrality of the Hebrew language and to the embedding of verses from Ibn Gabirol’s *Choice of Pearls* into Joseph Qimḥi’s later *The Sacred Currency* (*Sheqel ha-qodesh*). He lauds Ibn Gabirol not only on his own terms but by signaling to the reader the lasting impact he had on his successors. The final line cited here evokes Ibn Gabirol’s own claim to the literary-regnal title of “prince of the poem”³ and ultimately concludes that it was his output and the tools of his trade that cast his reflection forward to illuminate the work of the poets who would come after him.

The circumstances from which we are writing could not be more different from those in which al-Aḥḍab found himself; although these are dark days in which parallels to a lachrymose vision of medieval Spain may be increasingly attractive to some readers, the study of poetry and the humanities are flourishing at Cornell, and in the broad area of Judaeo-Arabīc and Andalusī studies more generally, in large measure because of Ross’s fostering of his students and disciples and his contributions to the field at large. Where al-Aḥḍab saw “every idiot, and every fool, spread his net in the hunt for poems,” our field sees precious little of that because of the standards that Ross, as its veritable dean, has set for himself and exemplified for others. The tools of his trade are the mark of his own *faḍā’il* and of the impact he has had and continues to have on those who have followed him. And so, felicitously, although this volume marks an anniversary, it does not mark the end of anything. *Wa-rashadta*.

ACB, SJP, and HMZ
 November 20, 2016
 San Antonio, TX

of the Poem, 317–318; Hayyim Schirmann, “Solomon Bonafed’s Polemic against the Grandees of Zaragoza” (Hebrew), *Qoveṣ ‘al Yad 4* (1946): 8–64, at 4.

3 Dīwān of Solomon ibn Gabirol, poem 109/61.

Legislating Borders in the Early Modern World: Naturalized Genoese and Sefaradi Merchants in the Ottoman Mediterranean

Ali H. Akhtar

Much has been written on medieval and early modern trade networks, which operated across polities and often specialized in a particular set of commodities. The question of how connected these networks were with local social life and ruling political culture has received particular attention among comparative historians. A well-studied example is the global Iranian Armenian trade network based in sixteenth-century New Julfa (Isfahan), a center of trade routes that linked the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean worlds.¹ In a comparative analysis of groups such as these Armenian silk merchants and contemporary Sefaradi Jewish wholesalers of spices and precious stones, historians and historical sociologists have long argued that there was an apparent gap in social customs and political activity between trade diasporas and their “host societies.”² In the case of the Iranian Armenians, however, recent research on the extensive political activities of particular Armenian families such as the Shahrims—known as “gli Scerimani” in Venice—has called into question whether this social and political gap has been overemphasized or even simplified.³ In the case of trade diasporas active in the Ottoman Empire, the history of legal pluralism in the governance of subjects, the presence of foreign short-term residents, the influx of foreign transient merchants, and the multiconfessional framework of subjecthood together indicate that the very notion of a politically and culturally distinct “trade diaspora” has obscured the history of more complex paradigms of legal and social interaction. The naturalization of foreigners as subjects as well as the corollary process of linguistic and civic acculturation is of particular interest.⁴ This history has been the subject of recent literature on

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- 1 Sebouh D. Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).
 - 2 Philip D. Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).
 - 3 Ina Baghdiantz McCabe, Gelina Harlaftis, and Ioanna Pepelasis Minoglou, eds., *Diaspora Entrepreneurial Networks: Four Centuries of History* (Oxford: Berg, 2005).
 - 4 Karen Barkey’s sociological analysis of Ottoman governance sheds light on some of these

transimperial subjecthood between the Italian peninsula and the Ottoman Empire. Natalie Rothman, Eric Dursteler, and Emrah Gürkan in particular have traced the myriad political and cultural ways that families involved in commerce and diplomacy straddled the legal worlds of the Italian peninsula and the Ottoman domains, often working as subjects of two distinct polities.⁵

This article takes the transimperial subjecthood of two groups of Ottoman subjects—the Genoese-heritage Latin-rite subjects of Pera and the Sefaradi subjects who settled throughout the Ottoman Aegean—as a starting point for investigating two questions about naturalization as a governing mode of delineating political boundaries: First, against the backdrop of mid-sixteenth-century competition between Italian peninsular polities and the Ottoman Sultanate to expand commercial activity in their respective ports—especially Ottoman Istanbul, papal-held Ancona, and the Republic of Venice’s capital on the lagoon—in what ways did the naturalization of merchant communities become a mechanism for early modern governments to extend their legal sovereignty and, in turn, their political boundaries? Agreements of residency, movement privileges, and customs duties are of particular import to this question. Second, as individuals within merchant communities began to straddle the jurisdictions of competing polities—in what ways did Italian peninsular and Ottoman administrations attempt to reinforce those political boundaries of naturalization, and to what extent were they successful? In the case of Genoese-origin and Sefaradi subjects of the Ottomans, for example, some family members owned property locally while spouses or relatives held Venetian extraterritorial status in a manner that Ottoman administrators sought to regulate.

One of the patterns that emerges in this article’s reexamination of key episodes in early modern global history is the strong pull of Ottoman subjecthood for Genoese and Sefaradi transimperial merchants in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in accordance with (a) a long medieval history of Genoese nobility naturalizing as foreigners within neighboring empires that offered opportunities in long-distance trade, and (b) an enduring early modern history of Sefaradi Jewish merchants securing flexibility in residency and

intersections between centralizing governance and porous cultural boundaries. Barkey, *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

5 E. Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects Between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012); Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople: Nation, Identity, and Coexistence in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006); Gürkan, “Espionage in the Sixteenth-Century Mediterranean: Secret Diplomacy, Mediterranean Go-Betweens, and the Ottoman Habsburg Rivalry,” PhD diss., Georgetown University, 2012.

movement throughout Ottoman domains in comparison with the restrictions that were imposed and retracted haphazardly in Venice and Papal-held Ancona prior to the rise of Tuscany's "free port" of Livorno.

1 **Genoese Merchants from Genoa to Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman Pera**

The way that much of the nobility of the Genoese Republic came to naturalize as Habsburg Spanish subjects and Ottoman subjects in the sixteenth century is a function both of Genoese governing expansion practices as well as Genoese conceptions of civic participation in their commune. The Republic expanded territorially in the late medieval period to include islands and ports in and around the Aegean (Lesbos, Chios, Pera) and Black Sea (Caffa), which it periodically leased out for private Genoese ventures and semi-independent governance. The merchants and financiers behind those ventures in some cases naturalized as foreign subjects for various periods of time.⁶ That is, while naturalization was a centripetal force for the Venetian Republic and Ottoman Sultanate, absorbing Aegean Greeks and Anatolian Armenians into their respective conceptions of subjecthood, naturalization was also a centrifugal force for the Genoese that allowed the nobility to participate simultaneously in the politics of the commune and the commerce of foreign lands as merchants, corsairs, financiers, and diplomatic figures. It is against this backdrop that many Genoese citizens resident in the Byzantine Aegean came to negotiate with the Ottomans and ultimately naturalize as Ottoman subjects, creating in the sixteenth century something of an Ottoman trade diaspora along with the Ottoman Sefaradi merchants of the Adriatic and Ottoman Armenian merchants of Anatolia.⁷

6 This picture of a continuing process in the sixteenth century of Genoese expansion westward and eastward as a kind of trade diaspora, one that remained connected with the center and with other nodes of Genoese commerce throughout the Mediterranean, contrasts with much of the literature on the Genoese Republic. In light of the sixteenth-century absorption of Genoese Aegean and Black Sea territories into Venetian and Ottoman domains, and against the backdrop of growing political connections between the Genoese center and Iberia, historians have in many cases overlooked enduring Genoese diplomatic and commercial activity as both naturalized Ottoman subjects and naturalized Venetian subjects. Céline Dauverd, *Imperial Ambition in the Early Modern Mediterranean: Genoese Merchants and the Spanish Crown* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Steven A. Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese, 958–1528* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

7 While the Ottoman Latin-rite community was broader than the Genoese families who numbered among them, there was still continuity in Genoese property ownership, family busi-

Genoese notarial documents indicate that the naturalization of Genoese residents in Byzantine Constantinople as Ottoman subjects after 1453 was a complex and sudden change of circumstances that, nonetheless, had key parallels in other nodes of Genoese Mediterranean commerce.⁸ When Byzantine Constantinople became the new Ottoman capital in 1453, the district of Pera across the Golden Horn had been under independent Genoese control since 1273. The *podestà*, whose residence still stands in ruins within walking distance of the former Venetian embassy and current Italian consulate, functioned as the district's mayor. By 1453, the Genoese Perots had become linguistically Hellenized and were typically bilingual, even as they remained generally beyond the boundaries of Byzantine subjecthood.⁹ More surprising was the fact that their political and commercial relations with the Ottomans were already more than a century old. Despite having restored the Byzantine family to the crown in Constantinople after a long period of Venetian-allied Crusader rule (1204–1260), the Byzantines allied themselves with the Venetians in 1350 during the five-year Venetian-Genoese war in the Aegean and Black Seas. The Ottomans, based in Bursa, were the surprising entry into the war, and they helped secure Genoese power in Pera. In return, the Ottomans were rewarded with key trading privileges.¹⁰ Among the Ottoman agents who helped secure those privileges, paradoxically, were two Genoese men who ended up working for Orhan (r. 1323–1362).

nesses, and trade networks within the Latin-rite community. Eric Dursteler, "Education and Identity in Constantinople's Latin Rite Community, c. 1600," *Renaissance Studies* 18 (2004): 287–303; Özden Mercan, "The Genoese of Pera in the Fifteenth Century: Draperio and Spinola Families," in *Living in the Ottoman Realm: Empire and Identity, 13th to 20th Centuries*, eds. Christine Isom-Verhaaren and Kent F. Schull (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016), 42–54.

- 8 The most illustrative series of these documents has been published in the following: Ausilia Roccatagliata, "Notai Genovesi in Oltremare: Atti rogati a Pera (1453)," *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria* 39 (1999): 101–160; Roccatagliata, *Notai Genovesi in Oltremare: Atti rogati a Pera e Mitilene. Vol. 1: Pera (1408–1490)* (Genoa: University of Genoa, 1982).
- 9 Christopher Wright offers an analytical picture of the simultaneous rise of Genoese linguistic acculturation in the Greek-speaking Aegean and the rise of Genoese political sovereignty in the region, including in Chios and in greater Constantinople's district of Pera. Wright, *The Gattilusio Lordships and the Aegean World 1355–1462* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).
- 10 Nevra Necipoğlu's analysis of the complexities of Byzantine-Latin political alignments contextualizes the changing alliances of the Venetian and Ottoman Republics with Byzantium. Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins: Politics and Society in the Late Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

Filippo Demerode and Bonifacio da Sori were originally Genoese ambassadors from Pera who were sent to negotiate a trade agreement with Orhan after the Genoese-Byzantine conflict of 1350. By 1355, they were working as agents in service of the Ottoman sultan. The Genoese document describes them as Orhan's "friends and servants," even as they were originally Genoese ambassadors sent to Orhan five years earlier.¹¹ In what reflects the early blending of political boundaries between Genoese Pera and Ottoman Bursa, the sultan successfully requested from the Genoese that these two be granted tax immunity during their time back in Pera conducting the sultan's business. While Christians had worked in political positions for sultans, caliphs, and emirs since the seventh century, they were typically local Christian subjects—whether Armenian, Greek Orthodox, Syrian Orthodox, or Coptic—already residing within the original Umayyad and Abbasid domains. That is, with the exception of Andalusí Christians, Christian subjects of an Islamic polity were typically not Roman Catholic Christians from Latin "Frankish" domains. In the unusual case of a married Florentine couple working in Mamluk political service in Cairo as interpreters, the European visitors who met them discovered that they were unsurprisingly Muslim Florentines who had presumably converted some years prior.¹² The case of Filippo Demerode and Bonifacio da Sori as Genoese agents in service of the Ottoman sultan Orhan in 1355, in other words, foreshadowed a cultural shift that had certain precedents in Muslim-Crusader frontier lands: Latin Christians naturalized as subjects of an Islamic polity as though the Latin church were among the various Orthodox churches of the late antique Near East. In another prelude to naturalization, Genoese and Venetian families were allowed residencies in early fifteenth-century Ottoman Bursa to facilitate their trade in Iranian silks. Among the key families who flourished in this market were the Genoese Spinolas, one of whom participated in the negotiations of 1453 and 1454.

When negotiations began in 1453 between the Genoese of Pera and the Ottomans, some families had already left for nearby Genoese-held domains such as the island of Chios, while others remained or returned. The agreement between the Ottomans and Genoese allowed the Genoese to remain in Pera on the condition that they pay the *haraç* tax "like the other non-Muslims."¹³ That is,

11 Archivio di Stato di Genova, *San Giorgio Manoscritti Membranacei IV*, fol. 304v, published in L.T. Belgrano, "Prima serie di documenti riguardanti la colonia di Pera," *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria* 13 (1877–1884): 125–126.

12 Olivia R. Constable, *Housing the Stranger in the Mediterranean World: Lodging, Trade, and Travel in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 303–305.

13 The agreement took the form of a capitulation charter (*ahidname*) not with the Republic of Genoa, but with the Genoese of Pera, which was part of the Republic but independent

the Genoese were to be subsumed into Ottoman Latin-rite subjecthood like the other churches, thus becoming the foundation of the Ottoman Latin-rite Perot community that eventually included naturalized Venetians. One member of the Spinola family, Luciano Spinola, together with the former *podestà* of Pera, Baldassare Marufo, attempted to secure the return of Genoese independence in Pera under the authority of the office of the *podestà*—that is, a return to the Byzantine-era arrangement that the Ottomans had helped the Genoese maintain after the Byzantine-Genoese conflict of 1350–1355. Mehmed II denied the request, and the foundation was laid for the growth of a new Ottoman Latin-rite community. This community differed theoretically and practically from non-resident Genoese and Venetian visitors in terms of laws surrounding property leasing, movement around the empire, and taxation.

From the perspective of residency and movement, what was notable about the naturalization of Genoese merchants as Ottoman subjects was a phenomenon that was seen less in Mamluk Egypt and more in Mamluk Syria in earlier centuries: the free movement and residence of Latin “Frankish” Christian merchants inland within Islamic polities beyond the boundaries of ports such as Alexandria and the lodges or hostelries (*fondaco*, *funduq*) that were built there. Echoing the way Venetian and Genoese merchants in Southampton operated from the port as opposed to buying and selling inland, Venetian and Genoese merchants previously required diplomatic accompaniment or pilgrim status to be able to move freely in cities like Mamluk Cairo, even as they moved more freely in Mamluk Syria.¹⁴ Upon naturalization as Ottoman subjects, Genoese travel privileges were now akin to those of Armenians or any other Ottoman subject traveling along overland and maritime trade routes from Europe and the Mediterranean to Asia and the Indian Ocean.

The Gagliano brothers were among the most widely influential Genoese merchants who were naturalized as Ottoman subjects. Their trade connected Ottoman commerce with Poland-Lithuania, the Venetian Republic, and Ragusa.¹⁵ The fact that their activities extended to include the Ottoman-Poland frontier illustrates the early modern advantages of Ottoman naturalization in comparison with the more limited privileges afforded by capitulation agreements (*ahidname*). Capitulation agreements with foreign powers guaranteed

in practice. The full text of the charter, written in Greek and translated soon afterwards to Turkish and Italian, can be found in: Halil İnalcık, “Ottoman Galata, 1453–1553,” in *Première rencontre internationale sur l’Empire Ottoman et la Turquie moderne, Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales, Maison des sciences de l’homme, 18–22 janvier 1985*, ed. Edhem Eldem (Istanbul: Editions Isis, 1991), 276 ff.; Louis Mitler, “The Genoese in Galata: 1453–1682,” *IJMES* 10.1 (1979): 71–91.

14 Constable, *Housing the Stranger in the Mediterranean World*, 107–157.

15 Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, 130–150.

visiting merchants both security and movement in Ottoman territory, but they did not guarantee Venetian and Genoese merchants the ability to operate and traverse all Ottoman frontiers, such as the Ottoman-Polish frontier, with the same facility as subjects. This made Genoese naturalization as Ottomans a clear advantage. In a capitulation agreement with Polish king Sigismund III in 1597, the Ottomans agreed that “the *beys* of the *sanjacks* of Silistra and Akkerman [present-day Bilhorod-Dnistrovskiy, Ukraine], the harbor masters, and the tax collectors, may not permit anyone to enter Poland across the river Dniester except the servants of my felicitous threshold and the merchants of both sides.”¹⁶ The Ottoman-Polish borders reflected the fact that while territorial borders were porous and saw the rise of frontier societies, they were neither theoretical nor imagined. The administrative oversight of merchant ships calling at ports and of pilgrims departing on merchant galleys throughout the Aegean illustrates that maritime borders, like land borders, were very real in the early modern world, even as they were only as real as the state’s ability to patrol them.

These kinds of restrictions in movement were intended, among other reasons, to prevent the two-way movement of fugitives and corsairs seen on the Venetian-Ottoman maritime frontier, which compromised the ability of the Republic of Venice and Ottoman Sultanate to project a reputation of protecting trade and attracting commerce. The existence of transimperial fugitives and corsairs, furthermore, pointed to the fact that there were cases when it was advantageous to have recourse to Ottoman justice and restitution following an attack on either one’s person or property, just as there were other cases when it was preferable to claim foreign subjecthood and immunity. Those with the most movement and advantage, then, were able to claim subjecthood in multiple domains. In the case of the Gagliano brothers, Venice offered them help during a property dispute while acknowledging that they had the status of a *haraçgüzar*—that is, *haraç*-paying Ottoman subject.¹⁷ In a reflection of their transimperial subjecthood, they were able to appeal to both the Venetian *bailo* resident in Pera and the Muslim chief judge (*qadi*) of Pera (Galata).

Beyond border control and questions of jurisdiction for property disputes and criminal cases, customs duties were another element that sometimes made Ottoman subjecthood preferable to claiming foreign status in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In the late Byzantine era, prior to the absorption of Genoese-held Pera into Ottoman sultanate, Genoese-Ottoman trade relations

16 The text of this capitulation charter sent by Mehmed III to King Sigismund III is available in Dariusz Kolodziejczyk, *Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations (15th–18th Century): An Annotated Edition of 'Ahdnames and Other Documents* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 310–312.

17 Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, 110–112.

were so strong that the Ottomans lifted customs duties for Genoese goods coming into Ottoman territory.¹⁸ In effect, Genoese Perots operating in Bursa—the key transit point to Europe of Iranian silks—traded as though they were traveling as Ottoman subjects within one Ottoman customs zone. With the absorption of Pera into Ottoman domain after 1453, Ottoman subjecthood was codified with the payment of the *haraç* tax. In return for this payment, the law reads, “I [the sultan] agree that those who trade can [trade] in other parts of my dominion and can travel by sea and by land without hindrance or disturbance.”¹⁹ As for Genoese citizens who resided temporarily, the statement read, “I agree that those Genoese merchants who come and go by land and sea must pay customs duties as required in the law, and that they may not be attacked.”²⁰ In this way, many Genoese Perots active in the late fifteenth century in previously Genoese-held territories, including Pera and Phokaia (Foça), took on Ottoman subjecthood rather than emigrate westward with the initial group that fled in 1453. As Ottoman territories eventually expanded into an assortment of customs zones with distinct customs agreements with different neighboring polities, choices became more complex. This complexity correlated with Genoese-origin Ottoman Latin-rite subjects and Ottoman Greeks becoming subjects of the Venetian Republic—that is, becoming foreigners again. The comparative advantages of Ottoman and Venetian subjecthood, in effect, became a moving target over time.

The growing complexity of customs duties, and the wider ambiguity over whether it was preferable to be a foreigner or Ottoman subject when trading between Ottoman and Italian peninsular domains, can be seen in a treaty signed between Venice and the Ottoman empire in 1502. The treaty stipulated that Venetians resident in Istanbul for more than one year had to pay the *haraç* tax paid by Ottoman subjects. That is, like the Genoese of Pera before them, they effectively had to naturalize as subjects. As in the case of the Genoese who naturalized, the benefit was that Ottoman subjects involved in Ottoman-Venetian trade paid more favorable customs duties than their Venetian counterparts, who also paid Venetian customs duties (*cottimi*) when they came to and from the city. The result was that Greek Orthodox subjects of the Venetian Republic residing in Istanbul, many of whom were Cretans, tended toward

18 Necipoğlu has traced the final decades of late Byzantine Genoese-held Pera's political and commercial relations with the expanding Ottoman Sultanate, highlighting the extent that Pera became partly subsumed into the commercial world of Ottoman trade routes eastward. Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins*, 184–233.

19 İnalçık, “Ottoman Galata,” 275–277.

20 *Ibid.*, 277.

becoming Ottoman subjects after 1502.²¹ What made this problematic, however, was that their Venetian Greek coreligionists continued to have privileged access to specific Venetian institutions in Istanbul that included a particular hospital in Galata as well as the Venetian chancellery, where Venetian Greeks registered wills, testaments, and property sales.

Likewise, for the Genoese Latin-rite subjects in Istanbul, diplomacy was the key arena where the choice of either maintaining a foreign status attached to the Genoese or Venetian Republic, naturalizing as an Ottoman Latin-rite subject, or attempting to straddle both subjecthoods carried the greatest political benefits and the greatest uncertainties. Ottoman Latin-rite subjects worked in service of the Ottoman sultan as interpreters and diplomatic go-betweens in negotiations with the resident Venetians. While technically working in service of the sultan, they were employed by the Venetian *bailo* and were often issued *berat* status. This *berat* status offered them the same privileges of foreign criminal jurisdiction and tax privileges garnered by Venetian foreigners resident in Istanbul.²² Those privileges were not necessarily advantageous in various scenarios, particularly in times of conflict, diplomatic spats, criminal cases, or investigations of espionage. The result was a kind of oscillation between subjecthoods seen previously among merchants, fugitives, and corsairs. Notably, even this movement between subjecthoods became an arena where both the Venetians and Ottomans stepped in to keep those associated with their diplomatic machinery within their own political boundaries.

With the rise of large numbers of *berat* holders among Latin-rite Christians by the end of the sixteenth century, newfound Ottoman imperial concerns about the Ottoman Latin-rite Christians' transimperial mobility between distinct legal jurisdictions became part of a larger set of Ottoman legal reforms oriented around restricting the number of residents in Istanbul who could claim extraterritorial privileges or exemptions from Ottoman fiscal legisla-

21 Molly Greene, *Catholic Pirates and Greek Merchants: A Maritime History of the Mediterranean* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 15–51.

22 On the practice of *berat* issuance more broadly and its connection with debates about sovereignty, see Bruce A. Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: The Roots of Sectarianism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Masters, *The Origins of Western Dominance in the Middle East: Mercantilism and the Islamic Economy in Aleppo, 1600–1750* (New York: New York University Press, 1988). Bruce McGowan, *Economic Life in the Ottoman Empire: Taxation, Trade and the Struggle for Land, 1600–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Halil İnalcık, "İmtiyazat," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 1954–2009), 3:1179–1189. Ottoman administrative concern over Roman Catholic political authority in Ottoman lands was also entangled with this reform of *berat* issuance. Charles A. Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans: The Church and the Ottoman Empire, 1453–1923* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

tion.²³ The broader Ottoman administrative attempt in the seventeenth century to begin restricting how many *berats* were associated with each foreign embassy was partly connected to the way some Ottoman Latin-rite Christian families simultaneously claimed foreign tax status, based on a Venetian husband's foreign privileges, and acquired local residential properties, based on an Ottoman Latin-rite Christian wife's local privileges.²⁴ The effect of these seventeenth-century Ottoman legal reforms on the political mobility of Latin-rite Catholics ran parallel with seventeenth-century Venetian reforms in Istanbul related to the hiring of Ottoman Latin-rite Christians. As in the case of concerns in the Italian peninsula about Sefaradi Jewish diplomats straddling the information networks of multiple empires, Venetian administrators sought to keep Ottoman Latin-rite Christian dragomans who worked in Venetian service on the payroll well into retirement age for fear that they might move to another embassy and share information.²⁵ By the eighteenth century, with the diminishing of the Ottoman-Venetian trade route, European powers passed over the Latin-rite Christians entirely when hiring Ottoman non-Muslim subjects for diplomatic service. In sum, the draw of Ottoman and Venetian forms of naturalization, and the push and pull of choosing residency and subjecthood in either domain according to political and economic circumstances, helped extend the activity of Genoese trade networks in the eastern Mediterranean long after the Republic's withdrawal from its Black Sea port of Caffa and the absorption of Genoese-held Pera and neighboring Aegean islands (Chios, Lesbos) into Ottoman dominion. In the long run, with the decline of Italian-Ottoman commerce amidst a rise of French and British activity in the eastern Mediterranean nodes of Genoese commerce in Iberia and South America continued to sustain the trans-Mediterranean activity of Genoese trade networks well into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

23 Dursteler, "Education and Identity," 287–303.

24 Rothman, *Brokering Empire*, 165–187.

25 One example is the case of Orimbei, a Luccan and one-time Venetian dragoman who became Muslim and Ottoman grand dragoman and who nonetheless remained on the Venetian payroll for his useful contacts. Tommaso Bertelè contextualizes Orimbei's career against the backdrop of the Venetians' and Ottomans' overlapping diplomatic networks. Bertelè, *Il palazzo degli ambasciatori di Venezia a Costantinopoli e le sue antiche memorie ricerche storiche con documenti inediti* (Bologna: Apollo, 1932), 104–106. Rothman has highlighted the example of Giovanni Piron, an apprentice dragoman from the local Ottoman Catholic elite who was listed in 1664 as an apprentice and who was kept on the payroll even at the age of sixty-five. E. Natalie Rothman, "Interpreting Dragomans: Boundaries and Crossings in the Early Modern Mediterranean," *Comparatives Studies in Society and History* 51.4 (2009): 771–800.

2 Sefaradi Merchants from the Dutch Low Countries to the Italian Peninsula and the Ottoman World

The case of Sefaradi merchants in Ottoman domains in the fifteenth century saw a similar pattern of a Mediterranean trade diaspora that was naturalized into Ottoman subjecthood and that began to move between Ottoman and Italian forms of subjecthood in accordance with changes in laws on residency, movement, and customs duties. The aftermath of the expulsion of Iberian Jews from the Crowns of Castile and Aragon in 1492 and Portugal in 1497 saw two major demographic trends: the overnight expansion in Iberia of Christians with Jewish heritage, known in contemporary Iberia as *conversos*, and the growth of both *converso* and openly Jewish Sefaradi communities throughout cities linked to Mediterranean trade.²⁶ From the later perspective of global trade networks in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the most significant destinations of Iberian Jewish exiles were the northern coastal cities of the Dutch Low Countries, the Italian peninsula, the Ottoman Aegean, and late Mamluk Egypt and Syria. A closer look at the legal fortunes of eminent Sefaradi families across these geographies highlights the political and economic advantages of residency in Italian and Ottoman cities, where the practice of Judaism legally permitted.

The case of the *converso* Diogo Mendes Benveniste, who was among the first in his family to travel from Portugal to Habsburg-controlled Antwerp in 1512, highlights the complexities of residency and commercial life for *conversos* in cities where Inquisition offices were active and were intertwined with governance. A merchant in precious stones and spices, Diogo Mendes was arrested in 1532 on a number of counts that included being a “Judaizing” Christian (*Heresie en Judaïsering*), helping Portuguese *conversos* flee for Ottoman lands, and monopolizing the trade of spice commodities to the detriment of local merchants. According to extant records of the case preserved in the Antwerp Municipal Archives, Diogo Mendes was sentenced to prison but was soon released upon granting Charles v an interest-free loan of 50,000 ducats.²⁷

26 A look at the commercial activities of Sefaradi families in northern Europe, especially Amsterdam, highlights the continued centrality of Mediterranean trade networks in sixteenth-century Sefaradi economic life. Renée Levine Melammed, *A Question of Identity: Iberian Conversos in Historical Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 69–80.

27 A record of the case against Diogo Mendes is preserved in the Antwerp Municipal Archives and has been published in Pierre Génard, “Personen te Antwerpen in de xvi^e eeuw voor het ‘feit van de religie’ gerechtelijk vergold. Lijst en ambtelijke bijhorige stukken,” *Antwerpsch Archievenblad* 9 (n.d.): 205–236.

This arrangement was not the first or last of its type, as Philip III in 1602 secured some 1,860,000 ducats from Portuguese businessmen in return for securing a papal bull that pardoned six thousand Portuguese *converso* families for any past heresies.²⁸ In the 1540s, Diogo Mendes's sister-in-law Doña Gracia Nasi and nephew João—that is, the later Ottoman diplomat Joseph Nasi—fled the Low Countries for the Italian peninsula and Ottoman domains after becoming entangled in legal difficulties. In Doña Gracia's case, her legal woes likewise led her to offer the cash-strapped government a private loan, but her family's properties were ultimately confiscated in absentia.²⁹ How Doña Gracia and Joseph Nasi became, respectively, a politically influential philanthropist and a chief adviser to Sultan Selim II (r. 1566–1574), is a story that can only be fully contextualized against the backdrop of Jewish political and commercial life in the Italian peninsula, the Ottoman Aegean, and late Mamluk Egypt and Syria as Mamluk territory was subsumed into Ottoman dominion.

Lorenzo “The Magnificent” de’ Medici, the de facto ruler of the rising Florentine Republic (r. 1469–1492), had an unusual connection to two popes who attempted to protect *conversos* from the offices of the Inquisition. Pope Leo X (r. 1513–1521), the first of the two Medici popes, was Lorenzo's second son Giovanni di Lorenzo de Medici. Pope Clement VII (r. 1523–1534), the second, was Lorenzo's nephew Giulio di Giuliano de’ Medici. As the Medici popes rose through the ranks of the church and reigned almost continuously from 1513 to 1534, they developed the same awareness that Lorenzo and his descendants had of how lucrative Sephardi trade networks were for Italian commerce throughout the Atlantic, Mediterranean, and even Indian Ocean worlds. Both Medici popes developed a reputation for protecting Portuguese *conversos* in the Italian peninsula from the jurisdiction of Charles V, the previously mentioned Habs-

28 Juan I. Pulido Serrano, “Las negociaciones con los cristianos nuevos en tiempos de Felipe III a la luz de algunos documentos inéditos (1598–1607),” *Sef* 66 (2006): 345–375; António Augusto Marques de Almeida, “O Perdão Geral de 1605,” *Primeiras Jornadas de História Moderna. Actas*, vol. 2 (Lisbon: Centro de História da Universidade de Lisboa, 1986), 885–898; Ana Isabel López-Salazar Codes, *Inquisición portuguesa y Monarquía Hispánica en tiempos del perdón general de 1605* (Lisbon: Colibri, 2010).

29 A series of eighteen documents preserved in the Portuguese National Archives, Vatican Secret Archives, the National Archives of Brussels, the National Archives of Modena, and the National Archives of Ferrara that detail the circumstances of both cases, including assurances of protection from Rome, have been published in: Herman Prins Salomon and Aron di Leone Leoni, “Mendes, Benveniste, de Luna, Micas, Nasci: The State of the Art (1532–1558),” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 88 (1998): 135–211.

burg monarch and Holy Roman Emperor. The second of the two Medici popes in particular, Clement VII (r. 1478–1534), famously issued the Bull of Pardon (Bulla de Perdão) for Portuguese *conversos* in 1533 that pardoned past offenses for those accused of “Judaizing” heresies.³⁰ By 1536, however, Charles V officially instituted an office of the Inquisition in Portugal (Conselho Geral do Santo Ofício) based on the model of Spain’s office (Tribunal del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición), which was established in 1478. That is, while both Spain and Portugal saw nearly simultaneous campaigns of mass baptisms and expulsions, Portuguese *converso* communities that included Spanish *converso* exiles had an almost fifty-year respite before being pursued for “Judaizing” heresies. Where Spanish *conversos* were able to escape tribunals was in Mexico, as the office of Spanish Inquisition waited until 1571 to establish a branch in the Americas. In Oaxaca, Spanish *conversos* participated in the wholesale export of red cochineal pigment that, beginning in the 1540s, began to compete with Iranian *qermez* in the Italian silk industry, particularly in the production of Venetian red velvet. By the end of the century, *converso* networks linking the Americas and Iberia with the Dutch Low Countries and the eastern Mediterranean saw the movement of merchants who were simultaneously navigating the changing dynamics of the Inquisition offices and trading in wholesale precious commodities like cochineal. Along with those commodities came the news that Istanbul and Cairo, which were now connected to Europe through the Ancona-Spalato-Istanbul route and the Venice-Ragusa-Istanbul route, saw the widespread presence of openly practicing Iberian Jews in Islamic political dominion.

While the second of the Medici popes, Clement VII (r. 1478–1534), was only able to offer *conversos* in Portugal a three-year respite from political pressures with the issuance of the Bull of Pardon in 1533, his defense of *conversos* played a role in the continuity of Jewish commerce in the port city of Ancona upon its absorption into papal control in 1532. It was during Clement VII’s administration when Ancona began to attract Sefaradi merchants who had settled decades earlier in the Islamic world, and ultimately the Venetian Senate responded quickly by allowing long-term residency permits for Jewish merchants from Portugal and the Ottoman world.

The Venetian and Anconan policies toward Jewish settlement developed in parallel. Specifically, the government of Ancona issued a series of decrees,

30 Jean-Pierre Filippini, “L’État pontifical,” in *Les Juifs d’Espagne. Histoire d’une diaspora, 1492–1992*, ed. Henry Méchoulan (Paris: Liana Levi, 1992), 304–305; Attilio Milano, *Storia degli ebrei in Italia* (Torino: Einaudi, 1963), 238–242.

beginning in 1499, lowering customs duties to encourage business with merchants from Ragusa, Lucca, and Florence, ultimately offering the same privileges to all Ottoman subjects—including Jewish merchants—in 1518.³¹ The Venetian Senate responded swiftly and deliberately to the movement of the Genoese westward and to the ascendancy of Ancona in the increasingly Ottoman-dominated Adriatic. Partly due to pressure from Venetian businessmen, the Senate decided in 1541 to allow the settlement of Jewish merchants for long periods as part of a larger move away from a strictly protectionist approach to the local silk industry and as part of a simultaneous aspiration to control the Adriatic silk trade.³² This move was part of a longer post-Byzantine process that saw the Venetian Senate attempt to transform Venice not only into a belated Catholic patron of the Greek Orthodox Aegean, but also a commercial gateway to the expanding silk and spice routes further east.³³

Residency privileges in Ancona and Venice were still problematic for Sefaradi merchants, particularly Ottoman subjects who had already established residence in the Ottoman Aegean. In Ancona, residency privileges were unpredictable in a manner evocative of Sefaradi experiences in Portugal, Spain, and the Dutch Low Countries. Specifically, the first pope who came to power following the Medici popes withdrew the right of Jews to reside in Ancona, resulting in a return to Istanbul. In Venice, which saw greater continuity in Jewish residency privileges, movement remained officially restricted, and petitions of exception were granted with uneven frequency. More specifically, the decree of the Venetian Senate that allowed Portuguese and Levantine Jews to settle in the city, issued in 1541, was issued partly as a result of local complaints among Venetian merchants about the government's protectionist approach toward local silk industries.³⁴ That is, the sumptuary laws oriented around specific

31 Halil İncalcık's classic examination of Ottoman commerce in the eastern Mediterranean contextualizes this importance of Ancona in the Ottoman's expanding control over the silk trade with Iran through Bursa. İncalcık, "Bursa and the Silk Trade," in *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1914*, ed. Halil İncalcık and Donald Quataert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 218–255.

32 Viviana Bonazzoli, "Ebrei italiani, portoghesi, levantini sulla piazza commerciale di Ancona intorno alla metà del Cinquecento," in *Gli Ebrei e Venezia, secoli XIV–XVIII*, ed. Gaetano Cozzi (Milano: Edizioni Comunità, 1987), 727–770.

33 Deborah Howard examines the development of Venetian urban political theater as a lens for understanding the connections between Venice and Middle Eastern Christianity in the Mamluk and Ottoman eras. Howard, *Venice and the East: The Impact of the Islamic World on Venetian Architecture, 1100–1500* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 189–216.

34 Bonazzoli, "Ebrei italiani, portoghesi, levantini," 727–770.

conceptions of Catholic ethics in public space contrasted with the state of affairs in nearby cities like Livorno and Lucca, where the presence of Sefaradi merchants helped silk commerce take on global dimensions. In the case of the previously mentioned cochineal commodity, the earlier protectionist approach meant that Venetian merchants had little access to this simultaneously lower cost and high quality Mexican alternative to Persian crimson (*qermez*) in the production of red velvet.³⁵ Once the decree was issued, however, restrictions of movement remained in the form of the enduring and politically complex *ghetto vecchio*.

The rise of the *ghetto vecchio*, an urban space for “Ponentine” (Portuguese) and “Levantine” (Ottoman) Jews that officially restricted their movement at night, can be read in the context of this clash between, on the one hand, much of the Venetian Senate’s resistance to the absorption of Jews in Venetian civic life and, on the other hand, individual Senators’ and businessmen’s shared vision of turning Venetian commerce global in competition with Ancona. The application of a night curfew and restrictions on certain types of commerce at the Rialto market was somewhat haphazard, as influential Jewish merchants were able to secure exceptions.³⁶ While this haphazardness has been read as the halting tolerance of Venetian governance, it can also be read in a legal context as that aspect of Venetian conceptions of residency and subjecthood that made the city only partly able to pull the Ottoman world’s global commerce to the westernmost point of the Venice-Spalato-Istanbul trade route. In a parallel manner, the change of papal policies on Jewish residency in Ancona reflects a similar weakness in the attraction of Ancona for Sefaradi Jews and their business associates along the Ancona-Ragusa-Istanbul route.

What Ottoman domains offered, in contrast, were wide-ranging residency and movement privileges that gave Sefaradi merchants access to Middle Eastern trade networks in the Levant, which included Arabic-speaking Jewish net-

35 Louisa S. Hoberman offers several illustrative examples of *converso* merchant houses that connected Mexican production of cochineal with Spanish silk commerce. Hoberman, *Mexico’s Merchant Elite, 1590–1660: Silver, State, and Society* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 94–146.

36 The enforcement of sumptuary laws governing Venetian public space had a long history of uneven enforcement. Kovesi Killerby, “Practical Problems in the Enforcement of Italian Sumptuary Law, 1200–1500,” in *Crime, Society and the Law in Renaissance Italy*, ed. Trevor Dean and K.J.P. Lowe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 99–120. Rothman has offered an overview of the way Jewish participation in the Rialto commercial activities were contested by Venetian guilds, particularly against the backdrop of the guilds’ declining profits from Levantine trade in Rothman, *Brokering Empire*, 29–60.

works trading in Iranian silks. As part of a specific approach to urban planning and empire construction, one oriented the centripetal pull of Ottoman subjecthood and its economic outcomes, Ottoman administrators developed an interest in the long-term settlement of Sefaradi merchants in Istanbul and around the Balkans. Under Beyazid II in the late fifteenth century, Sefaradi exiles played a major role in interimperial commerce both with neighbors in the Italian peninsula and with centers in the Islamic world like Mamluk Cairo. In the Ottoman context, this rise of Ottoman Sefaradi subjecthood developed in tandem with the dynamics of Ottoman Latin-rite subjects.³⁷

As in the case of Ottoman Latin-rite subjects, diplomacy was a key arena that saw the political mobility of Sefaradi Jews moving within Ottoman governing circles and across Italian-Ottoman political boundaries. Jewish diplomats working in Ottoman service were found within and outside Ottoman lands throughout the Adriatic in places where merchant communities existed.³⁸ Interimperial diplomacy was a natural fit for these merchants given how Sefaradi Jewish commercial networks of the late sixteenth-century connected the Italian and Ottoman eastern Mediterranean with places as far as Mexico in the Spanish Atlantic.³⁹ The Ottomans were keen to benefit from the service of such entrepreneurs with their far-flung family networks, but the decision to work in Ottoman service abroad was often a precarious one in according with the fickle nature of trade relations and wars.

One of the most well-known examples of this complexity is the career of Joseph Nasi, the previously mentioned João Nasi who was also known as João Michel and Giovanni Miguel. His multiple aliases are indicative not only of what Dursteler and Rothman have highlighted as the complexity of identity of transimperial subjects straddling the porous Mediterranean political worlds, but also the surprising interconnectedness that Gürkan has shown to have existed at the level of imperial intelligence gathering.⁴⁰ On the one hand, Nasi's

37 In their respective studies of the early modern history of Ottoman subjecthood, Julia Philips Cohen and Michelle Campos offer a comparative overview of the history of Sefaradic Jews, Ottoman Greeks, and Ottoman Armenians in eastern Mediterranean commerce. Cohen, *Becoming Ottomans: Sephardi Jews and Imperial Citizenship in the Modern Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014). Campos, *Ottoman Brothers: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Early Twentieth-Century Palestine* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).

38 Aryeh Shmuelevitz, *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire in the Late Fifteenth and the Sixteenth Centuries: Administrative, Economic, Legal and Social Relations as Reflected in the Responsa* (Leiden: Brill, 1984).

39 Hoberman, *Mexico's Merchant Elite*, 94–146.

40 Emrah Safa Gürkan, "Mediating Boundaries: Mediterranean Go-Betweens and Cross-

activity in multiple empires points to the fact that interimperial diplomatic activity facilitated the sharing of information for administrations that were in alliance. On the other hand, Nasi's straddling of multiple information networks points to a key concern at the heart of Gürkan's analysis: accusations, both false and substantiated, of espionage that could come from either side of these transimperial diplomatic and commercial networks.

The fact that Sefaradi diplomatic and mercantile activities throughout the Mediterranean extended into the realm of information networks should be read as a phenomenon illustrative of how transimperial identities and cultural literacy could be as much a source of political and economic advancement as they were a potential political disadvantage. In the case of accusations of espionage, the precariousness of careers in interimperial diplomacy or the repercussions of unpredictable political scenarios was often clearer on the side of Italian city-states. In an era when politicians from Sefaradi families such as Sinan Reis could be seen fighting under the Ottoman flag against the Spanish Habsburgs, two Jewish subjects in the Kingdom of Naples were prosecuted for passing Habsburg information to the Ottomans through contacts in Ottoman Thessaloníki.⁴¹ Likewise, during the Ottoman-Venetian war over Cyprus from 1570 to 1573, Sefaradi merchants in Venice faced accusations of helping the Ottomans. The outcome was that their mercantile and political status was frequently unstable within the Venetian Republic.⁴²

Confessional Diplomacy in Constantinople, 1560–1600," *Journal of Early Modern History* 19 (2015): 107–128; Cecil Roth, *The House of Nasi: The Duke of Naxos* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1948); Norman Rosenblatt, "Joseph Nasi, Friend of Spain," in *Studies in Honor of M.J. Benardete: Essays in Hispanic and Sephardic Culture*, ed. Izaak A. Langnas and Barton Sholod (New York: Las Americas, 1965), 323–332; Gürkan offers an analytical comparison of how the diplomatic networks of the Nasi and Passi operated across Ottoman, Venetian, and Habsburg boundaries.

41 In what reflects Sinan's fame among world powers at the time, the Portuguese governor in India in 1528 thought he was sent by the Ottomans to fight the Portuguese, and he was referred to shortly after as "the famous Jewish pirate" by Henry VIII's ambassador in Rome in a letter to the king in 1533. John Sherron Brewer, Robert Henry Brodie, and James Gairdner, eds., *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII: Preserved in the Public Record Office, the British Museum, and Elsewhere* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans and Roberts, 1862–1933), 6:426–428; Samuel Tokowsky, *They Took to the Sea: A Historical Survey of Jewish Maritime Activities* (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1964), 174–175; Benjamin Arbel, *Trading Nations: Jews and Venetians in the Early Modern Eastern Mediterranean* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 180–182; Gürkan, "Espionage in the 16th-Century Mediterranean," 394–395; José María del Moral, *El Virrey de Nápoles: Don Pedro de Toledo y la guerra contra el turco* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1966).

42 Benjamin Ravid, "The Socioeconomic Background of the Expulsion and Readmission of

How Sefaradi merchants and diplomats navigated these interimperial political conflicts was in part a function of the fluid and, in practice, often unclear legal distinctions throughout the eastern Mediterranean that delineated the civic and commercial status of local subjects and long-term foreign residents. From the perspective of citizenship and subjecthood, Venice in principle strictly distinguished between nobles, citizens, subjects, and foreign residents. The previously mentioned existence of sumptuary laws in Venice, which were an extension of this civic hierarchy, governed social practices of dress and the mixing of classes to an extent that reflected a theoretically strict but practically fluid understanding of Venetian society and ethics.⁴³ Many Sefaradi Jews in sixteenth-century Venice were considered long-term resident foreigners, specifically as subjects of the Ottomans. It was, therefore, as Ottoman subjects, not as Venetians, that many conducted much of their transimperial mercantile business dealings throughout much of early modern Venetian history. Their trading connections, especially with Ottoman elites, coupled with a lack of access to many other professions in Venice beyond brokers in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Venetian law, helps explain why the Ottoman side of these dangers was often the safer one.⁴⁴

In other words, even the precarious circumstances of being potentially accused of espionage saw the same centripetal forces that drew many Genoese and Sefaradi merchants more closely into Ottoman subjecthood than Venetian subjecthood. More specifically, Ottoman governing circles in many cases protected these transimperial diplomatic figures in a way that made Ottoman diplomacy a more politically secure option for transimperial subjects. This trend is particularly clear in the example of Ḥayyim Saruq, whose story rounds out this study's analysis of Genoese and Sefaradi merchants operating between Italian peninsular and Ottoman political centers.

3 The Case of the Ottoman Sefaradi Subject Ḥayyim Saruq

Ḥayyim Saruq has been the subject of recent scholarship on the role of Sefaradi Jewish merchants in the era of close Ottoman-Venetian political, commercial, and diplomatic relations. Ḥayyim offers an illustrative example of the multi-

the Venetian Jews, 1571–1573,” in *Essays in Modern Jewish History: A Tribute to Ben Halpern*, ed. Phyllis Cohen Albert and Frances Malino (Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1982), 27–55.

43 Kovesi Killerby, “Practical Problems” 99–120.

44 Rothman, *Brokering Empire*, 29–60.

faceted importance of Jewish merchants in early modern Mediterranean trade between centers in the Italian peninsula, the Balkans, Egypt, Syria, and the Ottoman Aegean.⁴⁵ Ḥayyim was an Ottoman subject from the Sefaradi community of Thessaloníki.⁴⁶ He appears in Venetian notarial records as early as 1561 and was connected to prominent Ottoman Jewish families, such as the Segura family, who operated in centers including Istanbul, Venice, Ferrara, and Ancona.⁴⁷ Apart from his involvement in the transfer of Ottoman exports, credit operations, and the acquisition of shipping vessels, Ḥayyim was also a patron of Talmudic literature in Venice.⁴⁸

Ḥayyim, in other words, was an Ottoman subject able to build connections between a variety of Sefaradi and non-Sefaradi Jewish communities in the eastern Mediterranean as well as connections between Jewish merchants and the various Muslim and Christian communities in Italian and Ottoman lands. Politically speaking, his negotiations with Venetian authorities on behalf of the Thessaloniki's Jewish community are particularly illustrative of the many hats he wore. In the context of a communal commercial dispute, an extant responsum of the rabbi Samuel de Medina of Thessaloníki indicates that Ḥayyim was asked to appeal to the Venetian authorities to reduce the community's commercial tariffs by fifty percent. The appeal was successful.⁴⁹ In what reflects the social and political position that Ḥayyim reached in eastern Mediterranean diplomatic circles, his name appears in Venetian notarial records, the acts of the Senate and Council of Ten, and in Venetian judicial records. The scholarship

45 Arbel, *Trading Nations*, 95–168.

46 Mark Mazower has provided an analytical overview of the arrival of Sefaradi merchants in the Ottoman Aegean in his discussion of the premodern history of Greece. Mazower, *Salonica, City of Ghosts: Christians, Muslims and Jews, 1430–1950* (New York: Knopf, 2005), 46–63.

47 The archival *Lettere e scritture turchesche* collection in the Venetian Archives is an important source for documents such as the Judaeo-Spanish contractual agreement between Ḥayyim Saruq and Joseph Segura in 1566/67. Archivio di Stato di Venezia (ASV), *Lettere e scritture turchesche*, filza 2, fol. 192. An inventory of the collection, which includes this agreement, was recently published in Maria Pia Pedani, ed., based on the materials compiled by Alessio Bombaci, *Inventory of the Lettere e Scritture Turchesche in the Venetian State Archives* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

48 Arbel, *Trading Nations*, 96 ff.

49 The original source used by Arbel was examined previously by Benayahu, who quotes key portions of the text, and is also available in an edited collection of Rabbi Samuel de Medina's responsa. M. Benayahu, "Further Evidence on Ḥayyim ben Saruq in Venice" (Hebrew), *Ozar Yehudei Sefarad (Tesoros de los Judíos Sefardíes)* 8 (1965): 135–136; Shmuel de Medina, *She'elot u-teshuvot Maharashdam* (New York: ha-Aḥim Polak, 1958), vol. 3, no. 99; Arbel, *Trading Nations*, 95–97.

contextualizing Ḥayyim's legacy has shown how his position reflects a larger pattern whereby Sefaradi Jewish merchants were central to Ottoman political and commercial relations in the eastern Mediterranean in an era when the Ottomans sought dominance in the region.

What is unclear about Ḥayyim's story, beyond what it tells us generally about Sefaradim in Ottoman diplomacy, is how indicative his career might be of the way imperial boundaries were increasingly contested and demarcated. On one level, his story highlights how Sefaradi Jewish merchants, like Ottoman Christian subjects, navigated fluid political boundaries between polities like the Venetian Republic and Ottoman Sultanate, whose mutually important commercial relations partly explain the two polities' longer history of peaceful relations than conflict. On another level, Ḥayyim's story also brings to mind the fact that Venetian and Ottoman administrators were continuously debating, especially through legal edicts, how to manage and police these boundaries. From the perspective of governance, administrators were aware of the political advantages of transimperial subjecthood given the government's needs of political diplomacy and commercial negotiation. However, as in the case of the Venetians maintaining certain Ottoman Latin-rite Christians on the Venetian payroll in order to avoid their employment by other embassies, both Venetians and Ottomans were equally interested in managing and controlling the boundaries of their information networks. The Dutch, newcomers to the global trade scene in the sixteenth century, even sought to benefit from the overlap of diplomatic and merchant communities in Istanbul despite the possible transfer of Dutch information to other embassies. The Ottomans appear to have taken a similar approach, allowing centers like Thessaloniki to benefit politically and commercially from the commercial and diplomatic activities of high-level transimperial subjects like Ḥayyim with an apparent awareness that the Venetians might, in turn, learn about the activities of Ottomans political elites. The outcome was that in his case, Ottoman subjecthood offered greater political security than any status the Venetians could offer.

In 1571, the Council of Ten in Venice sent Ḥayyim back to Ottoman territory, specifically to Istanbul, to gain information for Venice about Ottoman affairs. This event occurred five years after the Ottomans intervened on behalf of Ḥayyim in Venice's bankruptcy proceedings against him, an event that saw the Ottomans apply diplomatic pressure on Venice in order to claim as Ottoman royal property an amount of alum that Venice originally sought to confiscate. Three years prior to that event, the Ottomans intervened when Venetian authorities seized as contraband, and therefore state property, a shipment of textiles that Ḥayyim brought to Venice. The event turned into a diplomatic

spat that saw the Ottomans claiming the material as their own, which prevented the *bailo* from leaving unless the cloth was delivered. From the perspective of Ottoman governance, the question that arises here is whether the high-level patronage of figures like Ḥayyim was part of a deliberate strategy or set of strategies on the part of Ottoman administrators to prioritize maximum commercial benefit over maximum demarcation of information networks.

Like the Venetians, the Ottomans were certainly aware that figures like Ḥayyim, like the many Ottoman Catholic subjects working in the European embassies, could share information between the embassies.⁵⁰ As mentioned, the fact that misinformation was deliberately passed to other embassies, and the fact that dragomans were kept on the payroll to prevent their being hired by other embassies, is indicative of this reality. In the case of Ḥayyim, even in the years prior to 1571, it would certainly have been conceivable to the Ottomans that the Venetians might become privy to various Ottoman political affairs in the years when Ḥayyim and other Sefaradi and Catholic transimperial subjects like him were in close contact with Venetian authorities. Therefore, the fact that Ottomans intervened time and again on behalf of Ḥayyim and others seems to reflect something that parallels the Dutch example of governance, which is that in the particular case of Ottoman-Venetian relations, Ottoman governance frequently showed a preference for maximizing the political and commercial benefits of transimperial subjecthood in spite of the potential leaks across Ottoman and Venetian information networks. This aspect of Ottoman governance might be a specifically early modern outcome of a common Venetian-Ottoman political and commercial cause against growing Atlantic and Indian Ocean mercantile activity on the part of the Portuguese and Dutch.⁵¹ The end result was that as long as Venetian and Ottoman political and commercial interests were in alignment, Ottoman Catholic and Jewish subjects like Ḥayyim became the beneficiaries of cultural connections linking the Italian peninsula with the Ottoman world.

50 Gürkan, "Mediating Boundaries" 107–128.

51 Ottomans contemplated and took steps, with Venetian support, to establish a political alliance with the Southeast Asian Sultanate of Aceh in competition with the Portuguese in Melacca. Giancarlo Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 123–125.

Conclusion

This study began with the question of how naturalization became a mechanism for expanding political boundaries, one that Italian peninsular and Ottoman administrations attempted to use to absorb trade diasporas or trade networks in a commercially viable way. To what extent were they successful in the case of Genoese and Sefaradi trade networks? One of the key patterns highlighted in this study's reexamination of key episodes in early modern Mediterranean history is the enduring pull of Ottoman subjecthood, which attracted Genoese and Sefaradi transimperial merchants in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in accordance with three specific legal advantages: residency privileges, movement along lucrative internal trade routes and frontiers, and lowered customs duties throughout commercial centers absorbed into Ottoman political dominion.

From the perspective of the Genoese Republic's most prominent families, what this comparison sheds light on is the extent that their unique approach to expanding political boundaries went beyond militarized territorial expansion. In accordance with Genoese political practices throughout the Mediterranean, long-term naturalization abroad as foreign subjects, whether as Ottoman subjects or Venetian citizens (*cittadini*), offered an alternative approach to expanding the political reach of the Republic's center. From the perspective of Sefaradi Jewish exiles, what this comparison sheds light on is the extent that naturalization, and specifically legislation dictating flexibility in residency and movement, became the central player in the story of how the early modern Italian republics and the Ottoman sultanate absorbed a variety of economically lucrative trade diasporas around the world.

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The Headings of the Psalms: A Case Study in Medieval Exegesis and Translation*

Esperanza Alfonso

It is almost a commonplace of biblical scholarship to say that the technical terms that appear in the headings of many Psalms—especially in books one through three and, with some exceptions, in book five (Psalms 109, 139, and 140)—have been and continue to be an enigma in the history of the interpretation of this book of the Bible. These terms include what must have originally been indications on musical performance and literary genre, as well as biographical and historical information, particularly in reference to the life of David. While consensus has it that they must be later additions, their precise meaning, lost in an early period, continues to keep Bible specialists intrigued.

Rather than delving into the origin of the headings of the Psalms, this article aims to deal with a specific layer in the history of the medieval reception and translation of the text. Its main focus is the glossary-commentary to Psalms included in MS Hunt. 268, held at the Bodleian Library in Oxford.¹ MS Hunt. 268 is a codex—produced in the Iberian Peninsula, most likely in the second half of the thirteenth century—that includes a large number of glosses in the Castilian vernacular and was probably used in the context of teaching and

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1 I am currently completing an edition and study of MS Hunt. 268. A. Neubauer cited passages from this text as part of his overview of the discussions on the authorship and titles of the Psalms, featuring an extensive list of sources including translations of the Bible into Aramaic, Greek, and Latin, as well as commentaries by Jewish authors, both Karaite and Rabbanite, ranging from Saadiah Gaon (d. 942) to Saadiah ibn Danan (second half of the fifteenth century). See Neubauer, “The Authorship and the Titles of the Psalms According to Early Jewish Authorities,” in *Studia Biblica et Ecclesiastica: Essays Chiefly in Biblical and Patristic Criticism by Members of the University of Oxford*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890), 1–58. Incidentally, Saadiah Gaon is one of the four exegetes—together with the tenth-century Karaite authors Yefet ben ‘Eli and Salmon ben Yeruham and the Sefardic author Abraham ibn Ezra (d. 1164)—whose commentaries on the Psalms are the subject of a book by Uriel Simon, in which he pays close attention to the enigmatic terms in the headings: Simon, *Four Approaches to the Book of Psalms: From Saadiah Gaon to Abraham ibn Ezra*, trans. Lenn J. Schramm (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991).

studying the biblical text. I have chosen it for two reasons. First, it allows me to explore the way in which Bible teaching was inspired by the earlier exegetical tradition and dialogues with it. Second, it constitutes a highly interesting link between the different exegetical traditions that converge in the manuscript and the medieval and postmedieval translations of the Bible into Castilian. The pages that follow explore both issues.

Regarding the manuscript text's relationship with earlier exegetical traditions, I am especially interested in the coherence and internal logic of the glossary-commentary, as well as its dependent relationship with the commentaries of Solomon ben Isaac or "Rashi" (d. 1105) and of David Qimḥi (d. 1235?), which my previous work on this text has led me to identify as its main sources. As regards the translations, I am interested in the relationship that the text's *le'azim* (vernacular glosses) and its proposed interpretations have with the medieval and postmedieval translations of the Bible into Castilian. We only have complete testimonies of these translations in fifteenth-century codices,² but it is assumed that the translations these codices transmit belong to a tradition that reaches back to families that originated as early as the thirteenth century.³ With regard to the titles of the Psalms in the vernacular versions, in 1953 José Llamas wrote an article in which he focused on two of them, E3 and E5.⁴

The other books glossed and commented upon within MS Hunt. 268 begin with an introduction, so it is only reasonable to imagine that one was also provided for Psalms; unfortunately, however, the codex is truncated and the text for this book begins at Psalms 9:17. As a result, we do not have the commentary cor-

2 With the possible exception of the Psalter included in San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Real Biblioteca, MS 1.1.8, which is not included in this study as it calls for separate treatment.

3 The translations that are used as points of comparison are the following manuscripts from before 1492, given with the standard abbreviations: E3 (San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Real Biblioteca, MS 1.1.3); E5 (San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Real Biblioteca, MS 1.1.5); EV (Évora, Biblioteca Pública, MS cxxiv/1–2); BNE (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS 10288); and Arragel (Madrid, Palacio de Liria). E4 (San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Real Monasterio, MS 1.1.4) is not included, since it omits the headings of the Psalms. All of these manuscripts are available online: Andrés Enrique-Arias, ed., *Biblia Medieval*, 2008–, <http://corpus.bibliamedieval.es/>. Among those texts later than 1492 are the Ferrara Bible, which appeared in 1553 (F), and the Bible glossary *Heshek Shelomo*, published in Venice by Gedaliá Cordobero in 1558 (HS). The most up-to-date overall studies on the relationship between and comparison of these manuscripts are: Francisco Javier Pueyo, "Biblias romanceadas y en ladino," in *Sefardíes: Literatura y lengua de una nación dispersa. xv Curso de Cultura Hispanojudía y Sefardí de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha*, ed. Iacob M. Hassán and Ricardo Izquierdo Benito (Cuenca: Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 2008), 193–263; Francisco Javier Pueyo Mena and Andrés Enrique-Arias, "Los romanceamientos castellanos de la Biblia hebrea compuestos en la Edad Media: Manuscritos y traducciones," *Sef* 73.1 (2013): 165–224.

4 José Llamas, "Los epígrafes de los Salmos en las Biblias castellanas judías medievales," *Sef* 13 (1953): 239–256.

responding to the following terms: *mizmor* (Ps 3:1), *la-menatstseah bi-neginot* (Ps 4:1), *el ha-nehilot* (Ps 5:1), *‘al ha-sheminit* (Ps 6:1), *shiggayon* (Ps 7:1), *‘al ha-gittit* (Ps 8:1), and *‘almut la-ben* (Ps 9:1). Presumably, these terms were dealt with at their first occurrence (the words *mizmor* and *la-menatstseah* appear fifty-seven and fifty-four times, respectively, in the headings). Out of all of them, we find discussions of three (*bi-neginot*, *‘al ha-sheminit* and *‘al ha-gittit*) when they occur later in the text. In what follows, these three and the rest of terms from the extant part of the Psalms are presented in the order in which they appear in the biblical text, citing first the Hebrew text and then the translation of the relevant passages from MS Hunt. 268.⁵

1 *‘al ha-sheminit*: Ps [6:1],⁶ 12:1

יב,א. למנצח על השמינית. פ" כלי זמר בן ח' נימין, כמו שאמרנו.

Psalm 12:1. **For the leader,**⁷ **on the *sheminit*** (lit. the eighth). It means a musical instrument with eight strings, as we have already said.⁸

The text interprets the term *sheminit* as referring to a musical instrument with eight strings, without providing further details. This interpretation coincides with that of Rashi on Psalms 6:1, although he specifies that it is a harp (*kinnor*)⁹ and relates the verse to 1 Chronicles 15:21, where the term also appears.¹⁰

5 I am very grateful to Emilio Ros-Fábregas for his help with musical terminology throughout.

6 In what follows, all verses in which the term in question appears are indicated, including those that are missing from the commentary (which are inserted in square brackets) and those that are not specifically commented on.

7 Since the commentary on the term *la-menatstseah* is not extant, I follow the translation of the Jewish Publication Society, as in the rest of the article.

8 Presumably when commenting on Psalm 6:1.

9 This interpretation also appears in Targum and Rabbinic sources (bArak 13b, PesR 21, and MidPs) regarding the distinction between the seven-, eight-, and ten-stringed harp. Several Karaite authors subscribed to this view. See Simon, *Four Approaches*, 66; Neubauer, "Authorship," 36–37. We also find this interpretation among Sefardic authors, such as Menaḥem ben Saruq, Mosheh ibn Chiquitilla and Mosheh ibn Ezra: Simon, *Four Approaches*, 236. Menaḥem ben Saruq, *Mahberet*, ed. Ángel Sáenz-Badillos (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1986), s.v. *g-t* remarks on the term *ha-gittit* (Ps 8:1, etc.): "It may be interpreted as a musical instrument, as [is the case with]: *‘al ‘alamat shir*, *‘al maḥalat*, *‘al ha-sheminit*, *‘al ha-nevalim le-natstseah*, *‘al ha-kinnorot*, *‘al ha-neginot*, *‘al shigyonot*, and *‘ale ‘asor*."

10 "And Zechariah, Aziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Maaseiah, and Benaiah with

David Qimḥi points out in the introduction to his commentary on Psalms that the meanings of some enigmatic terms at the beginning of certain Psalms were currently unknown, and notes that he would discuss this point in his commentary on Psalms 4:1. The passage is relevant for understanding the explanation of this term, and therefore it is worthwhile to cite it here at length. It reads as follows:

Psalm 4:1. *La-menatstseah, bi-neginot, mizmor le-david*. Our Rabbis of blessed memory said (MidPs ad loc.) that this psalm was recited with three varieties of praise: with the leading of the music (*nišsuah*), with the playing upon the instruments (*niggun*), and with the singing of the Psalm (*mizmor*). And what it means is that the *menaššeah* is the one who was in charge of the singers, and that the Psalms were rendered under the direction of the *menaššeḥim*, who assigned them to the players and singers. Thus one never finds “for the player” (*la-meshorer*) or “for the singer” (*la-megannen*), but “for the leader” (*la-menatstseah*) ... And there was a “leader” over the instrument called *neginot* and another over the instrument called *sheminit*.¹¹ And the poems, chants, and praises were said according to the melody that was associated with them; this was an elevated science that stimulated the rational soul and was counted among the secular sciences. And the instruments found in the Temple to give praise were: *nevalim, kinnorot, mešiltayim, ḥašošet, and shofar*. And the instruments were divided up according to the melodies associated with them. Among these melodies are those called: *‘alamot* (1 Chr 15:20); *neginot*, with which this psalm (Ps 4) was recited; *maskil; mikhtam; shiggayon; nehilot; shigyonot; and gittit*. The instruments were: *‘asor, ‘ugav, and minnim*. And each had its (associated) melody, as those who practiced this science knew. And we find written: “And four thousand for praising the Lord with instruments I devised for singing praises” (1 Chr 23:5). It is not known whether those who held the instruments in their hands were the same as those who recited the psalms, or if some recited them

harp on *‘alamot*; also Mattitiah, Eliphalehu, Mikneiah, Obed-edom, Jeiel, and Azaziah, with lyres to lead on the *sheminit*.” (1 Chr 15:20–21)

11 In addition to this interpretation, there are two passages where Qimḥi seems to read the term *neginot* in a different way. Thus, in his introduction, he refers to “*neginot, mizmorim and shirim*, some of them uttered with the accompaniment of musical instruments and some without,” where *neginot* seems to be a composition adapted for stringed instruments. Further on (Ps 4:1), he lists eight melodies (*neginot*): *‘alamot* (1 Chr 15:20); *neginot*, with which Psalm 4 was recited; *maskil; mikhtam; shiggayon; nehilot; shigyonot; and gittit*, where *neginot* refers to one of the eight melodies listed, or to “melody” in a generic way.

while others played the instruments. We also find that Scripture says: “The Levites with the instruments of the Lord’s music that King David had made to praise the Lord ‘for His steadfast is eternal’ by means of the Psalms of David that they all knew. The priests opposite them blew trumpets” (2 Chr 7:6), and “The song was sung and the trumpets were blown” (2 Chr 29:28); only the priests played the trumpets, as the text says: “The trumpets shall be blown by Aharon’s sons” (Num 10:8), and the Levites played the rest of the instruments, according to “when the Levites were in place with the instruments of David, and the priests with their trumpets” (2 Chr 29:26).¹²

In this passage, David Qimḥi understands the terms *neginot* and *sheminit* as musical instruments. He revisits the term in Psalm 6:1, where he states:

We have already explained the meaning of *neginot* and *sheminit*, and the remaining kinds of musical terms (*she’ar mine ha-niggunim*) in Psalm 4:1. And some explain it [i.e., the term *sheminit*] as an eight-stringed harp, and [say] this Psalm was recited to the accompaniment of its music. And according to *derash* (bMen 43b; MidPs 6.1) [it refers to] circumcision, which was given on the eighth [day], although this is far [from the literal meaning of the text].¹³

Among the medieval translations of the Bible, BNE clearly adopts the interpretation given here—that is, the one that identifies the term *sheminit* as an instrument with eight strings—and translates it thus: “sobre el instrumento delas ocho cuerdas” (Ps 6:1). Likewise, the term is also translated as “on the eighth string” (E3: “sobre la cuerda ochaua”; HS: לֵא אוֹגֵאֲבָה קוֹאִירְדָה); or generically, as “on the eighth” (E5/E7: “sobre la octaua”; EV: “sobre la othaua”; Arragel

12 To consult the Hebrew text of this and the rest of the medieval commentaries cited here, see the electronic version of the Miqra’ot Gedolot Haketer: Miqra’ot Gedolot Haketer Project at Bar-Ilan University, *Miqra’ot Gedolot Haketer*, 2016, <http://www.mgketer.org/>.

13 In his commentary on Psalm 6:1, Saadiah explains: “*Al ha-sheminit* teaches us that the Levites in the Temple had eight *alḥān*, one assigned to each group of them.” According to him, the term designated the eighth melody (*lahn*) out of the eight that exist (cf. Simon, *Four Approaches*, 18). For Abraham ibn Ezra, *sheminit* and the other enigmatic technical terms that begin many psalms allude to the first words of a poem, in whose melody the psalm was sung. On Psalm 4:1 he adds two alternative interpretations: 1) a melody, an opinion endorsed by Saadiah Gaon; and 2) a musical instrument, following the rabbinical tradition. In his treatment of Psalm 12:2, he gives three succinct interpretations: melody, poem, and string (cf. Simon, *Four Approaches*, 236). In what follows, I will refer to Ibn Ezra only in those cases in which he departs from this main interpretation.

and F: “sobre la ochaua”). In Arragel, the glosses he adds to his translation help to specify the meaning.¹⁴ He gives three possible explanations: as a musical instrument,¹⁵ as the ambitus or range of a psalm’s melody encompassing eight notes, and in reference to circumcision.

2 [For the leader] ‘*al ha-gittit*: Ps [8:1], 8:1, 84:1

פא,א. למנצח על הגתית לאסף. זה המזמור היה נתון לעובד אדום הגתי לנגן בו, או שהיה דויד בגת כשעשהו.

Psalm 81.1. For the leader, ‘*al ha-gittit le-asaf*. This psalm was given to Obed-Edom the Gittite (cf. 2Sam 6:10–12) for him to play. Or, according to its most obvious meaning, it is possible that David was in Gat when he composed it.

In this case, the text differs from the two interpretations that Rashi gives for Psalm 8:1: a musical instrument that comes from Gat,¹⁶ or (following MidPs 8.1) as a reference to Edom “that will be trodden like a winepress (*gat*),” an interpretation that is not supported—Rashi reckons—by the content of the Psalm.¹⁷ It also differs from the first interpretation given by David Qimḥi in his commentary on Psalm 8:1, according to which the term refers to a kind of melody. However, it reflects two interpretations that Qimḥi cites but does not subscribe to when commenting on this verse: “Some say: David said it when he was in Gat,” a view that he also mentions in his *Shorashim*; and “others say that it was given to the sons of Obed-Edom the Gittite.”¹⁸

14 In the glosses, Arragel discusses the rubrics in the Psalms according to the Hebrew text. In the translation there are rubrics in Latin, which were apparently added at the time corrections were made by suggestion of the Friars. See Moshe Lazar, “Moses Arragel as Translator and Commentator,” in *La Biblia de Alba: An Illustrated Manuscript Bible in Castilian*, ed. Jeremy Schonfield, 2 vols. (Madrid: Fundación Amigos de Sefarad, 1992), 2:157–200.

15 Arragel clearly understands “ochaua” as a musical instrument in Psalm 4:1. Here, his comments are not very clear. He may be alluding to either a musical instrument or a type of composition.

16 This is also the version in the Targum—“on the harp which came from Gat”—and what is suggested by Menahem ben Saruq, *Mahberet*, s.v. *g-t*.

17 In Psalm 8:1, he again repeats this interpretation. It coincides with the Targum.

18 In the introduction to his commentary, Abraham ibn Ezra cites the latter interpretation (together with another one), explicitly attributing it to Saadia; however, in his commentary on Psalm 8:1, he presents it as his own, adding that it is perhaps a poem that begins with this word (as he interprets the rest of the enigmatic terms in the headings); he adds

Of the vernacular versions, E3, E5, EV, and HS translate the term in the sense of a guitar-shaped lute.¹⁹ In BNE it is clear that it is an instrument, though which kind is not specified: “sobre el instrumento gujti” (8:1). In Arragel we find “sobre githith,” and in F, which usually preserves the Hebrew terms in transcription, “en Gittith” (Ps 8:1).²⁰ Again, Arragel’s glosses clarify the meaning, as he explains that it can refer to an instrument by this name, githith, from Gat (on Ps 81:1 he adds: “some translate *vihuela*”), and in reference to the sons of Obed-Edom ha-Gitti, to whom David would have given the psalm to play.

3 *Mikhtam le-david: Ps 16:1, 60:1; le-david mikhtam: Ps 56:1, 57:1, 58:1, 59:1*

טז, א. **מכתם לדוד**. שְׁלְמוּ פְּרִי־סִיָּאָדוּ. פִּי שִׁמְזוֹר זֶה יִקַּר וְחֶשְׁבִּים כִּתְּמִים, שֶׁהוּא זֶה־הַב, כְּלוּ שְׁבוּ דְבָרִים נְעִימִים וְנִכְוֹנִים וְחֶשְׁבִּים וִיקָרִים כִּזְהַב, וְכֵן כְּלֶשׁוֹן זֶה זֶה שִׁמְעוּ כִּי נִגְיָדִים אֲדַבֵּר (מִשׁ ח, 1), ‘הִנֵּה²¹ כִּתְּבִיתִי לְךָ שְׁלִישִׁים²² (שֵׁם כֶּבֶב, ב), שְׂרִי לִזְמֵן דְּבָרִים יִקָּרִים וְחֶשְׁבִּים כִּנְגִידִים וְשְׁלִישִׁים, שֶׁהֵם חֶשְׁבִּים וִיקָרִים, וְכִדְרֵךְ שְׂקוֹרִין לְדְבָרִים הַחֶשְׁבִּים וְהַנְּכֹוֹנִים מְרַגְלִיּוֹת, וְכֵן לֶשׁוֹן ‘עֵדוֹת לְאֶסְפִּי (תִּהְיֶה פ, א), שִׁפִּי פֶּאֶר וְחִמְדָּה הוּא לְאֶסְפִּי, אִו שֶׁהֵם דְּבָרֵי פֶּאֶר וְחִמְדָּה, מִן זְעֵדִית עֵדִי (יח’ כג, מ), שֶׁהוּא עֵינִי תִכְשִׁיט.

נו, א. **מכתם לדוד**.²³ שְׁלְמוּ. פִּי מִזְמוֹר שֶׁדְּבָרָיו נִכְוֹנִים וְנִכְוָחִים וְחֶשְׁבִּים כִּתְּמִים שֶׁהוּא זֶה־הַב, מִן ‘כֶּתֶם²⁴ אֹפִיר (אִיּוֹב כח, טז וְעוֹד), ‘וּלְכֶתֶם אִמְרֹתַי מִבְּטַחִי (שֵׁם לֵא, כד), וְכֵן שִׁמְעוּ כִּי נִגְיָדִים אֲדַבֵּר (מִשׁ ח, 1), ‘הִנֵּה²⁵ כִּתְּבִיתִי לְךָ שְׁלִישִׁים²⁶ (שֵׁם כֶּבֶב, ב), שִׁפִּי דְּבָרִים חֶשְׁבִּים וִיקָרִים כִּנְגִידִים וְשְׁלִישִׁים, שִׁפִּי שְׂרִים חֶשְׁבִּים, וְכֵן קוֹרִין לְדְבָרִים הַחֶשְׁבִּים מְרַגְלִיּוֹת.

that, according to Ibn Chiquitilla, *gittit* was “an instrument attributed to Obed-Edom the Gittite.” See Simon, *Four Approaches*, 237–239. Other authors had alluded to Obed-Edom, but they gave a different meaning to the expression. See Neubauer, “Authorship,” 38.

19 Harvey Turnbull and Paul Sparks, “Guitar,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tirrell, 29 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 10:551–578, esp. 553. On the medieval guitar, its introduction into the Iberian Peninsula, and its evolution, see Rosario Álvarez, “Los instrumentos musicales en los códices alfonsinos: Su tipología, su uso y su origen. Algunos problemas iconográficos,” *Revista de Musicología* 10.1 (1987): 77–78.

20 The translation of the term in Psalms 81:1 and 84:1 is “on the Gittith,” so it is highly probable that he also understands it as a musical instrument.

21 Massoretic text: הלא.

22 According to the *ketiv*: שלשום.

23 Masoretic Text: לדוד מכתם.

24 Masoretic Text: בכתם.

25 Massoretic text: הלא.

26 According to the *ketiv*: שלשום.

Psalm 16:1. *Mikhtam le-david*. Salmu preciadu. It means that this psalm is [as] precious and important as *ketem*, which means gold, that is, that there are things in it that are beautiful, correct, important, and precious like gold. And thus, there is also the expressions: “Listen, for I speak noble things (*negidim*)” (Prov 8:6), “Indeed, I wrote down for you a threefold lore (*shalishim*)” (Prov 22:20), which mean: precious and important things like princes (*negidim*) and chiefs (*shelishim*), which are precious and important. And in the same way, words that are important and correct are called pearls. Thus, there are also the expression “*’edut le-asaf*” (Ps 80:1), which means: beauty and grace is for Asaf, or that they are things of beauty and grace, from “You donned your finery” (Ezek 23:40), which has the sense of jewel.

Psalm 56:1. *Mikhtam le-david*. Salmu. It means psalm whose words are correct, true, and important as *ketem*, which is gold, from “Gold of Ophir” (Job 28:16, etc.), “Did I put my reliance on gold” (Job 31:24). And thus, [there are also the expressions] “Listen, for I speak noble things” (Prov 8:6), and “Indeed, I wrote down for you a threefold lore” (Prov. 22:20), which mean important and precious things like princes (*negidim*) and chiefs (*shelishim*), which are important princes. Similarly, important things are called pearls.

In these two passages, MS Hunt. 268 relates the term *mikhtam* to *ketem* (gold), attributing to it the meaning of “precious psalm” and thereby underlining its value, a semantic nuance that reflects the *la’az*. It compares the expression to “*’edut le-asaf*” (Ps 80:1), in which it also attributes to *’edut* the sense of beauty and grace.²⁷

The proposed interpretation contrasts with Rashi’s, which starts by pointing to the opinion of the Rabbis according to whom the meaning would be related to a psalm of David, “who was meek (*makh*) and unblemished (*tam*), whose wound (*makkato*) was perfect (*tammah*) as he was born circumcised.”²⁸ Rashi thinks that although this interpretation is possible for *le-david mikhtam* (Pss 56:1, 57:1, 58:1, 59:1), it is not in the case of *mikhtam le-david* (Pss 16:1, 56:1). In these last two verses, Rashi is of the opinion that the term refers to “one of the names of types of poetic styles, as there is a distinction among poetic styles.” Furthermore, some manuscripts include an addition according

²⁷ See below, on *’edut* (Pss 60:1, 80:1).

²⁸ See bSot 10b; also MidPs 16.1.

to which the term *mikhtam* would have the meaning of “crown,” in the sense of *ketem paz* (Song 5:1).²⁹

In his commentary on Psalm 16:1, David Qimḥi again cites 4:1, where he had included *mikhtam* in the list of terms that described different kinds of melodies. However, in the *Shorashim* (under *k-t-m*), he interprets the term in reference to David, “on him whom this psalm was like gold (*ketem*).” This interpretation is in agreement with another that he gives in the same work (under *dh*) for *‘edut* as “this Psalm was adornment and beauty for Asaf.” This is one of the two possible interpretations that Abraham ibn Ezra had adopted in his commentary of Psalm 16:1, although, as in the rest of the cases, Ibn Ezra believes that the term could refer to “the melody of a poem that began *mikhtam*.” As Uriel Simon points out, in Psalm 80:1 Ibn Ezra refers explicitly to Jonah ibn Janah, who uses similar reasoning in his interpretation of *‘edut* and relates both terms to each other,³⁰ just as they are related by Qimḥi in *Shorashim* and in this text.³¹

MS Hunt. 268 includes two *le‘azim*: “salmu preçiadu” (Ps 16:1) and “salmu” (Ps 56:1). None of the vernacular translations considered herein reflects the idea of excellence that is explicit in the first *la‘az*. Taking Psalm 16:1 as an example, E3 and HS translate it as “salmo,” whereas E5 and EV translate it as “plegaria,” and BNE as “oraçion” (cf. Gallican and Iuxta Hebraeos: “oratio”).³² Arragel is an exception: at Ps 16:1 he notes that it is about the instrument with which the psalm is played or that the term refers to a crown, since David valued it as a precious crown.³³

4 [For the leader] ‘*al ayyelet ha-shaḥar*: Ps 22:1

כב, א. למנצח על אילת השחר. פי' כח עלות, מן איילותי³⁴ לעזרתי חושה' (תה' כב, ב), פירו' מזמור שמנגן בו בעלות השחר, ועל דרך הדרש משל על כנסת ישראל שהיא אילת אהבים הנשקפה כמו שחר, ונכון הוא שכל ענין המזמור על כנסת ישראל בהיותם בגלות.

29 E3 translates: “corona de ofaz.”

30 Simon, *Four Approaches*, 240.

31 On this same association in earlier Karaite authors, see Neubauer, “Authorship,” 51.

32 E3, E5, and EV translate the term in the same way for all six occurrences of the term. BNE translates it as *oraçion* in Psalms 16:1 and 56:1, and as *jnpreesion* (with spelling variants, perhaps from Heb. אֶתֶר, as in Ibn Janāḥ, *Sepher Haschoraschim*) in Psalms 57:1, 58:1, 59:1, 60:1. See Jonah ibn Janāḥ, *Sepher Haschoraschim*, ed. Wilhem Bacher (Berlin: H. Itzkowski, 1896; repr., Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1969), s.v. *k-t-m*. F leaves the term untranslated.

33 In the headings of Psalms 56, 57, 58, 59, it only alludes to the second explanation, indicating in one case that David held the psalm in question as his crown.

34 Masoretic Text: אילותי.

Psalm 22:1. For the leader *'al-ayyelet ha-shaḥar*. It means: the power of the rising [of the dawn], from “my strength (*eyaluti*) hasten to my aid” (Ps 22:20). It means: a psalm that is sung at the rising of the dawn. And according to *derash*, this is a *meshal* of the community of Israel that is *ayyelet ahavim* (see Prov 5:19) that breaks like the dawn (see Song 6:10). And it is correct [to say] that the entire theme of the psalm is the community of Israel in exile.

The first of the two interpretations that are offered relates the term *ayyelet* to the concept of strength; the second (“hind of the dawn”) adopts a midrashic interpretation that understands the term to refer to the community of Israel. This second opinion, according to *derash* is in keeping with that of Rashi, for whom the expression designates first of all a musical instrument, but points out that it could also be understood as a reference to the nation of Israel or, in the Rabbis’ view, to Esther.³⁵ Some manuscripts include an addition with a supplementary interpretation that explicitly cites Menaḥem ben Saruq, who interprets the term *ayyelet* as strength (*Maḥberet*, s.v. *’y-l*), as in the first interpretation of our text, although he relates the term *shaḥar* to seeking, as in Proverbs 11:27 and 7:15,³⁶ and not to the dawn; nor does he relate it to the time of day when it is sung.

In his commentary, David Qimḥi gives three possible explanations for the term *ayyelet*: the one preferred by those who interpret it to be a musical instrument, without mentioning Rashi specifically; the one preferred by those who think it derives from *eyaluti* in Psalm 22:20, which is why the biblical text would indicate that this is a psalm that is sung at the break of dawn;³⁷ and that preferred by those who think that it is a name to designate the morning star, as the Rabbis say in yYom 3.2 [40b]. He adds, again following the Rabbis, that the morning star is identified with Esther³⁸ and with Israel, which was in exile at that time. He recalls, finally, that there are some who apply the term to David in his flight from Saul. In his *Shorashim*, Qimḥi interprets the term in the first

35 See MidPs 22.1 (where *ayyelet ha-shaḥar* is identified with Esther); in MidPs 22.6 this Psalm is associated with the Fast of Esther, and bMeg 15a indicates that she recites it on her way to see Ahasuerus. In bYom 29a there is a discussion about why she is compared with a gazelle.

36 The Targum translates it as: “Upon the strength of the daily morning sacrifice.” Saadiah also interprets the term to mean “at sunrise” (lit. “the strengthening of the morning”). See Simon, *Four Approaches*, 51n56.

37 This same observation appeared in Saadiah and Abraham ibn Ezra: Simon, *Four Approaches*, 240.

38 See above, note 35.

place as “morning star,” he cites the interpretation that links the term *ayyelet* to “strength,” and he concludes that the right way to understand it is as a *maskal* of the community of Israel, as the comparison is applied to her in Song of Solomon 2:7 and Psalm 22:1.

Of the vernacular translations, E3, HS, and F reflect the Talmudic interpretation, adopted in the *Shorashim*, and they translate it as: “sobre la estrella dela mañana” (E3), לוזירו די לא מאנייאנה (HS), and “sobre luzero de la mañana” (F). E5, EV, and BNE, following Rashi’s preferred interpretation, understand the term to refer to a musical instrument and translate it as: “sobre el estrumete del aluorada” (E5 and EV); and “sobre el jnstrumente dicho çierua del alma” (“alua”?) (BNE). Arragel provides a three-fold interpretation: “sobre la çierua de la mañana,” “sobre la fortaleza de la mañana,” and “sobre la fortaleza de la obscuridat,” and he points out that for some (Rashi) it is a musical instrument and for others the time of the morning in which David composed the psalm.

5 **Maskil:** Ps 32:1, 42:1, 44:1, 45:1, 52:1, 53:1, 54:1, 55:1, 74:1, 78:1, 88:1, 89:1, 142:1³⁹

לב, א. לדוד משכיל. שְׁלֹמוֹ דֵי אִינְטִינְדִימִינְטוּ. פִּירוֹ מִזְמוֹר שְׁכָל לְהַשְׁכִּיל, כְּמוֹ לְדוּדִי⁴⁰ לְהַזְכִּיר (תה' לח, א), והוא שם מהכבד החמישי, ע"מ יתן אכל למכביר (איוב לו, לא), כלו' שמשכילין ממנו ענינים נכונים, או כמו כמשמעו לשון מפעיל כלו' שמזמור זה משכיל ומבין ומזהיר לעם, וכן מכתם לדודי⁴¹ ללמד (תה' ס, א), שמלמד ענינו לעם.

מב. א. למנעח משכיל לבני קרח. שְׁלֹמוֹ דֵי אִינְטִינְדִימִינְטוּ. פִּי מִזְמוֹר לְהַבְנִה, כְּלוֹ שִׁיבִין מִמֶּנּוּ הַקּוֹרָא דְבָרִים נְכוּחִים, וְהוּא שֵׁם, ע"מ יתן אכל למכביר (איוב לו, לא), או שיהיה מפעיל, כלו' שמלמד ומשכיל לעם דברים נכוחים.

Psalm 32:1. *Le-david, maskil*. Salmu de entendimientu. It means psalm of understanding to make [people] understand, as in “A Psalm of David for understanding” (Ps 38:1). [It is] a noun of the heavy verbs with five letters in their ground form (i.e., *hif'il*), following the paradigm of *le-makhbir* (Job 36:31), meaning that [readers] understand right things from it. Or, according to its most obvious meaning [that is, to what it appears at first],

39 At Psalms 32:1, 52:1, 53:1, 54:1, 55:1, 142:1 the term is associated with David’s name; at Psalms 74:1, 78:1 with Asaph’s; at Psalm 88:1 with Heman the Ezrahite; at 89:1 with Ethan the Ezrahite; and finally at Psalms 42:1, 44:1, 45:1, with the Korahites.

40 Masoretic Text is: לְדוּדִי.

41 Masoretic Text is: לְדוּדִי.

it is a *maf'il* form, meaning that this psalm provides understanding and gives knowledge and advises the people, as in “A *mikhtam* of David for teaching” (Ps 60:1), which means that he teaches its meaning to the people.

Psalm 42:1. For the leader, *maskil, li-vene Qorah*. Salmu de entendimientu. It means psalm of understanding, that is, so that the reader understands from it things that are correct. It is a noun that follows the paradigm of *le-makbhir* (Job 36:31). Or it can be a *maf'il* form, that is, that [the psalm] teaches and shows the people righteous things.⁴²

In both passages, which are practically identical, the term *maskil* is understood as a noun (“understanding”) or as a masculine singular active participle of the *hif'il* form (“that gives understanding”). In *Shorashim* (s.v. *s-k-l*), David Qimḥi adopts the term *maskil* (Ps 32:1) as a proof-text of the *hif'il* form of the root, which coincides with the first sense,⁴³ although in the commentary to this same verse he cites what he already said in Psalm 4:1, where he pointed out that *maskil* was a kind of melody.⁴⁴ In his commentary on Psalm 32:1, Rashi states, on the basis of a *baraita* cited in tPes 117a, that every Psalm in which the term *maskil* is mentioned means that David said it through an interpreter (*turgeman*).⁴⁵

The *la'az* “salmu de entendimientu” adopts the first sense in this case; that is, it reads the term as a noun, and in doing so it concurs with the translation in E5 (“entendimiento,” with spelling variants in the different verses); EV (“entendimjento,” also with spelling variants); and BNE (“de entendimiento” in Ps 42:1). In Psalm 32:1 BNE translates it as “fazjente entender” and in Psalm 44:1 as “para entender,” thus reflecting the second sense.⁴⁶ Arragel translates it as “prudente” nine times (Pss 32:1, 42:1, 44:1, 45:1, 74:1, 78:1, 88:1, 89:1, 142:1); in his glosses to four of these verses (Pss 32:1, 42:1, 44:1, 45:1), he explicitly interprets the term as a

42 In Psalm 45:1 the text repeats this last meaning in an abbreviated way.

43 The Targum translates it as “intelligence.”

44 Saadiah understood it to allude to the didactic genre, that is, as a psalm that teaches wisdom. In addition to considering it the title of a poem, Ibn Ezra thinks that it might also allude to the psalm genre. See Simon, *Four Approaches*, 51n56, 243.

45 Lit. “translator, interpreter.” Mayer I. Gruber, *Rashi's Commentary on Psalms* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2007), ad loc., translates “ghostwriter.” In Psalm 88:1, Rashi explains how the process of composition happens.

46 As in other cases, BNE exhibits variety in how it translates the term: “psalmo” (Pss 45:1, 53:1, 54:1, 55:1), “jntellectual psalmo” (Ps 52:1), “psalmo jntellectual” (Pss 74:1, 78:1, 88:1), etc. E3 is consistent in translating it as “Salmo,” and F preserves the Hebrew term *maskil*.

musical instrument; in Psalm 74:1, he indicates a lack of certainty in the identification; and in Psalm 88:1, he interprets the term as alluding to Heman. Three other times (Pss 52:1, 54:1, and 55:1) Arragel translates it as “psalmo,” while he leaves it untranslated in Psalm 53:1.

6 *Le-hazkir: Ps 38:1, 70:1*

לח,א. מזמור לדוד להזכיר. פי' להזכיר צרותם של ישראל, כדרך 'צרת[י] לפניו אגיד' (תה' קמב,ג), כי כן ענין כל המזמור ענין צרות ומאורעות קשות.

ע,א. למנצח לדוד להזכיר. תפלה לפני הקב"ה.

Psalm 38:1. **David's Psalm to make remembrance.** It means to recall Israel's tribulations, as it says in Psalm 142:3, “I lay my trouble before Him,” since this is the meaning of the whole psalm, tribulations and hard times.

Psalm 70:1. **For the leader, from David, to make remembrance.** Prayer, before the Holy One.

The interpretation of the term in Psalm 38:1 is based on Rashi's commentary, to which is added a proof-text and an application of this sense to the content of the whole psalm. Likewise, in Psalm 70:1 Rashi's commentary is followed in an abbreviated way.⁴⁷ David Qimḥi gives two options in his commentary: that it is one of the melodies (to which he has referred in Psalm 4:1), or that it has the sense of “giving thanks” (*lehodot*), as in Isaiah 12:4 (“Declare that His name is exalted”). He adds that David wrote this psalm to be prayed by anyone anguished by the soul's evils and burdens; that is, he concludes, “this psalm is to remind and make known to any oppressed and anguished person that he has to pray it.”⁴⁸

The sense of “remembering” is the one that the vernacular translations give, with different variants. Arragel translates the term as “por remembar” (Ps 38:1) and understands it as referring to an instrument or as alluding to David, who had to remember it in order to pray it every day. At Psalm 70:1, he translates it as “memorial,” in the sense of a psalm to be prayed every day.

47 The Targum also translates in in this way (“For the remembrance of Israel”).

48 In this last meaning, he follows Ibn Janāḥ, *Sepher Haschoraschim*, s.v. z-k-r.

- 7 [For the leader] *lidutun*: Ps 39:1; [For the leader] *'al yedutun*: Ps 62:1, 77:1

סב,א. למנצח על ידותון. ש" לידותון כשאר המזמורים, כדרך 'לאסף', 'לבני קרח', וזולתם, או שרו' לומ' בעבור ידותון, כלו' נעשה המזמור כדי שינגן בו ידותון, כמו 'על דבר אשר' (דב' כב, כד ועור), וכיצא בו, שפי' בעבור.

Psalm 62:1. [For the leader] *'al Yedutun*. It should say: by Jeduthun (*lidutun*), as is the case with the rest of the Psalms, [where it says] *le-Asaf, li-vene-Qorah*, etc. Or possibly it means, for Jeduthun, that is, this psalm is made for Jeduthun to play, as is the case with [the idiom] *'al devar asher* (Deut 22:24, etc.), and others, which also mean "for."

It can be deduced from this passage that the text understands Jeduthun as the name of a person, who is considered to be either the author of the psalm in question or the musician who is intended to play the psalm. In the introduction to his commentary to Psalms, Rashi alludes to the rabbinical controversy around Jeduthun, in which the term was interpreted as an actual person, one of the singers [who performed liturgical music before the Ark] (1 Chr 16:41), or in reference to the judgments imposed on David and Israel.⁴⁹ In his commentary on Psalm 39:1, Rashi repeats these two possibilities and adds a third according to which the term could be the name of a musical instrument (Menahem, *Mahberet*, s.v. *g-t*). In his commentary on Psalm 62:1 he mentions the latter interpretation and the midrash that he had referred to in the introduction, and in his commentary on Psalm 77:1 he only mentions the midrash. In Psalms 62:1 and 77:1, David Qimḥi notes that it is a psalm that David composes and gives to Jeduthun to perform; he therefore concurs with the second of the two senses that are indicated in MS Hunt. 268.⁵⁰

E₃, BNE, and F coincide in translating the term according to the second interpretation, which understands the psalm to be intended for Jeduthun.⁵¹ In contrast, E₅ and EV consider it to refer to a musical instrument, which they identify

49 On the sources of this rabbinical controversy, see Gruber, *Rashi's Commentary on Psalms*, 168n24–25.

50 According to Saadiah and Ibn Chiquitilla, David wrote these three psalms and gave them to Jeduthun to perform; Ibn Ezra notes, as in the rest of the cases, that it was the title of a poem written by an author of the same name, or that the poem was given to Jeduthun, thus mentioning the two-fold opinion expressed in MS Hunt. 268. See Simon, *Four Approaches*, 242–243.

51 In Psalm 62:1, E₃, however, translates it as: "por ayudador."

as the lute (in Pss 39:1, 62:1), and as the tungano/tunzano (possibly a mistake, as the term is not documented elsewhere) in Psalm 77:1, following Ben Saruq and Rashi. As for Arragel, he renders the expression as “A Jeduthun” in Psalms 39 and 62, explaining that he is the musician (*assonador*) or singer (*cantor*) to whom David gives it and that the biblical text does not specify with what instrument it should be played; in Psalm 77, Arragel translates it as “De Jeduthun” and explains that Asaph composes the psalm and gives it to the musician, who plays it with an instrument called a Jeduthun.

8 For the leader *‘al shoshannim*: Ps 45:1, 69:1, 80:1; *shoshan ‘edut*: Ps 60:1

מה, א. למנצח על שושנים.⁵² פ' שיר נחמד כשושנים, או שהוא תאר וכנוי לקול השיר, ובער' לקב ללא לחאן. משכיל. שמשכילים מענינו דברים נכוחים ונכונים כמו שאמרנו.

Psalm 45:1. For the leader *‘al shoshannim*. It means: a song beautiful like the lilies.⁵³ Or it is possibly the title and name of the melody of the poem, which in Arabic would be *laqab li-l-'ilhān*.

פ, א. למנצח אל שושנים.⁵⁴ שנחמדים דבריו כשושנים. עדות לאסף. פירמושוֹרָה. לשון תכשיט, ויופי, ונוי, כל' תכשיט ויופי הם הדברים, ו'עדי' מן ויתנו עליו את הנזר ואת העדות' (דה"ב כג, יא). ד"א מזמור של עדות לישראל שרמז להם שלש גליות והתפלל עליהם, שהרי אומ' במזמור הזה ג' פעמים 'השיבנו והאר פניך ונושעה' (תה' פ, ד; פ, ח; פ, ב), ורמז להם בו כל הצרות העתידות לבוא להם.

Psalm 80:1. For the leader *‘al shoshannim*. His words are pleasing like the lilies. *‘Edut le-Asaf*. *Fermosura*. In the sense of adornment, beauty, and loveliness; that is, adornment and beauty are the words, and *‘adi* derives from “And placed upon him the crown and the insignia (*ha-‘edut*)” (2 Chr 23:11). Another interpretation: Psalm of Israel’s testimony, in which [Asaph] alludes to the three exiles and prays for them, since in the psalm he repeats three times “Restore us, show Your favor that we may be deliv-

52 Massoretic Text: שושנים.

53 In Song of Solomon 5:13, following Ibn Janāh, *Sepher Haschoraschim*, s.v. *sh-sh-n*, the term *shushan* is interpreted as “rose” because that is what the context requires. The three verses cited here lack the *la‘az*, so I follow the usual tradition of understanding the word *shushan* as meaning “lily.”

54 Massoretic Text: שושנים.

ered" (verses 4, 8, and 20), and with that he alludes to all the misfortunes that will befall them in the future.

ס.א. למנצח על שושן עדות. שיר נחמד כשושן. עדות. די פִּירְמוֹשׁוּרָה. פי ענין פאר וּחְמֵדָה וּתְכֵשִׁיט וְיוֹפִי, מִן 'וְאֶעֱדֶךָ עֲדִי' (יח' טז,יא), כְּלוּ' שְׁדַבְרֵי נְחֻמִּים וּנְפֹאֲרִים כְּתְכֵשִׁיט, וְכֵן 'מִכְתָּם' שְׁדַבְרֵי יִקְרִים כִּזְהַב, כְּמוֹ שְׁאִמְרָנוּ. ש' עֲדָה, וְכֵן 'זִיתֶן עֲלֵי אֶת הַנֶּזֶר וְאֶת הָעֵדוּת' (מל"ב יא,יב). ד"א על עֲדוּתֵן שֶׁל סַנְהֶדְרִין שֶׁנִּמְשְׁלוּ לְשׁוֹשָׁנִים שֶׁהָעִידוּ לְהִלָּחֵם בְּאַרֶם, וּבְבָנֵי עַמּוֹן, וּבְאֲדוֹם, כְּמוֹ שִׁיתְפָּרֵשׁ.

Psalm 60:1. **For the leader 'al shushan 'edut.** A song beautiful like a lily. *'Edut.* De fermosura. In the sense of splendor, loveliness, jewel, and beauty, as "I decked you out in finery ('*edi*)" (Ezek 16:11), that is, his words are beautiful and magnificent like a jewel. The same is true of *mikhtam*, which means that his words are precious like gold, as we have already said. The root is *'d-h*, as in "And placed upon him the crown and the insignia (*ha-'edut*)" (2 Kgs 11:12). Another interpretation: referring to the testimony of the Sanhedrin, who were likened to lilies (*shoshannim*), who gave testimony at the time of the war with Aram and with the sons of Amon and with Edom, as will be explained.⁵⁵

The interpretation of the term *shoshannim/shushan* is the same in the three previous verses: the beauty of the Psalm is like that of lilies. This interpretation, which is in line with the literal meaning of the text, differs from Rashi's, who gives a midrashic interpretation of the term and for whom, in Psalm 45:1, the term *shoshannim* refers to the Rabbis, in whose honor the sons of Korah had composed the Psalm⁵⁶ (as it is interpreted in the Targum). It also differs from David Qimḥi's interpretation, for whom the term in Psalm 45:1 refers to a musical instrument, echoing an interpretation that had been mentioned in earlier sources. At Psalms 45:1, MS Hunt. 268 adds a second interpretation: *'al shoshannim* could refer to the melody according to which the Psalm is sung. This interpretation is identical to Saadiah's, for whom *shushan/shushanim* is the name of a *lahn*.⁵⁷

55 Psalm 60:2 says: "When he fought with Aram-Naharaim and Aram-zobah, and Joab returned and defeated Edom—[an army] of twelve thousand men—in the Valley of Salt" (cf. 2 Sam 8; 1 Chr 18).

56 On the rabbinical sources of this association, see Gruber, *Rashi's Commentary on Psalms*, 352–353n2.

57 As in the rest of the cases, Abraham ibn Ezra considers *'al shoshanim* to be the beginning of a poem with whose melody this psalm is sung. Simon, *Four Approaches*, 18, 243.

Some vernacular translations adopt the meaning given by Qimḥi and earlier authors; thus, at Psalm 45:1, E3 translates the term as “con estrumentes” and BNE as “sobre el jnstumente lirios.” Elsewhere, only the name of the flower is translated: “lirio/lirios” (E3 in Pss 60, 69, 80), “rrosas” (E5 and EV in Pss 45, 69, 80),⁵⁸ “açuçena” (E5 and EV in Ps 60) or, as in F, left in Hebrew. HS, on the other hand, differs from all of them and translates גוּזוּשׁ, probably from the Hebrew *sason* (joy) and not *shushan*.⁵⁹

As for the term *’edut*, which appears in Psalms 60:1 and 80:1, it is understood firstly as related to the word *’adi* (jewel), in the sense of “splendor, loveliness, jewel and beauty,” as has already been noted in our discussion of the term *mikhtam*, with whose meaning it is explicitly related in the first of these two verses. This interpretation appears in Ibn Janāḥ (*Sepher Haschoraschim*, s.v. *’d-h*).⁶⁰ David Qimḥi (*Shorashim*, s.v. *’d-h*) also interprets Psalm 80:1 in this way, although he indicates in the commentary that *’edut* is a musical term whose precise meaning is unknown. To this shared interpretation, MS Hunt. 268 adds a second one, according to *derash*, which follows Rashi’s commentary ad loc. in both verses.⁶¹ This second interpretation gives the term *’edut* the meaning of “testimony,” instead of “beauty.”

Among the vernacular translations, only HS translates the term *’edut* in Psalm 60:1 in the sense of “beauty” (אֵדוּת); the majority of the vernacular translations (E3, E5, BNE) understand it in the sense of testimony, or they leave it untranslated (F: Heduth, although in 80:1 it is also translated as “testimony”). For his part, Arragel considers *’al shoshanim* (“sobre las rosas”),⁶² *’edut* (“testimonio”), and *’al ’edut shushan* (“rosa del testimonio”) to refer to musical instruments.⁶³

58 See above, note 53.

59 That is also how it translates the term *shushan* in Psalm 60:1.

60 In his commentary ad loc., Ibn Ezra mentions this interpretation. See Simon, *Four Approaches*, 249.

61 At Psalm 60:1, Rashi relies on MidPs ad loc. He concurs with the *Targum Yonatan*, which translates it as “To praise the Sanhedrin.” See Moshe J. Bernstein, “A Jewish Reading of Psalms: Some Observations on the Method of the Aramaic Targum,” in *The Book of Psalms: Composition and Reception*, ed. Peter W. Flint and Patrick D. Miller (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 492.

62 This is how it is explained by David Qimḥi in the introduction to his commentary; on other authors, see Neubauer, “Authorship,” 46.

63 Saadiah also interpreted the term *’edut* in this way. See Simon, *Four Approaches*, 249.

9 [For the leader] [...] *'al 'alamot shir*: Ps 46:1

מו,א. למנצח לבני קרח על עלמות שיר. סילאמיינטוש די קאנקו או קנקו די סילאמיינטוש. שיר בכלי ניגון שקולו ערב ונמוך ונעלם שאינו נשמע למרחוק, ובער' צות כפי. ד"א שיר שעניניו נעלמים ונסתרים, כי ענין המזמור הזה מדבר על ענין זמן הגאולה שזמנה נסתר ונעלם ממנו.

Psalm 46:1. **For the leader** *li-vene Qorah 'al 'alamot shir*. Celamientos de cancu o cancu de celamientos. Poem with [the accompaniment of a] musical instrument, whose sound is so soft and low and hidden that it cannot be heard from afar, and in Arabic is called: *ṣawt khafiyy*. Another interpretation: Poem whose meanings are veiled and hidden, since the psalm is about the time of redemption, which is secret and unknown to us.

According to Rashi, *'alamot* is the name of a musical instrument, from 1 Chronicles 15:20. The first of the interpretations given in MS Hunt. 268 understands *'alamot* as “low, soft.” This reading concurs with Saadiah, who also interprets it to mean of “a quiet (*ne'elam*) voice.”⁶⁴ In his *Sepher Haschoraschim* (s.v. *'l-m*), Ibn Janāḥ understands it in a similar vein as a musical performance in a low, soft tone. David Qimḥi, ad loc., citing Psalm 4:1, considers it a kind of melody. MS Hunt. 268's second interpretation gives the term *'alamot* the meaning of “hidden,” and so does David Qimḥi in his *Shorashim* (s.v. *'l-m*).

The *la'az* (“Celamientos de cancu o cancu de celamientos”) reflects only the second meaning.⁶⁵ In this, it agrees with E₅ (“sobre los ençelamjentos. Cantar”), EV (“sobre los ençelamjentos cantar”), BNE (“sobre las cosas ocultas canto”), and HS (אינקובֿיירטשאַס). E₃ reflects Rashi's interpretation (“con estru- mentes canto”), and F retains the Hebrew term. Arragel, who translates it as “sobre las moças” (from *'almah*, “maiden”), understands it to refer to a musical instrument called “cantico de las moças.”

64 Simon points out that for Abraham ibn Ezra, who cites Saadiah's opinion, *'alamot* is simply the title of a poem, as in the rest of the cases. Simon, *Four Approaches*, 244.

65 The term *cançu* is probably derived from *cantico*, song, which in the vernacular versions is given as a translation of the Hebrew *shir*.

10 [For the leader] *‘al maḥalat*: Ps 53:1; [For the leader] *‘al maḥalat la‘annot*: Ps 88:1

נג,א. למנצח על מחלות. מן בתפסים ובמחלות (שופ' יא, לד), ובער' טנבור, והוא כמין תף, ועל כן הוא נזכר תמיד עם התוף, ובא בת"ו הסמך שלא כמשפט, שי' על מחלת שיר, וכיוצא בזה, והקמץ בו מפני ההפסק לתפארת, וכן 'למנצח על נגינת' (תה' סא, א) וזולתו, ששי' על נגינת נבל, וכיוצא בו, ומשפטו בלא ת"ו הסמך מ'חלה, ע"מ 'מגלה', 'מסבה', לפי ששרשו חל"ל, והוקל כך כדי להבדיל בינו ובין 'במחלות'⁶⁶ עפר' (יש' ב, יט), וכן במכסת נפשות⁶⁷ (שמ' יב, ד), שמש' מ'כסת.

Psalm 53:1. For the leader *‘al maḥalat*. As in “*Be-tuppim u-vi-meḥolot*” (Judg 11:34), and in Arabic it is: *ṭunbūr*, which is a kind of drum, and therefore it is always mentioned together with the word *ha-ṭof*. The *taw* of the construct is against the norm; it should say: *‘al maḥalat shir*, and the *qameṣ*, due to pause, is euphonic. Similarly, “For the leader, *‘al neginat*” (Ps 61:1), it should be: *‘al neginat nevel*. According to the norm, the form (*maḥalat*) should be without a *taw*, which is proper for the construct state, that is, *meḥillah*, following the paradigm of *megillah* and *mesibbah*, because its root is *ḥ-l-l*, but it is lightened in order not to be confused with “And hollows (*u-vi-meḥillot*) in the ground” (Isa 2:19), and that is also the case in “In proportion to the number of persons” (Exod 12:4), where *be-mikhsat* should be *mekhissat* [*mekhissah?*].

In his study on the Psalms, Simon points out that for Saadiah this heading (*‘al maḥalat*) is the only one that means a name for a musical instrument. Now, Saadiah relates *maḥalat* with *maḥol* and identifies it as an instrument called *ṭabl*, a large two-headed drum,⁶⁸ whereas in this case, the instrument is identified as *ṭunbūr*,⁶⁹ which for Saadiah is the Hebrew *kinnor*. Rashi also indicates in his commentary on Psalm 53:1 that *maḥalat* is a musical instrument, as had Menahem ben Saruq (*Maḥberet*, s.v. *g-t*). To this first interpretation Rashi adds a

66 Masoretic Text: ובמחלות עפר.

67 Masoretic Text: נפשות.

68 Simon, *Four Approaches*, 20. It is also identified as *ṭabl* in David ben Abraham. See Neubauer, “Authorship,” 47.

69 While *ṭunbūr* is originally a string instrument, the semantic change from string to percussion instrument is already documented in Andalusī Arabic. See Federico Corriente, Christophe Pereira, and Ángeles Vicente, *Dictionnaire des emprunts ibéro-romans: Emprunts à l'arabe et aux langues du Monde Islamique* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019). I am very grateful to Ángeles Vicente for this reference.

second one, which is the only one he brings to bear in his commentary on Psalm 88:1, according to which the term would refer to Israel's illness (*maḥalah*), when the Temple was destroyed. As for David Qimḥi, in his commentary on Psalm 88:1, he alludes, as usual, to the enigmatic nature of the expressions that open some psalms and their connection to music, and to this he adds an interpretation, according to *derash*, based on MidPs ad loc.

Of the vernacular translations, three give the term the meaning of an instrument: BNE, in the passage that corresponds to Psalm 88:1, where it is translated as: "sobre el instrumento mahalat,"⁷⁰ and E5 and EV, which translate both verses (53:1 and 88:1) as "sobre la baldosa."⁷¹ HS translates it as קאנטאבלינה and שוברי קאנטאבלינה, respectively.⁷² For Arragel, as was mentioned in the discussion of the term Jeduthun in Psalm 88:1, Maalath is a musical instrument called "dolençia e aflicçion" (from *maḥalah*, "illness").

11 *Al yonat elem reḥoqim: Ps 56:1*

נו,א. למנצח על יונת אלם רחוקים. קונפניא די לונינקוש. פי חברת רחוקים, מושאל מן 'והנה אנחנו מאלמים אלומים'⁷³ (בר' לז,ז) שהוא ענין אגידה, כמו שהושאל גם כן והחברה והקבוץ מלשון אגידה 'ויהיו לאגודה'⁷⁴ אחת' (שמ"ב ב,כה). אמ' דויד זה המזמור בהיותו בגת על תאותו וחשקו לארצו ולמשפחתו ודמה עצמו וסיעהו ליונה המרחקת נדוד, כמו שאומ' 'מי יתן לי אבר כיונה' (תה' נה,ז), 'הנה ארחיק נדוד'⁷⁵ (שם ח), כלומ' שהיו רחוקים מארץ ישראל. ד"א 'יונת אלם' מענין 'מי ישום אלם' (שמ' ד,יא),

70 In Psalm 53:1, it is translated as "sobre cantilena." *Cantilena*, from Latin *cantilena*, is a song, or a short poem meant to be sung. See Martín Alonso, *Diccionario medieval español: Desde las glosas emilianenses y silenses (s. xv) hasta el siglo xv* (Salamanca: Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, 1986).

71 Alonso, *Diccionario medieval español*, s.v. baldosa: from Italian, late fourteenth century, a stringed musical instrument similar to the psalter. Lloyd August Kasten and Florian J. Cody, *Tentative Dictionary of Medieval Spanish* (New York: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 2001), s.v. baldosa: from Provençal *baudosa*, with the same meaning. See also Álvarez, "Instrumentos musicales," 79.

72 Like the word *maḥol*, the Castilian term *cantavlena* seems to have a double meaning of musical instrument and dancing circle. In this regard, the translation of its feminine construct in the expression *ki-meḥolat ha-maḥanayim* (Song 7:1) is interesting. MS Hunt. 268 translates "con cantavlena de los fosados" in the sense of an army positioned in a circle, as does Arragel ("chorro de los reales"); however, E5 and EV opt for an instrument, like BNE, which translates it as "atabal," from the Arabic *ṭabl*.

73 Masoretic Text: אלמים.

74 Masoretic Text: לאגדה.

75 Masoretic Text: נדוד.

כלומ' שהיו נודדים מארצם כיונה המרחקת נדוד ויושבין שם כאלמים שלא היו יכולין לדבר מפחד, וזהו הנכון.

Psalm 56:1. For the leader, *'al yonat elem rehoqim*. Compañía de lonincos. It means a group of people who are far away, metaphorically, from “There we were binding sheaves” (Gen 37:7), which has the meaning of tying, in the same way that the group and society are related metaphorically with the expression “to tie,” in “Forming a single company” (2 Sam 2:25). David recited this psalm in Gat on the desire and longing that he felt for his homeland and his family and he compared himself and his companions with a dove that moves away in its flight, as in “O that I had the wings of a dove!” (Ps 55:7), “Surely, I would flee far off” (Ps 55:8), that is, that they were far from the land of Israel. Another interpretation of *yonat elem* is that it is derived from “Who makes [man] dumb (*illem*)” (Exod 4:11), that is, that they had left their land as a dove leaves on its flight and they had settled there like mute people who could not speak out of fear. And this is correct.

The commentary addresses the expression *elem rehoqim* and construes the first word to mean “group,” relating the term to others with the same root in Genesis 37:7 and 2 Samuel 2:25, such that it interprets it as “group of people who are far away.”⁷⁶ It provides a second interpretation, which it seems to prefer, according to which *elem* is an adjective modifying the previous term (*yonah*), and together they would mean “mute dove.”

In his *Sepher Haschoraschim* (s.v. *'l-m*), Ibn Janāḥ proposed three interpretations of *elem*: in the sense of “palace” by relating it to a term with the same root (*ulam*, “palace”);⁷⁷ in the sense of *qahal* (community) by relating it to Psalm 58:2;⁷⁸ and in the sense of “silenced, hushed” from the expression with the same root in Psalm 31:19. David Qimḥi (*Shorashim*, s.v. *'l-m*) cites the first and the third of these three opinions and opts (like MS Hunt. 268) for the latter, considering it to be the most appropriate in the context, and that is how Rashi understands it as well.

76 The term *elem* appears in the expression *elem šedeq* in Psalm 58:2, and there it is interpreted in two ways: 1) as “group,” reiterating its relationship with other terms with the same root in Genesis 37:7 and 2 Samuel 2:25, and adopting the *la'az* “ya compañía, justicia favlades,” and as “conjunto de palabras de justicia” (*la'az*: “ayuntamiento de biervos de yusticia”), from Genesis 37:7 and Psalm 16:4. To that is added a midrashic interpretation.

77 A similar interpretation appeared in earlier Karaite authors. See Neubauer, “Authorship,” 49.

78 Saadiah also understands it this way. See Simon, *Four Approaches*, 51n56.

Between the two interpretations (“group of people” and “mute dove”), in MS Hunt. 268 it is pointed out that David recited this psalm while he was in Gat⁷⁹ and that in it he compares himself to a dove. The commentary, based on MidPs 56:1, appears (although not literally) in Rashi, and in David Qimḥi, both in his commentary and his *Shorashim*.

The *la‘az* (“compaña de lonincos”) translates the expression according to the first interpretation.⁸⁰ Of all of the Romance versions, it is in agreement only with BNE, and then only partially. The latter translates it as: “por la Conpañã enganadora de lexos.” E3 and F follow the second interpretation of *elem* (E3: “sobre la paloma muda alongada”; F: “sobre paloma muda en lexanos”). E5 and EV understand it to refer to a musical instrument, an interpretation already alluded to by Saadia⁸¹ (E5: “sobre el estrumento dela paloma nida” (“muda?”); EV: “sobre la strumente de la plegaria”). Arragel translates it as “sobre la paloma muda de lueñe” and explains that for some the expression denotes an instrument and for others it alludes to David in his flight from Saul.

12 *Al tashhet*: Ps 57:1, 58:1, 59:1, 75:1

נ.א. למנצח אל תשחת לדויד⁸² מב' בברחו מפני שאול. לשון תפלה מפני פחד שאול שהיה קרוב למות, ואמ' אל תשחת, כלו' אל תשחיתני, כדרך שאמ' דויד לאבישי א'ל תשחיתו כי מי שלח ידו' וכו' (שמ"א כו, ט).

Psalm 57:1. For the leader. *Al tashhet* de David *mikhtam*, when he fled from Saul. In the form of a prayer for [David's] fear of Saul, since he was on the point of death and he said: “*al tashhet*,” that is, do not destroy me, as David said to Abishai in 1 Samuel 26:9 (“Don’t do him violence! No one can lay his hands [on the Lord’s anointed]”).

79 The verse continues: “when the Philistines seized him in Gat.”

80 The term *lonnincio* from the Latin *longinquus* is attested in the well-known Jewish documents of Aguilar de Campoo. Ramón Menéndez Pidal considered it “one of the oddest remains” of “archaic vulgar Latin, the popular Latin of Leon, in the antiquated language of the Jews.” Menéndez Pidal, *Orígenes del español: Estudio lingüístico de la península ibérica hasta el siglo XI*, 9th ed. (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1980), 460. Alberto Varvaro adds that the only corresponding term is found in the popular tradition in Old Provençal (*longinc*). Varvaro, “Il giudeo-spagnuolo prima dell’espulsione del 1492,” *Medioevo Romanzo* 12 (1987): 165.

81 Simon, *Four Approaches*, 51n56.

82 Masoretic Text: לדויד.

נח,א-ג. למנינח אל תשחת לדוד מכתם. האמנם אלם צדק. אל תשחת. לשון תפלה גם כן
שלא ישחיתהו.

Psalm 58:1–3. For the leader. *Altashhet* de David *mikhtam*. *Altashhet*. It is also a prayer for him not to destroy him (cf. 57:1).

The different versions and exegetes usually agree on the interpretation of this verse. The commentary offered here by MS Hunt. 268 therefore concurs with Rashi on Psalm 57:1; also with David Qimḥi, who interprets it in the same way after recalling, as in all other cases, the enigmatic nature of the expression, and also connects the form *al tashhet* with 1Samuel 26:9, as MS Hunt. 268 does. The Targum understands the expression to refer to the episode in which David said “Do not destroy,” whereas Saadiah construes it as a type of composition that David made when he fled from Saul, in which he asked him not to destroy him.⁸³

Of the vernacular versions, E3 systematically translates *tashhet* as “non danes,” preserving the negative imperative and in doing so coincides with HS (Ps 58:1: נוֹן דאניישׁ); with an identical meaning but in the negative infinitive, BNE translates it as “syn dañar,” with graphic variants. E5 and EV show greater variation and agree with the previous interpretations only in Psalm 59:1 (E5: “non estruyr”; EV: “non struyr”); however, they translate Psalm 57:1 as “ala cançion” and Psalm 75:1 as “al estrumento/estromet.” Arragel, who translates it as “non dañes,” explains the term as a musical instrument in Psalms 57:1 and 58:1.

13 [For the leader] *‘al neginat*: Ps 61:1; [For the leader] *bi-neginot*: Ps [4:1, 6:1], 54:1, 55:1, 67:1, 76:1⁸⁴

סא,א. למנינח על נגינת לדוד. שׁי על נגינת נבל, וכיוצא בזה.

Psalm 61:1. For the director, *‘al neginat*, of David. It should say: *‘al neginat nevel*, as in other cases.

Rashi has no commentary for the term *neginat*. For David Qimḥi ad loc., the ending in *taw* is irregular, since it should end in *he*’. He was responding with this explanation to those, such as Abraham ibn Ezra, who thought that the

83 Simon, *Four Approaches*, 248.

84 In three cases (Pss 54:1, 55:1, and 67:1) the form is defective. The vowel of the feminine plural is shortened and it is not clear why.

truncated form was proof that the beginning of the poem to whose melody the psalm was sung was being alluded to.⁸⁵ In MS Hunt. 268 the anomaly is resolved by considering it to be a construct state in which the second term on the same level is omitted: *nevel*.

The surviving text of MS Hunt. 268 does not include any reference to the term *neginot*. It is plausible that Psalm 4:1 or 6:1, which are not extant, would have included observations about this term.

E3 (which translates it as “con tanner,” pl. “tanneres”) and HS (טאנייר)⁸⁶ are the vernacular translations that are most similar to the interpretation given here, since they are the ones that construe the term to mean “to play a stringed instrument.” BNE translates *neginah* as: “canto” and its plural form as “cantos” or “cantares,” and E5 and EV translate *neginah* as a musical instrument, the vihuela,⁸⁷ and its plural as “cantablana.”⁸⁸ Arragel systematically translates it as “canciones,” which he construes as the name of a musical instrument.

14 *Shir la-ma'alot*: Ps 121:1; *shir ha-ma'alot*: Ps 120:1, 122–134

קכ, א. שיר המעלות אל יי בערתה. כמו בצרה, ונכפל בו הנקבות כמו 'שועתה' (תה) ג, ג, ועוד), 'עזרתה' (שם מד, בז ועוד). פי' שיר המעלות שיאמרו הלויים אותו שיר על ט"ז מעלות היורדות מעזרת ישראל לעזרת הנשים, ויש כאן ט"ז שירים כנגדן. ורבותי אמרו 'כדי להעלות בהם את התהום', כמו שמפורש במסכת סוטה⁸⁹ (בבלי סוכה נג ע"א). ויש מפר' 'שיר המעלות' שהיו שרים בקול גדול, כלו' שמעלין את הקול, את קולם.

Psalm 120:1. *Shir ha-ma'alot*. In my distress (*ba-ṣaratah*) [I called] to the Lord. It is as if to say: *ba-ṣarah*, and it duplicates the feminine ending as in *yeshu'atah* (Ps 3:3, etc.) and *'ezratah* (Ps 63:8, etc.). It means: a song of ascents which the Levites will pronounce on the fifteen steps which descend from the court of the Israelites to the court of the women, and there are here fifteen songs corresponding to them. And our Rabbis said

85 Simon, *Four Approaches*, 291n183.

86 This is the translation of the term *neginah* in Psalm 61:1. HS does not translate *neginot* in any of the headings in which this term appears.

87 That is what was proposed by Menaḥem ben Saruq and Ibn Chiquitilla. See Simon, *Four Approaches*, 235; Menaḥem ben Saruq, *Maḥberet*, s.v. *g-t*. In his introduction, David Qimḥi also construed *neginot* in the sense of an instrument. As usual, F preserves the Hebrew term.

88 See above, note 72.

89 It should say: סוכה. את קולם.

[that David composed them] to raise the deep, as it is explained in Tractate *Sukkah* (bSuk 53a). And some say that it [means] that they sang out loud, that is, they raised the voice, their voice.

Here, the first interpretation, according to *derash*, is a literal citation of Rashi's commentary, which is based on mSuk 5.4 and mMid 2.5, and the Targum also understands it along these lines. The second midrashic interpretation, based on bSuk 53a, also draws from Rashi. In his commentary on this verse, David Qimḥi quotes these two interpretations and adds two additional ones: firstly, that given by Saadiah, whom he cites explicitly and who understood the term *ma'alot* as the name of a certain melody that was performed "in a loud and high voice";⁹⁰ and secondly, in allusion to the ascents that Israel will have to make in the future from exile to the land of Israel. The second interpretation in MS Hunt. 268 thus coincides with that of Saadiah, which is cited by David Qimḥi in his commentary.

The vernacular translations usually coincide in this meaning of "steps" ("grados o gradas"), with the exception of BNE, which translates it as "delas alturas" or "a las alturas," where it is not clear exactly what is being referred to. Arragel translates it as "cantico de los grados." This is the only term that Arragel does not explicitly identify as a musical instrument. He just goes on to discuss the intention of the psalm by giving a series of midrashic explanations (among which are those mentioned by Rashi)⁹¹ and one musical explanation—namely, that the Levites sung these fifteen Psalms ascending by step the beginning of the intonation of each one until the fifteenth, an opinion maintained by Saadiah.

Conclusion

From the examples presented in detail thus far we can see that the text of MS Hunt. 268 usually gives one or more interpretations of the biblical lemma that paraphrase and clarify its meaning, and that are frequently based on and supported by grammatical observations. The midrashic interpretations are introduced as alternatives to literal explanations (see, for example, Pss 22:1; 60:1, and 80:1), or as additional information intended to elucidate the context (for example, Ps 45:1). The material repeatedly cites Rashi and David Qimḥi, and midrashic passages are often taken verbatim from the former. These midrashic

90 See Simon, *Four Approaches*, 249.

91 The first according to mSuk 5.4 and mMid 2.5, and the second according to bSuk 53a.

passages often interpret the Biblical lemma to refer to Israel and give it an explanation related to the community as a whole and not the individual (Ps 38:1).

In full consonance with the nature of the glossary-commentary—the intended purpose of which is to clarify the precise meaning of the words—the enigmatic terms in the headings of the Psalms are not treated with the aim of overall coherence, as they are in Abraham ibn Ezra, for whom they indicated the first words of a poem with a melody according to which the Psalm was to be sung. Nor does MS Hunt. 268 follow the system used by David Qimḥi in his commentaries, in which most of these technical terms described a melody. Frequently, the text adopts an opinion mentioned but not subscribed to by Qimḥi or an interpretation that appeared in his *Shorashim* but not in his commentary. This is what happens, for example, with the interpretation of *‘edut* or *maskil*.

On only two occasions is explicit reference made to a melody, and in both cases, it is one of two possible explanations: in Psalm 45:1, in reference to the term *shoshanim* (the explanation is omitted in the subsequent appearances of the term in Psalms 60:1 and 80:1), and in Psalm 46:1, when explaining *‘alamot*. In the first case, the explanation is not found in the two usual sources, Rashi and David Qimḥi. In the second case, Qimḥi also interprets the term in his commentary as a melody, but he is not the direct source. In both passages, MS Hunt. 268 makes an annotation in Arabic, which is also not found in either of those authors. Aside from the two cases mentioned, only two others make reference to a musical instrument: *maḥalat* (Pss 53:1 and 88:1), where the term is translated into Arabic; and *sheminit* (Ps 12:1). Although in the latter case the source seems to be Rashi, who concurred with the Targum and the rabbinical tradition, in the former case the source is unknown.

The foregoing is made equally clear with regard to the *le‘azim*, which translate at least one of the interpretive options that are presented. Three of them make reference to the literary genre and the other two are not related in any way to the musical performance of the psalm to which they belong. These *le‘azim* do not coincide in any systematic way with a specific vernacular translation, although all of them have at least one match with a translation prior to and/or after 1492. The vernacular translations, whose meaning is sometimes difficult to determine given their terseness and literalness with respect to the Hebrew term, subscribe to the different options transmitted by the exegetical tradition. Arragel is exceptional in his glosses to Psalms where he consistently translates all the terms in the headings as names of musical instruments.

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An Iberian Braid for Ross

who slips us in ...

Peter Cole

1 If Only

If only my heart
were split by a knife,
I'd slip you in
and seal it again.

You'd dwell there forever
and not in another,
content in that chamber
till the end of Time.

Within me you'd live
as long as I lived,
then lie in the dark
of the grave when I did.

ʿALĪ IBN AḤMAD IBN SAʿĪD IBN ḤAZM, Arabic, 11th century

2 A Riddle

A doe I longed for asked me: Among the many,
who do you love with a love that's true?
And I told her: If you'd really like to know—
remove the leader from a few.

JUDAH HALEVI, Hebrew, 12th century

3 Words by Friends

No lance pierces
or passes through
armor as writing
slices into you,

let alone words
composed by a friend
or rival about you.

True? Not true?

SANTOB DE CARRIÓN, Spanish, 14th century

Panegyric as Pedagogy: Moses ibn Ezra's Didactic Poem on the "Beautiful Elements of Poetry" (*maḥāsīn al-shi'r*) in the Context of Classical Arabic Poetics

Jonathan Decter

At the conclusion of Moses Ibn Ezra's *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara wa-l-mudhākara*—appended to the book's final chapters, outlining the "beautiful elements of poetry" (*maḥāsīn al-shi'r*)¹—the author presents a sixty-verse *qaṣīda* on the subject of praise and blame, the most dominant of all subjects in the medieval Hebrew corpus, "some of whose verses include all of the mentioned chapters concerning the novel style (*al-badī'*) so that you will find it in them."² This poem—highly contrived, as it was written for the very purpose of exemplifying poetic devices—might be considered an example of didactic verse, comparable to poems composed to illustrate grammatical systems or medical knowledge. Hebrew didactic poetry was relatively rare in Ibn Ezra's day, though it would become a hallmark of the Hebrew tradition in later centuries.³ Similar Arabic didactic poems on the *badī'*—a self-conscious intensification of poetic figures that was cultivated among the so-called *muḥdath* ("modern") poets—from this period are few, though by the fourteenth century a genre of *badī'īyyāt* became recognizable, generally taking praise of Muḥammad as their subject.⁴

1 For the term *maḥāsīn al-shi'r*, see, for example, 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Mu'tazz, *Kitāb al-Badī'*, ed. Ignatius Kratchkovsky (London: Luzac, 1935), 58. The term is also used by al-Ḥātimī and others. See below.

2 Moses Ibn Ezra, *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara wa-l-mudhākara*, ed. and trans. Abraham S. Halkin (Jerusalem: Mekize Nirdamim, 1975), 302. Unless noted otherwise, all citations refer to Halkin's edition of the text.

3 Hebrew didactic poetry is a current research pursuit of Maud Kozodoy.

4 See Pierre Cachia, "Badī'īyyāt," in *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, ed. Julie Scott Meisami and Paul Starkey, 2 vols. (London: Routledge, 1998), 1:124; Geert Jan van Gelder, "Arabic Didactic Verse," in *Centres of Learning: Learning and Location in Pre-Modern Europe and the Near East*, ed. Jan Willem Drijvers and Alasdair A. MacDonald (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 103–117.

As Raymond Scheindlin has argued, *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara* as a whole can be viewed as an apology for Hebrew poetry composed according to Arabic poetics.⁵ To this I will only add that Ibn Ezra's was a legitimization not only of Arabized meter and rhyme and the conceit of falsehood, but more specifically of the mannerism of the *badī*, a style for which Ibn al-Mu'tazz, one of Ibn Ezra's sources, had also mounted a defense in his *Kitāb al-Badī*. As is well known, Ibn Ezra's recommendations for composition according to the "novel style" (*al-badī*) in Hebrew poetry is highly informed by his close engagement with works of Arabic literary criticism.

Although Ibn Ezra cites Aristotle and al-Farābī (two major sources of medieval thinking on poetics) as authorities in *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara*, it is with the authors of the genre of *naqd al-shi'r* ("poetic criticism") that he most explicitly aligns himself. He writes:

Concerning most of the chapters of this work, the banners of eloquence from within Islam—and they are the most worthy regarding speech in prose and poetry—laid out numerous books, such as the book of Qudāma (d. 948) concerning criticism [*al-naqd*]; the *Novel Style* [*al-Badī*] by Ibn al-Mu'tazz (d. 908); the *Ornament of Lecturing* [*Ḥilyat al-muḥāḍara*] by al-Ḥātimī (d. 998); the *Ornamenting and the Denuding* [*al-Ḥāli wa-l-ʿātil*] by him [i.e., al-Ḥātimī];⁶ the *Pillar* (*al-'Umda*) by Ibn Rashīq (d. 1063 or 1071); *Poetry and Poets* (*al-Shi'r wa-l-shu'arā*) by Ibn Qutayba (d. 889), and others.

Of these "banners of eloquence from within Islam" (i.e., Muslim scholars of rhetoric), al-Ḥātimī's *Ḥilyat al-muḥāḍara* and Ibn Rashīq's *al-'Umda* seem to have been of the greatest direct influence. The former has received very little treatment, despite the fact, as Yosef Tobi stresses, that the word *muḥāḍara*

5 Raymond P. Scheindlin, "Rabbi Moshe Ibn Ezra on the Legitimacy of Poetry," *Medievalia et Humanistica* 7 (1976): 101–115. A far less substantial work on Hebrew poetics was composed by El'azar ben Ya'aqov ha-Bavli. See Joseph Yahalom, *Judaeo-Arabic Poetics: Fragments of a Lost Treatise by Elazar ben Jacob of Baghdad* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 2001). The seven "conditions" of poetry by al-Ḥarīzī are also far more general (the poet must maintain his rhyme, choose strong themes, avoid grammatical errors, etc.). See Judah ben Solomon al-Ḥarīzī, *Tahkemoni or The Tales of Heman the Ezrahite* (Hebrew), ed. Joseph Yahalom and Naoya Katsumata (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 2011), 217–220, including 217n88.

6 This work has not been discovered. See Seeger A. Bonebakker, *Materials for the History of Arabic Rhetoric: From the Ḥilyat al-Muḥāḍara of Ḥātimī (Mss 2934 and 590 of the Qarawīyīn Mosque in Fez)* (Naples: Istituto Orientale di Napoli, 1975), 14–16.

appears in the titles of both al-Ḥātimī's and Ibn Ezra's works and that the paired terms of Ibn Ezra's title (*al-muḥāḍara* and *al-mudhākara*) appear in near succession within the *Hilyat*.⁷

Just as works of exegesis could contain substantive discussions of poetics, so works of poetics often subsumed discussions of exegesis, not only reflecting but also producing in the process a kind of exegesis focused on aesthetics (in the Islamic case, this held particular import for the doctrine of the Qur'ān's inimitability). Before writing *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara*, Ibn Ezra wrote a work on exegesis, *Kitāb al-Ḥadiqa fī ma'ana al-majāz wa-l-ḥaqīqa* (Book of the Garden concerning Figurative and Literal Speech) and many sections of *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara* continue this line of enquiry.⁸ In *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara*, Ibn Ezra generally illustrates devices with verses from the Qur'ān and/or Arabic poetry, the Hebrew Bible, and Andalusī Hebrew poetry (quite often his own). That is, in introducing biblical examples into his discussion of the "beautiful elements of poetry," the critic was effectively inventing a new approach to biblical criticism, an aesthetic exegesis according to the standards of Arabic literary criticism.⁹

I am hardly the first to review Ibn Ezra's chapters on poetic devices in the context of medieval Arabic criticism. Numerous scholars, Ross Brann among them, have done a more than admirable job in undertaking this sometimes painfully technical but nonetheless important subject (Brann also explores topics not considered explicitly by the medieval critics).¹⁰ This article presents

7 This is likely because much of the work was incorporated into Ibn Rashīq's text, but also because of the relatively poor state of the manuscript. See, however, the preliminary survey by Yosef Tobi, "Preliminary Study in *Hilyat al-Muḥāḍara* [ḤМ] by Abū 'Alī Muḥammad al-Ḥātimī: The 'Lost' Source of Moše Ibn Ezra for His *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara wa-al-Mudhākara* [кММ]," in *Between Hebrew and Arabic Poetry: Studies in Spanish Medieval Poetry* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 355–368. On the two words *al-muḥāḍara* and *al-mudhākara* in near succession, see *ibid.*, 362. Notably, al-Tha'ālibī composed a work entitled *al-Tamāthul wa-l-muḥāḍara*, which also circulated under the title *Hilyat al-muḥāḍara*. See Bilal Orfali, "The Works of Abū Maṣū'ir al-Tha'ālibī (350–429/961–1039)," *JAL* 40 (2009): 292.

8 See Paul Fenton, *Philosophie et exégèse dans le Jardin de la métaphore de Moïse Ibn 'Ezra, philosophe et poète andalou du XI^e siècle* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

9 See also Mordechai Z. Cohen, "The Aesthetic Exegesis of Moses Ibn Ezra," in *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation. Volume 1: From the Beginnings to the Middle Ages (Until 1300). Part 2: The Middle Ages*, ed. Magne Sæbø (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2000), 282–301.

10 Ross Brann, "Structure and Meaning in the Secular Poetry of Moshe Ibn Ezra" (PhD diss., New York University, 1981); Joseph Dana, *Poetics of Medieval Hebrew Literature According to Moshe ibn Ezra* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Dvir, 1982); Yosef Tobi, "Preliminary Study"; Yaakov Mashiah, "The Terminology of Hebrew Prosody and Rhetoric with Special Reference to Arabic Origins" (PhD diss., Columbia University of New York, 1972).

a systematic overview of Ibn Ezra's treatment of *al-badī* by using the critic's didactic poem (herein called the "model poem") as a heuristic and pedagogical device. As far as I am aware, this article offers the first analysis of the "model poem" apart from Heinrich Brody's notes in his edition of the *diwān*. I translate select verses from the poem and match them, verse by verse, with the various "beautiful elements" as Ibn Ezra describes them.¹¹ One goal of this article is thus simply to give an update on the "state of the field" with more detail about Ibn Ezra's sources, helpful parallels or expansions from *Maqālat al-ḥadīqa*, and some refinements of definition as well as occasional corrections to Halkin's edition of the Judaeo-Arabic text. Further, the article will engage with many of the examples from Hebrew poetry, Arabic poetry, the Bible and the Qur'ān that the critic saw as exemplifying the devices under discussion.

In the interest of brevity, I usually cite Ibn Ezra's citations from Hebrew poems, Arabic poems, the Bible, and the Qur'ān only when they elucidate the subject at hand. Also, I will only quote definitions from Arabic works from which the critic draws when these clarify Ibn Ezra's point, either because his definition of a device is imprecise or absent. However, I do expatiate on a few topics (especially *ḥusn al-takhalluṣ* and *al-ghulū*) and particularly interesting interpretations of biblical verses.¹² When rendering Arabic technical terms, I generally translate into English literally; although I will mention parallel Greek terminology when appropriate, I generally find attempts to match Arabic devices with Greek ones somewhat forced and overdetermined. Because a number of the "beautiful elements" revolve around word order, I sometimes translate awkwardly in order to reflect the Hebrew.

11 The poem can be found on pages 302–304 of Halkin's edition and also in Brody's edition of the *diwān*: Moses ibn Ezra, *Secular Poems* (Hebrew), ed. Heinrich Brody, 2 vols. (Berlin and Jerusalem: Schocken, 1935–1941), 2:226–229 [223]. Brody was the first to try to match the verses of the poem with the various "beautiful elements of poetry." See his comments in *ibid.*, 2:418–425. My selection is based upon his, though with some differences. I agree with Brody that the following cannot be found within the poem: *mazj al-shakk bi-l-yaqīn* ("mixture of uncertain with certain"), and *al-ijāb wa-l-salb 'alā tariqat al-shu'arā* ("positive and negative according to the way of the poets"). I suggest, however, that verse 46 might illustrate *al-isti'rād*. I will also discuss Ibn Ezra's treatment of proverbs, which is technically not among the *maḥāsīn al-shi'r*, but included as a postscript in this section of *Kitāb al-Muḥādara*.

12 In my book, *Dominion Built of Praise: Panegyric and Legitimacy among Jews in the Medieval Mediterranean* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), I elaborate further upon Ibn Ezra's treatment of *al-ghulū* and his use of "imaginative poetics" more broadly.

The most atypical aspect of the “model poem” is its structure, which opens directly with panegyric for a group of men, then turns to invective, and ultimately makes a transition to praise for an individual named Joseph (though in one manuscript the poem is dedicated to “So-and-so” [*Ploni*] instead).¹³ This odd structure allows Ibn Ezra to model two “beautiful elements” of poetry that one might assume were contradictory: (1) *ḥusn al-ibtidāʾ* (“beautiful opening”), opening directly with praise rather than a prelude on an extraneous theme (e.g., a garden, a beloved, etc.), and (2) *ḥusn al-takhalluṣ* (“beautiful transition”), making a smooth and elegant transition between sections of a multi-thematic poem. The group panegyric (and the incorporated invective) thus appears first as the main theme of the poem but turns out to be an introductory prelude.

1 *Maḥāsin al-Shiʿr* and the “Model Poem”

1. To you, raised (*emunim*) in the bosom of faith (*emunim*), men of thought sharp as lightning,
2. lords of communities, pillars of praise (*tehillot*), who scatter flashes (*tehillot*) that shame all other lights,

Ḥusn al-ibtidāʾ (“Beautiful Opening”). Although a great many Hebrew and Arabic panegyrics open with a prelude on another theme (often an amatory prelude, a *nasīb*), Ibn Ezra describes opening directly with praise as the ideal. Avoiding the prelude, in his theoretical opinion, allows the poet to arrive at his subject, praise of the *mamdūḥ* (lit., “the one praised”), “before the charm of the poetry has disappeared and its well-fashioned rhymes have vanished.”¹⁴ Ibn Ezra cites openings to Arabic poems by Abū al-ʿAtāhiyya and al-Mutanabbī that begin directly with praise, and then Hebrew examples by Ibn Gabirol, Ibn Sahl, and himself, all of which reach praise by the second line.¹⁵ In this respect,

13 This suggests that the poem was either composed as a generic poem prior to its dedication to a patron, or that it was composed for Joseph but later considered reusable for a future patron (either by Ibn Ezra or someone else). For the verse, see the note at Ibn Ezra, *Secular Poems*, 2:419. See also Brody’s comment at *ibid.*, 2:61 about poem 24, line 15, where the word *ploni* is written within the line but a copyist has crossed it out and written “Mosheh” above it; another manuscript of the same poem is dedicated to “Yaʿaqov.”

14 The wording in the translation is that of Geert Jan van Gelder, *Beyond the Line: Classical Arabic Literary Critics on the Coherence and Unity of the Poem* (Leiden: Brill, 1982), 141.

15 However, the structure of one (274, lines 96–97) is similar to a transitional verse, “Is it honeycomb to lips and wine to the teeth, or the bud of cheeks, or myrrh to the nose, or has the wind of youth blown from the corner of Solomon’s letter, a delight to the eyes?”

as Geert Jan van Gelder notes, Ibn Ezra parts ways with his Arabic sources on criticism.¹⁶ Al-Ḥātimī and Ibn Rashīq do discuss what constitutes a strong opening at some length, but these treatments involve the poet's expressing, in al-Ḥātimī's words, "the way he is going in his poem, thereby making you aware of his intention in the first line," which is not the same as beginning directly with the main subject. Although these critics are certainly concerned with striking the proper proportion between sections of the poem, they do not insist upon, or even recommend, beginning directly with praise.¹⁷ In practice, as Dan Pagis notes, Ibn Ezra only begins twenty-two of his own panegyrics directly with praise, in comparison with approximately fifty that begin with some other theme (usually wine or complaint).¹⁸ Still, Ibn Ezra never begins with a prelude on an amatory theme even though erotic preludes are not uncommon in the Andalusian Hebrew corpus. The model poem opens directly with praise, at this point for a group of men, in order to illustrate the device, though, as noted, the poem later makes a transition to praise of a single *mamdūh*.

Al-Mujānasa ("Paronomasia"). Ibn Ezra defines this as "agreement in utterance but difference in meaning," exemplified in these lines by *emunim* as both "raised" and "faith," and *tehillot* as both "praise" and "flashes." There are many varieties of this, ranging from the complete paronomasia, which is homonymic; to different permutations of the same root; to partial paronomasia, whereby two words share two but not three root letters. In his discussion, Ibn Ezra cites biblical examples and offers many plays on proper names, place names, body parts, and numbers. He also boasts that, in his youth, he composed *Sefer ha-*

16 The passage is translated by Van Gelder, *Beyond the Line*, 140–141, so I need not retranslate it here. This is the only chapter for which Ibn Ezra's selection of Arabic verses does not derive from the corresponding chapters among the surviving works of Arabic criticism that he mentions by name (the only one I was unable to consult, obviously, is the lost work by al-Ḥātimī, which we know included a more extensive treatment of rhetorical figures). The verse by Abū al-'Atāhiyya appears elsewhere in Ibn Rashīq, *Kitāb al-'Umda*, whereas the verses by al-Mutanabbī do not seem to be cited in criticism before Ibn Rushd, who quoted one of the them, and this may testify to its circulation apart from the *dīwān* in al-Andalus at the time of Ibn Ezra. It is also possible, as Van Gelder suggests, that Ibn Ezra gleaned the verses by al-Mutanabbī directly from the *dīwān*. See Van Gelder, *Beyond the Line*, 142.

17 Van Gelder, *Beyond the Line*, 30. Ibn Rashīq values openings as the first thing the listener hears, but focuses on poems that have introductory preludes as the most pleasing. In fact, Ibn Rashīq designates those poems that begin with the main subject by such terms as *batr* ("amputation"). *Ibid.*, 115–116.

18 Dan Pagis, *Secular Poetry and Poetic Theory: Moses Ibn Ezra and His Contemporaries* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1970), 157, 162.

'anaq on the subject with more than 1,200 homonymic verses, the first 151 of which are dedicated to panegyric and invective. To cite only one other example from the model poem (line 28 below): “like saplings of willows (*'aravim*) to teach sweetness (*'arevim*) with the eloquence of Arabs (*'aravim*) to those learned in enchantment.”

Al-Isti'āra (“Borrowing, Loan Metaphor”). As noted by Mordechai Z. Cohen, Ibn Ezra’s conception of metaphor corresponds to what Wolfhart Heinrichs describes as “loan metaphor” whereby the poet attributes a thing to something that does not possess that thing in reality, as in such expressions as “the hand of the Northwind” (the wind does not possess a hand in reality but “borrows” it from a body). This is distinct from the Aristotelian definition of metaphor, wherein something is named by something else, as when a man is called a lion in order to convey the characteristic of courage.¹⁹ Ibn Ezra’s definition of *isti'āra* is somewhat opaque, but Cohen’s translation (in consultation with Ibn al-Mu‘tazz, Ibn Ezra’s source) seems correct, in that it fits the many biblical examples given by Ibn Ezra: “the meaning of *isti'āra* is [borrowing] a word for a thing not known using something already known.”²⁰ In verse 1, the *mamdūhs* are called “pillars of praise”: because praise does not possess pillars in reality (something not known), it borrows them from an architectural structure (something known). “Bosom of faith” in the same verse is similar.

3. Lamps in the gloom of Time, a stay and fortified mound for the fallen, a support for those ensnared in traps,
4. crying out for the suffering, healing for those in pain, food stores for the hungry, wealth for the poor.
5. They strengthen men of integrity,²¹ pulverize injustice, declare the blameless righteous, but pronounce guilt upon the profane,
6. gather the dispersed, brighten those who grieve, spread a tent over the terrified, and bring rain to those who burn.

Al-Taqsīm (“Classification, Categorization”). Lines 4 through 6 all illustrate this device, sometimes in combination with other effects. Ibn Ezra thus defines the term: “The poet expounds upon (*yufassir*) what he opens with and does not

19 Within Arabic poetics, such a construction is generally considered to be a simile (*tashbīh*) in which the word “like” is suppressed. See below, on line 26.

20 See Mordechai Z. Cohen, “Moses Ibn Ezra vs. Maimonides: Argument for a Poetic Definition of Metaphor (*Isti'āra*),” *Edebiyat* 11 (2000): 4.

21 Literally, “hands of integrity.”

leave out any class (*qism*) that the meaning requires but rather he presents it.” This is quite close to al-Ḥātimī: “The poet seeks the classification (*tafṣīl*) of what he opened with and presents it in detail (*yastawfihi*) and does not leave out any class (*qism*) that the meaning requires but rather he presents it.”²² Among the biblical verses Ibn Ezra cites is, “Her rulers judge for gifts; her priests give rulings for a fee; and her prophets divine for pay” (Micah 3:1). The verse thus offers multiple categories of political figures. Ibn Ezra’s chapter includes Arabic verses by Imru’ al-Qays and al-Mutanabbī²³ and two of his own Hebrew verses:

Honeycomb to the mouth of the taster, sunlight to the eye of the seer,
and flowing myrrh giving scent to the nose.
A pedestal to all kindness, a pillar to esteem, a beam and covering for
the Tabernacle of Truth.²⁴

The verses thus present various classes of sensory organs and architectural elements. The categories of the downtrodden presented in verse four of the model poem include the suffering, those in pain, the hungry, and the poor.

Al-Tashīm (“Allotment, Assignment”). The rhyme words in verses 4, 5, and 6 (*le-rashim*, “the poor”; *le-ha’ashim*, “to pronounce guilt”; and *le-hagshim*, “to bring rain”) all exemplify *al-tashīm*.²⁵ Although Ibn Ezra does not offer a clear definition, he seems to follow al-Ḥātimī: “The listener anticipates (*yasbiq*) the rhyme before its reciter reaches it so much that if one hears the first hemistich, he can deduce (*istakhrāja*) the last hemistich before hearing it.”²⁶ Ibn Ezra quotes an Arabic verse also cited by al-Ḥātimī: “You were the day with its sun and the dark

22 Bonebakker, *Materials for the History of Arabic Rhetoric*, 45. Al-Ḥātimī’s chapter is referenced by Ibn Rashīq in his chapter on *al-taqṣīm*.

23 The verse by Imru’ al-Qays is also cited by Qudāma ibn Ja’far in *The Kitāb Naqd al-Šīr of Qudāma b. Ġa’far al-Kātib al-Baḡdādī*, ed. Seeger A. Bonebakker (Leiden: Brill, 1956), 58 [331]. Although Qudāma does not associate it with *al-taqṣīm*, both critics discuss the employment of simile (*al-tashbīh*) in the verse.

24 I have emended the text according to the version of the line in the *dīwān* (Ibn Ezra, *Secular Poems*, 1:66, line 16) since it exemplifies the device more clearly in that it expands upon architectural elements. All of these occur in Ex 35:11.

25 Buṭrus al-Bustānī’s well-known dictionary *Kitāb Muḥīṭ al-muḥīṭ*, 2 vols. (Beirut: n.p., 1867–1870), in explaining the term’s usage in *al-Badī*, gives *al-irsād* (“setting apart”) as an antonym. The most general meaning of *tashīm* is “striping,” and it is thus not surprising that the device is sometimes also called *al-tawshīh*. For example, see Qudāma, *Naqd al-Šīr*, 96, line 12. Qudāma considers this a subspecies of *al-i’tilāf*, which also includes *al-ighāl* (further below). *Tashīm* can also mean “throwing of an arrow.”

26 Bonebakker, *Materials for the History of Arabic Rhetoric*, 52.

of night with its crescent";²⁷ since the rhyme (-al) is already established when one reaches that verse and because of the parallelism of the verse ("day with its sun, night with its ..."), one can predict that the rhyme word will be *hilāl* ("new moon, crescent") rather than another word for moon (e.g., *qamr*, *badr*). Ibn Ezra also includes a Hebrew verse "according to the theme of the Arabic verse mentioned": "To the wanderer on a gloomy night, he is the moon, and to the nomad on a cold day, he is the sun." As a biblical example, Ibn Ezra gives Isaiah 6:10, "Fatten that peoples heart, block its ears, and seal its eyes" and explains, "[He] allotted (*ashama*) each organ the appropriate condition that prevents it from doing what it was created to do." Even without the benefit of rhyme, one might have anticipated the last terms. In line 4 of the model poem, one can anticipate the word "the poor" because we already have "healing for those in pain, food stores for the hungry, wealth for the ..." especially because the rhyme has clearly been established.²⁸ With this and also the following subject, Ibn Ezra and other critics emphasize the role of the reader in supplying meaning.

Al-Wahy wa-l-ishāra ("Clear Indication and Hint"). Ibn Ezra defines this as "what is hinted at but is not made explicit"²⁹ and quotes another authority, clearly al-Ḥātimī: "the small utterance's implying a great meaning with an indicating flash."³⁰ The reader is expected to supply, simply through context or a learned reference, a missing term or idea. These can be very basic, as with the words "those who burn" in verse six; the reader knows that the poet means "those who burn with thirst" though he does not state "with thirst" explicitly. The same is true in the same verse "brighten those who grieve," where the

27 This line comes from a lament by the poetess Janūb over her brother 'Amr. Al-Ḥātimī includes others verses of this poem, probably in order to establish the rhyme. See Bonebakker, *Materials for the History of Arabic Rhetoric*, 51–53, which notes other critics who discuss Janūb's poem. Interestingly, the biblical examples that Ibn Ezra offers do not even depend on rhyme: e.g., Ezekiel 34:4, "You have not sustained the weak, healed the sick, nor bandaged the injured."

28 Also, the words written just prior to the beginning of the poem in a manuscript of *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara* are *ḥsun al-ibtidā'* and *al-tashīm*, probably meaning that both of these devices are illustrated by the first line. The *tashīm* in this case would be the word *leṭūshim* ("sharp") since the poet already establishes the rhyme *-im* in the first three of the four feet of the stanza and because "sharp" is the logical word a reader would supply to modify "thought" and "like lightning."

29 "Made explicit," or literally, "attained." Halkin translates "given expression," which preserves the sense.

30 Compare Bonebakker, *Materials for the History of Arabic Rhetoric*, 36, which has *ma'ānin kathira* ("many meanings") rather than "great meaning." In this case, I believe Ibn Ezra's reading to be preferable to Bonebakker's manuscript.

reader supplies “brighten [the faces]” according to the usage in Psalm 104:15. The allusions can also be more rarefied. Ibn Ezra offers an example from his own panegyric in honor of Abū al-Walīd Ibn Faraj: “My brother, may you live forever, and should a mishap occur, may I be Uzza and you Aḥyo” (cf. 2Sam 6:3–7; 1Chron 13:7–10). When Aḥyo stood before the Ark of the Covenant and the oxen carrying it stumbled, it was his brother Uzza who stretched his hand toward the Ark and thereby roused the ire of God, who smote him. Thus Uzza effectively sacrificed himself to protect his brother, which fits the context of the poem.³¹ Again, this device exists “in the poem” only in potential and is made actual only when activated by the reader.³²

9. They are ministers, except that (*aval*) like the ministers of God they are holy; hence they are the holy of holies!
10. Their souls are within them yet they are on high in the pleasant abode and the camps of the holy!
11. They thirst and long for the goodness of God and hurry to grasp lofty ranks
12. while [others] are corpses upon the earth; they behold perversion and plunder, their days are like vapor, and they are driven forth from the midst of men.

Al-Istithnā' (“Exception”). Particular to the purpose of praise and blame, this is sometimes also called *ta'akīd madḥ bimā yushbihu dhamm*, “strengthening praise with what looks like blame.” Ibn Ezra defines it as: “the poet begins the poem with praise and afterwards inserts a word of exception as though he were making an exception to the praise with a fault, but then he brings praise that is better than the first, and also the opposite [i.e., in invective].” He cites a verse by al-Nābigha, which is also among those discussed by Ibn Rashīq in his own chapter on the same device: “A youth, perfect in his morals except (*bal*) that he is generous so that he does not leave behind any wealth.” The Arabic word *bal* generally means “but, except” though it can also mean, “moreover, nay.” Ibn Ezra argues, bolstered by several biblical examples, that the Hebrew cognate *aval* functions in the same way, and this is clearly the sense in verse 9 of the model poem. The model poem also presents an example of *al-isithnā'* within invective (see verse 46 below).

31 Ibn Ezra, *Secular Poems*, [86], line 22 and Brody's comments, 2:168.

32 There is certain ambiguity regarding the term *wahy*, which Ibn Ezra does not explain. It could either be taken as the opposite of *ishāra*, meaning “apparent, revealed,” or as a parallel to it, meaning “revelation,” i.e. that which is initially hidden but later revealed. The ambiguity is also noted in Mashiah, “Terminology of Hebrew Prosody,” 53.

Al-Tablīgh ("Extending"). Ibn Ezra defines this as: "The poet brings a theme in its entirety prior to ending at the rhyme, but then brings [the theme again] due to the requirements of poetry, that it will be poetic and so increase wondrousness." Al-Ḥātimī also calls this *al-tablīgh*, though some critics, such as Qudāma and Ibn Rashīq, call this *al-ighāl* ("penetrating deeply").³³ Ibn Ezra's definition is not identical to theirs,³⁴ but the idea is effectively the same: the poet concludes the poetic theme before the rhyme word but then reiterates the theme with the rhyme. This might reasonably be translated by "pleonasm," i.e., rhetorical repetition that is grammatically superfluous, though with the added requirement that it occur at the end of the verse. In verse 12, the phrase "they are driven forth from men" reiterates the theme of being a living corpse.³⁵ This verse also begins the invective against other men of the age, which will continue through verse 24. The invective is thus precisely the same length as the opening praise; although Ibn Ezra does not discuss this type of structural balance, it seems unlikely that the proportion is accidental.

17. The weary they break but the iniquitous they strengthen; is there no one to speak [kindly] to the weary?

Al-Taṣdīr ("Prefacing"). Ibn Ezra defines this: "The poet opens with a word at the beginning of a verse and [uses] this precise word [again] at the end and thereby beautifies the verse." This device is also sometimes called *radd al-'ajz 'alā al-ṣadr*, "having the end reiterate the beginning," and corresponds nicely with the Greek *epanalepsis*. Ibn Ezra and Ibn Rashīq give the same example from an Arabic invective, "He makes haste to his cousin to curse his honor, but to the one who asks for generosity he does not make haste."³⁶ The device is

33 See al-Ḥasan ibn Rashīq al-Qayrawānī, *Kitāb al-'Umda fi maḥāsin al-shi'r wa-ādābihi*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Qādir Aḥmad 'Atā, 2 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2001), 2:7–11.

34 On the authority of al-Ḥātimī, Ibn Rashīq quotes al-Aṣma'i, who was asked: "Who is the most poetic of men?" He answers: "He who comes to a minor theme but sets it in a great expression, he who comes to a great theme and sets it in a minor expression, or one who completes his speech prior to the rhyme and, if it is needed, adds to the theme." The citation is also found in: Qudāma, *Naqd al-Ši'r*, 99.

35 Some critics use the term *al-tablīgh* in an entirely different way as a subspecies of *mubāl-gha* ("going beyond bounds") that corresponds to the realm of that which customarily exists, as opposed to the non-existent or the impossible. See further below, as well as Wolfhart Heinrichs, "Rhetorical Figures," in *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, 2:658.

36 Ibn Rashīq's notion of *al-taṣdīr* is more expansive in that he also allows for configurations whereby the first occurrence of the repeated word can occur in places other than the

illustrated in verse seventeen of the model poem with “the weary.” Although it is sometimes considered ugly to use the same word twice with the same meaning within a single verse, it can also be viewed positively, both in *al-taṣḍīr* and in the following device.

Al-Tardīd (“Repetition, Resounding”). This is the more general category to which *al-taṣḍīr* belongs. Ibn Ezra, following Arabic critics, explains this term: “the poet affixes a term in the first hemistich and then reiterates the exact same [term] in the second hemistich, yet this does not spoil [the verse] but rather enhances its beauty.” Hence, it is like *al-taṣḍīr* without the requirement that the repeated word be the first and last of the line. Ibn Ezra’s source is clearly Ibn Rashīq or al-Ḥātimī, both of whom state more clearly that the poet affixes an utterance (*lafẓa*) to a different adjacent word in each case. All three critics treat the same Arabic verse by Zuhayr, “He who one day encounters the most eminent over all encounters liberality and generosity as virtues”; the *tardīd* is in the word “encounters,” affixed to the *mamdūh* in the first hemistich and “liberality and generosity” in the second. Even though the usage of “encounters” is physical in the first instance and figurative in the second, this does not require that it take on different meanings in each case. Ibn Ezra identifies numerous biblical verses with this effect and quotes Hebrew poems, including the opening verse of a panegyric he composed in honor of Abū l-Ḥasan Joseph ben al-Battāt.

21. They seek wantonness, to make paved crooked, for no reason they pounce upon³⁷ wealth like creditors.
22. They weave treachery;³⁸ girded in violence they bake rebellion in order to feed, and they knead.

Al-Tatbīʿ (“Following”). Illustrated by the awkward phrase “make paved crooked” in verse 21, Ibn Ezra defines *al-tatbīʿ*: “A poet brings a verse but does not bring the word that indicates what it is about but rather a word that follows it, and so the word following (*al-tābīʿ*) indicates the explication of the word followed (*al-matbūʿ*).” Here, Ibn Ezra seems to follow al-Ḥātimī, who himself

first word as long as the second occurrence is the final word. See Ibn Rashīq, *Kitāb al-Umda*, 1:337–339.

37 Cf., Psalm 109:11. For “pounce upon,” see Ibn Janāh, who explains the root *yenaqesh* as *yuhlik*, “to destroy, annihilate, pounce upon.”

38 *Veʾorgim begadim*. This is a brilliant play since the listener might first understand the words to mean “they weave clothing” (*begadim*) but subsequently it becomes clear that the poet means the homonym “treachery.” I am not aware of a name for such a device.

follows Qudāma's definition of *al-irdāf*, which itself also means "following": "The poet wishes to indicate a meaning but does not bring the word that indicates this meaning but rather a word that indicates the meaning that comes after it (*radafahu*) and follows it (*tāba'a lahu*) and by indicating the word following, he indicates the thing followed."³⁹ Ibn Rashīq notes that some call the device *tajāwuz* ("passing over") and defines it with greater clarity: "the poet wants to mention the thing but passes it over and mentions that which follows it by description and serves as a proxy for it in indicating it." Like Ibn Rashīq, Ibn Ezra sees it as a species of *ishāra*. The critics all cite the same verse by Ibn Abī Rabī'a, "Long as the length up to the earring, whether to her father Nawfal, 'Abd Shams, or Hāshim." The missing word—here at the beginning of the line—is "neck" according to Ibn Ezra and the others, indicated by the adjectival description "long as the length up to the earring."⁴⁰ Ibn Ezra sees examples in the Bible (e.g., "A ram's horn to your mouth" from Hosea 8:1, where the missing word is "Put!") but, atypically, he does not list a single example from the medieval Hebrew poetic corpus. Nevertheless, verse 21 offers an example with "make paved crooked": I have preserved the awkward construction to show that the noun which "paved" modifies, namely "paths" or "roads," is absent.⁴¹ This might be considered a form of ellipsis and a type of *ishāra* and relies upon the active role of the reader.

Al-Tatmīm ("Completion").⁴² Ibn Ezra defines the term: "The poet mentions a theme and does not omit anything that might complete it until he has completed it."⁴³ He includes a verse by the pre-Islamic poet Ṭarafa ibn al-'Abd that

39 Qudāma, *Naqd al-Šīr*, 188.

40 Halkin misunderstands the word *sālifa* here and translates it (according to the same root and probably to make sense of the conclusion of the verse) as "lineage." However, for *sālifa*, Edward William Lane, *An Arabic—English Lexicon*, 8 vols. (London: Williams and Norgate, 1863–1893) has "the side of the fore part of the neck, from the place of suspension of the earring to the hollow of the collar bone," and consultation with the *dīwān* makes it clear that the poet here means a part of the body. Qudāma writes that the missing word is *jīd*, "neck." See Qudāma, *Naqd al-Šīr*, 88. Noah Braun, "Arabic Verses in *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara wa-l-mudhākara*" (Hebrew), *Tarbiẓ* 14.2 (1943): 126–139; 14.3–4 (1943): 191–203 also understands it correctly.

41 Of course, in the Hebrew, the adjective follows the noun, hence *al-tatbī*.

42 In her Spanish translation, Montserrat Abumalham Mas gives *expolicio* (i.e., *exargasia*), though this term refers more properly to repeating an idea with a change of wording. See Moses ibn Ezra, *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara wa-l-mudhākara*, ed. and trans. Montserrat Abumalham Mas, 2 vols. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1985–1986). In contrast, *al-tatmīm* is about not failing to include something germane to the theme.

43 Compare Qudāma, *Naqd al-Šīr*, 75.

is mentioned by both Qudāma and Ibn Rashīq: “The spring rain fell, the copious rain flowed, upon your homes without harming them.”⁴⁴ All of the critics identify the words “without harming them” as the *tatmīm*, for, without it, the verse would be deficient. It seems that the words “for no reason” (verse 21) constitute a *tatmīm*. Ibn Ezra notes that the device seems to be absent from the Bible and cites only a single example from a Hebrew poem, one of his own laments.

Hashw li-iqāmat wazn (“Filling [a verse] to maintain the meter”).⁴⁵ Ibn Ezra defines this as “a filling word that the poet inserts in order to fulfill the meter, so that the poem can be a poem, and this word increases the novel style (*al-badī*) of the verse.” In his treatment of *al-ḥashw*, Ibn Rashīq opines that there is a variety that does not affect the meaning or the beauty of the verse. It seems that Ibn Ezra does not favor the latter and therefore only mentions the former. Ibn Ezra cites a verse by al-Mutanabbī (also cited by Ibn Rashīq) that displays the feature; the usual biblical citations (though these lack meter); and a verse from a panegyric by Ibn Gabirol, “Do you destroy us when you possess no power or is it the hand of Yequiel upon our necks?” In Ibn Ezra’s reading, “when you possess no power” is inserted for the purposes of the meter *and* because it enhances beauty (it might also be an example of *al-tatmīm*). In verse 22 of the model poem, the words “and they knead” at the end of the verse are added in order to satisfy the meter.

25. Turn, O pure ones, to the vision of the wise—not to magic and divination—
 26. to a hill of frankincense, a mountain of truth, a tablet of wisdom for those who remember and for those who have forgotten.

Al-I‘tirāḍ (“Parenthetical Insertion”). In these verses, Ibn Ezra calls upon the listeners (“pure ones”) to turn to his book, which is figured with a number of similes. Although the syntax is completed over two lines (enjambment) rather than within a single line, together these verses constitute an example of *al-i‘tirāḍ* with the words, “not to magic and divination.” Ibn Ezra defines *al-i‘tirāḍ* as “the poet begins with a theme and then parenthetically inserts (*ya‘tarīḍ*)

44 I am using the version of the verse found in Ibn Rashīq, *Kitāb al-‘Umda*, 386.

45 Halkin has the word *ma‘ana* (“theme”) instead of *wazn* in the list at Ibn Ezra, *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara*, 222. However, the heading and the discussion at *ibid.*, 260 both have *wazn*, which also fits with what we know from other works of literary criticism.

speech because of which he turns away from what he was doing, and then he returns to [the theme] and completes it." Ibn Ezra also includes, from the dedicatory section of one of his panegyrics: "The sons of Time were ashamed and spoke gently with me, when before—though I was without sin—they gave me wrath" (this might also be considered *al-tatmīm*). The chapter corresponds to one by al-Ḥātimī, though the definition seems closest to that of Ibn al-Muʿtazz, and Ibn Ezra and Ibn al-Muʿtazz both cite the same verse by Ṭarafa ibn al-ʿAbd: "If the misers—and you are one of them!—were to see you, they would learn from you how to put off [giving]!"⁴⁶ The parenthetical insertion here is "and you are one of them." The device matches well with the Greek parenthesis, the insertion of a verbal unit that interrupts syntactical flow.

Al-Tashbīh ("Simile, Resemblance").⁴⁷ Unlike Western poetics, which often asserts a division between "metaphor" and "simile" wherein the latter presents the word "like" but the former does not, Arabic poetics knows no such distinction. *Isti'āra*, borrowing, means "loan metaphor" (see above), whereas the kind of structure that Aristotle calls "metaphor" (e.g., "the man is a lion") is considered a variety of simile in which the word "like" is suppressed. Thus, verse 26 of the model poem presents three similes for the book, "hill of frankincense, mountain of truth, tablet of wisdom," wherein each object of the simile (e.g. "mountain of truth"), in turn, is constructed as an *isti'āra*. Ibn Ezra's relatively long chapter on *al-tashbīh* follows Arabic poetics, though oddly he offers neither a definition of the term nor his usual samples from Arabic verse. Perhaps because the chapters on Arabic poetics offer so many citations, he simply writes, "Since simile is always a product of thought, and because most of their poems are known, no verse among the verses of simile is foremost to cite as a textual citation."

Ibn Ezra's presentation of the device largely follows that of Ibn Rashīq, who defines *al-tashbīh* in this way:

The description of a thing with what is close to it and fitting to it, whether with regard to a single aspect or many aspects, but not with regard to all of its aspects, for if something corresponded in all respects, it would be itself. Don't you see that ... in their saying, "So and so is like the sea, or the

46 Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Kitāb al-Badīʿ*.

47 Halkin's translation of both *tashbīh* and *takhayyul* with the Hebrew *dimmui* is infelicitous since it does not capture the distinction between "resemblance" and "the imaginary" even though these are both products of the mind.

lion,” that he is like the sea with respect to generosity and knowledge and like the lion with respect to courage and voraciousness for prey,⁴⁸ but not the saltiness of the sea or its brackishness.⁴⁹

Ibn Rashīq’s discussion focuses on the various constructions of similes (those that use the word “like” and those that do not) and presents poetic verses according to the number of comparisons executed in a single line, examples of similes from the Qur’ān, similes that are wholly unique, etc. Similarly, Ibn Ezra’s discussion organizes biblical examples into those that include the word “like” (e.g., Ps 17:12, “Like a lion yearning for prey”) and those that do not (e.g., Lam 3:10, “[God] is a lurking bear to me”). He notes that the single image of the beloved’s lips in the Song of Songs (“your lips are like a scarlet thread”) conveys three resemblances, “softness, color, and slenderness.” Also, a single verse—“Their princes were purer than snow, whiter than milk, their bones ruddier than coral, their bodies were of crystal” (Lam 4:7)—conveys four aspects of the novel style: classification (*al-taqṣīm*), hyperbole (*al-ghulū*), simile (*al-tashbīh*), and parenthetical insertion (*al-iltifāt*).⁵⁰ Further, Ibn Ezra, like many Arabic critics, treats similes wherein the subject of comparison is absent altogether. In his reading of Job 31:26 (“If ever I saw the sun⁵¹ shining, or the moon on its course in brightness”), he explains, “[Job] intended by the sun and the moon nicknames for gold and silver,” a reading which is certainly correct, since the preceding verse reads, “If I put my trust in gold ... If I rejoiced in my great wealth?” Thus the *tashbīh* can occur when the subject of comparison is entirely absent whereas the object of comparison, in this case the sun and the moon, must obviously be present.

48 That is, he is ready to pounce upon his enemies and act mercilessly toward them. This quality of the lion is also operative in lion similes within the Hebrew Bible: e.g., Psalm 17:12; Hosea 5:14.

49 Ibn Rashīq, *Kitāb al-Umda*, 1:389.

50 *Al-iltifāt* (literally, “turning aside”). Although Ibn Ezra does not discuss a device of this name, it is identified by Ibn Rashīq as another name for *al-ītirāḍ* (discussed above, see also Bonebakker, *Materials for the History of Arabic Rhetoric*, 57–59). The insertion in this case includes “their bones ruddier than coral, their bodies were of crystal” since it interrupts the flow between “whiter than milk” and the following verse (“But now their faces are blacker than soot”). Halkin simply translates *iltifāt* as *ma’avar* (“transition”), which does not capture the specific device. Ibn al-Mu’tazz includes a section on *al-iltifāt* in *Kitāb al-Badr*, 58.

51 Literally, “the light.” I have substituted “the sun” to avoid confusion, since it is not this substitution that interests Ibn Ezra here but rather the substitution of the sun for gold. Of course, the example is particularly interesting because it presents two degrees of remove from the subject of comparison: gold is the sun, which is called “light.”

33. Princes of speech to speak wisdom and cunning, sweetness and bitterness, gentleness and harshness,
34. to reveal the hidden, to cover the revealed, to renew the tattered, and wear out the new.
35. to build dwellings for men of understanding but to destroy the abodes of the wicked and to ruin.⁵²

Al-Muṭābaqa ("Antithesis"). Various Arabic critics discuss a device of this name, though the definition is not entirely stable. Al-Ḥātimī notes a dispute wherein one party, the larger one, defines it as mentioning a thing and its opposite in a single line, while the other claims that the verse uses the same word in different ways. Although Ibn Ezra does not offer a definition, it is clear from his examples that he intends the former (probably because the latter is difficult to distinguish from *al-mujānasa*). Atypically, Ibn Ezra does not quote any examples from Arabic poetry. Among his biblical examples is, "Those who pursue evil draw near; they distance themselves from your Teaching" (Ps 119:105). "Draw near" and "distance" constitute the *muṭābaqa*. He also cites a Hebrew verse wherein every word in the first hemistich stands in opposition to a corresponding word, almost in identical order, in the second, "The day of heat was cold to me like snow, while the night of cold was hot to me like coal!" In the model poem, *al-muṭābaqa* is exemplified in verse 35, where each word in the first hemistich has a corresponding antithesis in the second. Verse 35, by the way, also illustrates *al-tablīgh* with the words "to ruin."

Al-Muqābala ("Opposition"). This device is quite similar to *al-muṭābaqa*, and some consider it a subspecies of the latter, though Ibn Rashīq describes it in a distinct chapter as "in between classification (*taqṣīm*) and antithesis (*tibāq*)." Ibn Rashīq further defines *al-muqābala* as "the mutual facing of utterances (*muwājahat al-laḥẓ*) concerning that which is subject to judgment." Similarly, according to Ibn Ezra, the device refers to "opposites facing each other (*taqābul aḍād*) in speech." Among Ibn Ezra's examples is the Arabic verse by al-Nābigha (also cited by al-Ḥātimī and Ibn Rashīq), "A youth, perfect in him are what gladdens his friends but also what harms his enemies."⁵³ He also includes: from

52 "Wicked," literally, "dissenters, the different." Cf., Proverbs 24:21.

53 Compare this with al-Ḥātimī's words cited in Seeger A. Bonebakker, *Notes on the Kitāb Naḍrat al-ighrīd of al-Muẓaffar al-Husaynī (Ms Damat Ibrahim 963, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul)* (Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut in het Nabije Oosten, 1968), 28–29. Bonebakker did not reprint this section in his *Materials for the History of Arabic Rhetoric*.

Psalm 55:22, “his talk was smoother than butter, yet his mind was on war; his words were more soothing than oil, yet they were drawn swords”;⁵⁴ from Genesis 8:22, “Seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, spring and fall, day and night”; and from a poem by Samuel ha-Nagid concerning a beloved, “I am gracious, but he is obstinate; I love, but he hates; I speak of him truth, but about me he utters falsehood.” Thus, *al-muqābala* is distinguished from *al-muṭābaqa* because of the immediate proximity of the opposites. In the model poem, verse 33 is rich in this device.

45. For the princes of creation, I sent [this book] as a gift like fattened ewes
and the wine of raisin cakes,
46. but for oxen, except they are donkeys, it is like barley bread and a pottage
of lentils.

Al-Istīrād (“Digression”). Taken together, these verses might be considered an example of *al-istīrād* which occurs, according to Ibn Ezra, when the poet “digresses from praise to blame, as though it were a manner of transition but more refined and delicate.” Wolfhart Heinrichs explains the device as “a brief aside often containing an ironic stab at someone,” which seems to fit nicely with Ibn Ezra’s Arabic poetic example by Bakr ibn al-Naṭṭāḥ (also quoted by Ibn Rashīq and others): “A youth whose money was distressed through his generosity, as the [sons of] Qays were distressed by the spears of Taghlib.” Ibn Ezra claims that the device has not been used either in the Bible or among the Jewish poets, which is striking given that the Arabic critics generally credit the pre-Islamic Jewish poet al-Samaw’al ibn ‘Ādiyā’ with its invention. In the present example, the reference to “barley bread” derives from Judges 7:13, where Gideon dreams of a loaf of barley bread that fells the camp of Midian. The pottage of lentils, of course, is what Jacob sells Esau in exchange for his birthright.⁵⁵ Hence, the book will bring about the downfall of the ignorant, who are insulted as oxen and (even worse) donkeys; the verse thus constitutes a “jab,” though not toward anyone specific. Line 46 also exemplifies *al-istithnā’* (above) in the invective mode.

49. Can flatterers on the earth be compared with the sinless, or rulers over
thousands with rulers over fifties?

54 Here Ibn Ezra also refers to the poetic (*rajaʿ*) translation of the Psalms by Ḥaḥṣ b. Albar al-Qūṭī.

55 Gen 25:30–34.

50. Or a river of delights with the venom of serpents, or the skins of goats with the skins of seals?⁵⁶
51. Can the proverbs of the wise be like the vapor of dreamers, or hailstones (*elgevishim*) like pearl or crystal (*gevishim*)?
52. Or can companions (*re'ei*) of thought be like tenders (*ro'ei*) of beasts, or Orion and the Pleiades like clods of earth?
53. Or can a man who gathers kindness be like Joseph, beneath whose feet gold and silver are trampled?

Husn al-takhalluṣ ("Beautiful transition"). Although the model poem began with a "beautiful opening," in these lines Ibn Ezra also illustrates a "beautiful transition" between two themes, boasting over one's own writing to praise of the *mamdūh*. Ibn Ezra begins by extolling the incomparability of his own writing, then introduces a series of pairs that are similarly incomparable (whether by degree or opposition), and finally, in verse 53, submits a final comparison of degree that stations the *mamdūh*, Joseph, over other men of kindness. The transition here is quite gradual and is executed over several lines.

The transitional verse (*takhalluṣ*, lit., "escape")⁵⁷ is not unlike the moment of a concerto when the listener waits for the soloist to conclude the flourish of the cadenza and reintegrate with the orchestra; the audience knows that the transition will occur, but it is unclear exactly how. Medieval Arabic critics, van Gelder has demonstrated, give considerable attention to the way in which the *takhalluṣ* is constructed, a subject which allows van Gelder to approach the contested question of whether "organic unity" exists in Arabic poetry. The medieval critics witness the existence of an abrupt transition—either accomplished by simply changing themes or with a synthetic marker such as "desist from this"—but generally prefer transitions that logically connect the motifs of consecutive sections.⁵⁸ Ibn Rashīq catalogues a number of introductory themes, both nomadic (crossing deserts on camelback and the like) and urbane (wine, garden, etc.), that lead to the *takhalluṣ* and favors a smooth, gradual transition, which is illustrated nicely within the model poem.⁵⁹

56 The skin of *tehashim* is specified for the construction of the Tabernacle in Ex 26:14 and is therefore the superior. Various animals' skins have been suggested as the referent of this term, including that of the seal, dolphin, and badger.

57 This is called *khurūj* by some critics, including Ibn al-Mu'tazz and Ibn Ezra. Van Gelder, *Beyond the Line*, 34.

58 Van Gelder, *Beyond the Line*, 30.

59 Van Gelder, *Beyond the Line*, 115. See also the richer "catalogue" of thematic developments by al-Āmidī in *ibid.*, 73.

Again, Ibn Ezra generally downplays the importance of the *takhalluṣ* since it is only a remedy to a poem that is theoretically ill-conceived, since it should have begun with praise. Still, he does discuss the subject of balance and coherence between different parts of the poem, both in his general discussion of stylistics and in his chapter on *ḥusn al-takhalluṣ*. In offering advice to the aspiring poet, he writes:

If you introduce a *qaṣīda* with one of the types of amatory prelude, then make a transition (*khurūj*) to praise or blame in which there does not appear any discontinuity (*infīṣāl*). It has been said, “the *qaṣīda* is like the creation of a human body with respect to the conjoining (*ittiṣāl*) of its limbs with one another; when one of them becomes detached (*infaṣala*) from another, it leaves the body with a malady (*‘illa*)⁶⁰ that harms its beautiful qualities (*maḥāsin*).” Another said, “A *qaṣīda* must be like an epistle whose components cohere (*mutassiqa*).” If you take heed in this and similar things, the openings of your *qaṣīdās* will accord with their conclusions and their preludes⁶¹ with their main subjects (lit “goals”). This is the meaning of transition according to the ways of the novel style (*al-badi‘*), as you will see in the designated place in this treatise.⁶²

Ibn Ezra’s source here is clearly al-Ḥātimī, who compares the *qaṣīda* with both the human body and the epistle using very similar wording.⁶³ Later, in the “designated section” in the *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara*, Ibn Ezra treats *ḥusn al-takhalluṣ* further. His discussion is as follows:⁶⁴

[As for] transition (*al-takhalluṣ*) from one thing to another, the latter generations of Arab poets considered it beautiful and shining to behold; they became enamored with it so that it became ubiquitous and thus we need not cite an example. However, this [the inclusion of transitional verses] occurred little among the Jewish poets. An example of an outstanding transition following a lengthy amatory prelude (*tashbīb*) is the speech of the Nagid, may God be satisfied with him,

60 Although Halkin’s translation “cause” is possible, this other meaning of *‘illa* seems preferable. Indeed, the parallel passage in *al-Umda* has *‘āha*, which means “malady.”

61 Here I accept Halkin’s emendation of *tashbibāt* for *tashbihāt*.

62 Ibn Ezra, *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara*, 180.

63 The similarity is noted also by Van Gelder, *Beyond the Line*, 140, though he translates there from Ibn Rashīq.

64 Ibn Ezra, *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara*, 278–280.

Ask Wisdom, but if it is beyond you, ask Rabbi Joseph, whose sister is
Wisdom.⁶⁵

Ibn Gabirol, may God have mercy on him, spoke beautifully when he said,
Knowledge is the first among the paths of God, from the might of the
Lord God stored it up
and established it as a king over everything and wrote Yequtiel's
name upon its standard.⁶⁶

He also said, filling the verse in order to maintain the meter,⁶⁷

I rage against the daughters of days and laugh when they shout, "Who
is it that subdues us?"

Is it you who pushes us, though you are powerless, or is it the hand of
Yequtiel upon our necks?"⁶⁸

Everything with which [Ibn Gabirol] praised this man Abū al-Ḥasān, may
God have mercy on him, hit the target, cut at the joints,⁶⁹ and is true, for
[Ibn Gabirol] found a bough and made something wondrous.⁷⁰ As the
poet of the Arabs [al-Mutanabbī] said,

You have found a broad place for speech, so if you find a tongue that
speaks, then speak!

[Ibn Gabirol] also made a lovely transition from a description of a dark
night and a cold cloud to the censure of the poem,

Its coolness is like the snow of Senir or like the poetry of Samuel ha-
Qahati!⁷¹

The use of transitional verses is far more prevalent in the Hebrew corpus than
Ibn Ezra lets on and is extremely common in his own poetry. Even before the
Andalusian period, a transition from the praise of wine to praise of a *mam-*

65 Samuel ha-Nagid, *Dīwān Shemuel ha-Nagid. Ben Tehillim*, ed. Dov Jarden (Jerusalem: Hebrew Union College Press, 1966), 159 [50], lines 15–17.

66 Solomon ibn Gabirol, *The Secular Poetry of Rabbi Solomon ibn Gabirol* (Hebrew), ed. Dov Jarden, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: n.p., 1975), 38–43 [30], lines 18–19.

67 See the discussion of *hashw al-bayt li-iqāmat wazn* above.

68 Ibn Gabirol, *Secular Poetry*, 36–38 [19], lines 9–10. Note that this verse was also used to illustrate *al-i'tirād*.

69 This is an expression simply meaning "attained its goal."

70 Regarding "found a bough": while Halkin disagrees, I find the reading suggested in the notes to line 45 quite reasonable and far superior. This proverb also fits the theme of the poem that follows. This is also the opinion of Abumalham Mas: Ibn Ezra, *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara* (ed. Abumalham Mas), 1:294.

71 Ibn Gabirol, *Secular Poetry*, 354 [195], line 11. It should also be noted, atypically, that this is the final verse of the poem. A similar structure is observed in one of Ibn Gabirol's laments over his patron Yequtiel ben Isaac: *Secular Poetry*, 301 [158].

dūh is attested in a panegyric dedicated to Abraham ha-Baghdadi.⁷² Ibn Ezra is obviously not opposed to amatory preludes since he includes the example by the Nagid. In the examples in *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara*, transition is made from themes as diverse as praise of Wisdom, complaint against Time, and the amatory prelude, and indeed, in the Andalusian corpus, transition to praise is made from virtually every conceivable genre (also self-exhortation, nature description, praise of wine, etc.).

The examples given by Ibn Ezra have a structural commonality, which tacitly prescribes a recommendation for a well-crafted transition. In each, the transition is accomplished within a single line: i.e., the first hemistich deals with the theme of the previous verses and, through some logical association, the *mam-duh* is introduced in the second. Given this, it is notable that the model poem does not exhibit this feature, but follows a graded transition executed over several lines instead.

55. To the trunk of the wise and shoot of the mighty, young in years though he brings wisdom to elders,
56. whose deeds accord with the might of his fathers. The length of the branches follows the strength of the roots!
57. He burns like coal, sweeps away like a river, and roars like a lion amid flocks of goats.
58. Take [this] counsel and friendship of Arabic and Hebrew, food and rations to the mouths of all who ask.
59. Ascend through them⁷³ and do battle, for they are like salt to speech and a spear to attack those armed for war.
60. Ascend on high, to the shining stars! Strive with God, and strive with men!⁷⁴

Al-Ghulū (“Hyperbole”). “Hyperbole” (from the Greek, “throwing beyond”) is one of the richer and more ambiguous areas of Western literary criticism and

72 Alexander Scheiber, “Two Additional Poems of Praise in Honor of Abraham of Baghdad” (Hebrew), *Zion* 30 (1965): 123–127. Dan Pagis already noted that the wine theme prefigures the explosion of the Hebrew *khamriyyāt* in al-Andalus: Dan Pagis, “Wine Songs Preceding the Spanish Period” in *Poetry Aptly Explained: Studies and Essays on Medieval Hebrew Poetry* (Hebrew), ed. Ezra Fleischer (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1993), 18–28. There is clearly a prefiguring not only of theme but also of form.

73 I.e., the teachings of this book.

74 The reference here is to Jacob at Gen 32:28. The repetition of the word “strive” here might be considered *al-tardīd*, though it does not meet Ibn Ezra’s definition that the word occurs once in each hemistich.

the philosophy of language more broadly. One thorny problem is to understand its relationship with “exaggeration” (from the Latin, “to heap up”). Are the two synonymous? Is one a subspecies of the other? Is “hyperbole” strictly a “figure of thought” defined by the impossibility of content, or can it encompass a device such as “amplification” as a “figure of wording”?⁷⁵

The problem is equally complicated in Arabic criticism. First, terminology is used differently by different authors. The word *mubālagha* is sometimes understood as the umbrella category “hyperbole” with several sub-varieties but can also be defined specifically as “exaggeration,” similar to but not identical with “hyperbole.” Hence the fourteenth-century al-Khaṭīb al-Qazwīnī divides *mubālagha maqbūla* (“acceptable hyperbole”) into three categories: (1) that which is exaggerated within what is customarily possible (*tablīgh*); (2) within what is theoretically possible (*ighrāq*); (3) and that which pertains to the strictly impossible (*ghulū*).⁷⁶ But in the tenth and eleventh centuries, critics such as Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī distinguished between *al-mubālagha* (exaggeration) as “that which reaches the outer limit and furthest end in meaning” and *al-ghulū* (hyperbole) as “that which passes over the limit (*ḥadd*) of meaning and rises above it.”⁷⁷ Ibn Rashīq similarly sees *al-mubālagha* as “following something to an end (*al-taqāṣṣi*), the poet’s reaching (*bulūgh*) the furthest (*aqṣa*) of what is possible in describing a thing”⁷⁸ but *al-ghulū* as “impossibility because of its divergence from reality, its departure from the existing (*al-wājib*) and the generally accepted.”⁷⁹

In his *Kitāb al-Ḥadīqa*, Ibn Ezra seems to differentiate between *al-mubālagha* as “exaggeration, reaching the limit” (e.g. Gen 41:49, “Joseph stored up huge quantities of grain, like the sand of the sea”), and *al-ghulū* as “hyperbole, going beyond the limit” (e.g. Prov 25:15, “A gentle tongue can break a

75 See, for example Albert W. Halsall and Terry V.F. Brogan, “Amplification,” in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, 4th ed., ed. Roland Greene et al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 45–46; Kevin McFadden, “Hyperbole,” in *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry*, 648.

76 Heinrichs, “Rhetorical Figures,” 658.

77 This is the wording in Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī, *Kitāb al-Ṣināʿatayn al-kitāba wa-l-shiʿr*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Bijāwī and Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: ʿIsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1952), 327, 365. Similar is the definition of *mubālagha* in Qudāma, *Naqd al-Šiʿr*, 7, though, like Ibn Ezra, he also defends the use of *al-ghulū* by equating it with *al-mubālagha* (see below). Al-Ḥātimī does not include a chapter on *al-mubālagha*.

78 This can include figures of wording such as *al-tatmīm*, *al-ighāl* (by which he means *al-tablīgh*), *al-ḥashw*, etc.

79 Ibn Ezra does not include a chapter on *al-mubālagha* in *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara*.

bone”).⁸⁰ The example in Genesis 41:49 brings description of quantity to its limit, but it is nonetheless a description of quantity. The content of the proverb is more strictly impossible. In this way, Ibn Ezra seems to follow the definitions of Ibn Rashīq. Hyperbole in panegyric often involves bringing the *mamdūh* to the level of heavenly bodies or celestial beings, clearly exemplified in verses 60 and 10 of the model poem.

In his section on *al-ghulū* within the presentation of the *maḥāsin al-shi‘r*, Ibn Ezra uses a number of terms of art more or less interchangeably as hyperbole: *ghulū*, *ighrāq*, *ighāl*, *taghmīq*, and *ta‘ammuq*. Following a number of critics, he describes *al-ighāl* as a variety of *ghulū* that involves the reiteration of a theme at the end of a verse and is hence a “figure of wording” as much as a “figure of thought.”⁸¹ He also identifies *al-ghulū* with the Talmudic term *havai*, which appears in Babylonian Talmud Tamid 29a: there several textual examples are given, including, among others, “cities great and fortified up to heaven” (Deut 1:28), and “the people played pipes ... so that the earth rent with their sound” (1 Kings 1:40).⁸² The commonality in this terminology, over against *mubālagha*, is that hyperbole, in Ibn Ezra’s words, “departs from the class of the possible and enters the class of the impossible.” The subtleties in Ibn Ezra’s terminology become clearer with a close reading of his exegetic interventions in the *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara*. Ibn Ezra cites numerous biblical verses that make use of *al-ghulū*, including “great cities and fortresses up to the sky” (Deut 9:1, also quoted in *b. Tamid* 29b) and “their land shall be drunk with blood, their dust saturated with fat” (Isa 34:3).

80 Fenton, *Philosophie et exégèse*, 334–335.

81 He considers “their land shall be drunk with blood, their dust saturated with fat” (Isa 34:3) as *al-ghulū*, and “the host of heaven shall be dissolved” (Isa 34:4) as *ighāl*. Some critics define *al-ighāl* as reiterating an exaggerated theme at the end of a verse, and Isaiah 34:4 might fit that requirement. He first calls “My glory refreshed, my bow renewed in my hand” (Job 29:20) *al-ghulū* and subsequently *al-ighāl*, and arguably this too fits the more stringent definition of *al-ighāl*. However, he calls “for the heavens shall vanish like smoke” (Isa 51:6) *al-ighāl*, and this is the first of the exaggerations in the verse; perhaps he means in following the previous verse. *Al-ighāl* is thus very similar to *al-tabliḡh*. See also Fenton, *Philosophie et exégèse*, 334–335.

82 The passage notes that hyperbolic and exaggerative language is found in the Torah, the Prophets, and in the discourse of the Rabbis. However, the Talmudic passage uses *havai* and *guzma* (“exaggeration”) more or less synonymously. In some cases, *havai* is paired with *hevel*, (“vapor, vanity”) and can hence carry the meaning of “nonsense,” which is also the usage in modern Hebrew. The etymology of the word *havai* is unclear. Ben Yehudah suggests the Arabic cognate *hby*, “dust that has risen into the air.” Perhaps it is related to the Greek, *hyper*?

Ibn Ezra's comments on Num 13:33, "And we were in our eyes like grasshoppers, and so we were in their eyes" are also illustrative of his categories. The first phrase, he opines, is "exaggeration, reaching a limit" (*taghyī*)⁸³ but the second he calls "utter falsehood (*kidhb maḥḍ*), since no one knows the hidden except for God, exalted" (i.e., the inhabitants of the land did not actually see the spies). This type of falsehood is distinct from both *al-mubālagha* and *al-ghulū*. Both exaggeration and hyperbole ultimately express truth, though with different relationships to possibility, whereas "utter falsehood" does not correspond to truth in any way. A rich sequence of verses is found in Isaiah 34:3-4,⁸⁴ which deals with God's fury against the nations and their ensuing destruction:

(3) Their slain shall be cast out, the stench of their carcasses shall rise, (4) the mountains shall be melted with their blood, and all the host of heaven will be dissolved.

While verse 3 does not even constitute exaggeration, the two images in verse 4 exemplify hyperbole, especially since the angels are viewed as inviolable. The destruction of the angels, writes Ibn Ezra, refers to "the overturning (*taqallub*) of the nations, and [Isaiah] coined a similitude (*mathal*) with the transformation (*taḥawwul*) of the angels." "The mountains shall be melted with their blood" is called *ghulū* and "the host of heaven shall be dissolved" is called *ighāl* since it reiterates the hyperbolic theme at the end of the verse.

Distinguishing between figurative and literal expressions has obvious implications for the interpretation of eschatological passages of the Bible, for the exegete must consider whether the Bible presents seemingly impossible statements that do not correspond with human experience but are nonetheless intended as true. Importantly and subjectively, Ibn Ezra sees seemingly false expressions such as those in Isaiah 34:4 as figurative but similar expressions concerning "the awaited polity," i.e. the Messianic age (*al-dawla al-muntaẓara*) and miracles (*al-mu'jizāt*) as non-figurative.

Among the most beautiful biblical hyperboles, in Ibn Ezra's opinion, is Job's image of his former glory, "And the rock poured me out rivers of oil" (Job 29:4), as well as Job's image of how he had imagined his future happiness prior to his suffering, "My glory refreshed, my bow renewed in my hand" (Job 29:20).⁸⁵

83 Derived from *ghāya* ("limit"), hence "reaching a limit."

84 Ibn Ezra does not discuss the second verse, but I translate it here to provide contrast.

85 Ibn Ezra actually discusses competing interpretations of the verse following his own.

“One of the Arab poets,” Ibn Ezra adds, saw or heard about the latter image and invented a verse in imitation: “If you heard about a lucky man who held a branch in his hand and it flourished, it would be true.”⁸⁶

After this lengthy excursus on biblical interpretation, Ibn Ezra quotes verses of Andalusian Hebrew poetry that make use of hyperbolic devices, including a panegyric by Isaac ibn Khalfūn and also one of his own:

I am astonished that his pens did not bloom from the rivers of his hands,
which flow.⁸⁷

The verse combines two qualities: the *mamdūh*'s generosity (the rivers of his hands) and his skill in writing (his pens), linked because the poet is surprised that the *mamdūh*'s wondrous writing is not a product of his generosity. The hyperbole in the verse relates to the degree of generosity but also to the impossibility of the content, even in the contrafactual mode. With this, Ibn Ezra enters the complicated area of imaginative poetics, which I take up in a separate publication.

Amthāl (“Proverbs”). Immediately following his twenty chapters on *maḥāsin al-shiʿr*, Ibn Ezra includes a final discussion, just prior to the close of the *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara*, on “proverbs (*amthāl*)⁸⁸ and enigmas (*aḥāji*) in the beautiful elements of poetry.”⁸⁹ The rather lengthy discussion reviews the place of proverbs in Islamic writing (beginning with the famous verse, Qurʾān 29:43, “These proverbs, We coin them for men, but none will grasp their meaning save the wise”); among the philosophers; and, of course, in Jewish sources. Among his many sayings in praise of proverbs is the following, “the proverb brings together three properties: brevity of utterance, truth of meaning, and beauty of simile.” Unsurprisingly, he favors the inclusion of pithy aphorisms within poetry and demonstrates the practice in verse 56, here using a proverb of Arabic origin.⁹⁰

86 Braun, “Arabic Verses in *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara*” does not remark on this.

87 Isaac ibn Khalfūn, *Isaac ibn Khalfūn: Poems* (Hebrew), ed. Aharon Mirsky (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1961), 168, line 20. This is from a lament, though the verse itself is indistinguishable from what might be found in a panegyric. In prefacing the verse in *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara*, Ibn Ezra describes himself as “one who uses hyperbole (*al-ghulū*) most in his poetry.”

88 Like the Hebrew *mashal*, the Arabic *mathal* carries a range of meanings, from proverb to similitude, metaphor, and parable.

89 Ibn Ezra, *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara*, 284–300. It does not seem to me that this section has been sufficiently exploited as a possible source for Maimonides' thinking on parables. Al-Ḥātīmī treats both proverbs and enigmas (though not together) in *Ḥilyat al-muḥāḍara*.

90 See the useful note by Brody (to a different poem): Ibn Ezra, *Secular Poems*, 2:396 [207], lines 83–85.

Conclusion

Ibn Ezra's setting in a single poem verses that present related, often proximate yet distinct, types of "beautiful elements" allows those devices to be observed in clear relief. At the time of its composition, didactic poetry was relatively rare, and the "model poem" augurs for what became a prevalent genre in Hebrew and the ultimate emergence of the *badī'yyāt* in Arabic. Not only must the poem be read in light of the chapters on *maḥāsīn al-shi'r* that precede it, but the poem actually helps elucidate ambiguities in those chapters. The review of the chapters presented here helps situate Ibn Ezra both as a consumer and producer of the *naqd al-shi'r* genre; the very instability of terms, as well as the numerous strategies by which the *maḥāsīn al-shi'r* are configured taxonomically, demonstrates the degree to which this discipline, a relative latecomer among the Islamic sciences, was very much "under construction." The review of Arabic poems cited by Ibn Ezra demonstrates the degree to which, with very few exceptions, the poet selected sources from works of literary criticism rather than through an independent gleaning directly from *dīwāns*. Interestingly, Ibn Ezra and the critics upon whom he relies show a marked interest in what modern critics call the "role of the reader," not only when discussing "figures of thought" (e.g. hyperbole, metaphor), which obviously rely upon the human imagination, but also with respect to certain "figures of wording" (especially *tashīm* and *tatbīr*).

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Sefarad in Tzarfat: Sefardi and Sefardi-Style Piyyutim in MS Bernkastel-Kues 313

Elisabeth Hollender

Hebrew poetry ranks among the most famous elements of Jewish culture from medieval Andalusia. This genre led the period of cultural flourishing in the tenth and eleventh centuries to be called the “Golden Age” of Spanish Jewry.¹ It has also provided a point of demarcation between medieval Sefarad and Ashkenaz: the biblicizing style that characterized Iberian Jewish poets has been compared to classical aesthetics² and helped to secure a place of honor for their oeuvre in Jewish literary tradition; they have been lauded as the only medieval Jews to write secular poetry, and, moreover, their liturgical poetry has received special attention for its alleged use of the composer’s individual voice rather than a collective call to God on behalf of the nation. While eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century promulgation of the myth of Sefardi supremacy contributed to the fascination with Sefardi culture that helped to cement the modern image of Sefarad and Ashkenaz as two separate cultural identities that

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- 1 The term “Golden Age” as a description for tenth- and eleventh-century Andalusian Hebrew poetry was introduced by Franz Delitzsch, *Zur Geschichte der jüdischen Poësie vom Abschluss der heiligen Schriften Alten Bundes bis auf die neueste Zeit* (Leipzig: Karl Tauchnitz, 1836), 44. It evokes the ancient Greek myth of the “ages of man,” with its image of peace, harmony, stability, and prosperity, but also the concept of inevitable deterioration over time, a descent from the halcyon and irrevocably concluded Golden Age.
 - 2 On this comparison, see Joseph Yahalom, “Aesthetic Models in Conflict: Classicist versus Ornamental in Jewish Poetics,” in *Renewing the Past, Reconfiguring Jewish Culture: From Al-Andalus to the Haskalah*, ed. Ross Brann and Adam Sutcliffe (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 21–30. Rina Drory has argued that the use of Hebrew for poetry in Sefarad was based on a functional division of languages that assigned beauty to Hebrew. See Drory, “Words Beautifully Put’: Hebrew versus Arabic in Tenth-Century Jewish Literature,” in *Genizah Research after Ninety Years: The Case of Judaeo-Arabic. Papers Read at the Third Congress of the Society for Judaeo-Arabic Studies*, ed. Joshua Blau and Stephan C. Reif (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 53–66; Drory, “Literary Contacts and Where to Find Them: On Arabic Literary Models in Medieval Jewish Literature,” *Poetics Today* 14.2 (1993): 277–302; Drory, *Models and Contacts: Arabic Literature and Its Impact on Medieval Jewish Culture* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 169–177.

rarely had contact,³ the notion of the superiority of Sefardi culture originated with its promotion by Andalusian intellectuals during the medieval period;⁴ unlike some Provençal scholars who saw their own culture as peripheral to the Andalusian cultural center, the Talmudic scholars that dominated the Northern French and Ashkenazi intellectual elite made no such concession to their Sefardi counterparts. However, *ḥazanim* in Northern France and Ashkenaz imported a selection of Andalusian liturgical poetry to their own impressive corpus of liturgical poems. Moreover, by the turn of the thirteenth century, a number of Northern French and Ashkenazi authors had begun to compose liturgical poetry that incorporated aesthetic elements from Sefardi Hebrew poetics, such as quantitative meter and biblical language.⁵ This resulted in a parallel presence of Sefardi and Ashkenazi styles in liturgical poetry as well as hybrid compositions that drew on features from both traditions.

In most cases, earlier poetry was not replaced by the subsequent adoption of Sefardi poetry or compositions from Northern France and Ashkenaz that engaged Sefardi aesthetics; rather, these works augmented extant liturgies (possibly as late in the process of composition as the copying and redacting of new manuscripts), incorporating another layer of poetry to an already well-developed liturgical tradition.⁶ From the mid-fourteenth century onward, the majority of Ashkenazi liturgical manuscripts include some poetry from Sefarad

3 See Ismar Schorsch, *From Text to Context: The Turn to History in Modern Judaism* (Hanover: Brandeis University Press; University Press of New England, 1994), 71–92.

4 The intellectual elite of Sefarad, especially in Muslim Andalusia, were not only convinced of their supremacy, which they expressed through varied means (e.g., by terming themselves the “Jerusalemite diaspora”), but they also convinced many Jewish communities that did not belong to this cultural center to consider themselves peripheral, see Uriah Kfir, *A Matter of Geography: A New Perspective on Medieval Hebrew Poetry* (Leiden: Brill, 2018). See also the articles published in the *Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts/Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook* 8 (2009) edited by Gad Freudenthal that trace the transmission and appropriation of the secular sciences and philosophy in Medieval Judaism.

5 See, for example, Abraham Meir Habermann, “Liturgical Poetry of Ephraim bar Isaac of Regensburg” (Hebrew), *Studies of the Research Institute for Hebrew Poetry in Jerusalem* 4 (1938): 119–195; Habermann, “Liturgical Poetry of Rabbi Ephraim bar Jacob of Bonn” (Hebrew), *Studies of the Research Institute for Hebrew Poetry in Jerusalem* 7 (1958): 215–302. Chapter 5 of Ephraim Kanarfogel, *The Intellectual History and Rabbinic Culture of Medieval Ashkenaz: Expanding Horizons and Innovating Traditions* (Detroit: Wayne University Press, 2012), 375–443, describes many twelfth- and thirteenth-century poets—most of them minor ones—and their respective oeuvre, noting Sefardi influences where evident.

6 On the development of Ashkenazi liturgy through the importation of piyyutim from other Jewish communities, see Elisabeth Hollender, *Liturgie und Geschichte: Der aschkenasische Machsor und jüdische Mobilität im Mittelalter—Ein methodologischer Versuch* (Trier: Klieme-dia, 2015).

plus numerous Ashkenazi poems that display aesthetics from Sefarad. However, by the late eighteenth century, most of these works had fallen into disuse and, thus, they are absent from printed collections.

The presence/inclusion of Sefardi liturgical poetry in medieval Ashkenazi synagogue services (i.e., the communal rituals that comprise a central aspect of religious identity) is not only proof of cultural transfer from Sefarad to Ashkenaz during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but also an indication of Ashkenazi receptivity to cultural goods from another community. This contradicts the image of Ashkenazi self-sufficiency to the point of disinterest in contemporaneous Jewish cultures and neighboring Christian societies.⁷ The adoption of Sefardi poetry into the Ashkenazi prayer book began no later than the mid-twelfth century and probably continued through the mid-fourteenth century; this complex, two-century process allows a glimpse at the largely under-attended reception of contemporary Jewish cultures by medieval Ashkenazi communities.

The reconstruction of this medieval Northern French and Ashkenazi process of adopting and adapting Sefardi poetry and poetics requires a two-stage examination of medieval manuscripts from those communities. For an overview of textual transmission, a systematic comparison of the Sefardi piyyutim in each manuscript would need to be conducted to develop a historical map that traces each piyyut's trajectory of transmission over time.⁸ Furthermore, an analysis of each collection that includes Sefardi and Northern French/Ashkenazi poetry is necessary to understand the relationship between texts of differing styles and provenances as documented at a given time and place. While both approaches must be combined to completely articulate this process, studies of individual manuscripts can illustrate crucial moments and aspects of transfer and reception.

This study examines one section of a particularly interesting manuscript, which was probably copied in the late thirteenth century in a community that used the Northern French rite; a reconstructed history of this manuscript situates its origin in the upper Moselle valley. Given the absence of a colophon

7 Interactions between Ashkenazi Judaism and the adjacent communities have received significant scholarly attention in recent years, thanks to the work of Ivan Marcus, Israel Yuval, and others.

8 A comprehensive analysis using this approach extends beyond the scope of single essay. For a study that concentrates on a subgroup of one genre, namely Zionide *qinot*, see Elisabeth Hollender, "Adoption and Adaptation: Judah haLevi's אסיריך לשלום תשאלני and its Ashkenazic Environment," in *Entangled Histories: Knowledge, Authority, and Jewish Culture in the Thirteenth Century*, ed. Elisheva Baumgarten, Ruth Mazo Karras, and Katelyn Mesler (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 248–262.

to indicate its time and place of production, these identifications are based on paleographic evidence.⁹ This manuscript is held by the Cusanus Library at Bernkastel-Kues (MS Bernkastel-Kues 313, henceforth Kues 313¹⁰) but apparently it was not part of Nicolaus of Cues's personal collection. Its fifteenth-century binding and the similarity in script and content to a group of liturgical manuscripts that has been reconstructed from pastedowns in books and manuscripts signal that this volume belonged to the Augustine Convent at Eberhardsklausen during the fifteenth century. It seems that this convent, which did not actively pursue Hebrew studies, received these liturgical manuscripts (as part of a larger group of Hebrew works) from Archbishop Otto von Ziegenhain of Trier who had expelled the Jews from his electorate and seized their assets in 1419.¹¹

This carefully executed manuscript is relatively small for an Ashkenazic liturgical manuscript. Like most Ashkenazic liturgical manuscripts, it contains only piyyutim, not the standard prayers. Most piyyutim are not vocalized. With the exception of enlarged initial words, its pages lack embellish-

9 I would like to extend my thanks to Judith Olszowy-Schlanger (EPHE, Paris) for her help in this paleographical dating.

10 The shelf mark corresponds to the numbering in the sole printed catalog of manuscripts from this library. On this manuscript, see Joseph Marx, *Verzeichnis der Handschriften-Sammlung des Hospitals zu Cues bei Bernkastel a./Mosel* (Trier: Druck der Kunst- und Verlangsanstalt Schaar and Dathe, 1905), 305–306.

11 On the library at Eberhardsklausen, see Marco Brösch, “Die Klosterbibliothek von Eberhardsklausen und ihre Bestände. Von den Anfängen bis ins 16. Jahrhundert” (PhD diss., Universität Trier, 2010). On the history of Hebrew pastedowns in books and manuscripts from this library, see Brösch, “Makulierte hebräische Handschriften in Eberhardsklausen—eine bibliotheks- und literaturgeschichtliche Untersuchung,” in *Genizat Germania—Hebrew and Aramaic Binding Fragments from Germany in Context*, ed. Andreas Lehnardt (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 91–155. On liturgical fragments in volumes from Eberhardsklausen, now in the Municipal Library of Trier, see Hollender, “Reconstructing Manuscripts: The Liturgical Fragments from Trier,” in Lehnardt, *Genizat Germania*, 61–90, and literature cited therein. During the fifteenth century, when other manuscripts were maculated in Eberhardsklausen, Kues 313 was rebound but apparently never used again. As a result, it has been preserved in pristine condition, although at least one quire is missing from the end of the manuscript. I am indebted to Dr. Marco Brösch for having checked the binding of Kues 313 and ascertaining Eberhardsklausen as its likely provenance. The simple decorations on its leather cover do not lend themselves to an unambiguous attribution to any single binder; nevertheless, the use of parts of a single document in the bindings of Kues 313 and Kues 314 provides an approximate date and establishes that these volumes were rebound by Christians. The incomplete preservation of the other Hebrew liturgical manuscripts from Eberhardsklausen limits our ability to conjecture about motivations that prompted this manuscript to be rebound by its Christian owners or preserved with such care.

ment.¹² Its dimensions and overall simplicity indicate that this volume did not serve as the main liturgical manuscript for a major Rhineland community; rather, it would have been used in a small, less influential community in the Moselle valley. Kues 313 is comprised of liturgies for Hanukkah, Purim, the four special Sabbaths, and the pilgrimage festivals, according to Minhag Tzarfat,¹³ with numerous piyyutim by French poets, such as Joseph ben Samuel Tov Elem and Jacob ben Meir (Rabbenu Tam). While several liturgical manuscripts from Northern France have come down to us, this is the most complete extant manuscript from the Moselle valley,¹⁴ one of the main transfer routes between Northern France and Ashkenaz.

Kues 313 is notable in that, in addition to standard elements from the Northern French rite,¹⁵ it features a collection of sixty-two nonobligatory piyyutim—liturgically unassigned poems that could be inserted to embellish services at the prayer leader's discretion—that appears on twenty consecutive leaves (fols. 30r–49v), between the piyyutim for Shabbat haGadol and those for Passover. Similar collections of piyyutim that were not tied to a specific point in the calendar—usually referred to as *quntras ha-piyyutim* (a collection of piyyutim)—whose contents provided a repertoire of liturgical embellishments for occasions that lacked specifically assigned piyyutim (such as life-cycle celebrations) are found in many Ashkenazi liturgical manuscripts.¹⁶ This collection

12 This manuscript measures approximately 22×15.5 cm, which reflects the margins that resulted from trimming when it was rebound in the fifteenth century. It currently consists of quires that are each comprised of four bifolios that were ruled individually. At least one quire is missing from the end of the manuscript, possibly more. Each page has twenty-two lines; even the trimmed margins have generous proportions. Although several leaves are missing corners or show evidence of production-time repairs in the parchment, this manuscript was undoubtedly produced for a wealthy client.

13 Its division into two volumes—one for the high holidays and one for the remainder of the year—was typical for Ashkenaz and Northern France, where penitential poems (*selihot*) and lamentations (*qinot*) for fast days were often collected in an additional volume.

14 Very few Jewish communities have been documented from the Moselle valley in the first half of the fifteenth century: Alfred Haverkamp, ed., *Geschichte der Juden im Mittelalter von der Nordsee bis zu den Südalpen: Kommentiertes Kartenwerk*, 3 vols. (Hannover: Hahn, 2002), vol. 3, map A 3.7 (1401–1450) lists only Trier, Saarburg (on the Saar River), Trarbach, and Cochem. During this period, Bernkastel is also mentioned as place of origin.

15 Even in the standard liturgy, this manuscript presents a number of unusual features: for example, in the first three piyyutim of most *qedushta'ot* the verse chains have been omitted, as well as the closing piyyutim (*silluqim*) of these compositions. Curiously, it also contains many of the Ashkenazi piyyutim for Passover, for which the manuscript transmits both piyyutim of the Northern French and the Ashkenazi rite.

16 On the impressive number of piyyutim for Shabbat Ḥatan in some Ashkenazic manuscripts, see Menahem Schmelzer, *Studies in Jewish Bibliography and Medieval Hebrew*

of predominantly short piyyutim in Kues 313, which is roughly organized by genre (such as *ofanim*, piyyutim for Nishmat, and *geullot*), will be described and is the subject of this study due its significant representation of Sefardi piyyutim.

Official liturgical manuscripts typically include only those piyyutim that that were part of the local rite by the time it was commissioned and copied.¹⁷ If Kues 313 conforms to this norm, it would follow that the *ḥazan*, and probably the local leadership, in the community for which it was created, were familiar with and accepted the inclusion of thirty-plus Sefardi piyyutim along with those from the Northern French rite in this *quntras ha-piyyutim* for their prayer services. By the late thirteenth century, even the Ashkenazi and Northern French communities that were not dominated by eminent scholars who had ongoing contacts with the academies in France and Provence (through which Sefardic texts were brought to Ashkenaz) had incorporated Sefardi poetry in their liturgies.

Whereas the festival liturgy in Kues 313 is comprised of piyyutim from Byzantine *eretz Israel*, tenth- and eleventh-century Ashkenaz, and eleventh-century Northern France, its *quntras ha-piyyutim* transmits many Sefardi piyyutim, some piyyutim that were composed in a Sefardi style, Northern French piyyutim, and only a small sampling of Ashkenazic piyyutim. Given that these piyyutim were performed on select occasions throughout the year, Sefardi and Sefardi-style poetry therefore had a regular liturgical presence in the community that used Kues 313 as the textual basis for the poetic embellishment of their prayer services.¹⁸

Poetry: Collected Essays (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 2006), 190–208.

- 17 The process of determining how piyyutim were selected for local rites has not yet been studied. For preliminary remarks on this mechanism, see Hollender, *Liturgie und Geschichte*. A tendency to close liturgies and to discourage changes is evident from the fourteenth century, when certain communities ruled that their precursors could not recite piyyutim that were not included in that community's liturgical manuscripts. The principle of limiting transmission to the piyyutim that a given community recites was operative up to the modern period, see for example the new Dutch mahzor, which only includes piyyutim that are recited regularly by at least one Jewish community in the Netherlands. Thus, mainly incomplete compositions were transmitted. *Atirat Jitschak: Het Smeken von Jitschak*, trans. Jitschak Dasberg and Wouter Jacques van Bekkum, ed. Abraham Wolf Rosenberg (Amsterdam: Nederlands-Israëlitisch Kerkgenootschap, 1983–1998).
- 18 Similar collections probably existed in other communities; for one example, see the *quntras ha-piyyutim* at the end of the second volume of the manuscript of Mahzor Vitry held by the British Library, edited by Heinrich Brody, *Quntras ha-piyyutim: ha-nilve el ha-mahzor Vitry Ketav Yad London* (Berlin: H. Itzkowski, 1894).

The opening page of the *quntras ha-piyyutim* in Kues 313 lists sixty (that is, all but two) of the poems collected therein.¹⁹ Over half of these piyyutim were composed by known Sefardi authors: eighteen by Judah Halevi, nine by Abraham ibn Ezra, three by Solomon ibn Gabirol, and one each by Isaac ibn Ghayyat, Joseph ibn Tzaddiq, and Levi ben Jacob al-Tabbān. A rubric in this manuscript also attributes another piyyut to Judah Halevi: this poem is also transmitted in *quntras ha-piyyutim* in the London manuscript of *Maḥzor Vitry* (יחקור מבין, י 2730);²⁰ although that composition is not in the *diwān* of Judah Halevi, Brody considered it authentic.²¹ This collection also includes at least five piyyutim of unclear provenance that are most likely Sefardi or Provençal: (1) a *reshut*—also transmitted in the Cairo Genizah—whose author signed “Joseph” in a name acrostic (יה ברוב חסדך ארוממך);²² (2) a *nishmat* by an author named Isaac (נשמת, י 752), which appears in printed Provençal prayer books and in a collection of Sicilian poetry that was published in Constantinople; (3) a *geulla* composed by an author who signed his name “Isaac” in the acrostic (יקוש בעוניו ולכוד פח חבלו, י 3608), which has been attributed to both Isaac ben Reuben al-Bargeluni and Isaac ibn Ghayyat despite being printed exclusively in Ashkenaz; (4) a *geulla* that has been attributed to Joseph Qimḥi, which was transmitted throughout the Sefardi world (יחדיו בשיר מעלות, י 2454); and, (5) a hitherto unpublished piyyut for *Ḥatan*, that shows no indication of its exact liturgical position, לכלת אהבים.²³

19 Given that this collection begins in the middle of a quire, this is surely its original position in the manuscript. The scribe wrote the rubric for this section on folio 29r. The scribe mistakenly began copying piyyutim for Passover before completing the piyyutim as listed on folio 29v, which explains the inclusion of a *yotzer* for the intermediate Sabbath during Passover by Simon ben Isaac אהוביך אהבוך מישרים, in this collection despite its absence from the table of contents. The second item that is not listed is the final piyyut in this collection, a *reshut* for the Targum of the Decalogue. These piyyutim both have assigned positions in the liturgy and, therefore, should not be part of this collection.

20 Throughout this analysis, each piyyut is referred to by its incipit and number in Israel Davidson, *Thesaurus of Medieval Hebrew Poetry*, 4 vols. (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1924–1933). For transmission history and bibliography, see Davidson.

21 See Brody, *Quntras ha-piyyutim*, 68.

22 T-S Add. Series 128/257. I would like to extend my appreciation to Dr. Sara Cohen, of the Ezra Fleischer Geniza Research Institute for Hebrew Poetry of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities for locating the transmission of this poem.

23 See edition below. In addition to its formal characteristics, the author's name, Levi, which is signed in the refrain and the first two stanzas, indicates the Sefardi origin, since Levi was not used as a personal name in Northern France and Ashkenaz. By contrast, the Sefardi poets who signed with this name in their compositions include Levi ibn al-Tabbān and Levi ben Mar Shaul. This personal name was also used in Provence, e.g., by the philosopher Levi ben Gershom, to whose father a similar poem is attributed (גיל יגילון אהובים, ג 140).

Only three piyyutim from Ashkenaz are transmitted in this *quntras ha-piyyutim*: a *yotzer* for Passover by Simon ben Isaac, which should have been copied in the Passover section²⁴ and two *ofanim* by Benjamin ben Zerah (לבעל ב, בשרפי אש בוערה אתקדש שם הנורא; ל, 447; להתפארת ל, 447). The anonymous *yotzer* for Shabbat Bereshit שלוחתו אשישת (א 8068), which was used in some Ashkenazi rites, reflects this same cultural heritage. Based on this representation, it is evident that the editor of this collection did not prioritize eleventh- and twelfth-century Ashkenazi poetry. By contrast, he clearly favored poetic production from Northern France, as evidenced by the thirteen poems in the *quntras ha-piyyutim* by known authors from that region: five by Rabbenu Tam,²⁵ four by Yosefya ha-Ger,²⁶ two by Solomon ben Avun,²⁷ one by Benjamin ben Samuel,²⁸ and one by Isaac ben Samuel.²⁹ Moreover, the two anonymous Ara-

24 אוהביך אהבוד משרים, without its *geulla*, is neither listed on folio 29v nor is it numbered in this collection. Obviously, the scribe realized his mistake at some point. Similarly, the other *yotzer* compositions for Passover manuscript are also transmit without *geullot*.

25 The oeuvre of piyyutim by Rabbenu Tam is edited in Isaac Meiseles, *Shirat Rabbeinu Tam: The Poems of Rabbi Jacob ben Rabbi Meir* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Isaac Meiseles, 2012). Also see Kanarfogel, *Intellectual History*, 393–397.

26 On this twelfth-century French author, see Leopold Zunz, *Literaturgeschichte der synagogalen Poesie* (Berlin: Louis Gerschel, 1865), 469. Little is known about this poet, who composed at least six or seven piyyutim, four of which appear in this collection. With respect to genre, it is remarkable that the very genre that was imported from Sefarad—the *reshut* for Nishmat (ימין אל הנאדרת נפן האדרת)—is not present in in the *quntras ha-piyyutim* studied here; rather, it transmits one piyyut for Barkhu, two for Sim Shalom, one for the groom on his descent after reading from the Torah, all written for Shabbat Ḥatan, an occasion of particular importance in the medieval Northern French and Ashkenazi liturgies. Even though their language is taken almost exclusively from biblical verses, these poems show no clear signs of Sefardi influence. They allow for community participation with short refrains, their stanzas are brief and easily understood, and their many variants in manuscripts indicates that they were treated akin to popular literature. The versions of the four poems included in this collection are also transmitted in numerous other manuscripts. They seem to have been counted among the standards for Shabbat Ḥatan (which is not demarcated as separate liturgical section in Kues 313) in Northern France and western Ashkenaz. יפרח לנוחי שר משיחי ובבית מנוחי (3437), also contained in Kues 313, was published by Abraham Meir Habermann, “Arba’ piyyutim al Shalom,” *Mahanayim* 121 (1969): 90–95.

27 One of them has been attributed to both Solomon ben Avun and Solomon ibn Gabirol (שירי לאל נועם מהלל אמוני) (1057). In Kues 313, it is located between piyyutim by Ibn Gabirol and Solomon ben Avun, respectively. Like Zunz and Horowitz, Brody attributed this piyyut to the Northern French author in his edition; see Brody, *Quntras ha-piyyutim*, 65.

28 On this poet, see Ezra Fleischer, “Azharot by R. Binyamin (ben Shmu’el) Payṭan” (Hebrew), *Qovez ‘al Yad*, n.s. 11 (1985): 3–75. He may have been the brother of Joseph ben Samuel Tov Elem, author of numerous piyyutim that are included in the French rite.

29 On Isaac ben Samuel of Dampierre’s poetry, see Kanarfogel, *Intellectual History*, 405–407.

benedictions that frame the Shema Israel. These preferences led to the development of culturally distinct poetic genres; for example, Sefardi poets innovated poetic genres to introduce a number of prayers from the regular liturgy—such as Nishmat, Barkhu, and Qaddish—as reflected in the genres transmitted in the *quntras ha-piyyutim* in Kues 313.

As works that were copied for a specific *Sitz im Leben*, liturgical manuscripts were designed for use by the *ḥazan* during prayer services, whose statutory liturgy would be adorned with piyyutim. Generally, such manuscripts are structured by holiday liturgies: on these days, the *ḥazan* would recite piyyutim according to their position in that volume. On days which lacked assigned poetry, the *ḥazan* could select a piyyut from the *quntras ha-piyyutim* for each liturgical moment or phrase that he—or the rabbi(s) of the community—wished to beautify. On holidays, complex poetic compositions would elaborate the Shema Israel and the Amidah (*yotzer* and *qedushta*, respectively); whereas on Sabbaths, piyyutim were limited to specific phrases in the benedictions that frame the Shema Israel and—first in the Sefardi tradition—to introductions (*reshuyot*) for other liturgical moments. In Ashkenaz, the most popular genres of single piyyutim for special Sabbaths, namely those connected to life-cycle events and to special *parashot*, were: *ofanim* before והאופנים וחיות הקדש in the first blessing that precedes the Shema Israel and *zulatot* after אין אלהים זולתיך in the blessing that immediately follows the Shema Israel.³² In addition to these liturgical positions, in Sefarad the Shema Israel was further amplified by *meorot* that praise God as “Creator of the great lights” in the first benediction, *ahavot* to amplify the second benediction by describing Israel’s great love for God, and *geullot* that expand on the divine promise of salvation in the subsequent benediction. In Ashkenaz, *reshuyot* were traditionally recited for the special Torah portions that were read on holidays; poetic imports from Sefarad included *reshuyot* for other liturgical positions (e.g., Nishmat, Barkhu, and Qaddish).³³

A quantitative analysis of the *quntras ha-piyyutim* of Kues 313 by genre³⁴ allows for a reconstruction of the liturgical moments that were highlighted via the recitation of piyyutim, at least in the community for which this manuscript

32 On the use of *zulatot* in Ashkenaz, see Hollender, “Single *Zulatot* in Ashkenaz,” in *Studies in Medieval Hebrew Poetry: A Message Upon the Garden*, ed. Alessandro Guetta and Masha Itzhaki (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 99–115.

33 Ezra Fleischer, *Hebrew Liturgical Poetry in the Middle Ages* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Keter, 1975; repr., Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2007), 400.

34 This *quntras ha-piyyutim* transmits: four *ahavot* (all from Sefarad); six *geullot* (four from Sefarad, two of unknown origin), three *meorot* (all from Sefarad), nine piyyutim for Nishmat (mainly *reshuyot*, eight from Sefarad, one of unknown origin); three *reshuyot*

was written. *Ofanim* appear most frequently, with a total of fourteen poems: ten composed in Sefarad, two in Northern France, and two by the same Ashkenazi author. This distribution is particularly interesting since, as a genre that had traditionally been known, composed, and recited in Ashkenaz,³⁵ there was no apparent need to import Sefardi texts for this liturgical position. Nonetheless, over two-thirds of the *ofanim* in this *quntras ha-piyyutim* are Sefardi; thus, if a *hazan* who relied on this manuscript had selected an *ofan* randomly, he would have been far more likely to choose a Sefardi composition than a Northern French or Ashkenazi one. This visible presence of Sefardi *ofanim* is reinforced by the ordering of this collection, where Sefardi *ofanim* are copied in a continuous block (positions 17–25).³⁶ The high proportion of Sefardi works among the *ofanim* in Kues 313 is remarkable and speaks to the embrace of Sefardi compositions within the community that used this manuscript.

This Sefardi influence is further evidenced by the structure of the Northern French *ofanim* in this collection: יחיד ערץ יסוד ארץ (י 2600) by Jacob ben Meir (Rabbenu Tam) and יום הודו וכבודו (י 1665), which is usually attributed to him as well.³⁷ These *ofanim* both employ quantitative meter, although several lines in ערץ יחיד show metrical inaccuracies.³⁸ Quantitative meter was gradually introduced in Northern French and Ashkenazi poetry during the twelfth century and it was employed by a growing number of poets from those regions in the thirteenth century, though without gaining enough momentum

for Qaddish (all from Sefarad); and, four *reshuyot* for Barkhu (one from Sefarad, three from Northern France). Unlike many Ashkenazi *quntras ha-piyyutim*, Kues 313 transmits only one *zulat*: יודעי גונוי יספו לבי באש (י 1569) by Judah Halevi. The organization of this *quntras* according to genres and its focus on *reshuyot* and *piyyutim* for those parts of the *yotzer* composition that did not originate in Ashkenaz parallels the structure of similar collections in Ashkenazi manuscripts.

- 35 On Ashkenazi *ofanim*, see Hollender, “Italian and Ashkenazi Ofanim: Forms and Content Models,” *Frankfurter Judaistische Beiträge* 39 (2014): 53–68; Hollender, “Communio Liturgica: Die Schau der himmlischen Anbetung in hebräischer liturgischer Poesie des Mittelalters,” *Comparatio* 7.1 (2015): 23–37, and the bibliography mentioned therein.
- 36 The compiler of the *quntras ha-piyyutim*—or those whom he copied—appropriated certain *piyyutim* for genres other than the ones for which they were originally intended. Thus, the *reshut* for Ma’ariv, יאתה שדי לך מלוכה וגדולה (י 74) by Judah Halevi and the *reshut* for Barkhu, שמים וחילים ובני אדמה למולם אב אחד לכולם (ש 1594) by Abraham ibn Ezra are addressed as *ofanim* in Kues 313.
- 37 Samuel David Luzzatto “Ha’ataqot Yeqarot shel Sh”uT ve-shirim mi-qovtze kitve yad ‘im he’erot muskalot,” *Kerem Hemed* 7 (1833): 80–81, doubts its ascription to Rabbenu Tam.
- 38 Northern French and Ashkenazi authors found *ha-marnin* more difficult to use in their compositions than the first quantitative meter employed in Ashkenaz, *mishqal ha-tenu’ot* (which is used in הודו יום). However, Rabbenu Tam may have taken liberties with the meter, as Andalusian poets did occasionally.

to become as pervasive as it was in Sefarad. Rabbenu Tam experimented with the potential of quantitative meter, for the majority of his poems incorporate this feature in some manner. He was certainly familiar with Sefardi poetry and Sefardi poets and, at one point, he corresponded with Abraham ibn Ezra, including an exchange of poems. The facility demonstrated by Rabbenu Tam's responses, following the meter chosen by Ibn Ezra, compelled the Sefardi poet to admit that—contrary to his preconceptions—some poets beyond the borders of Sefarad could write adeptly in quantitative meter.³⁹ The two *ofanim* by Rabbenu Tam in Kues 313, which are each comprised of stanzas with a short refrain that is based on a biblical verse, also share certain salient characteristics: their lines are longer than those which typify Ashkenazi *ofanim*; they use inner rhyme and employ a rhyme scheme similar to girdle poems, where the final line of each stanza rhymes with the refrain, rather than the rest of the stanza. Variants on the Sefardi girdle poem (as well as other poetic forms) had been accepted for Ashkenazi and Northern French *ofanim* by the early twelfth century.⁴⁰ All Sefardi *ofanim* in the *quntras ha-piyyutim* in Kues 313

39 On his use of quantitative meter, see the list of meters in Meiseles, *Shirat Rabbeinu Tam*, 185, whose edition includes a number of piyyutim whose attributions are questionable. Since its first publication by Samuel David Luzzatto in *Kerem Hemed* 7 (1843): 19–53, the exchange between Rabbenu Tam and Abraham ibn Ezra has often been cited as proof of the alleged superiority of Sefardi poetry; see for example Uriel Simon, “Transplanting the Wisdom of Spain to Christian Lands: The Failed Efforts of Abraham Ibn Ezra,” *Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts/Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook* 8 (2009): 185–188, who tries to prove that Rabbenu Tam conceded the superiority of his Sefardi counterpart. A close study of these texts (edited again by Meiseles, *Shirat Rabbeinu Tam*, 140–144) demonstrates that Rabbenu Tam's deference to the mastery of Ibn Ezra is ironic, particularly given that he raised the technical stakes in his answer by adding a complicated rhyme scheme that Ibn Ezra then had to incorporate in his response. I thank Professor Avraham (Rami) Reiner (Ben Gurion University, Beer Sheva) for discussing Rabbenu Tam and his attitude toward Rabbeinu Tam's correspondence with Ibn Ezra with me.

40 Both of the *ofanim* by Benjamin ben Zerah in this collection employ the double rhyme scheme inspired by the girdle poem. On Ashkenazi *ofanim* and the forms employed, see Ezra Fleischer, *The Yotzer: Its Emergence and Development* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1984), 667–672. *Ofanim* written in Ashkenaz and Northern France in a form that was inspired by girdle poems include: אביר הגביר אשר העביר (א 250) for the Sabbath and Rosh Hodesh by Abraham; אזורי אימה ברואי יראה (א 2200) for Shabbat Brit Milah by Eliezer ben Nathan, edited by Fleischer (*Yotzer*, 668–670); איומתו קדושתו (א 2711) for Shavu'ot by Ephraim ben Jacob of Bonn, edited in Habermann, “Liturgical Poetry of Rabbi Ephraim bar Jacob of Bonn,” 232–233; ברית כרות בתני (ב 1716) for Shabbat Brit Milah by Baruch ben Samuel, edited in Habermann, “Liturgical Poetry of R. Baruch bar Samuel of Mainz” (Hebrew), *Studies of the Research Institute for Hebrew Poetry in Jerusalem* 6 (1945): 79–82; יום נגלה צור מעלה (י 1849) for Shavu'ot by Rabbenu Tam, edited in Jonah Fraenkel, *Maḥzor Shavu'ot: lefi minhage bene Ashkenaz le-khol 'anfehém* (Jerusalem: Koren, 2000),

tions, as demonstrated by its use of *haruz mavriah* (the closing lines of the stanzas share a rhyme with the refrain), clearly influenced by girdle poems. The Sefardi and Sefardi-style presence in liturgical performance should therefore be considered—in contrast to the impression informed by the regular liturgies in this manuscript⁴⁶—an aspect of many holidays, which is to say, a liturgical element that the community using Kues 313 anticipated would be combined with their otherwise traditional Northern French liturgical poetry.

The performance of a *ḥazan* who was leading prayer from this manuscript, probably accompanied by a choir, would have been a hybrid *mélange* of traditional Northern French melodies and rhythms, as well as the sounds of Sefardi and Sefardi-style piyyutim, with their distinctive stanza forms and meter.⁴⁷ Melodies, rhythm, and other aspects of performance were also influential factors in both the transmission and the introduction of variants into piyyutim. The community that used Kues 313 was partial to structures that incorporated the participation of a second voice—whether an individual, a choir, or a communal response—as indicated by their preference for piyyutim that included stanzas with two rhymes, as in girdle poems. They did not hesitate to transmit Sefardi piyyutim with variants that altered a poem's original structure to fit their taste. For example, *האיץ בגלעד הצרי*, which is ascribed to Judah Halevi and positioned as a *reshut* for Nishmat in Kues 313, is transmitted in the Cairo Genizah as an anonymously authored secular girdle poem, with an Arabic *kharja*.⁴⁸ In Kues 313, only the first three of its five stanzas are transmitted, without the *kharja*. Whereas truncated versions of piyyutim also appear in other manuscripts, they are exceptional in the Northern French and Ashkenazic liturgical traditions. In this case, however, this modification made the transfer from the secular to the liturgical sphere feasible: while longing for a (male) lover who

a fixed place in the liturgy, such as the anonymous *reshut* for the Targum of the Decalogue *אציתו למימרי הדברא רברבוון ומלכוון* (א 7278), Fraenkel, *Maḥzor Shavu'ot*, 404–407.

46 Two well-known Sefardi piyyutim—the *meora* *שני זיתים* by Solomon ibn Gabirol and the *mi kamokha* *בל יחדל חסדך* (א 536) by Judah Halevi—are transmitted in the liturgy for Shabbat Zakhor under the rubric *שכחתי לכתוב אומנם לשירה חדשה* 'אחר הזולת' (fol. 11v). The regular liturgy in this manuscript does not include any other piyyutim for *mi kamokha*.

47 The compilers of Ashkenazi and Northern French liturgical manuscripts were aware of this distinction, as demonstrated by the use of rubric *בנגון ספרדי* which introduces the *qina* *אש תוקד בקרבי* in Arras, Bibliothèque Municipale Ms 560 and Oxford Bodlean Library Can Or 139 (Neubauer 1027). On rubrics relating to Sefardi payyotanim, see also Hollender, "Attraction and Attribution: Framings of Sephardi Identity in Ashkenazic Prayer Books," in *Regional Identities and Cultures of Medieval Jews*, ed. Javier Castaño, Talya Fishman, and Ephraim Kanarfogel (London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2018), 221–239.

48 Ḥayyim Schirmann, *New Hebrew Poems from the Genizah* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1965), 347. Edited from T-S K 14.4 and T-S NS 108.114.

is vividly described with images from Song of Songs could be interpreted as a metaphor for God, for whom the soul yearns, in the original poem, the third stanza serves as transition which introduces the notion that love for any but one's beloved is false and addresses the changes that occur over time. The version of this third stanza in Kues 313 introduces numerous variants, more than the first two stanzas, which remain consistent in their praise of the lover. The fifth stanza of the *muwashshaḥa* introduces a beautiful girl crying over her lost love, reciting the *kharja* that asks why her lover broke his promise even as she keeps hers. Since this stanza and the *kharja* cannot be read as a reference to the love between Israel and God, they had to be deleted if this poem were to be adopted for a liturgical role.⁴⁹

In addition to the poem's abbreviation and reinterpretation as piyyut, its three remaining stanzas were adapted for local performance by inserting a double repetition of the last word of its third and final lines, and ending the stanza with a repetition of the closing stich of the final line. This generates a completely different structure, this side-by-side presentation of the second stanza shows:⁵⁰

As published by Schirmann
In Kues 313, fol. 32r-v

נפשי מאד משתוקקה לקראת צבי חן עד⁵¹ ראותו
 כי את אשר בו חשקה פניו כאור שמש בצאתו
 מי יתניני אשקהו פיהו ואמצה את שפתו

נפשי מאד משתוקקה לקראת צבי חן על
 כי את אשר בו חשקה ראיתו פניו פני שמש
 בצאתו ואמצה את שפתו

ש"פה ש"פה

שפה מתוקה נעמה כצוף ודבש
 דקה כחוט שני אדומה

ברורה נעימה כצוף ודבש
 רבה כחוט שני אדומה

אדו"מה אדו"מה

רבה כחוט השני אדומה

49 A similar abbreviation can be found in another Northern French liturgical manuscript regarding Judah Halevi's *ארמון צבית* (א 8577), which has six stanzas in the *diwān*, only three of which are transmitted in that *Maḥzor Vitry* manuscript (Oxford Bodlean Library Opp. 59 [Neubauer 1100], fol. 104v). In that case, however, the abbreviated version reads like a love song and is missing the last stanza that transforms it into a religious poem.

50 In addition to structural changes, textual variants are also present. In particular, the third stanza in Kues 313 is not based on the text transmitted in the Cairo Genizah.

51 T-S K 16.4 reads, like Kues 313, על.

Although the insertions differ in each stanza, they are brief enough to have been repeated by the congregation, providing brief opportunities for participation. One could readily imagine a performance where one voice would sing the first three lines, a second voice would sing the repeated words, the first voice would continue with the next two lines, with the second voice again echoing the final word, and the closing line of the stanza would be sung in unison.⁵² Similar rhythmic repetitions were inserted into יה ברויב חסדך, an unpublished *reshut* for the Qaddish⁵³ and the *ofan* מביין פליל יחקור by Judah Halevi.⁵⁴ This evidence further affirms that the community that used Kues 313 was partial to the melodies and rhythms that supported these variants.⁵⁵

This example demonstrates that the “aggressive intervention” into traditional texts that Israel Ta-Shma identified in Ashkenazi and Northern French textual tradition⁵⁶ was not deterred by poetic texts that might otherwise have been protected by their structures. In this case, alternate structures were superimposed for the sake of an aesthetically preferable performance. These performative and structural adaptations of imported texts would have facilitated their integration in the Northern French environment by disguising their unfamiliar source.

Even if we do not take into account texts that had been modified from their original form, the editor of the Kues 313 *quntras ha-piyyutim* would still have provided material for hybrid performances where poetry from the Northern French tradition and those that were Sefardi in style were combined. For instance, one pair of piyyutim in the collection gives the impression that the editor selected inconspicuous texts from the two traditions that would harmonize with each other, namely the two poems that are related to weddings: לבלת מיתרי נטרי written most probably in Sefarad, and מיתרי נטרי which follows a North-

52 Discussions regarding the permissibility of polyphonic music in synagogues begin much later, when Judah Leone Modena defended the compositions of Salomone de Rossi. By contrast, the use of antiphonal voices in liturgical music does not seem to have prompted halakic discussions.

53 This piyyut is also attested in the Cairo Geniza, T-S Add. Series 128/257. I thank Dr. Sarah Cohen of the Geniza Research Institute for Hebrew Poetry of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities for identifying this parallel transmission.

54 This piyyut was published from the London manuscript of *Mahzor Vitry*, which seems to preserve its original structure, in Brody, *Quntras ha-piyyutim*, 7–8.

55 The marks that were placed above two words in each stanza of יאתה שדי לך מלוכה (י 74)—a *reshut* for Ma’ariv by Judah Halevi, which appears as an *ofan* in Kues 313 (fols. 33v–34r)—may have served this same purpose.

56 Israel M. Ta-Shma, “The ‘Open’ Book in Medieval Hebrew Literature: The Problem of Authorized Editions,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 75:3 (1993): 17–24.

ern French pattern.⁵⁷ *Le-Kallat Ahavim* is—at least in this context—a typical Sefardi poem for the groom that praises the beauty of bride and groom using language drawn from Song of Songs.⁵⁸ This poem's transmission in a Northern French liturgy becomes feasible since it thematically returns to the religious sphere by shifting from a love song to an expression of love for God ("The Eternal, rider of cherubs"), who comforts his people with assurance of salvation from exile ("Arise and shine forth, your darkness has ended"). Similar songs from Sefarad and Provence were used liturgically by Jewish communities in various locales, among them even the Romaniote communities of late Byzantium.⁵⁹ The rubrics offer no indication of its liturgical role and *Sitz im Leben*, nor can these easily be deduced from the texts themselves; they may have been associated with various events during the wedding. At the very least, their transmission in liturgical manuscripts outside of Sefarad points to paraliturgical contexts that underscored these compositions' religious motifs.

The inclusion of מיתרי נטרי in a liturgical collection is unusual, for it is an epithalamium that would be sung to a newly wedded couple before they retired to the bridal chamber. This poem shows unequivocal signs of its Northern French origins. Its two opening words are probably French, and the remainder is in Hebrew, largely a pastiche of biblical phrases with minor variants. This composition closely resembles three other poems written for similar purposes: the two known bilingual Hebrew-French wedding poems⁶⁰ and the Hebrew *Piyut for*

57 See the edition below.

58 For a collection of Sefardi wedding songs, see Aurora Salvatierra Ossorio, *Cantos de boda hispanohebreos: Antología* (Córdoba: Ediciones El Almendro, 1998), and its references to Hebrew publications.

59 See, for example, the wedding poems in Ms. Moscow Guenzburg 746, where a group of four Hebrew poems that resemble לכלת אהבים in Kues 313 appear under the rubric זמר לחתן: the anonymous הזמן ולבני הזמן (The tents and bricks of time); גיל יגילון אהובים ודודים (ג 140, May lovers and sweethearts rejoice with abandon), ascribed to Gershom, father of the well-known medieval philosopher Levi ben Gershom; שחי נא יחידתי מי ומה כבד גלות (Tell me, my love, to whom and how heavy is exile) by Samuel; and, אהובה חושקה יעלת אהבים (א 1381, Coveted love, hind of loves), ascribed to Abraham ibn Ezra. On this manuscript and the Judaeo-Greek wedding songs that appear with the Hebrew poems, see Elisabeth Hollender and Jannis Niehoff-Panagiotidis, "Judeo-Greek Wedding Poems from the Fifteenth Century," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 109.2 (2016), 703–738.

60 *El qiv'at ha-levonah notre hatan eit arriveiz* and *'Uri liqra'ti yafah, gentis kallah einoreieh*, see David Simon Blondheim, *Poèmes judéo-françaises du moyen âge* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1927), 36–47; Samuel Rosenberg, "The Medieval Hebrew-French Wedding Song," *Shofar* 11.1 (1992): 22–37; Kirsten A. Fudeman, *Vernacular Voices: Language and Identity in Medieval French Jewish Communities* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 124–150, 159–173; Alexandra Edzard, "A Judeo-French Wedding Song from the Mid-13th Century: Literary Contacts between Jews and Christians," *Journal of Jewish Languages* 2.1 (2014): 78–98.

the Bridegroom When He Lies with the Bride.⁶¹ Yet, when compared with the sexual explicitness conveyed in the bilingual poems, the Hebrew song in Kues 313 almost reads as delicate in its choice of imagery. An erotic subtext is clearly evident, as derived from a figurative reading of the plain lexical sense, and the violent setting for the verses quoted in the first and the last stanzas persists,⁶² but the restrained depiction of doors to be breeched and a city conquered inhibits the use of less subtle language. While the selected Sefardi wedding poem conveys a religious component, the second stanza of the Northern French wedding song includes elements of love poetry that are absent from bilingual French Jewish poetry.

The majority presence of Sefardi poetry in the *quntras ha-piyyutim* in Kues 313 offers one example among many of cultural contact among medieval European Jewish communities. The multifaceted process of importing cultural objects, adapting them for use within a group's own cultural portfolio, and mixing them freely into established rites and rituals was an inherent aspect of the development of Jewish cultural development in medieval Europe. Even in the realm of liturgy, which is deemed among the most conservative, the constant changes induced by the incorporation of texts from other communities attests to the permeability of medieval Jewish cultural portfolios.

61 First edited by Moritz Chamizer, *Kalendar auf 1908/1909 mit einem Anhang* (Leipzig: W. Drugulin, 1908), 61, and reprinted in Blondheim, *Poèmes judéo-françaises*, 43.

62 On the romanticization of sexual violence in medieval Hebrew wedding songs from Northern France, see Fudeman, *Vernacular Voices*, 143–144, and literature quoted therein.

Appendix

Bernkastel-Kues—St. Nicholas Hospital Cod. Hebr. 313, fol. 38r-v

This poem, which uses *haruz mavriah*, has a refrain and three stanzas. The author's name, Levi, is signed in the initial letter of the refrain and the first two stanzas; the last stanza has an acrostic that spells חזק. The second stanza seems to be transmitted with faulty variants since its third line does not rhyme with the previous two.

לחתן

לְפֶלֶת אֱהָבִים חֵן חֵן יֹאמֵר
זֹאת קוֹמְתֵךְ דְּמַתָּה לְתִמְרָה

וְעוֹנָה בְּשׁוֹרָה כְּזֹהֵר לְזִיזִיּוֹ
תִתְאַוֶּי הַיּוֹתָה אֲדוֹנָה לְיוֹפִי
וְתֹאמְרֵי מֵה־טוֹב וְנָעִים פְּרִיּוֹ 5
כְּנִפְתַּת צוֹפִים אֲשֶׁר אֵין בּוֹ מֵר

יִרְאֶה חֲתָנִי כְּאִישׁוֹן שֵׁתִים
בְּצִלְחוֹ בְּרִכְבוֹ דְתִים
סָבִיב גֵּן נְעוּל מַעֲזָן
וּלְזֹר בְּאַרְתַּת בְּאַרְתַּת חֲמָר 10

חֵי עוֹלָמִים יֵשֵׁב כְּרוֹבִים
זְכָרָה לְפֶלֶת גְּזַע נְדִיבִים
קוֹל מֵהַלְלִים נְכוֹחִים עֲרָבִים
קוֹמֵי אוֹרֵי אֲפֶלֶךְ גְּמֵר

זֹאת קוֹמְתֵךְ דְּמַתָּה לְתִמְרָה 15

2 זאת קומתך דמתה לתמר cf. Cant 7:8. This line is used as the refrain that would likely have been repeated after each stanza; however, in this manuscript, it only appears at the beginning and end of the poem. It defines the *haruz mavriah* in the closing lines of each stanza. 9 גן נעול מעזן cf. Cant 4:12. 10 בארות בארות חמר cf. Gen 14:10. 11 יושב כרובים cf. Ps 99:1. 14 קומי אורי גמר אפלך גמר cf. Isa 60:1

Bernkastel-Kues—St. Nicholas Hospital Cod. Hebr. 313, fol. 43r

This poem consists of three six-line stanzas; in place of a refrain, the closing line of each stanza is repeated. The rhyme pattern is *aaabba*, with a variant in the third stanza. The initial letters of the stanzas form the name acrostic משה.

אחר
 מיתרי נטרי ויתדתיֹו הטיבו
 נגן את שירי נשאֹו קול יחדֹו עזבו
 על בית חתן נסבו
 ויגשו לשבר הדלת
 וענות פלה משפלת 5
 אסתור טרם ישכבון
 אסתרֹור טרם

שמֹש זרחה בלחי יושבת גני[ם]
 גפן פרחה הנצו הרמונים
 ידור שפתותיו שושנים
 נטפות מור ואהלות 10
 אז שר משה למעלות
 מזמור שיר על־שושנים
 מזמור

השבעתי אותך כי תקרב למחמה
 אל־עיר בלבך תקרב ותשאל בשלומה
 אם־שלום תענך מה 15

1 מיתרי נטרי 1, French phrase, *Maitre notre* (Our Master). [I thank Susan Einbinder for bringing the French origin of this phrase to my attention.] || יתדתיֹו might be an allusion to Isaiah 33:20, where this term refers to Zion, which is said to have been established for eternity. 1–2 הטיבו 1–2 נסבו על־הבית, על בית חתן נסבו 3: cf. Gen 19:4. 3 על בית חתן נסבו 3: cf. Gen 19:4. 4 נגן: cf. Ps 33:3. 5 נשאֹו קול יחדֹו 2: cf. Isa 52:8. 6 מנער ועד זקן) converge on Lot's house with the intention of having intercourse with his visitors. 7 ויגשו לשבר הדלת 4: cf. Gen 19:9, in the same scene (see n. 3), the inhabitants of Sodom attempt to break down the door of Lot's house. 8 משפלת 5: cf. Prov 19:14, there used with אשה. 9 טרם ישכבון 6: cf. Gen 19:4, cf. above. 10 שמֹש זרחה 7: cf. Nah 3:17. 11 גפן פרחה הנצו הרמונים 8: cf. Cant 6:11, 7:13. 12–13 נטפות מור ואהלות 10: cf. Cant 5:13. 14 אז שר משה 11: cf. Ex 15:1. 15 מזמור שיר 12: cf., e.g., Ps 48:1, Ps 67:1, Ps 68:1, etc. || על שושנים 13: cf. several verses in Cant. 13–14 אל עיר ... תקרב למחמה / אל עיר ... תקרב ותשאל בשלומה 13–14. The rest of the third stanza is almost completely drawn from Deuteronomy 20, which describes Israel's responsibilities when conquering the cities of the Promised Land. 15 אם־שלום תענך 15: cf. Deut 20:11.

טוֹב כִּי לֹא תִשְׁלִים עִמָּה
 וְתִבְנֶה מְצוֹר עַד רִדְתָּהּ
 דְּרֹךְ גִּבּוֹר בְּעֵלְמָה
 דֶּרֶךְ

16 לֹא תִשְׁלִים עִמָּה, cf. Deut 20:12. In the biblical context, the city is the subject that will not make peace with Israel (addressed in second person: עִמָּךְ); in the poem, the groom, addressed in the second person, seems to be the subject who should not “make peace,” i.e., end the “siege” of his bride, before he has taken her. 17 וְתִבְנֶה מְצוֹר עַד רִדְתָּהּ: cf. Deut 20:20. 18 דְּרֹךְ גִּבּוֹר בְּעֵלְמָה: cf. Prov 30:19.

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Solomon vs. Solomon: The Fabrication of a Hebrew-*shu'ūbite* Polemic

Uriah Kfir

This paper addresses a set of images in a poem by Solomon ibn Gabirol, though less for the sake of this imagery itself than to use it as a conceptual key to Ibn Gabirol's poetics in particular and the relationship between Hebrew and Arabic poetries and cultures in general. This paper was written in honor of Professor Ross Brann, to express my gratitude to a scholar who taught us so much—besides so many other things—about both Ibn Gabirol and the relationship between Hebrew and Arabic.

1 Matrix of Similes

The starting point for my inquiry is an important article by Dan Pagis about similes in medieval Hebrew poetry. Specifically, Pagis deals with a maqāma-like composition by the thirteenth-century poet Jacob ben El'azar, describing a poetic competition involving short lucid poems with multiple similes—at times five, six, or even seven—all pertaining to the same referent. Pagis's analysis of the poetics of Ben El'azar's similes demonstrates the close dyadic relationship between Hebrew and Arabic poetries as well, pointing out the great similarities between the Hebrew work of Ben El'azar of Toledo and the second maqāma of al-Ḥarīrī of Basra, the most prestigious Arabic maqāmāt writer whose book was translated into Hebrew by Ben El'azar's contemporary and townsman Judah al-Ḥarīzī.¹ As Pagis shows, both Ben El'azar and al-Ḥarīrī's

1 Dan Pagis, "Šiburei dimuyim" (Hebrew), in *Poetry Aptly Explained: Studies and Essays on Medieval Hebrew Poetry*, ed. Ezra Fleischer (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1993), 109–123. Pagis points out that the same technique of multiple similes was also used masterfully by the Andalusī Ibn Ḥazm in his famous *Ṭawq al-ḥamāma* (The neck-ring of the dove). For the maqāma-like work of Ben El'azar, see *The Love Stories of Jacob ben El'azar (1170–1233?)* (Hebrew), ed. Yonah David (Tel Aviv: Ramot Publishing, 1992–1993), 28–30. For al-Ḥarīzī's translation of al-Ḥarīrī's maqāma see Judah ben Solomon al-Ḥarīzī, *Maḥberot Itie'el*, ed. Yitzḥaq Peretz (Tel Aviv: Maḥbarot le-sifrut, 1951), 9–16.

compositions share not only the same narrative competitive core and the same rhetorical technique of multiple similes but also involve poems about the same unique, somewhat bizarre subject: the beautiful teeth of the young gazelle.

I would like to add another, relatively early possible intertext to this matrix: Ibn Gabirol's poem *We-shinei ha-ševi* (The teeth of the gazelle) whose use of multiple similes and choice of images shows, likewise, a full implementation of Arabic poetics. However, I will argue that the poem goes far beyond issues of poetics and touches on sensitive conflictual themes in Muslim civilization of the time. Here is the poem, in both the Hebrew source and English translation:²

וְשֵׁנֵי הַצִּבִּי חַיִּים וְקָרִים / וְהִמָּה כְּחַרוֹזֵי דָר בְּרוּרִים,
 וְאַתְמָה מְשֻׁלְמָה הַמְדֻמָּה / בְּחֻכְמָתוֹ פְּנִינִים לְעֵדָרִים—
 כְּאֵלּוֹ אֲבָדָה בְּהֵם עֲצָתוֹ / וְעִזָּב אֶת לִבּוֹ לְבִקְרִים.

The teeth of the gazelle are cold [drops] and alive
 And they are the likeness of bright nacre beads,
 And I am surprised at Solomon the wise
 Who dares to compare pearls to ewe herds—
 As if they made him lose his mind;
 As if cattle herds have made his heart dazed.

Obviously, Ibn Gabirol's poem, unlike al-Ḥarīrī's and Ben El'azar's, is not a part of a prose narrative. Likewise, the confrontation in his poem is not with fellow fictional poets but with the ancient King Solomon, nor is it about piling up as many similes as possible but rather about using them "correctly." Nevertheless, Ibn Gabirol's poem does share the main common elements of his later peers' works in that it is a short poem about the beloved gazelle's teeth with multiple similes.

Let us first address the similes in the poem that are not so easy to decipher, by recruiting both al-Ḥarīrī's and Ben El'azar's works to assist us. The first simile appears at the start of the poem: "The teeth of the gazelle are cold and alive." Several questions present themselves: How can teeth be cold and alive? What

2 Solomon ibn Gabirol, *Solomon ibn Gabirol: Secular Poems* (Hebrew), eds. Haim Brody and Jefim Schirmann (Jerusalem: Schocken Institute, 1974), 132 (no. 205). The translations of the Hebrew poems in this article are mine. I have attempted to find the golden mean between the literal meaning and a version that is suggestive of the musicality of the original. The translations of the Arabic texts are (except for one case) by others, as indicated.

does this mean? And why call it a simile? Some scholars indeed suspected that this version of the poem as it appears in manuscripts was passed down erroneously, and offered to “correct” it with other adjectives that are more “appropriate” for teeth such as “sharp,” “bright,” or “clean,” which Ibn Gabirol allegedly used in the original.³ In my opinion, however, these “corrections” are not only highly invasive but also unnecessary; clearly “cold” and “alive” are unbecoming to teeth, but they do traditionally describe water, for instance as in Genesis 26:19 and Proverbs 25:25. In our case, they can easily refer to cold and alive drops of dew, pellets of hail, icy frost, or snowflakes—all of which are traditional similes for teeth and on both al-Ḥarīrī’s and Ben El’azar’s lists of dental metaphors.⁴ According to this reading, Ibn Gabirol uses the technique of *kinuyyim* common in liturgical poetry of alluding to a referent solely by its adjectives.

The next similes, nacre beads and pearls, are even more common traditional symbols of teeth, again used by both the Arabic maqāma writer and his Hebrew successor. And if the word *beqarim* in the last line is understood as meaning “bright mornings”—as it was by the twelfth-century Solomon ibn Parḥon (see below), or as in Ben El’azar’s list of metaphors that includes the comparison of bright teeth to the dawn—then we can add yet one more simile to this matrix.⁵

2 Beauty and the Beast

As shown, Ibn Gabirol’s poem has features and techniques in common with the works of his later Arabic and Hebrew peers. Nevertheless, he goes well beyond them, since he does not stop with objects that can be compared to teeth (hail, pearls, etc.) but moves to objects that in his eyes must *not* be compared to them: “And I am surprised at Solomon the wise, who dares to compare pearls to ewe herds.” This line clearly alludes to the famous verses of the Song of Songs, which is traditionally attributed to King Solomon (Song 4:1–2):⁶

3 See *The Poetry of Solomon ben Judah ibn Gabirol* (Hebrew), eds. Ḥayyim Nahman Bialik and Yehoshua Hana Rawnitzki, 5 vols. (Berlin: Dvir, 1924–1932), 1:165 (no. 98) and their annotations at 2:128; and *The Secular Poetry of Rabbi Solomon ibn Gabirol* (Hebrew), ed. Dov Jarden, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: n.p., 1975), 1:372 (no. 221).

4 Note that scholars’ “corrections” of “sharp,” “bright,” or “clean”—all of which are Hebrew words that are syntactically masculine—are still problematic when associated with the feminine teeth. “Water,” on the other hand, solves this grammatical quandary and makes their “corrections” again redundant.

5 Ben El’azar, *Love Stories*, 29, line 30.

6 The translation of the biblical verses in this article are taken from the Jewish Publication Society’s 1917 edition of *The Holy Scriptures*.

Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thine eyes are as doves behind thy veil; thy hair is as a flock of goats, that trail down from mount Gilead. Thy teeth are like a flock of ewes all shaped alike, which are come up from the washing; whereof all are paired, and none faileth among them.

The biblical poet describes the beauty of his beloved using pastoral images from shepherds' daily life in ancient Palestine; namely, serene doves, wandering goats, and watered ewes. Ibn Gabirol's attention is drawn specifically to the strange latter comparison between teeth and ewes. What made the biblical author link the two? Bible exegetes and Hebrew grammarians have addressed this quandary. As in every simile analysis, the challenge was to find the feature common to the simile and its referent: what relates a herd of sheep climbing from a desert spring to the beloved's teeth? There are as many answers as there are rabbis who have addressed this issue. The famous Ashkenazi exegete Solomon Isaacides (Rashi) suggested that the common dominator between bathed sheep and moist teeth is gleaming and cleanliness. The Provençal exegete and grammarian David Qimḥi (Radaq) emphasized in his bible commentary, as did Abraham ibn Ezra before him, the fact that both are white, though in his grammar work *Sefer ha-shorashim* he followed his Andalusí predecessor Jonah ibn Janāḥ who suggested that all sheep, just like all teeth, appear to have been "carved" equally.⁷ Another explanation focused instead on texture, finding a (dubious) resemblance between the smooth skin of the sheep whose wool was shaved off and glossy teeth.⁸ However, my preferred explanation, one that these urban rabbis were probably not familiar with but is known to anyone who has ever crossed the Judaeen desert, has to do with the customary tendency of sheep to crowd together, which in the eyes of the biblical poet apparently resembled a perfect smile, full of teeth adjacent to one another (for this exact reason he also compared his beloved's well-combed hair to goats, which, unlike sheep, graze apart from one another).⁹

7 See Jonah ibn Janāḥ, *Sefer Haschoraschim*, ed. Wilhem Bacher (Berlin: H. Itzkowski, 1896; repr., Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1969), 452; David Qimḥi, *Sefer ha-shorashim*, eds. Johann Heinrich Raphael Biesenthal and Fürchtegott Lebrecht (Berlin: G. Bertge, 1847; repr.: Jerusalem: n.p., 1967), 662; Solomon ibn Parḥon, *Maḥberet he-arukh: Salomonis ben Abrahami Parchon Aragonensis Lexicon Hebraicum*, ed. Salomo Gottlieb Stern (Pressburg: Anton Schmid, 1844), 60b.

8 Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, *Thesaurus Totius Hebraicitatis et Veteris et Recentioris*, 17 vols. (Jerusalem and Berlin: Langenscheidt, 1908–1959), 12:6080n3. The lexicographer himself found this interpretation unlikely.

9 For the latter resemblances, compare to Ṭodros Abulafia's panegyric, which uses adjacent

Whatever the common feature that prompted the biblical poet to compare teeth to a flock of ewes, Ibn Gabirol rejects this simile with complete contempt. For him the teeth of the beautiful gazelle cannot be compared to sheep under any circumstances. Obviously, this is not because he could not find any common feature between the two. Rather, I suggest seeing this poetic rejection as reflecting Ibn Gabirol's principal view of the simile.

In the above article, Pagis discusses a passage from Moses ibn Ezra's *Kitāb al-muḥāḍara wa-l-mudhākara* (Book of conversation and deliberation), in which the author speaks favorably of the biblical verse: "Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet" (Song 4:3).¹⁰ According to Ibn Ezra, the "thread of scarlet" is a praiseworthy simile because it combines no fewer than three affinities to the sensual nature of lips: texture, color, and shape. His key observation is that a simile, any simile, is not univalent but rather elicits a series of associations and connotations. According to Ibn Ezra, the "thread of scarlet" is an exemplary simile for the beloved's lips because each of its components describes both the simile and its referent—they both are soft, red, and thin. Projecting this idea on Ibn Gabirol's poem, we find that what might have bothered him about the sheep-teeth simile is that it works exactly the other way around: like the simile of the "thread of scarlet," it elicits several associations; however, not all of these associations are fit to describe the referent. Sheep—unlike hail or pearls and unlike some of the forced explanations of the exegetes above—do not resemble teeth in texture, in their whitish-gray color, and obviously not in shape or size. More important, the associations prompted by sheep are not solely those related to cleanness, whiteness, equality, smoothness, or closeness but also noise, filth, and stench and in fact associations of bestiality and brutishness.¹¹ All of

teeth (as well as nacre beads in a necklace) as a metaphor for a close friendship: Todros ben Yehuda Abu-l-ʿĀfiya, *Gan hammeshalim we-haḥidoth: Diwan of Don Tadros son of Yehuda Abu-el-ʿĀfiyah* (Hebrew), ed. David Yellin, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Weiss Press, 1932–1936), 1:119 (no. 390:78).

10 Moses Ibn Ezra, *Kitāb al-muḥāḍara wa-l-mudhākara*, ed. and trans. Abraham S. Halkin (Jerusalem: Mekize Nirdamim, 1975), 258–259. This verse about the beloved's lips (Song 4:3) is a continuation of the verses quoted above which describe her eyes, hair, and teeth (*ibid.*, 41–2).

11 Notice, of course, the irony in rejecting beast similes in a poem describing a "gazelle." A similar irony drew the attention of the early poet Isaac ibn Khalfūn. In one poem he used the common technique of a "simile with distinction" (*havdalah be-dimuy*) in which the referent is presented both like and unlike (i.e., better than) the simile. Ibn Khalfūn, who was aware of the fact that the epithets *gazelle* and *fawn* may elicit a series of associations, instructs his early Hebrew poetry fans, who were probably not yet well acquainted with the code of love lyrics, on which associations they should embrace (the gazelle's gentle

this was perfectly clear to Ibn Gabirol, who made his protest loud and decisive: “And I am surprised at Solomon the Wise, who dares to compare pearls to ewe herds (!).”

This difference between Ibn Gabirol and the traditional exegetes also has to do with the type of lens they use. The latter use a zoom-out mode, in that from a distance, sheep—white, clean, equal, smooth, and adjacent—look like beautiful teeth. Ibn Gabirol, on the contrary, uses a microscopic lens. First he puts pristine hail and pearls under the lens, but then, when he continues to the sheep, instead of zooming out like his peers did, he keeps to the zoom-in mode, which reveals of course the less appealing sides of the sheep and evoke his disgust. To conclude, while transforming the female beloved of the Song of Songs into a male gazelle in his poem,¹² Ibn Gabirol rejects the biblical simile, and even comments ironically on the tasteless choice of the famous king who is thought to be the wisest of all men.

A similar ars-poetic vacillation about the proper simile for teeth, whether herds or pearls, appears in the Spanish twelfth-century exegete Joseph ibn ‘Aqnīn’s Judaeo-Arabic commentary on the Song of Songs:¹³

[King Solomon] compared teeth to a flock of ewes ... and one should wonder: why would he compare teeth to ewes and not to a necklace of pearls—like the poets do—no doubt a nicer and more elegant simile? The wisest man obviously did right; the reason he did so is because he wanted to compare teeth to an object [ewes] familiar to all ... and pearls are known only to a select few.

eyes) and which associations they should ignore (the gazelle’s sharp antlers): Isaac ibn Khalfūn, *Isaac ibn Khalfūn: Poems* (Hebrew), ed. Aharon Mirsky (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1961), 92–93 (no. 20:7–8); for the Hebrew poem along with an English translation see Ann Brener, *Isaac ibn Khalfūn: A Wandering Hebrew Poet of the Eleventh Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 136–137. In fact, behind every “simile with distinction” lies the acknowledgment that every symbol can prompt both welcome and unwelcome meanings, and therefore the distinction, e.g., my beloved rises like a sun though unlike the sun my beloved never sets, she flowers like a garden though unlike the garden she never withers, or in the case of Ibn Khalfūn, the desired ephebe’s eyes are reminiscent of those of a gazelle though unlike the gazelle he does not have sharp antlers.

12 Bialik and Rawnitzki, as well as Jarden, were of the opinion that the poet intended to refer to a female gazelle although he used the male inflection. See Ibn Gabirol, *Poetry of Solomon*, 2:128 (no. 98); Ibn Gabirol, *Secular Poetry*, 1:372 (no. 221).

13 Joseph Ibn ‘Aqnīn, *Inkishāf al-asrār wa-zuhūr al-anwār*, ed. and trans. Abraham S. Halkin (Jerusalem: Mekize Nirdamim, 1964), 322–323; the English translation is mine.

Unlike Ibn Gabirol, Ibn ‘Aqnīn insists that King Solomon chose the most appropriate simile. According to him the biblical poet apparently did take the simile of pearls into consideration but ultimately preferred sheep. Ibn ‘Aqnīn’s principal guide is a social one, in which poetry does not solely address a small elitist milieu but also those who cannot afford pearls and those who do not even know what pearls look like. In so doing Ibn ‘Aqnīn suggests another criterion for the “good” simile, according to which a simile, any simile, is first and foremost an act of communication between a poet and his audience. A successful simile, i.e., successful communication, depends therefore on their common cultural and associative denominators. In his conclusion, Ibn ‘Aqnīn refers specifically to the poem of Ibn Gabirol—probably the main motivation for his long reflection—and both criticizes him and defends King Solomon: “Solomon ibn Gabirol, God rest his soul, did not understand this and [hence falsely] criticized the wise ... may God pardon us and him and forgive us and him.”

Ibn Gabirol’s criticism of King Solomon continues in the third line, which, again, is not easy to interpret. One particular difficulty stems from the word *beaqarim*, translated above as “herds of cattle.” However, as noted earlier, *beaqarim* can also be understood as the plural form of *boqer*, i.e., morning. This is exactly how Judah Halevi’s disciple, Solomon ibn Parḥon read it. In his grammatical work *Maḥberet he-arukh* he criticizes Ibn Gabirol’s poem in the framework of his discussion on the root of *peninim*. Ibn Parḥon’s claim that the biblical *peninim* (Lam 4:7) are red rubies and not white pearls leads him to attack Ibn Gabirol who erroneously compared them to teeth.¹⁴ Immediately afterward, Ibn Parḥon continues to attack Ibn Gabirol, this time however for his alleged comparison of alluring teeth to mornings. Keen to defend King Solomon, he quotes Psalms 101:8 probably as a (poor) excuse to disqualify the mornings simile, given the verse’s negative connotation: “Morning by morning will I destroy all the wicked of the land.” As though he wants to project the verse on Ibn Gabirol himself, Ibn Parḥon concludes on a note of sarcastic schadenfreude (which, as discussed below, can be projected back to him): “He who seek out faults in the words of Solomon the Wise will end up stumbling on his own faults.”

14 Ibn Parḥon, *Maḥberet he-arukh*, 53b. Moses ibn Ezra, who, in his *Maqalat al-ḥadiqa*, discusses both the biblical verse and Ibn Gabirol’s poem (without mentioning his name), also criticizes the latter for using the red gemstone as a metaphor for teeth, although he also seems to be uncomfortable with the biblical comparison to sheep, for “they do not belong here”. Moses ibn Ezra, *Maqalat al-ḥadiqa*, MS. Jerusalem, JNUL Heb. 8°5701:192–193. I thank Jonathan Decter for drawing my attention to this source, and to Haviva Ishay who helped me decipher the manuscript.

Dov Jarden who published an annotated edition of Ibn Gabirol's *Dīwān* also addressed the difficulty of *beqarim*.¹⁵ Jarden's solution likewise constituted a vertiginous leap, though he went all the way to the water basin in the courtyard of King Solomon's temple that stood on a pedestal of twelve *beqarim*, twelve sculpted oxen. His somewhat blunt paraphrase of Ibn Gabirol's line reads: "The beautiful teeth disrupted King Solomon's good judgment, and [hence?] he left his wisdom to sculpt the twelve oxen in the temple."

In my opinion, both Ibn Parḥon's and Jarden's forced interpretations derive from a simple misunderstanding. Both missed seeing that the entire phrase is based on the most common structure of parallelism between the line's two hemistichs. The meaning of *beqarim* in the second hemistich is not mornings, nor is it a sculpted pedestal in the temple—but simply a herd of cattle,¹⁶ a parallel of the herd of ewes hinted at by the word *they* in the first hemistich: "As if they [the ewes] made him lose his mind; As if cattle herds have made his heart dazed." These misunderstandings are probably related to the fact that cattle, unlike sheep, are not mentioned in the Song of Songs; however, the regular proximity of cattle and ewes in other places in the Bible makes the cattle, according to medieval poetics, a legitimate metonymy of ewes.¹⁷ To sum up, Ibn Gabirol repeats the same idea in both hemistichs: how can King Solomon use beasts as symbols for beauty? He probably lost his mind, or has been dazed.

The criticism of King Solomon and his images calls for an update of the popular perception that Andalusī-Hebrew love poetry comprehensively and indiscriminately borrowed images and features from the Song of Songs. Rather, Ibn Gabirol presents a selective reading of the Song of Songs, a critical approach that views King Solomon's work as a large bank of idioms and imagery. However, those drawing upon this repository should carefully differentiate the appropriate from the odd and out of place. Thus, the poem that begins with a loving description of the gazelle ends as a poetic lesson about the proper, careful, and accurate use of similes. Though in the existing editions the poem

15 Ibn Gabirol, *Secular Poetry*, 1:372 (no. 221).

16 This is also how Bialik and Rawnitzki interpreted it: Ibn Gabirol, *Poetry of Solomon*, 2:128 (no. 98).

17 See, e.g., "The herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate" (Joel 1:18). Genesis 20:14 and 21:27 and Exodus 12:38 are only a few of the many biblical examples of this sort. One famous case related to this metonymy issue is that of Isaac ibn Mar Saul, who draws on the fact that Adonijah and Absalom were brothers to authorize himself to view them as metonymies of each other and, hence, to use one for the other for the purposes of the rhyme. See Ḥayyim Schirmann, *New Hebrew Poems from the Genizah* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1965), 158. For more on this subject see Shulamit Elizur, *Hebrew Poetry in Spain in the Middle Ages* (Hebrew), 3 vols. (Tel Aviv: Open University of Israel, 2004), 1:130–131.

is usually ascribed to the family of love poems, it also departs from it. First and foremost this is an ars-poetic demand to use “legitimate” similes, a lesson about the mechanism behind similes and the need for good taste and how to properly associate a referent with a suitable image.¹⁸

3 The Desert Is a Metaphor for Life in Misery

Deliberations and arguments about proper images were not only of concern to Hebrew poets and bible exegetes but also inflamed the contemporary Arabic world and its literature. The Arabic discourse that dealt with polemics over similes—but as we shall see went much beyond them—was the outcome of the specific social and political reality of the early Islamic world. The rapid Islamic conquests during the seventh and eighth centuries, and the massive implantation of the new religion in new countries and populations from the fringes of India in the East up to the Maghreb and al-Andalus in the West brought about an encounter and at times clashes between two cultural and political movements: the *ʿarabiyya* movement that privileged native Arabs and Arab descendants and honored Arabic culture that originated in the Arabian deserts in the pre-Islamic *Jāhiliyya* period, and the *shuʿūbiyya* movement that called for equality among all Muslims and stressed the cultures and legacies of the inhabitants of the countries that had just become acquainted with Islam.¹⁹

18 Nevertheless, Ibn Gabirol himself poked fun at this requirement elsewhere. This is the case for his grotesque lament over his skin-diseased body *Ha-lo ʿešdaq*—*Secular Poems*, 111 (no. 184)—in which “the ailing poet combined into one metaphoric matrix his suppurating sores with red roses, the sound of cracked wounds with the sound of lips kissing, layers of pus with the curtain over the tabernacle, the shape of his damaged skin with Bezalel’s holy ornaments, etc”: Israel Levin, *The Embroidered Coat: The Genres of Hebrew Secular Poetry in Spain* (Hebrew), 3 vols. (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1980–1994), 1:243. Or in the opposite case of *Qera ha-sir*—*Secular Poems*, 55–56 (no. 102)—a poem about a basket of lovely roses in which Ibn Gabirol similarly compared the flowers to leprous women and the cut-off stems to amputated limbs. For more on his skin-disease imagery and its meanings, see Hayyim Schirmann, “A Study of the Life of Solomon ibn Gabirol,” in *Studies in the History of Hebrew Poetry and Drama* (Hebrew), 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 1979), 1:216–233; Reuven Tsur, *Mediaeval Hebrew Poetry in a Double Perspective: The Versatile Reader and Hebrew Poetry in Spain. Papers in Cognitive Poetics* (Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: University Publishing Projects, 1987), 176–194; and Tova Rosen, “‘Sometimes Pus, Sometimes Poetry’: Medieval Poems on Sickness” (Hebrew), in *My Torn Body Blossoms: Essays and Literary Excerpts on Literature and Medicine*, ed. Yehosheva Bentov (Jerusalem: Carmel, 2009), 47–60.

19 Hamilton Gibb argues that the importance of the struggle between the two movements derived mainly from its influence on determining “the destinies of the Islamic culture as a whole.” Gibb, “The Social Significance of the Shuubiya,” in *Studies on the Civilization of*

Besides the obvious competition over status, political power, and access to resources and high positions, this polemic also had a significant literary side: traditional Arabic poetry was well rooted in the desert values of life of Bedouin nomadic tribes. Motifs and images such as the desert landscape and its typical animals—especially camels, desert mirages, and night skies, combats between tribes, the life of warriors and shepherds, tent campsites that are usually deserted and ruined, the sorrow of lovers forced to depart from one another because of their tribes' wanderings—were some of the primary components of Arabic poetry. The shift from a small, nomadic Arabian society to a large, urban, Islamic civilization raised the unavoidable question of the relevance of traditional poetry and its values. Muslims who lived in the most prosperous towns of the time—Córdoba, Baghdad, and their surroundings; writers and readers of poetry who had never ridden a camel or wandered in the desert wilderness, justifiably wondered what tied them to desert poetry. Should this poetry be treated as an obligatory model? And why prefer the archaic values of the old fatherland of Arabia over the values of the here and now?²⁰

In mid-eighth century, with the rise of the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad, which involved a strong Persian component, the *shu'ūbiyya* received a profound boost. This was the era of al-Ḥasan ibn Hānī al-Ḥakamī, the famous poet Abū Nuwās (756–814), who was active in the Baghdadi court of the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd. Born to a Persian maid who never mastered Arabic, Abū Nuwās was possibly of Persian origin on his father's side as well. Although he occasionally used traditional Arabic motifs in his panegyrics, he more often condemned them, especially in his famous *khamriyyāt*, i.e., wine poems. These condemnations have led scholars, though not unanimously, to associate Abū Nuwās with the ideals of the *shu'ūbiyya*:²¹ “He rejected the old not because it was old but because it was old and Arab; similarly he praised the new not because it was new, but because it was new and Persian. It is therefore a belief in the superiority of the Persians over the Arabs, the famous belief in *shu'ūbiyya*.”

Islam, eds. Stanford J. Shaw and William R. Polk (Boston: Beacon, 1962), 62. See also Ignaz Goldziher, “The *Shu'ūbiyya*” and “The *Shu'ūbiyya* and its Manifestation in Scholarship,” in *Muslim Studies*, trans. C.R. Barber and S.M. Stern, ed. S.M. Stern, 2 vols. (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1967–1971), 1:147–163 and 1:164–198.

20 Yosef Tobi points out that the dispute also had a rhetorical side, between the older trend in which content took precedence, and the new trend that ascribed importance mostly to style: Yosef Tobi, *Proximity and Distance: Medieval Hebrew and Arabic Poetry*, trans. Murray Rosovsky (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 190.

21 Huda J. Fakhreddine, *Metapoesis in the Arabic Tradition from Modernists to Muḥdathūn* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 105. The quotation is attributed to Ṭahā Ḥusayn. For an argumentative view on this issue see *ibid.*, n. 37.

The following typical poetic example of Abū Nuwās's rejection of the old and Arab speaks for itself:²²

Come, let us drink a toast but not
 To tents in desert wastes.
 They may be loved by poets but
 I view them with distaste.
 The cloud would waste their precious rain
 On such sterility;
 The desert is a metaphor
 For life in misery.
 The wind, there, carries but one sound—
 The bleating of the flocks;
 You're either cursed by jet-black crows
 or haunted by the hawks.
 To me, a far more pleasant thing
 Than pitching tents in sand
 Is sitting, flowers behind my ears,
 A wineglass in my hand.
 ...
 Now, that's a much more pleasant thing
 Than mourning where crows roost;
 The body it invigorates
 And gives the soul a boost!

Abū Nuwās's attacks on the traditional motif of *at̤lāl*, that is, "the crying over the ruined abodes" are among his most famous expressions. The narrative core of this fundamental motif describes a Bedouin who rides to his beloved's or friends' tent campsite only to find that the lodging has already been abandoned and the tribe has moved away, only the wind knows where, together with the people he is longing for. All that is left behind are the neglected remains such as a few lost tent pegs, a rickety stone wall, an extinguished campfire, or animal droppings. Despairing and pained, he is left to weep in the midst of the ruined camp for the traces of the tribe now covered by the shifting sands.

Huda J. Fakhreddine holds the *at̤lāl* motif in such esteem that in her opinion it "extends beyond the realm of art and poetry to become an established mark of [Arabic] identity." According to her, using the *at̤lāl* motif came "to represent

²² Abū Nuwās, *Poems of Wine and Revelry: The Khamriyyat of Abu Nuwas*, ed. and trans. Jim Colville (London: Kegan Paul, 2005), 41 (no. 38). For more poems of this sort see *ibid.*, 10 (no. 8); 49 (no. 44); 92 (no. 80).

what it is to be Arab; [and vice versa] rejecting the *aṭlāl* motif is a way of rejecting Arab tradition altogether.”²³ Fakhreddine finds Abū Nuwās a bit ambivalent: “By seeming to reject and attack, Abū Nuwās in fact draws attention to the motif and demonstrates how it cannot be all too easily dispensed with.” Hence, rather than abandoning it, according to Fakhreddine, Abū Nuwās was “toying with the *aṭlāl* motif.” One “toying poem” by Abū Nuwās reads, for example:²⁴

The wretched lover halted questioning the abodes
 And I halted asking for the town’s tavern.
 May God never dry the eyes of him who weeps for a stone,
 Nor heal the passions of him who longs for a peg.
 ...
 Leave all this behind, may I be rid of you, and drink it,
 Yellow and fragrant mixed with water and foam.

As discussed in detail by James T. Monroe, the waves of the *shu‘ūbiyya* soon reached al-Andalus’s shore as well, where they “left a profound impact on the culture of the Iberian Peninsula.”²⁵ Monroe presents the Andalusī conflict in one *shu‘ūbite* epistle (followed by five refutations) by the eleventh-century writer, Abū ‘Amir ibn García, who had Basque Christian roots and whose ideas closely resemble that of his Eastern Persian counterpart Abū Nuwās. Here is one example from the beginning of Ibn García’s epistle, which after a short, moderate opening turns highly satiric and sarcastic:²⁶

Seldom do poets begin a journey, save from the abandoned encampment
 ... wander after the false illusions of the morning mirage. Gently! Who put
 you in need of riding across the vast deserts? ... who in exchange for habit-
 ual dwelling places made you travel through very dangerous areas? ... Am
 I suppose that you have maligned or despised this respected non-Arab
 nation, without realizing that they are the blonds, the fair-complexioned
 ones? They are not Arabs, possessors of mangy camels. They are skilled
 archers, descendants of Chosroes, of glorious ancestry, brave, heroic; not
 herders of sheep or cows. Their nobles were removed ... from the pastur-
 ing of camels and ... from the milking of goats.

23 Fakhreddine, *Metapoesis in the Arabic Tradition*, 105.

24 *Ibid.*, 108. The translation is by Huda J. Fakhreddine. Compare the poems that appear thereafter (*ibid.*, 109–113), and Abū Nuwās, *Poems of Wine*, 18 (no. 16); 26 (no. 23); 42 (no. 39); 71 (no. 61).

25 James T. Monroe, *The Shu‘ūbiyya in al-Andalus: The Risāla of Ibn García and Five Refutations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 3.

26 *Ibid.*, 23–24. The translation is by James T. Monroe.

Andalusi *shu'ūbite* claims of this kind are easy to understand given the relatively small Arab population in multiethnic Andalusi society, which included many “new” Muslims converts from Christianity.

4 Similar to the Recent Poets among the Muslims

Were Andalusian Jews familiar with and did they respond to the intra-Muslim conflict of their neighbors? Some scholars, and in particular Nehemiah Allony, have argued that Andalusi Hebrew poets (especially Judah Halevi) adapted the arguments of the *shu'ūbiyya* against the *'arabiyya*. Primarily, they did so defensively by insisting on composing poetry in their own national language of Hebrew rather than in Arabic.²⁷ Allony describes Ibn Gabirol as no less than a “soldier [in the war] against *'arabiyya*”:²⁸ “The influence of the *shu'ūbiyya* on Ibn Gabirol actualized in his demand for a full redemption from exile among Muslims and Arabs, the return to Zion and the rebuilding of the holy land; the influence of the *shu'ūbiyya* was actualized in his disdain and condemn of the *'arabiyya* and, vice versa, in his praise for his people, language, culture and promised land.”²⁹ This nationalistic approach sees both Jewish and Arabic cultures as distinctive and competitive systems. Ross Brann, on the contrary, contends that this binary thinking is highly inaccurate at the least, and he puts forward a more complex and nuanced approach:³⁰

27 Among Allony's many works in this mode, see in particular “Hishtaqefut ha-mered ba-'arabiyya be-sifrutenu bi-yeme ha-benayim” (Hebrew), in *Studies in the Bible and the Hebrew Language Offered to Meir Wallenstein on the Occasion of his Seventy-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Chaim Rabin, B.Z. Luria, David Patterson, and Yişhaq Avishur (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sepher, 1979), 80–136. This approach does not of course deny the great similarity between Hebrew and Arabic poetry but rather stresses the differences between the two or simply acknowledges them as unavoidable “influences,” insincere “imitations” or even improper “submissiveness.” See also below note 45.

28 Allony, “Me-shirat Rashbag u-leshono,” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 47 (1976): 98 (Hebrew section).

29 *Ibid.*, 104.

30 Ross Brann, “The Arabized Jews,” in *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: The Literature of Al-Andalus*, ed. María Rosa Menocal, Raymond P. Scheindlin, and Michael Sells (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 443–444, 450. Brann's use of the term “language” refers to its broad meaning, i.e. the “instinctive, creative refraction of the language, forms, and substance of Arabo-Islamic learning in the form of a Jewish subcultural adaptation” (*ibid.*, 441). See also Brann, *The Compunctious Poet: Cultural Ambiguity and Hebrew Poetry in Muslim Spain* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 16 and nn. 24–25. For more on Brann and his opponents' views, specifically as regards Judah Halevi, see *ibid.*, 88–89, and n. 25.

Andalusi Jews can be observed “speaking the same language” as their Muslim informants, counterparts and interlocutors, regardless of the differing contexts and subject matters at hand ... the consequence of the Jews’ Arabization was the deep penetration of Arabic discursive vocabulary, literary genres, the conceptual frameworks of *adab* and *ḥikma* along with the absorption of the aesthetic, rhetorical, and philosophical values of Andalusi Arabo-Islamic culture ... Hebrew poetry ... [likewise] not signals the Jew’s defensive, imitative response to the overwhelming appeal of Arabic but also is an emptying of Arabic into Hebrew.

In the same spirit, I would like to rethink the penetration of the ideas of the *shu‘ūbiyya* in Hebrew poetry, specifically by Ibn Gabirol: in my opinion not only did it not set Hebrew in opposition to Arabic, but it in fact created new and surprising linkages between the two. This will eventually lead us back to Ibn Gabirol’s *We-shinei ha-ševi*. Let us begin with one wine poem by Ibn Gabirol:³¹

My friend, lead me beside grapes,
Irrigate me, this’ll fill me up with delight.
Your cups of love to me will paste
And the sorrow push aside.
If you drink in my love eight cups—
I’ll double them in yours ten times.
And if before you I’ll be dead—
Dig my grave under the vine,
Wash me up with vinous drops,
Shroud me up with peels and its kind.
Don’t you cry over my corpse
But celebrate with lute and pipe!
And don’t throw soil into my grave
But cover it with jugs of wine!

The protagonist leaves his friend a specific last will: where to dig the grave, how to treat the body, what the ceremony should be, how to cover the grave—all should be inspired by wine. Scholars have questioned whether this poem

31 Ibn Gabirol, *Secular Poems*, 180 (no. 267). For the nature of the translation see note 2 above.

should be attributed, in whole or in part, to Ibn Gabirol;³² however he also used this motif in another poem, though concisely:³³

If I should die of sorrow in front of you,
Cover my bones with vine branches.

As Israel Levin showed, this motif mimics Arabic models including by Abū Nuwās who asked to be buried in the tavern-village of Qutrabbul.³⁴ This is also true of a poem by the early Abū Miḥjan al-Thaqafi, which Levin suggests to be Ibn Gabirol's possible source of inspiration:³⁵

If I should die, bury me by a vine
Whose roots after my death may slake the thirst of my bones.

Relating to Abū Nuwās's use of the motif of burial in the vineyard, Yosef Sadan comments further that "the important elements here are the repudiation of the desert dryness and the admiration of civilized lands and their beverages, which were part of his and other poets' condemnations of the hated desert life and legacy."³⁶ Thus, according to this reading, this motif also reflects the conflict between the dreary desert and the luxurious court, the *ʿarabiyya* and the *shuʿubiyya*. To use Brann's phraseology, in these wine poems Ibn Gabirol, by "speaking the same language" as his *shuʿubite* counterparts, "emptied the Arabic into Hebrew." Examples of this sort may at least in part have prompted Moses ibn Ezra to describe Ibn Gabirol as "similar to the recent poets among the Muslims;"³⁷ i.e. the *Muḥdathūn*.

32 In the Brody and Schirrmann edition, the poem is ascribed to the works whose attribution to Ibn Gabirol is "uncertain." Ezra Fleischer was of the opinion that only the first three lines were written by Ibn Gabirol, and that the rest were added by "a later rhymer." Fleischer, "Fantastic Songs of Friendship of Solomon ibn Gabirol" (Hebrew), *Jerusalem Studies in Hebrew Literature* 3 (1983): 156–163.

33 Ibn Gabirol, *Secular Poems*, 113 (no. 188:11). See also Yehuda Ratzaby, *Borrowed Motifs in Jewish Literature* (Hebrew) (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2006), 333.

34 Levin, *Embroidered Coat*, 2:165, with further examples; compare Ratzaby, *Borrowed Motifs*, 333–334. For more poems by Abū Nuwās glorifying Qutrabbul, see, e.g., Abū Nuwās, *Poems of Wine*, 51 (no. 46); 82 (no. 71); 126 (no. 109).

35 The translation is from Philip F. Kennedy, *The Wine Song in Classical Arabic Poetry: Abū Nuwās and the Literary Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press: 1997), 21.

36 Sadan's comment appears in: Abū Nuwās, *Wine and Love Poems* (Hebrew), ed. and trans. Ofra Bengio and Shmuel Regulant (Jerusalem: Van Leer Institute and Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1999), 29.

37 Ibn Ezra, *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara*, 70–71.

5 As Beautiful as a Cow

The discussion of Hebrew Arabized poetry and Ibn Gabirol's ties to "the recent poets among the Muslims" calls for a new interpretation of his poem *We-shinei ha-ševi* and his rejection of the Song of Songs's ewe simile—not merely aesthetically but also sociopolitically. Here, too, the Arabic parallels are eye openers. Elsewhere Sadan refers to works of Arabic poets who amazingly echo Ibn Gabirol's perception of similes. One example is the *shu'ūbite* writer who mocked early Arabic poets for comparing alluring women to cows; another example is the story told by Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī about an Arabic prince who wanted to flatter a Persian king by praising the beauty of his country's damsels but ended up offending him by describing them as wild cattle.³⁸

These examples bring us back instinctively to Ibn Gabirol's problematization of the simile, and more precisely to his specific dilemma: can beasts be taken as symbols of beauty? Like his *shu'ūbite* counterparts, Ibn Gabirol rejects the "irrelevant" imagery of animals, and chooses more "suitable" similes (hail, pearls) found for example in al-Ḥarīrī's work mentioned above. However, in both cases, the controversy goes beyond the question of imagery per se, and is shaped as a more comprehensive argument opposing archaic, desert, and agricultural values to up-to-date, urban, and courtly ones.³⁹

However, the importance of Ibn Gabirol's poem lies not in its clear resemblance to Arabic parallels, but, as Brann stresses, in the manipulation that involves the emptying one language into another:⁴⁰

Arabic language and culture not only surrounded the Jews in the speech and writings of their Muslim (and Christian) neighbors so as to influence them as cultural others; but also and more pertinently, *Arabic was the lin-*

38 Joseph Sadan, "Milk and Wine: A Conflict between Archaic Classicism and Modern Realism in Medieval Arabic Literature" (Hebrew), *Ha-Sifrut* 21 (1975): 120 and n. 10. Sadan specifically stressed the contradiction between desert camel milk and courtly wine.

39 Similarly, though much less sarcastically, Ibn Gabirol shows a preference for the Andalusī perception of beauty over the biblical view, when he praises a local patio water basin, which stands on sculpted lions and is thus better than the one in Solomon's temple that stood on oxen: Ibn Gabirol, *Secular Poems*, 134–135 (no. 207:18–19). For the Hebrew poem along with an English translation, see Solomon ibn Gabirol, "In Praise of an Unnamed Patron," trans. Raymond P. Scheindlin, in *Qasida Poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa*, ed. Stefan Sperl and Christopher Shackle, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 2:140–147; for a discussion of the poem see Raymond P. Scheindlin, "The Hebrew Qasida in Spain," in *Qasida Poetry*, ed. Sperl and Shackle, 1:123–124.

40 Brann, "Arabized Jews," 442–443. For Brann's broad use of "language," see note 30 above.

guistic medium central to the Andalusí-Jewish experience ... the Arabized culture of the Jews of al-Andalus [should be seen] as a rereading and rewriting of their tradition in Arabic according to the literary and cultural conventions of that language.

Thus Ibn Gabirol uses the Arabic cultural model to rethink *his own* literary legacy and reread *his* Jewish Song of Songs masterpiece. His embracing of the *shu'ūbiyya* thus serves him not as a tool in a conflict between the two allegedly competitive literary systems of Hebrew and Arabic. On the contrary, the Arabic polemic inspires him to turn it into a Hebrew one. It is crucial to note that the Song of Songs, aside from its imagery and idioms, was by no means considered—unlike Arabic classical poetry—an actual model for Hebrew composition of that time. Nevertheless, Ibn Gabirol implements the ideas of the *shu'ūbiyya* to force the Arabic polemic onto Hebrew tradition; the Arabic polemic thus enables him to fabricate a fictive equivalent Hebrew dispute with the Song of Songs, and almost to reinvent its author, King Solomon, as a “Hebrew *Jahilic*-like poet.”⁴¹

Ibn Gabirol's poem involves yet another manipulation: the discussion of the Arabic image of cattle calls for a rereading of the difficult case of the word *beqarim* in the third line discussed above. Earlier, I suggested seeing the *beqarim*, i.e., cattle, as a legitimate metonymy of the ewes in the Song of Songs. However the manipulation of the Arabic polemic in Ibn Gabirol's poem place this Arabic intertext at the forefront as well, as though the rethinking of King Solomon as a “*Jahilic* poet” prompted Ibn Gabirol to extend the biblical image for beauty of ewes by attributing to the ancient Hebrew poet the equivalent archaic Arabic image of cattle as well.

6 Solomon vs. Solomon?

This leads to the broader question of Ibn Gabirol's rationale for writing this poem. Although the Arabized poet showed great literary ease with Arabic culture, terminology, and imagery, he was still considerably different from his *shu'ūbite* counterparts. Unlike them, he, as a Hebrew poet, was much less threatened by and was thus liberated from the heavy burden of the Arabic

⁴¹ As noted recently by Haviva Ishay in a conference at Bar-Ilan University, the resemblance between the Song of Songs and Bedouin love lyrics has caught the eye of a number of scholars. See, for example, Michael Shashar, “The Song of Songs and the Bedouin Love Song” (Hebrew), *Bulletin of the Israeli Academic Center in Cairo* 12 (1989): 35–40.

desert legacy; nor was he, as a Jewish author in the eleventh century, expected to look at the ancient style of the Bible as an ideal example for his own literature. Further, neither he nor his fellow ethnic brethren could aspire, as minorities, to political power on par with their Muslim countrymen. Why would he, then, introduce this ethnic dispute that was internal to Muslim civilization into Hebrew literature? Moreover, as is well known, Andalusī-Hebrew poets, in particular Moses ibn Ezra but also Ibn Gabirol himself, occasionally used desert motifs especially the *aṭlāl*,⁴² which gave their work a strong Arabic flavor—but none condemned them. Then why would Ibn Gabirol take this exceptional step? And is it so exceptional? In response, I suggest that instead of viewing *We-shinei ha-sevi* as an opposing or ambivalent approach to the classic Arabic models, we should see the poem as a witty attempt to have the best of both worlds.

As shown, this sophisticated manipulation enabled Ibn Gabirol to manufacture a fictional polemic within Hebrew poetry that was simultaneously close but also departed from the Arabic schism. Elsewhere I have tried to soften Ibn Gabirol's criticism of King Solomon,⁴³ although barely touching on the fabricated nature of the polemic. However the crucial fact that this polemic was a fabrication suggests that the "improper" desert similes did not trouble him at all.⁴⁴ Similarly, what Ibn Gabirol's critics and King Solomon's defenders (Ibn 'Aqnīn and Ibn Parḥon) failed to see is that rather than criticizing King

42 See, for example, Ibn Gabirol's poem of complaint *Revivei dim'aakha*, evoking the desert's endless nights, or Ibn Ezra's *aṭlāl*, *Megurei 'ohavay*: Ibn Gabirol, *Secular Poems*, 87 (no. 141: 15–24); Moses ibn Ezra, *Secular Poems* (Hebrew), ed. Heinrich Brody, 2 vols. (Berlin and Jerusalem: Schocken, 1935–1941), 1:90–91 (no. 91:1–11). In relation to the latter poem, Raymond Scheindlin writes: "By beginning this and several other *qasidas* with the ruined-campsite motif—one that derives from pre-Islamic Arabic poetry and was not common among Andalusī-Arabic poets—Ibn Ezra might appear to be somewhat more conservative than his Andalusī-Arabic contemporaries." Raymond P. Scheindlin, "Moses ibn Ezra," in *Literature of Al-Andalus*, eds. Menocal, Scheindlin, and Sells, 254–255. See also Jonathan P. Decker, *Iberian Jewish Literature: Between al-Andalus and Christian Europe* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 29–33. By alternatively rebuking and using desert motifs Ibn Gabirol may also remind us of Abū Nuwās, who, as indicated above, showed similar ambivalences.

43 Uriah Kfir, "Pearls or Herds: The 'Beautiful' according to Solomon ibn Gabirol" (Hebrew), in *Mikan 11/El Presente 6 (Ot LeTova: Essays in Honor of Professor Tova Rosen; 2012)*, 96–97.

44 As indicated earlier, Ibn Gabirol himself occasionally used desert motifs (see note 42 above) as well as "unsuitable" images (see note 18 above). In one case he even described his beloved as a "fair heifer," evoking both Jeremiah 26:20 and Arabic imagery: Ibn Gabirol, *Secular Poems*, 34 (no. 61:1).

Solomon's ewe simile, Ibn Gabirol stresses it and even takes pains to reinforce it associatively with cattle. Not only did he not try to resolve the quandary of the ewe simile—as did his fellow exegetists (Rashi, Radaq, etc.)—Ibn Gabirol celebrated it.

Ironically, he deliberately forced the Arabic polemic onto Hebrew literary tradition, but not as an insincere imitation,⁴⁵ or because he was intimidated by the archaic similes as were his *shu'ūbite* counterparts. On the contrary, in my opinion the confident Arabized Ibn Gabirol invested his efforts in fabricating the polemic within Hebrew literary tradition (and in so doing speculated on what constitutes a “good” simile) because it enabled him to tighten the bonds between both Arabic and Hebrew poetries and cultures and to demonstrate the enormous affinity between them not only in his own era, but also by giving the impression that they were close in their glorious pasts as well.

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45 In rejecting the “insincere imitation” theory, I follow scholars such as Jefim Schirmann, who pointed out that: “the Jews were influenced by Arabic literature, but they had by no means adopted all its themes indiscriminately. There must have been a relationship between their own life and experiences and the subject matter of their poetry”; and Raymond Scheindlin, who rightly inquired: “Once we acknowledge that [Hebrew] poets adopted the forms, imageries and themes of Arabic poetry, why assume that they did not absorb its views as well? If most of the features of Hebrew poetry were no more than literary fads, intellectual games, demonstrations of virtuosity or imitations of foreign values with no profound meaning for the poets themselves or their audiences, why would serious people like Samuel ha-Nagid, Solomon ibn Gabirol and Moses ibn Ezra invest so much effort and talent in it?” Schirmann, “The Ephebe in Medieval Hebrew Poetry,” *Sefarad* 15 (1955): 67–68; Raymond P. Scheindlin, “Between Hebrew and Arabic Poetry,” *Pe'amim: Studies in Oriental Jewry* 95 (2003): 247.

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“His (Jewish) Nation ... and His (Muslim) King”: Modern Nationalism Articulated through Medieval Andalusi Poetry

S.J. Pearce

The first time that I visited Granada, it was February. The landscape and the climate at that time of year brought about two realizations that a more typical summertime visit would never have allowed: First, looking across the cyprus-filled Darro River valley at the very tops of the heavy square towers of the Alhambra just barely visible above the fog that enshrouded them, I could see why the sixteenth-century churchmen, missionaries, and conquistadors felt so at home in my—and Ross’s—native northern California. And second, that foggy-damp green-gray landscape, with the olive trees blending into a same-colored fog, the plumes of smoke rising up from the controlled burn of farmland—before the dry summer would make it too risky an activity—and the old, ruined stone barns and storehouses sinking into the hills at the edge of where new roads had been cut through, that landscape brought into very sharp focus the imagery of Andalusi poetry, both in Arabic and in Hebrew; I suddenly understood, in a way that I had not previously, how so many literary tropes that were borrowed from the very distinct desert environment of Arabia including, especially, the trope of the ruins of the beloved, could have been first borrowed and then made so thoroughly a part of al-Andalus by her poets.

In the early 1950s and with a poet’s imagination that did not necessitate a midwinter visit to the former stronghold of the Naṣrid emirate, a young Yehuda Amichai—not yet the celebrated poet he would become but only a third-year undergraduate student in the Hebrew University medieval poetry seminar of Ḥayim Schirrmann, the veritable dean of the field—had a similar realization about the landscape of Granada and the singers of her songs: that the poets of his own age writing in Spain and defending their own vision of their nation were working against the selfsame backdrop as the medieval Hebrew poets whose lives and work were leveraged in the service of the culture and history of the nascent Israeli state. What we know of the young Amichai’s ideas about medieval Hebrew poetry are preserved in the final essay that he wrote at the conclusion of Schirrmann’s seminar. The essay, which takes up some thirty-seven pages of an exam blue book is entitled “The War Poetry of Samuel the

Nagid.¹ It deals with the work of the eleventh-century Samuel ibn Naghrīla, known as *dhū l-wizāratain*, twice the vizier, for his twin prowess in administering the Zirid state at Granada as vizier and general, and in writing poetry.² Through a historicizing reading of a selection of verses from the Ibn Naghrīla *dīwān*, his essay sets Ibn Naghrīla's work into a global, diachronic study of war poetry that finds comparisons in the Bible and in Arabic poetry, naturally, and in Chinese poetry, in the English and German literature of the two World Wars and, most strikingly, in the poetry of Federico García Lorca. In particular, he draws out connections between the imagery of war and its weapons between the work of the two men—Ibn Naghrīla and Lorca—whom he identifies as equally Spanish poets. Through an approach to war poetry that is at once global-diachronic, closely attentive, and historicizing, Amichai articulates a transgressive, modern vision of Ibn Naghrīla's place in both time and geography, effectively making him a canonical Spanish poet with every facet of meaning that such a denomination can include.

Amichai's dense, sophisticated essay ultimately approaches the question of national poetic identity by posing an initial methodological question about reading the poetry of Ibn Naghrīla, to whom Amichai refers by the honorific title *nagid*:

In assessing these works, we immediately enter into the middle of an ongoing fight about literature that is completely distant, temporally and geographically, and about our own Hebrew literature from the Middle Ages. There are those who claim that it is impossible to approach that literature without first building up a store of much-needed historical and literary knowledge. In short, so they claim, we must read medieval literature through medieval eyes... on the other side are those who say that we must read this literature as we would read any other. Rather than choosing sides in the debate, my opinion is that we must look at this literature with both of our eyes open: with one modern and simple eye and with the other eye augmented with a monocle of knowledge. From the frame

1 Yehuda Amichai, "The War Poetry of Samuel the Nagid: Final Paper for the Seminar on Hebrew Literature Taught by Hayim Schirman, Written by Yehuda Amichai, Third-Year Student, in His Own Hand," Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, Gen MSS 572, Box 35, folder 1230.

2 On Ibn Naghrīla, see Brann, Hámori, Harkavy, Rosen, Sáenz-Badillos, and Schirmann. The epithet *dhū l-wizāratain* is also applied to the vizier-poet Ibn al-Khatīb, but ostensibly for his prowess in military and civil leadership rather than in governance and poetry; see Jacinto Bosch-Vilá, "Ibn al-Khatīb," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 1954–2009), 3:835–837.

of reference of optics, we see the most important details of objects and vistas with binocular vision; and so, too, can we look at literary material with this doubly-seeing vision. That might even bring us pleasure and satisfaction as we read these poems. Perhaps that pleasure is what good literature must give us; that is all the payoff for literary work. The modern eye captures the totality of the poems, the nuances of the imagery, the reflected humanity of the poet, and the whole range of emotions found in the poem. In contrast, the augmented eye guides us through the culture and historical situation, through the Arabs' poetry that was so influential over so much, through poetics, through the poetic imagery that was common in those days, through the influence of the Hebrew Bible and allusions to it in the poems, and through the rules of style and the formal conventions. Only in that way can we correctly approach the Nagid's war poetry.³

Amichai is in effect asking a methodological question about whether the close reading of the New Critics, whose work had begun to emerge in the Anglophone world in the 1930s and 1940s but in Israel only after statehood,⁴ was really a better approach to this kind of historically grounded poetry than the scholarly historicism that it replaced and sought to remedy. As a proving ground for his methodological question, he turns to the theme of national identity in Samuel ibn Naghrila's poetic oeuvre, testing out the aesthetic, the historical, and the in-between manifestations of religion, ethnicity, community spirit, geography, and other factors as contributing elements to what makes a national identity recognizable by and useful to a medieval poet living, by definition, before the modern age of nationalism *per se*.

It is worth noting that this methodological question is applicable to interpreting the essay itself, too. Previous scholarship has focused on Amichai's interest in the relationship between Samuel and his beloved son, Yehosef, and the way in which that interest would manifest itself in his later poetry.⁵ Instead, with my eyesight augmented with the scholarship of Amichai's teacher, Schir-

3 Amichai, "The War Poetry," fol. 2a.

4 Arnold J. Band, "Literary Criticism in Israel," *Modern Judaism* 11.1 (1991): 12.

5 The extent of scholarly discussion of this essay comes in a 2003 article by Nili Scharf Gold, "Notes on Love and War in the Life of Yehuda Amichai," *Israel Studies Forum* 19.1 (2003), which is reprinted in her 2008 biography of Amichai. She writes: "While working in Amichai's archive at Yale, I discovered a document that sheds new light on the triangle formed by his father, love, and war. Among barely-legible scraps of paper lay one black [*sic*—if it was black over a decade ago, it has faded to a light blue now] notebook, different in its organization and clarity of handwriting. It was a term paper submitted by the undergraduate Yehuda Amichai

mann, and with that of many of my colleagues and teachers who succeeded him, I would argue that his essay represents the beginnings of a national poetics, grounded in the nationalism and the poetics of his medieval predecessors, that both stands on its own and is more fully realized in Amichai's later poetry. His essay is an important document in modern literary history, but its approach to poetry and national identity is one that requires a medieval and a medievalist⁶ optics to be most fully understood; in other words, it requires interpretation through medieval literary theory, through modern scholarship on medieval theory and poetics, and bearing in mind a sensitivity toward the significance that the Middle Ages holds for the readers and writers of various modern imaginaries. Amichai develops a poetics of nationalism for the modern world that relies upon medieval poetry and prenatal conceptions of the national; it

to Professor Schirman, the world-renowned authority on Medieval Hebrew Poetry. In a systematic analysis, Amichai presents a compelling case for the unique relationship, documented in poetry, between two medieval Jewish heroes. They are the eleventh-century Jewish poet and army-general Samuel ibn Nagrilla or Hanagid and his beloved son and heir, in writing as in battle, Yehosef. Professor Schirman gave his yet unknown student the high grade of 'very good' and remarked on the psychological sensitivity demonstrated in the paper. One could not overlook the connection between the love that Amichai and his father shared and the identification he felt with the medieval poet-warrior. Years later, when Amichai's children were in their teens, he, a famous poet, took them to an old 1948 battleground: 'I brought my children to the mound where once I fought my battles' and 'we sat there on its back and on its side as in the poem by Samuel Hanagid.' It comes as no surprise, then, that in her detailed article, the Israeli scholar of medieval poetry, Tova Rosen, unveiled Hanagid's poetic influence on Amichai's diction. The motivation for this influence, I argue, is not merely poetic" (59). Chana Kronfeld also mentions the essay very briefly in her excellent new book on Amichai's poetics and traces it as the beginning of his "particular fascinat[ion with] the work and life of the eleventh-century poet Rabbi Shmuel Ha-Nagid, whose influence he freely acknowledges ... Ha-Nagid is for Amichai such a powerful early paragon because, though writing within a traditional Jewish world that Amichai no longer inhabits, he offers a model for textualizing and thus sanctifying the mundane": *The Full Severity of Compassion: The Poetry of Yehuda Amichai* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), 19.

- 6 Here I use the terms *medievalism* and *medievalist* not to refer solely to scholarly activity that interrogates the medieval but also to the academic and broader popular trends that encompass, in T.A. Shipley's words, "responses to the Middle Ages at all periods since a sense of the medieval began to develop," as cited in David Matthews's *Medievalism: A Critical History* (Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 2017). Ultimately, *medievalism*, whether scholarly or popular, comes down to what is encompassed in the literalness of its terminological counterpart in German, *Mittelalterrezeption*, the reception of the Middle Ages. Other, more detailed definitions may be found in Matthews, *Medievalism*; Elizabeth Emery and Richard Utz, "Making Medievalism: A Critical Overview," in *Medievalism: Key Critical Terms*, ed. Elizabeth Emery and Richard Utz (Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 2015), 1–10; and Helen Young, "Approaches to Medievalism: A Consideration of Taxonomy and Methodology," *Parergon* 27.1 (2010): 163–179.

defines the nation along both geographic and shared cultural lines, rather than along linguistic ones, and recognizes and even relies upon the swaths that war cuts across these landed national-cultural groups and its impact upon them.

1 A National Spain and a Jewish Spain

To write about Spain in the Middle Ages is a delicate and often anachronistic proposition that requires definition, explanation, and ultimately walking a fine terminological line. While Spain naturally did not exist as the kind of political entity that we know today, the name *España* derives from a Roman understanding of the geography of its westernmost province, *Hispania*, which it occupied beginning in the third century before the Common Era; in his Latin-language history of the Goths, Vandals, and Suevi, the Visigothic bishop Isidore of Seville (d. 636) uses *Hispania* when he praises the verdancy of the land of the old Roman province, by then ruled by the Goths. It is not until the second half of the thirteenth century that we see the toponym *España* utilized in Ibero-Romance-language prose texts, when it first occurs as a lexical borrowing from Occitan in the Castilian king Alfonso X's *Estoria de Espanna* referring to his Kingdom of Castile as well as to the Andalusi principalities that pledged loyalty to him. And while this panorama drawn from the most canonical texts from Spain would seem to suggest that the term *España* and its variants represent the name of an entity that emerges along with the earliest Castilian desires for political and linguistic hegemony, the rupture is not nearly so complete: neither along the linguistic nor the temporal axis. Numismatic evidence shows a complete conflation of the geography and idea of a greater Hispania with the geography and idea of an Arabophone, Islamicate al-Andalus in the early years of the Umayyad emirate in the eighth and ninth centuries; when Arabizing Hebrew poets sought to laud their land in a meter that would require a word with two long syllables and a short one rather than two short ones and a long, they lauded *Espamyā* (*es-pam-ya*, long-long-short) instead of and as an equivalent to *Sefarad* (*se-fa-rad*, short-short-long). Narratives of continuity and rupture both have their partisans in the modern world and both have implications for the terminology used to describe the Iberian Peninsula in the Middle Ages; but all told, the notion that there was no *Spain* in the Middle Ages is as oversimplifying and erroneous as the notion that Spain has always been what it is today, even in the Middle Ages.

The terminological question is additionally complicated with respect to Hebrew-language scholarship and sources because of the ambiguity of the Hebrew toponym *Sefarad*, which can refer both to the home of the Arabized

Jews of the Iberian Peninsula in the Middle Ages as well as to the modern country of Spain as it currently exists; and the adjective *Sefaradi* can refer to the Jews of medieval Spain and to citizens of the modern country of Spain.⁷ While the ambiguity of this term is often bothersome to scholars, it is one that is embedded firmly in Amichai's reading of and writing about a Spanish Middle Ages. Beyond his university days, in his career as a poet Amichai made frequent recourse to a *Sefaradi*—a Spanish—Middle Ages, both explicitly and implicitly. Perhaps the most famous example of this is his long lyric poem "Travels of a Latter-Day Benjamin of Tudela."⁸ He also recalls two of his medieval predecessors in the poems entitled "Ibn Gabirol" and "Judah Halevi," channeling the former's physical pain and deformity rendered spiritual despair and the latter's seabound longing for Zion.⁹ In many poems he both addresses and marshals the Arabized Hebrew poets' techniques of recourse to the Hebrew Bible.¹⁰ As we shall see below through analysis of Amichai's essay on Ibn Naghrila, his Spain is a national Spain in a fairly conservative and limited modern sense: populated by poets writing in Castilian and just emerging from a civil war that tested the will and the power of theories of government as they had evolved in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; yet both the essay and the poetry show that his Spain is also undeniably a Jewish Spain, a place that is constituted more by its literature than by any other factor that might define a nation. Tabea Linhard writes that a "Jewish Spain' ... encompasses a series of historical contradictions that cannot be dissociated from different representations of cultural memory."¹¹ A Jewish Spain, as opposed to a modern national Spain, is a historical fiction of memory created by the representation of it, and while Linhard's contention is correct on the historiographic face of it—there

7 The term *Sefarad* comes from a toponym found in the biblical book of Ovadiah (1:20), which may have referred to the Greek city of Sardis. It was adopted to refer to the Iberian Peninsula in Jewish circles beginning in the Roman period and was used as a point of pride amongst Iberian Jews to trace their lineage back to the exile from Jerusalem. On the development of an exceptionalist attitude in Iberian Jewish communities tied, in part, to their imagined connection to the exiles of Jerusalem, see Ross Brann, "Andalusi 'Exceptionalism,'" in *A Sea of Languages: Rethinking the Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History*, eds. Suzanne Conklin Akbari and Karla Mallette (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 119–134.

8 Yehuda Amichai, *Poetry of Yehuda Amichai* (Hebrew), 5 vols. (Tel Aviv: Schocken Books, 2002–2004), 2:117–158.

9 Amichai, *Poetry*, 1:30–31.

10 On this phenomenon, see Kronfeld, "I Want to Mix Up the Bible," chapter 3 of *Full Severity of Compassion*, 117–173.

11 Tabea Alexa Linhard, *Jewish Spain: A Mediterranean Memory* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014), 5.

was never a political entity that was “Jewish Spain”—it is also true that those representations—both contemporaneous and contemporary—create the reality of that cultural space, if not place or polity. Throughout his work, Amichai’s poetic and authorial voice walks that line. While his Sefaradi Middle Ages is often a recourse to a Hebrew-language, Jewish literary culture, in other places in his own poetic *dīwān* he embraces the representation of a Spanish and Jewish identity in the modern world that is as fully and equally both as it could be in the medieval one. His learned and imagined Sefaradi Middle Ages is imbued with both senses of meaning that the fullness of the Hebrew term allows.

We see Amichai as a poet developing the idea of a subject both fully Jewish and fully Spanish, but also always the consummate outsider. In his poem “The Bull Returns,” Amichai personifies one of the most emblematic symbols of Spain: the fighting bull.¹² The poem describes him returning home after drinking coffee with the *toreadores* and makes plain that the man-bull is as much Jewish as he is Spanish when it notes: “Now he sits on his bed with his heavy, Jewish eyes.”¹³ Furthermore, the poem notes that a bull is designated by the Hebrew Bible as a kosher animal—“*Ba-tanakh hu katuv ‘im ḥayot tehorot.*” (He is written into the Tanakh along with the pure animals)—and describes its subject as “*kasher me’od*” (very kosher).¹⁴ The poem calls the *toreadores* by the Hebrew word *loḥamim*, generic fighters rather than bullfighters specifically; and after it establishes the Spanish and the Jewish character of its subject, it details the weapons of his enemies-cum-boon companions. As a student writing his final essay on Ibn Naghrīla, Amichai’s attention was particularly drawn to medieval weapons of war as depicted in poetry. By the time Amichai composes “The Bull Returns,” we see that his fascination with weaponry and its representation in poetry is no less intense. In the poem, we see the same interest manifest, though with a different focus and tone. In the poem, Amichai writes of this personified Jewish *toro* with a sword still in his neck and then goes on to say: “He knows that the sword also feels pain when it hones into the flesh. Next time he will be the sword: and the pain will remain.”¹⁵ In very few words he composes not an ekphrastic but rather a psychological portrait of the sword that makes it every bit the victim of the fighters as the bull

12 Amichai, *Poetry*, 2:35. On the fighting bull as a national emblem, see Carrie B. Douglass, *Bulls, Bullfighting, and Spanish Identities* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1997).

13 Amichai, *Poetry*, 2:35, lines 6–8.

14 Amichai, *Poetry*, 2:35, lines 13–14.

15 Amichai, *Poetry*, 2:35, lines 8–10.

is and develops a vivid scene of this Spanish-Jewish bull-man and the fighters raising their weapons against him. The Sefaradi bull is equally characterized by his place in the Bible and by the trappings of his mortal profession. Either one, in the end, could get him killed: Is his fate to be slaughtered or to be slayed?

2 The Poet as a Jew and the History of an Idea

By the time that Amichai enrolled in the Hebrew University, close to two decades had passed since the first publication of the then-most-complete version of Samuel ibn Naghrīla's poetic *dīwān*: the 1934 edition made by David S. Sassoon based on a manuscript he had purchased.¹⁶ This publication increased by a factor of eight the number of poems in the *dīwān*, and, of at least equal importance, included Arabic headings to all of the poems that had, up until that point, been known only in later-medieval Hebrew translations;¹⁷ A.M. Habermann published a new critical edition in 1943 and these are the two editions that Amichai cites in his bibliography. Amichai's two main secondary sources for the historical foundations of his essay the essay are Schirmann's two-part article on Ibn Naghrīla's war poetry in *Zion* and R.A. Nicholson's *A Literary History of the Arabs*; both the influence of these intellectual predecessors and the ways in which Amichai, even as an undergraduate, refines their thinking and pushes it in his own direction are evident in the text of the essay itself. He draws upon Nicholson's history for basic information about themes and motifs common in Arabic poetry and for some notable incidents in the literary history of Arabic poetry. But by and large, his thinking is shaped by Schirmann's articles in *Zion*, which, in form and, to a certain extent, in methodology, are echoed by Amichai's essay. Like the latter, the former is divided into short thematic or descriptive sections and introduces excerpts from the *dīwān*, a few lines at a time, in order to support a historical argument. Yet at the same time, Amichai's essay is a direct challenge to aspects of Schirmann's analysis of Ibn Naghrīla's poetry, insisting upon a reading in the space between literary and historical writing whereas Schirmann argued that poetry itself was a source for history, writing:

16 *The Dīwān of Samuel Ha-Nagid*, ed. David S. Sassoon (London: Oxford University Press, 1934).

17 The statistic about the increase in the amount of Ibn Naghrīla's poetry known after the discovery of the Sassoon manuscript is cited in the introduction to Peter Cole, *Selected Poems of Samuel HaNagid* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), xiii–xv.

Here we have poetic works whose intrinsic value is incontestable and which considerably enrich our knowledge of Hispano-Hebrew literature in the classical period. No doubt the great poetic collection also offers valuable materials for Jewish history and especially for the biography of the author, who distinguished himself as a poet as well as a scholar and statesman.¹⁸

With regard to their methodological differences, it is interesting to note that in his final assessment of Amichai's essay, Schirmann would critique his student not for failing to follow his methodology but for saying that he would depart from it but then hewing too closely:

This work was not written using a uniform methodology. It seems that its author did not mean (as on pages 2 and 36) to use poetry as a source for a composition of historical, technical, etc., character. But despite that, he did so in several places (pages 9–16, and others) without giving any kind of sufficient explanation for that. Overall, the literary-psychological analysis of the author indicates his unique perspective. As such, this work is worthy despite its insufficiencies.¹⁹

It is clear from the totality of the comment that Schirmann appreciated that Amichai was using poetry and history to very different ends than he himself had done and that his were the insights of a poet rather than of a historian; all the while he still demanded rigor, coherence, and organization from his argument.

In addition to the split between the historian's Ibn Naghrīla and the literary-critic's Ibn Naghrīla that Amichai himself observed and noted (to be discussed below), the Ibn Naghrīla known to scholars working primarily with Arabic sources and in an Islamic studies milieu cut a wildly different profile at that time—and well into more contemporary periods of scholarship and reading—than he did in his appearance to those scholars working primarily with the Hebrew sources and within a Judaic studies framework. It would not be until 1993 that David Wasserstein would point out the extent to which Samuel ibn Naghrīla had been exceptionally interpreted as a partisan of his interpreters. At least until the publication of much more recent scholarship, including Ross

18 Jefim Schirmann, "Le *Dīwān* de Šemū'el Hannāgīd considéré comme source pour l'histoire espagnole," *Hespéris* 35 (1948): 163.

19 Schirmann, note in Amichai, "The War Poetry" fol. 37a.

Brann's 2002 monograph *The Power in the Portrayal*,²⁰ scholars of Jewish studies relied on the Hebrew sources for Ibn Naghrīla's life whereas scholars of Islamic studies relied only on the Arabic ones as though the two corpora were or could be wholly separate.²¹ This is more the case for historical and cultural-historical appraisals of Ibn Naghrīla's intellectual and political biography than for literary-critical studies of his poetry, which necessarily refer to the conventions of Arabic poetry that the Arabizing Hebrew poet made use of. For example, Schirmann contextualized Ibn Naghrīla's poetry in both Hebrew and Judaic and Arabic and Islamic literary contexts, for example, with his now-classic interpretation "She'eh mini 'amiti ve-ḥaveri" (Leave me, my beloved and my friend), which demonstrates the ways in which Ibn Naghrīla connects his Jewish identity to his role in the service of the Zirid emir: by coidentifying the military enemies of the Zirid state with biblical enemies of the Israelites, he turns the enemies of his Jewish community into the same enemies being fought by the Zirid state. Thus, with the same foe, Ibn Naghrīla ties his fate and that of the Jewish community of Granada to the fate of his medieval prince and that of his emirate.²² However, this is strictly a literary affinity, and, as Wasserstein has shown, the idea that Ibn Naghrīla might have successfully navigated the full spectrum of the polysystemic and multilingual Andalusī culture that he inhabited was unthinkable prior to the final decades of the twentieth century, let alone that this culture might be the precursor to some kind of Spanish identity.

Although questions of overlapping religious identity and national belonging as articulated through a view toward a Spanish past are fully developed in the poetry of a more mature Amichai, they emerge in a primordial form as early as

20 Ross Brann, *Power in the Portrayal: Representations of Jews and Muslims in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Islamic Spain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

21 David J. Wasserstein, "Samuel Ibn Naghrīla Ha-Nagid and Islamic Historiography in al-Andalus," *Al-Qanṭara* 14.1 (1993): 111–113. An example of the type of scholarship that remedies the problem that Wasserstein signals is a major intervention in the historiography of another Andalusī literary figure, Judah al-Ḥarīzī, who was typically treated as the province of Jewish studies, but whose biography was advanced seriously when Joseph Sadan found an entry for him in the biographical dictionary of the Iraqi Muslim anthologist, Mubārak ibn al-Sha'ar al-Mawṣili: Joseph Sadan, "R. Judah al-Ḥarīzī as a Cultural Cross-Roads: Arabic Biography of a Jewish Artist in the Eyes of an Orientalist" (Hebrew), *Pe'amim* 68 (1996): 16–67.

22 Ḥayyim Schirmann, *Hebrew Poetry in Spain and Provence* (Hebrew), 2nd ed., 4 vols. (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute; Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1960–1961), 1:76–77. For Schirmann's discussion of the historical background to the battle at Arjona, in response to which this poem was written, see his "The Wars of Samuel the Nagid" (Hebrew), *Zion* 1 (1936): 273–275. On the relationship between the poetic voice and the interlocutor, see Ross Brann, *The Compunctious Poet: Cultural Ambiguity and Hebrew Poetry in Muslim Spain* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 52–58.

his university days. In his final essay for his seminar with Schirmann, Amichai defines nation and nationalism along three distinct lines: one, racial, ethnic, and religious nationalism; two, cultural nationalism; and three, the more modern construct of state-based nationalism. With respect to the first, he makes several references to three major groups in the Iberian Peninsula during the period of the taifa kingdoms—Arabs, Berbers, and Slavs (*saqāliba*)—and characterizes them along ethnic lines.²³ With respect to the third, he writes about Ibn Naghrila by applying modern terminology to a medieval situation, describing his poetry and ideology as “dati-le’umi,”²⁴ or national-religious, using the modern Hebrew term that emerged at the turn of the twentieth century and that designates those Orthodox Jews who support the state of Israel as opposed to those ultra-Orthodox who oppose it. Here Amichai does what a great many critics do, reading modern, state-based Zionism into the words of the medieval poets as they grappled with their fealty to an imagined Zion and their casting of the al-Andalus where they flourished as a kind of new and more real Zion.²⁵ Yet it is in the second, the incipient cultural nationalism articulated in this essay, where we see even a very young Amichai as an iconoclast working around the margins of the poetical, literary, and nationalist thinking of his time.

23 Amichai, “The War Poetry,” fol. 10a. Amichai draws this tripartite scheme from Schirmann’s article in *Zion*, which he references; Schirmann, in turn, draws this scheme from Ignaz Goldziher’s “Die Shuubijja,” in his *Muhammedanische Studien*, 2 vols. (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1889–1890), 1:208–218. More recently published, for a good reading of the *muluk al-tawā’if* ruled by leaders belonging to each of the three ethnic-cultural groups, the political relationships between those taifa kingdoms, and the place of ethnicity in governance, see David J. Wasserstein, *The Rise and Fall of the Party-Kings: Politics and Society in Islamic Spain, 1002–1086* (Princeton: University Press, 1985), 24 and ff.; and chapter 6 of Hugh Kennedy’s *Muslim Spain and Portugal: A Political History of Al-Andalus* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 1996), 130–153; for a more extensive discussion of the ethnicity of both the governors and the governed, see Pierre Guichard, *Al-Andalus, 711–1492: Un histoire de l’Andalousie arabe* (Paris: Hachette, 2001). On explicitly ethnic tensions between Arabs and Berbers primarily during the Umayyad period, see Janina M. Safran, *Defining Boundaries in al-Andalus: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Islamic Iberia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013). On the origin of the *saqāliba* in Iberia’s slave trade, see William D. Phillips, Jr., *Slavery in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 56–57.

24 Amichai, “The War Poetry,” fol. 24a.

25 This phenomenon is discussed in Tova Rosen and Eli Yassif, “The Study of Hebrew Literature of the Middle Ages: Major Trends and Goals,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Studies*, ed. Martin Goodman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 253–255. Judah Halevi’s explicit poetic yearnings for Zion make him a more common subject for this kind of presentist reading in the modern period: Perhaps the most recent example is Hillel Halkin’s (auto)biography, *Yehuda Halevi* (New York: Schocken, 2010). Samuel Werses has written about the phenomenon as early as the mid-nineteenth century.

Scholars typically define cultural nationalism as a kind of collective identity grounded not only (or especially not) in a group's relationship to a particular territory or state, but rather as one that coheres around a set of texts, values, and ideas; it is often a productive framework for understanding the ways in which the medieval Jewish communities of Spain and France articulated their cultural identity and walked the lines of their literary and community lives in relationship to each other and to others who shared some of their linguistic, cultural, and identitary investments. As noted above, writing Arabized Hebrew poetry was the way in which intellectuals and literati asserted themselves wholly as Andalusí Jews. Cultural nationalism is a thoroughly modern concept that grew out of a scholarly need at midcentury to describe increasingly diverse and diffuse societies that grew up beginning in the nineteenth century;²⁶ yet it is a framework that easily defies the modern categories of language, text, and culture in the same way that medieval literature and its writers are especially good at doing. For Amichai, geography and colocation play a much greater role in his vision of nationalism than is emphasized in conventional definitions of cultural nationalism, as we shall see below. All the same, Amichai's ability to alight upon cultural-nationalist insight into Ibn Naghrīla's place in his medieval world and the identity that he created for himself within it, even when the concept of cultural nationalism was not yet explicitly a part of Amichai's intellectual universe, is indicative of his sensitivity to the issues of a complex and multifaceted but unitary identity and of his transgressive approach to boundaries that hold back interpretation rather than refine it.

Amichai builds upon Schirmann's classic interpretation of Ibn Naghrīla's war poetry and takes his own interpretation ever farther; by drawing upon the Marxist understanding of the figural role of the Jew and of Judaism in the historical imagination, Amichai succeeds in foreshadowing the arguments of the Tel Aviv poststructuralists who would turn their attention to the literature of al-Andalus as well as the notion of "cultural nationalism" that would ultimately become the theoretical currency in which scholars of the medieval Arabizing Hebrew poets of Spain deal. Most directly, Amichai follows Schirmann when he writes in his final essay that Ibn Naghrīla was successful in portraying the enemies of his Jewish nation as the same enemies of his Muslim kingdom. Like Schirmann, Amichai demonstrates that Ibn Naghrīla consolidates his place within his Jewish community and the Muslim court and bureaucracy

26 David Aberbach, *Jewish Cultural Nationalism: Origins and Influences* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 1–5.

by using biblical terms and images to portray the enemies of the one as the same as the enemies of the other:

Even though the Nagid was the Jewish leader of a non-Jewish army he saw every attack on his king as an attack on his nation—an attack on Judaism even in instances when the dispute was exclusively between two kings from other religious nations and without any kind of anti-Jewish undertones; and even when there were other rationales he remained committed to that position. In his position at the king's court, he assembled a circle of his Jewish brethren as leaders and representatives. The Jews knew that their position would be strengthened through his successes and that their fate was tied up with his, through his own influence and the king's grace.²⁷

There was, then, in Amichai's reading, no question about Ibn Naghrīla's ability to defend equally "his (Jewish) nation ... and his (Muslim) king" and to articulate this dual position. Where Amichai takes his interpretation further is through his apparently slight but tremendously deft use of punctuation, which appears in the manuscript as it is reproduced here: "Ha-ʿantishemiyuṭ shel oivav ʿazrah lo leḥaber et leʿumiyuto ha-yehudit le-neʿemanuto la-medinah bazeh sheʿastah et oivei ʿamo (ha-yehudi) gam le-oivei malko (ha-muslimi)" (The "anti-Semitism" of his enemies helped him to tie his Jewish nationalism to his fidelity to the state in that it made the enemies of his (Jewish) nation the same as the enemies of his (Muslim) king).²⁸ All of the punctuation in this single sentence radically alters the role that religion plays in Amichai's writing of medieval Jewish history. Only a few sentences before this, he begins setting up this new framework that draws a distinction between the ethnic categories such as those he mentions early in the essay and religion(s)²⁹ as a category.

Amichai sets up this dismissal of a racially inflected notion of anti-Semitism when he writes in the preceding paragraph:

27 Amichai, "The War Poetry," fol. 25a.

28 Amichai, "The War Poetry," fol. 25a.

29 Jonathan Z. Smith, "Religion, Religions, Religious," in *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, ed. Mark S. Taylor (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 269–284; and Brent Nongbri, *Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

It is interesting that almost without realizing it, or perhaps subconsciously, I began this section on the Nagid's Judaism with a particular provocation known to every Jew throughout the diaspora and that does have its own umbrella term: anti-Semitism. This anti-Semitism, as most people know, persists against Jews as a nation and that the flourishing of the national movement of Zionism sought to put to an end; and this "anti-Semitism light" (*ha-antishemiyut ha-qalah*) (because from a racial perspective (*mi-behinah giz'it*), it cannot correctly be applied to the Nagid) nonetheless had an impact on his frame of mind.³⁰

In this observation, Amichai separates a racialized anti-Semitism from a more culturally inflected anti-Judaism. In order to realize this separation, he seems to draw upon an intellectual tradition by then already a hundred years old and well circulated in Israel,³¹ namely Marxism and Marxist cultural critique.

Karl Marx's essay, "On the Jewish Question," a response to Bruno Bauer's earlier essay, "The Jewish Question," effectively demonstrates that the rights of Jews within a political state are the same as the rights of any man within that state; in sum, he addresses one of the major themes of the essay, namely political and human emancipation, by arguing that the limits that religion places upon man in general are the same as the limits that Judaism places on a Jew and, as such, that Jews cannot be emancipated politically until all individual religious practice is fully separate from the state. It is worth noting here that part of Marx's line of argumentation separates the idea of a secular state from a civil society and that this is a particularly attractive line of argumentation for students of the Middle Ages. In other words, when Marx writes about religion, diversity, and the state, he suggests that in one phase of political development, a kind of civil or secular society can still exist under a government that is officially confessional. This serves scholars of the Middle Ages, who often struggle to use the modern terminology of nationalism, national identity, religion, and secularism to describe and analyze societies in which versions of those concepts were operative (and crucially important in historically contextualized readings of literature and other forms of cultural production) but not in ways that corresponded, one-to-one, to the modern sense of the terms; a Marxist critique

30 Amichai, "The War Poetry," fols. 24a–25a.

31 On Amichai's familiarity with Marx's writing and its influence on his poetry, see Kronfeld, *Full Severity of Compassion*, 74. Hannan Hever makes reference to the influence of Marxist criticism on Israeli reportage and fiction writing in the late 1940s and early 1950s in his *Suddenly, The Sight of War: Violence and Nationalism in Hebrew Poetry in the 1940s* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), 196.

allows for a more organic integration of these ideas in a way that is reflective of a lived Middle Ages. In the particular case of Samuel ibn Naghrila, his war poetry, and his relationships to his Jewish community and to his Zirid employers, we see just this set of political, religious, and civil relationships in play.

Marx goes further still, separating the notion of anti-Judaism from anti-Semitism toward the end of the first half of his essay and throughout the second half of it. He begins to conclude the first half of the essay by emphasizing the difference that he had already established between the flesh-and-blood man and the more abstract ideal of the citizen:

Man, as he is a member of civil society is taken to be the real man, man as distinct from citizen, since he is man in his sensuous, individual and immediate existence, whereas political man is simply abstract, artificial man, man as an allegorical, moral person.³²

In the second half of the essay, he applies this distinction to Jews in particular; in the conclusion to the essay as a whole, he writes:

Since the real essence of the Jew is universally realized and secularized in civil society, civil society could not convince the Jew of the unreality of his religious essence, which is nothing more than the ideal expression of practical need. Therefore not only in the Pentateuch and the Talmud but also in present-day society we find the essence of the modern Jew not in an abstract but in a supremely empirical form, not only as the narrowness of the Jew but as the Jewish narrowness of society.³³

In order to arrive at this conclusion, Marx, who is, of course, writing with the goal of reshaping the economic and laboral structure of society, writes about the Jew as the same kind of allegorical figure as the citizen, both equally estranged from flesh-and-blood people; following on that, he apportions to the specific allegory of the Jew the characteristics that society at large do, namely interest in money. In order to achieve the kind of political (and ultimately economic) emancipation that Marx desires to effect, his framework requires that real Jews free themselves from the attributes ascribed to them by civil society that make them this kind of figure or allegory.³⁴ In this way, he distinguishes

32 Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question," in *Early Writings*, trans. Rodney Livingstone and Gregor Benton (New York: Penguin, 1992), 234.

33 Marx, "On the Jewish Question," 241.

34 Marx, "On the Jewish Question," 236–237.

between anti-Semitism, the hatred of Jews because they are Jewish, and anti-Judaism, the hatred of a stereotypical figure of the Jew because it is a vessel for qualities and characteristics that history and society consider to be despicable; one is racialized and material while the other is figural. It cannot go without mention that Marx's approach skirts, sometimes uncomfortably closely, the line between defining anti-Judaism and grounding it in a kind of argued truth of the most medieval stereotypes of anti-Semitism; in fact, David Nirenberg points out that Marx

might, for example, have asked why it was that Christian European culture thought of capitalism as "Jewish" and written a critical history intended to make his contemporaries more reflective about the association. Famously, he chose instead to exploit these habits, putting old ideas and fears about Jewishness to a new kind of work: that of planning a world without private property or wage labor.³⁵

Nevertheless we can begin to appreciate, first, that by the time of Amichai's writing it had been possible for over a century to understand that there was a place for religiously guided lives within a civil society guided by a contrasting set of (confessional) principles; and second, that intellectual history already allowed for the possibility of inveighing against Jews as symbols rather than as Jews and that the figural Jew could be a driving force not only in understanding history but in the course of history itself.

With this intellectual foundation established, we can return to that unusually punctuated sentence in Amichai's essay. Through that punctuation, Amichai reasserts his dismissal of a possible racialized cast to Ibn Naghrīla's enemies' enmity toward him by placing the word *anti-Semitism* within quotation marks, reinforcing the distinction between anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism, which he terms "anti-Semitism light." Amichai equally uses punctuation to assert a cultural-national position from which Ibn Naghrīla's enemies might be viewed from two different perspectives: By bracketing off the words *Muslim* and *Jewish* within parentheses, Amichai makes Ibn Naghrīla a member of a nation and a subject of a king while limiting the distance between him and the two groups into which he was bound as well as and the distance between those two groups themselves; simultaneously, the religious identifications are mere apostrophe while Ibn Naghrīla's relationships to his national community and to his king are central. Religious difference here is a parenthetical

35 David Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2013), 4.

afterthought that comes second to national, cultural, and political identity—and religious hatred is sublimated to other types of conflict and competing loyalties.

3 Cultural Nationalism, Poetry, and History in the Two Spains

We have now seen how Amichai followed Schirmann's lead to depict Samuel ibn Naghrīla as a political and military leader who, through his poetry, was able to integrate his individual religious practice and its communitary implications fully with his role in civil society, even doing so in a state governed according to confessional practices different from his own and his community's. Yet the original question that Amichai poses in the essay, about whether poetry is best read in context or up close, continues to drive the national question even further, not only across religious boundaries but also across temporal ones. And by continuing to chip away at the borders of national-linguistic literary traditions and the distances between, them he succeeds in making Ibn Naghrīla the consummate *Spanish* poet in very modern senses of the word and in claiming the literary heritage of the Spanish Middle Ages as his own.

Part of Amichai's drive to historic contextualization of the medieval Hebrew poetry of Spain while still treating it as an aesthetic object sees him draw comparisons between poets across time; including Wilfred Owen, David Sassoon, and Rainer Maria Rilke, along with the biblical psalmist, the Arab poets al-Farazdaq and Jarīr, and the anonymous poets who recorded the wars of China in verse. Yet the most striking of these comparisons, and the one that best argues for a kind of cultural nationalism that pervades and defines a Jewish Spain transposed directly and completely onto a national Spain is Amichai's diachronic reading of Ibn Naghrīla's war poetry with that of his twentieth-century counterpart Federico García Lorca, who was murdered in 1936 during Spain's civil war. Lorca's own recourse to the Arabo-Islamic past of the Granada that was as much his as it was Ibn Naghrīla's is well documented: *Diván del Tamarit*, Lorca's collection of pseudo-*ghazals* and pseudo-*qaṣīdas*, refers to, if without directly drawing upon, Andalusī Arabic poetic forms. An introduction to the collection was written by the medieval historian and literary critic Emilio García Gómez. García Gómez correctly points out to the lay audience that Lorca is not writing Andalusī *ghazals* and *qaṣīdas* but rather drawing upon and adapting the form out of literary-cultural affinity. After defining the Arabic literary terms that appear in Lorca's *dīwān*, García Gómez writes that the neo-*qaṣīdas* and neo-*ghazals* are still an adaptation or a cultural translation of the original forms:

It hardly needs to be said that García Lorca's names for these poems—*dīwān*, *gacela* [*ghazal*], *qaṣīda*—do not conform to the above definitions. In that sense, they are arbitrary. But nor do I believe that it can be said—and least of all in Lorca's case—that this poetry has nothing in common with those that we call Oriental ... Yet, generally and fortunately, Lorca's poems separate themselves from Arabic verse in that they are not slaves to the grammar but rather that grammar is their slave.³⁶

The Arabizing Hebrew poets of Spain set themselves a different task in a different moment and to meet a different set of cultural and linguistic demands, but in a certain way, Lorca's project is like theirs: translating the form for their audience that they might make themselves understood in the poetic vernacular. Each of Amichai's two Spanish poets writes the modern and the medieval, allowing a reflection upon the work of both poets to inform discussions of poetics, medieval history, and modern nationalism.

Amichai's reading draws Ibn Nahrīla into the modern Spanish canon as much as his interpretation pulls Lorca medieval-ward; his joint reading of the two poets is also the clearest challenge to a single and modernizing Eurocentric meaning of the terms *Sefaradi* and *Spanish*. To draw the comparison between the work of the two poets, he examines their treatment of an image that, as noted, was of particular interest to him, namely weapons of war; he cites a number of verses from the *dīwān* that declaim about the use of weapons in the wars versified. And then Amichai continues, commenting:

These descriptions of weapons and of weapons in use in wartime are also drawn, at least in part, from the tradition of Arabic poetry. Much of this imagery serves to bring the weapons as they were and as they were used in war into the mind's eye of the reader. I have already mentioned the comparison that R.M. Rilke drew between curved sword blades and streams of water running from a fountain. I am also reminded of a modern *Spanish*³⁷ poet (*meshorer sefaradi moderni*) who is also associated with many descriptions of weapons in war. Here is a verse from a poem by F.G. Lorca: "In the valley, the Albacete knives are engorged with the blood of the enemy and they glisten like fish."³⁸ Incidentally, that is also a description

36 Emilio García Gómez, "Nota al *Diván del Tamarit*," in Federico García Lorca, *Diván del Tamarit*, ed. Mario Hernández (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1981), 54–55.

37 Amichai underlines the word *Sefaradi* in this spot.

38 Federico García Lorca, "Reyerta," in *Poema del Cante Jondo/Romancero gitano*, ed. Allen Josephs and Juan Caballero (Madrid: Cátedra, 2010), 128–129. The verses in question read:

of a battle taking place in an olive grove. It is sublime to realize that both the Nagid and Lorca, who lived so far apart in time, creed, and place, were both sons of Spain, of its perspective, and its environment. This closeness (*kirvah*) is moving.³⁹

This is the trace, in blue ink, of Amichai's moment of synchronicity⁴⁰ and his realization of the way in which the landscape provides not only a backdrop but sense itself to the readers of Granada's poetry. In a literary universe in which religion, language, and time are secondary not to the land but to the ability to write literature in and of the land, then it is only sensible that Ibn Naghrīla should be read every bit as much as a Spanish poet as Lorca, and that Lorca is, especially but not exclusively to the Hebrew-language critic, a Sefaradi poet with no qualification. García Gómez, too, appreciates that there is a connection between Lorca and his geographic antecedents, writing:

Lorca coincides, heartfelt, with his ancestors and countrymen in his love for Granada; and he imitates them in it. No city is so feminine as the Islamic ones were and none so deeply, all-encompassingly, and profoundly beloved by their poets ... Only someone from Granada could have felt, with such refined hyperesthesia, the proclivity toward ruins, this negligent and sensual surrender that characterizes Granada against the measured Seville and the elegant Córdoba.⁴¹

Both Ibn Naghrīla and Lorca define their poetic nationalism in geographic terms that are the background for literary articulations of their polysystemic, local culture.

In the above-cited passage, Amichai uses the term "closeness," *kirvah*, to describe the relationship of the two poets and their poetry and to enforce the transgressive canonicity of Samuel ibn Naghrīla in Spain, making him fully Jewish, fully Andalusí, and equally, fully Spanish. This closeness is predicated upon the geographic and thematic affinities between Lorca and Ibn Naghrīla but also invokes other kinds of relationships between texts across time and space and does so, again, with a literary-critical lexicon that almost foreshadows the con-

"En la mitad del barranco/ las navajas de Albacete, / bellas de sangre contraria, / relucen como los peces."

39 Amichai, "The War Poetry," fols. 14–15.

40 María Rosa Menocal, *Writing in Dante's Cult of Truth: From Borges to Boccaccio* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 11–50.

41 García Gómez, "Nota," 56.

temporary. In an essay⁴² from the year 2000, the critic Franco Moretti issued a charge to the discipline of comparative literature: to read distantly, that is, to carry the text across and beyond the boundaries of what he saw as a shriveling European cultural unit—and if the text itself is slightly effaced in the process of drawing global connections, then so be it. Moretti, himself relying upon polysystem theory, asserts that the purpose of distant reading is to challenge the structures of national literatures in order to reject them and replace them with a unitary world literature.⁴³ And perhaps Amichai's connection between a medieval Spanish poet whose wars in the land defined his nation in Arabic meter and rhyme and a modern Spanish poet who is aware of his own Arabic literary heritage that is just slightly out of his reach is one of born of distant reading, one where the cultural nationalism of the two authors matters more than their poetry. We may say that Amichai's cultural-poetic nationalism, like Moretti's distant reading, places less emphasis on language than on other factors, both geographic and cultural, but however apt, Amichai never rejects text or the idea of nation and so this remains an unsatisfying solution that requires that we turn to the responses to Moretti's rejection of text.

In the years following his original publication, other critics, notable among them Emily Apter, responded to Moretti's charge to distant reading by rejecting it; with the term "close reading" already taken by the New Critics, Apter coined the term "textual closeness" to describe a practice of comparative literature that reaffirms the centrality of language while maintaining the very polysystemic features of the distance of Moretti's world literature. She identifies "the problem left unresolved by Moretti" as "the need for a full-throttle globalism that would valorize textual closeness while refusing to sacrifice distance"⁴⁴ and relies upon Leo Spitzer's development of a textually grounded world literature in the middle of the twentieth century. Amichai answers the question about reading closely or globally and historically in a somewhat different way: standing between textual closeness and distant reading, Amichai rejects nationalism as it operates in modern literature but is not antinational; that is, he does not reject the concept of the nation in the way or to the extent that Moretti does but

42 Franco Moretti, "Conjectures on World Literature," *New Left Review* 1 (2000): 54–68. Irritatingly, when the article was finally published as part of a collection of essays, Moretti would feign surprise that the theory that he intended as a joke should have been taken so seriously by his field: *Distant Reading* (New York: Verso, 2013), 44.

43 Moretti, *Distant Reading*, relying upon Itamar Even-Zohar, "The Laws of Literary Interference," *Poetics Today* 11.1 (1990): 53–72.

44 Emily S. Apter, *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 43–44.

rather issues a medievalist challenge to the nation as it is defined. With his *kirvah*, Amichai offers a simple resolution to the question of how poetry informs nationalist debate: the distant is close.

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Inscribing the Good News: The Run-Up to Mark

F.E. Peters

For Ross, former colleague, permanently tenured friend



The story of Jesus, it is often said, is based on multiple (and reliable) eye-witness accounts. It is history, not myth. Just so: but all history is recollection. Memories were once simply what participants or eyewitnesses could recall of events. Then came Google and Netflix and the whole complex of knows-everything and forgets-nothing media to teach us that nothing we remembered was quite the way we remembered it. Digitalized documentation, the ability to replay the past, or simply the existence of archives, where we can verify the past, are, however, rare occurrences in the premodern era, most of whose records have been long reduced to rubble and ash. So the Jesus of history, like all others of his era, is no more than others' memories of him and, absent his birth or death certificate, a personal memoir, or his collected correspondence, that is all there is. Our Jesus is Jesus remembered.

The news is not all bad, however. Certain of Jesus's followers collected and noted down theirs and others' recollections of him in a useful biographical form, and these were set down in writing and preserved for us remarkably close to the remembered events. There are in fact two time elements in play in the evaluation of ancient literary evidence: first, how close to the event that it professes to describe was our document recorded; and second, how much time has elapsed between that original recording and our earliest preserved copy of it, an interval during which scribal errors and scribal emendations presumably occurred.¹ The earliest preserved literary evidence for Jesus is found in Paul's

1 The length and breadth of what ancient scribes might do to a New Testament text in the process of its transmission is set out in: Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 186–206. Cf. also the more nuanced findings in: E.C. Colwell, "Scribal Habits in Early Papyri: A Study in the Corruption of the Text," in *The Bible in Modern Scholarship*, ed. J.P. Hyatt

letters written a remarkably brief twenty years after Jesus's passing, while the latest recollections with a claim to eyewitness authenticity were committed to writing in John's Gospel no more than seventy years after the event. The earliest physical evidence of those records in the form of Egyptian papyrus fragments are from the early 100s,² and the first fully preserved texts of the literary evidence for Jesus are the great parchment book-like codices called Sinaiticus and Vaticanus from the fourth century.³

The New Testament texts are, then, remarkably early when compared to other literary evidence from the ancient world, but what is equally notable about the recorded memories of Jesus is that we have in the New Testament Gospels four different versions of his life. Moreover, they appear to stand relative to one another in such a way that we are able to draw some important conclusions about these texts' origins.

One such conclusion is that an examination of early Christianity must begin not with the Gospels themselves—however inviting that might seem—but with an investigation of the sources for the Gospels' "reminiscences" of Jesus, as an early writer calls them.⁴ The "reminiscences" enshrined in these literary works are based on recollections of the events of Jesus's life but, more importantly, on what Jesus said, the contents of his claim, and his message. The authenticity of those words as they are recorded in the Gospels has been vigorously debated in modern times and rests, or founders, on an understanding of both the circumstances of Jesus's communications and the manner and mode of their recording. The Gospels require, then, close critical scrutiny before they

(Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1965), 370–389; James R. Royse, "Scribal Habits in the Transmission of New Testament Texts," in *The Critical Study of Sacred Texts*, ed. Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty (Berkeley: Graduate Theological Union, 1979), 139–161; and Peter M. Head, "Observations on Early Papyri of the Synoptic Gospels, especially on the 'Scribal Habits,'" *Bib* 71 (1990): 240–247, who notes the scribal tendency to harmonize a given text with what is found in the other Synoptics and that scribes were more likely to omit than to add something to a text.

2 Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, trans. Erroll F. Rhodes, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 83–103.

3 *Ibid.*, 107–109; Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 62–69. Some have argued that these expensively produced codices were the byproduct of the emperor Constantine's order to Bishop Eusebius to produce fifty carefully prepared parchment Bibles for distribution to the Christian centers of the Empire: Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 4.36 and cf. Theodore Skeat, "The Codex Sinaiticus, the Codex Vaticanus and Constantine," *JTS* 50 (1999): 583–625.

4 The term *apomnemoneumata* frequently occurs in the writings of the early Christian writer Justin Martyr, ca. 150 CE. See Helmut Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels: Their History and Development* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1990), 37–40.

can be exploited as sources for Jesus's teachings and so for Christian doctrine. Jesus's words did not pass directly from his mouth into Mark's Gospel: between Jesus's spoken word and our received Gospel texts stand a number of distorting filters created in the course of the performance, translation, transcription, and redaction of those words.

A primary filter arises from the very nature of oral performance. While it may sound odd to modern ears to hear Jesus described as a "performer," that is exactly what he was—being also the disciple of an even more theatrical performer, John the Baptist—and the statements that constitute his message were part of his performances. Jesus was both a preacher and a teacher; his views, the core of what later became Christianity, were expressed multiple times as public sermons in large open-air venues on hillsides and shorelines; as preaching in village synagogues; as debates, public and private, with Pharisees and their scribes; as impromptu remarks on the streets of Galilean towns or in people's homes; and as private instruction to his closest followers.⁵

It should be noted that our Gospels, all theology apart, give a misleading picture of Jesus's career as an itinerant oral preacher. His public teaching, his aphorisms, sermons, and parables, are all presented dramatically in a series of once and for all cameos, as if he said this here and that there. The story of Jesus is unfolded serially, in a consecutive narrative where one unique event follows another. That manner of presentation is literary; the reality, we know, must have been quite different. Moreover, there is no record of an actual Jesus sermon in the Synoptic Gospels:⁶ what their editors designate as such (as, for example, the famous "Sermon on the Mount") are edited collections of aphorisms bearing little resemblance to the more genuine sermons represented, albeit in condensed form, in the Acts of the Apostles. Jesus preached, certainly, but the evidence is considerable that his preferred rhetorical media for communicating his message was the pithy aphorism and the parable, the latter an extended comparison ("The Kingdom of Heaven is like ...") that often emerges as a very short story carrying a distinct, though not always obvious, moral point.⁷

5 On Jesus's public performances, see D.E. Nineham, *The Gospel of St. Mark* (London: Penguin, 1992), 23–24.

6 Jesus is portrayed as a voluble sermonizer and lecturer in John's Gospel, but this mode of expression flies in the face of all the evidence in the other Gospels. It is far more likely that it was "John" himself who converted Jesus's views into sermons and in so doing rendered them useless for reconstructing Jesus's actual words. See John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus. Volume One: The Roots of the Problem and the Person* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 53n1.

7 Three classic studies are: C.H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom* (New York: Scribner, 1961); Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, 2nd ed. (London: SCM Press, 1972); and Norman

The crucial point here, however, is that Jesus's aphorisms, parables, and disappeared sermons were all delivered, or performed, orally; there is nothing to suggest that Jesus, who may well have been functionally literate, committed his message to writing.⁸ If we are not entirely sure what Jesus actually said, we now know why, for the twentieth century has industriously unlocked the mysteries of oral performance and oral transmission.⁹ The oral performer, as Jesus unmistakably was, composed as he spoke (or sung), relying on concrete thinking and the mnemonic tool of formulaic expressions. Moreover, the performer repeats, and, though the content remains essentially the same, the expression of each performance varies.

Like all performers—bards, prophets, preachers, teachers, and politicians—Jesus delivered his public remarks, his “message,” more than once and in different settings and to different audiences. Jesus, then, like his fellow performers, repeated his message of the kingdom on many occasions, and each particular performance varied according to time, place, and audience, whether learned or local, friendly, neutral, or hostile, and (in the case of his followers) Jew or gentile.¹⁰ This repetition provided an opportunity for memorization, but it also meant that no two performances were identical. It is one or more of these per-

Perrin, *Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom: Symbol and Metaphor in New Testament Interpretation* (London: SCM Press, 1976).

- 8 “Not a writer himself, he [Jesus] apparently never instructed his followers to record his words and the story of his life and death ... There is no hard evidence that any of his personal followers committed his living words to the confining space of papyrus and parchment”: Werner H. Kelber, *The Oral and the Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul, and Q* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 21.
- 9 Important and instructive works out of a rather large literature include: Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000); Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Routledge, 1991); John Miles Foley, *The Theory of Oral Composition: History and Methodology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988); Joanna Dewey, ed., *Orality and Textuality in Early Christian Literature*, *Semeia* 65 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1994); Tom Thatcher, ed., *Jesus, the Voice, and the Text: Beyond the Oral and the Written Gospel* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2008). Albert Lord (somewhat unadvisedly perhaps) extended his theorizing to the Gospels, thinking that they too showed distinct signs of oral composition: see Lord, “The Gospels as Oral Traditional Literature,” in *The Relationships Among the Gospels: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue*, ed. William O. Walker, Jr. (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1978), 33–91. His findings did not provoke much assent: Werner H. Kelber, “Jesus and Tradition: Words in Time, Words in Space,” in Dewey, *Orality and Textuality*, 160–161.
- 10 On the creative role of the audience in oral performance, see Kelber, *Oral and the Written*, 14–15; and on repetitive performances, Arland Dean Jacobson, *The First Gospel: An Introduction to Q* (Sonoma: Polebridge, 1992).

formances that his followers, the primary tradents of his message, heard and, we must believe, heard somewhat differently on occasion. What they remembered and recorded and what we read in the Gospels may be the gleanings of one particular performance or, more likely, a composite of many of them. Jesus's exact words vanish behind the modalities of oral performance and oral transmission.¹¹

The sayings that have come down to us represent what Jesus may have said on a single instance and what he put somewhat differently to a different audience on another occasion. Speakers without the benefit of reading texts or teleprompters tailor their remarks to the audience and the occasion, and there is no reason to think that Jesus was any different. The Gospels show the exchanges between Jesus and the Pharisees as heated, but we are given few other indications of the mood and tone of Jesus's preaching. What we have is a single version of the Beatitudes—the differences between Matthew's and Luke's versions seem to be the result of those authors' own editing—which was doubtless a set piece that Jesus presented, like a politician's stump speech, in somewhat differing versions to varying audiences in varying settings. What the Gospels give us, thus, is one single oral performance out of many on the same subject or, equally plausibly, a single, conflated "literary" version of repeated pronouncements on a subject that have been filtered through many ears and many memories.

The Gospels were not, however the first recorded memories of Jesus. As already noted, Paul in his letters was reflecting on Jesus in the early 50s, but even before Paul some members of his audience—we know not who, perhaps the most devoted believers, perhaps members of his inner circle of the Twelve—undertook to memorize one or other of the versions of what they had heard from the mouth of this man whom they called "Master." Their motive may have been none other than personal edification, or perhaps for the "conversion" or instruction of others. In this latter case, the memorization is likely to have been of a *collection* of sayings that were thought to embody Jesus's message in some more or less comprehensive form. If so, some attempt at redaction would be likely: the logia would have been organized and arranged to create an artifact that differed in some degree from the original. Another intention had, then, come into play and imposed itself on the Jesus original.

The content of those collections of Jesus's sayings continued to circulate orally long after many of them had been incorporated into the Gospels,¹² and they turn up in bits and pieces as citations in the writings of later Christian

11 Kelber, "Jesus and Tradition," 140–153.

12 On the oral milieu of Jesus and his followers, see Kelber, *Oral and the Written*, 17, 21; on

authors. But what appears to be our best evidence for an actual pre-Gospel collection of Jesus's sayings seems to be the so-called Q (from German *Quelle*, "source"), the name that modern scholarship has given to a hypothetical collection of Jesus's sayings reconstructed from the 235 verses not found in Mark but shared, in near identical form, by Matthew and Luke.¹³ Our reconstructed Q was a Greek text, since it is quoted as such in Matthew and Luke, and the same appears to be true of another seemingly early collection of Jesus's sayings that lies behind the Greek original of the Gospel of Thomas, a work not included in the New Testament.¹⁴

Our reconstructed Q is both mysterious and opaque. We have little idea of when, where, or why it was composed: perhaps Galilee for its geographic origin,¹⁵ while its date has been placed anywhere from 30 CE (that is, almost immediately after Jesus's death), to sometime after the fall of Jerusalem in 70, or more generally any time before Matthew and Luke used it in the 80s.¹⁶ Though it is agreed that the document as a whole is organized to make certain theological points,¹⁷ there is no certitude as to what those apparently conflicting points are.

One solution to that conflict, and one that makes Q very difficult to date, and indeed to construe, is the attempt on the part of some to demonstrate that Q was a redacted or edited document. Redaction criticism did not begin with Q of course: certain anomalies in a given text, in the book of Genesis for example, had long ago prompted scholars to posit the activity of a not very skillful

the "unwritten sayings," David E. Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987), 71; and on their value to the historian, Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 112–113.

- 13 The literature is by now immense, but the entire story of Q, its supposed redactional history (see below), and what are thought to be its considerable consequences for the composition of the Gospels are put forward in John S. Kloppenborg Verbin, *Excavating Q: The History and Setting of the Sayings Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000). For a brief but pointed critique of the very hypothesis of Q, see James D.G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 148–149.
- 14 The Greek original of Thomas is represented only in some papyrus fragments. The entire text in Coptic translation was unearthed in a third-century manuscript discovered at Nag Hammadi in Egypt. On the discovery, see James M. Robinson, ed. *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* (San Francisco: Harper, 1988), 22–26; on the Gospel of Thomas, *ibid.*, 124–138. The date and relevance of Thomas is still being robustly debated: Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 124–139.
- 15 Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 164–165.
- 16 Kloppenborg Verbin, *Excavating Q*, 80–87; Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 159.
- 17 Dieter Lüthmann, "The Gospel of Mark and the Sayings Collection Q," *JBL* 108 (1989): 58–59, has drawn up a list of agreed propositions regarding Q, the third of which is that "Q is not a mere collection" but "evidences specific theological features."

editor. Varying themes in the text then provide clues as to the agenda of the putative editor(s) and prompt contemporary editors to attempt to sort out the base document and its different additions and/or emendations.¹⁸

So it is with Q.¹⁹ Simply put, the reconstructed document we call Q is thought to have begun as a collection of Jesus's "sapiential sayings" (designated as Q¹) that occur in "six analogously structured instructional units." These units were then scattered throughout Q as a result of a later editorial hand adding new "polemical materials directed against both the impenitence of 'this generation'" and, more pointedly, the hypocrisy of the Pharisees.²⁰ These are chiefly prophetic and apocalyptic sayings cast in the form of *chreias*²¹ and introduce the book of Daniel's image of "the Son of Man" (Dan 7:13, 8:27) as an apocalyptic figure with whom Jesus is identified.²² The product of this redaction, which Matthew seems to have used in composing his Gospel, may be called Q². Finally, to complete the composition of our Q, there was added, between John the Baptist's prediction of the one to come and the beginning of Jesus's ministry, the account of Jesus's temptation by Satan. This Q³ is not a saying but a narrative, a story, and it may signal the beginning of the effort to narrativize Jesus's sayings into a biography, a process that comes to term in Mark's Gospel.²³

If such a redactional process is granted, we are confronted with some conclusions that are at odds with what we find in Paul and the Gospels and, in

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- 18 John S. Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q: Trajectories in Ancient Wisdom Collections* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 92.
- 19 Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 133, has set out the basic assumptions in the reconstruction of Q. John Kloppenborg is the current chief advocate of Q's redaction and his theory unfolds in his *Formation of Q* and *The Shape of Q: Signal Essays on the Sayings* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press: 1994). For all things Q, there is now: Kloppenborg Verbin, *Excavating Q*, 113–133, 163–165, with comments on the history of its editing. A somewhat different reconstruction of the redaction of Q appears in Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 162–171. For a brief but pointed critique of the application of redaction criticism to Q, see Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 152–156.
- 20 John S. Kloppenborg, "Easter Faith' and the Sayings Gospel Q" *The Apocryphal Jesus and Christian Origins*, Semeia 49, ed. Ron Cameron (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 71–99.
- 21 A *chreia* is defined in the ancient handbooks on rhetoric as "a concise and pointed account of something said and done, attributed to some particular person": Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 214–217.
- 22 This identification must have been in general circulation, however, since Mark incorporated the Son of Man figure into his Gospel in exactly the same eschatological role (cf. Mark 13:14, 14:62). Kloppenborg Verbin, *Excavating Q*, 388–391; Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 165–166.
- 23 Kloppenborg, "Easter Faith," 84–85.

short, with what came to be thought of as Christianity.²⁴ If we accept Q¹ as a distinct document reflecting the views of a group of Jesus's followers, this latter group apparently regarded their master as a wise man who provided moral guidance for those who would listen and to his close followers, teaching about discipleship and ministry. They had, however, no inkling of his teaching on the end time. Q² then would reflect the beliefs of a different group, or perhaps those of a more enlightened or more instructed version of the original Q¹ community. Whoever they were, they regarded Jesus as a prophet on the Israelite model who, like the biblical prototypes, would suffer grievous punishment, even death. And they were thoroughly instructed on Jesus's urgent teachings about the judgment and the end time.

Yet setting aside the redaction theories and accepting all the sayings in Q as a record of Jesus's sayings collected by a single, none too fastidious editor, we are nonetheless left with the astonishing fact that the person who assembled the collection, and the audience that heard it, accepted a presentation of Jesus that was either unaware or took no notice of Jesus's crucifixion and resurrection. As already noted, it is hard to imagine that they were unaware of those events, and so it is possible that they simply regarded Jesus's execution as another example of the fate of God's prophets and messengers, a reading that casts the importance of the document back onto the moral teaching that Q records.²⁵

However we construe Q, two important things are clear. First, it must have been in fairly wide circulation—as wide as Mark's Gospel was—since both Matthew and Luke, and presumably their congregations, had accepted it.²⁶

24 Jacobson, *First Gospel*, 2–4; Burt L. Mack, *The Lost Gospel: The Book of Q and Christian Origins* (San Francisco: Harper, 1994), 4–11.

25 Q's presentation of Jesus solely as a teacher and as a prophet has found an attentive audience in modern scholarship, which has veered away from the traditional Gospel-based portrait of Jesus and has extrapolated something quite different from Q¹. There is very little contemporary interest in the imminent eschatology that is found in Q² and that so concerned Paul, and seemingly Jesus himself. For many (chiefly academics), Jesus is now a Galilean sage, a social reformer, perhaps even a near-Cynic philosopher and/or a radical peasant revolutionary. See the survey of the views of some representative scholars in Marcus J. Borg, *Jesus in Contemporary Scholarship* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1994). Borg notices "what may be a paradigm shift in our understanding of Jesus and Christian origins, namely the paradigm of imminent eschatology ... has seriously eroded, and a new paradigm has become at least equally strong within the discipline: Jesus as a wisdom figure and social prophet." *Ibid.*, x. Notably, the early post-Gospel Christians, who had no hesitation in retouching the evangelical portrait of Jesus, never reconfigured him as simply a Q-style sage.

26 What is odd, however, is that no one of that era seems to have heard of the reconstructed collection of Jesus sayings we call Q.

Thus Q would have been regarded as “orthodox,” so far as that notion was understood among mid-first-century believers. Second, if there was indeed such a document behind Matthew’s and Luke’s Gospels, it demonstrates that the understanding of Jesus was already being shaped early on. The Q collection, and others like it that we do not possess or cannot construct,²⁷ represent a choice of which Jesus sayings to include and how to organize them, even if we are now unsure of the precise shape and point of that organization.

Paul seems to prefer the opposite end of the spectrum of early Christian conceptions of Jesus from that found in Q. He gives scant notice to Jesus the wise teacher or Jesus the prophet; rather, he sees the primary importance of Jesus in his willing self-sacrifice, according to God’s plan, for the redemption of humankind and his subsequent vindication through his resurrection and return.²⁸ The Gospels, for their part, are inclusive of both positions: they faithfully record Jesus’s teachings, many of them taken from Q and other such sayings collections, while at the same time bringing Jesus’s death front and center through a detailed passion narrative.²⁹ And finally, the Gospels celebrate the risen Jesus through vivid accounts of his postresurrection appearances.

There was, then, not merely writing about Jesus before the appearance of Mark’s Greek Gospel in the 60s or 70s, but editing, organizing, and arranging of that writing. Q is our best evidence, but the highly detailed and finished accounts of Jesus’s arrest, trial, and execution that appear in the Gospels strongly indicate the existence of a written, pre-Markan passion narrative,³⁰ and the evidence from John’s Gospel suggests that there may have been a

27 There were almost certainly just such collections in pre-Gospel circulation since similar oral material is reproduced in Mark’s Gospel and in the Gospel attributed to Thomas: Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 287–288. However, in this latter case, unlike the case of Q, the Jesus sayings seem to be arranged “without rhyme or reason.”

28 This is the same Pauline emphasis (though shorn of most of its theology) that we find in Acts’ presentation of the earliest apostolic preaching. An argument for its authenticity is the fact that Luke knew of Jesus “the teacher” from Q and elsewhere, and presented him thusly in full in his Gospel, but nonetheless did not put him in the apostles’ mouths in the early chapters of Acts.

29 The Gospels are aware of Jesus’s identification as a prophet: cf. Matt 16:14.

30 The arguments are reviewed in John R. Donahue, “Introduction: From Passion Traditions to Passion Narrative,” in *The Passion in Mark: Studies on Mark 14–16*, ed. Werner H. Kelber and John R. Donahue (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 8–16; Marion L. Soards, “The Question of a Pre-Markan Passion Narrative,” Appendix IX in *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave*, by Raymond E. Brown, 2 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 2:1492–524.

written collection of Jesus's miracles as well.³¹ It must have been at a very early point, indeed likely during Jesus's own lifetime, that his words, uttered in his native Aramaic and perhaps with a very distinctive Galilean accent (cf. Matt 26:73),³² were memorized, not always accurately, most as single, aphoristic utterances, some perhaps as clusters, and then repeated, again, not always accurately, among the brethren.³³ They were then translated into vernacular (Koine) Greek, a language already familiar to some of his original followers and perhaps to Jesus himself.³⁴ Yet "translation" may be the wrong, altogether too formal, word to describe what took place.³⁵ It is more than likely that some of Jesus's audience heard him (more than once) in Aramaic and remembered or recounted to others in Greek what they had heard, either because that language was more familiar to them or to those they were addressing.³⁶ Thus the

31 Sara C. Winter, "Little Flags: The Scope and Reconstruction of the Signs Gospel," in *Jesus in Johannine Tradition*, ed. Robert T. Fortna and Tom Thatcher (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 219–235.

32 Kloppenborg Verbin, *Excavating Q*, 72–80, and 340–343 on the possibility of an Aramaic original for Q.

33 On the defects of memory in this context, see Bart D. Ehrman, *Jesus Before the Gospels: How the Earliest Christians Remembered, Changed, and Invented their Stories of the Savior* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2016).

34 As inscriptions and other evidence bear witness, Greek was relatively commonplace in the wider circle of Palestinian Jews, and particularly in Jerusalem and Galilee. See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "The Languages of Palestine in the First Century AD," in *A Wandering Aramean: Collected Aramaic Essays* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1979), 29–56; Robert H. Stein, *The Synoptic Problem: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 208–209. On Greek in Galilee, Scott D. Charlesworth notes that "it is likely that some of the Twelve were productive bilinguals, that Jesus himself could also have known Greek": Charlesworth, "The Use of Greek in Early Roman Galilee: The Inscriptional Evidence Re-Examined," *JSN7* 38 (2016): 383. See also Albert L. Lukaszewski, "Issues Concerning the Aramaic Behind ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου: A Critical Review of Scholarship," in *Who is This Son of Man?: The Latest Scholarship on a Puzzling Expression of the Historical Jesus*, ed. Larry W. Hurtado and Paul L. Owen (New York: T&T Clark, 2011), 1–27. Not only is Jesus portrayed speaking Greek in the Gospels, when citing the Jewish Scriptures he quotes neither the Hebrew text nor an Aramaic targum-translation, but instead the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Bible popular in this period in the Jewish diaspora. See Karen H. Jobs and Moisés Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 193–195. On the richly embroidered Egyptian origins of this translation, *ibid.*, 29–44.

35 Or perhaps not: one very early account of the origin of Mark's Gospel describes Mark as the apostle Peter's *hermēneutes*, a word that can mean "translator" as well as "interpreter." The former sense would have Mark slowly translating Peter's Aramaic, or perhaps broken Greek reminiscences into a more literary Koine. See Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eye-witnesses*, 205–210.

36 Translation is another filter through which a given source passes. Apropos the narrative

Aramaic Jesus, who then disappears forever, is translated, and so transformed, into the permanent, Greek historical Jesus.

As already noted, our hypothesized Q was not only in Greek: it was also a written text as Matthew's and Luke's use attests. Thus, at some point, various memorized sayings of Jesus, now in Greek and now arranged by someone into a collection with a perceptible organic unity and purpose, were committed to writing by person or persons unknown, possibly in Galilee itself,³⁷ in some urban area like Jerusalem, the center of Israel's scribal culture,³⁸ or possibly in the same Syrian hellenized setting where Mark's Gospel was composed.³⁹ That passage from oral memory to written text raises another substantial accuracy filter between the original speaker and the listener who will slowly morph into a reader.

Literacy was a rare achievement in the ancient world, but familiarity with writing was relatively widespread in Israel.⁴⁰ Though the ability to read text was spread across the upper social classes of the population (the same stratum that knew and used Greek), writing itself, i.e., the production as opposed to the consumption of texts, was primarily and almost exclusively the work of scribes: the *soferim* of Jewish literature generally and the *grammateis* who appear throughout the Gospels. In Israel, the scribes were not merely a professional guild, whose work and workshop have been preserved at Qumran near the shore of the Dead Sea,⁴¹ but a class in the social and political sense.⁴²

proclivities of the translators of the Septuagint, see John A. Beck, *Translators as Storytellers: A Study in Septuagint Translation Technique* (New York: Lang, 2000).

- 37 "It is likely ... that some of the earliest Jesus tradition might have been transmitted in Greek": Charlesworth, "Use of Greek," 383.
- 38 On literacy as principally an urban phenomenon, see Kelber, *Oral and the Written*, 17–18; and on scribal culture, Vernon K. Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology* (London: Routledge, 1996), 80–81.
- 39 On a gentile, and so hellenized congregation in Syria as the backdrop for the composition of Mark's Gospel, see: Joel Marcus, *Mark 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 33–37.
- 40 Thomas E. Boomershine, "Jesus of Nazareth and the Watershed of Ancient Orality and Literacy," in Dewey, *Orality and Textuality*, 13–16; Joanna Dewey, "Textuality in an Oral Culture: A Survey of the Pauline Traditions," in Dewey, *Orality and Textuality*, 44; and, more specifically, Catherine Hezser, *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2001).
- 41 The Qumran evidence for scribal practices in the Israel of Jesus's day have been sorted out and analyzed in Emanuel Tov, *Scribal Practices and Approaches Reflected in the Texts Found in the Judean Desert* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).
- 42 Anthony J. Saldarini, *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 241–276.

Though we have a good deal of important information on the editorial practices of first-century scribes, we know little or nothing about the narrower issue that emerges in study of the Gospels: how contemporary Jews committed remembered speech to writing. The conversion from oral speech into a Greek text like the hypothesized Q would have been difficult work at best, as it still is, and, failing local stenographic skills, the conversion from oral to written was generally achieved by slow dictation on the part of a speaker to someone, at best a professional scribe, at worst someone with a more than rudimentary ability to write.

In the Gospels' instance, that "speaker" is unlikely to have been Jesus himself. Jeremiah had his scribe Baruch who transcribed as the prophet dictated (Jer 34:6), but there is no evidence that Jesus had such an amanuensis or that he dictated his remarks to anyone. We know students took notes "live" (*apo phônês*), as the Greeks described it, at their professors' lectures, generally in the formal setting of a lecture hall or classroom.⁴³ While Jesus was called "teacher" (*didaskalos*) and his followers "disciples" or "students" (*mathêtai*), the practice was rabbinic rather than academic;⁴⁴ his public venues were open-air gatherings, large and small, and synagogues. The transcription of Jesus's sayings likely took place, then, at a remove from the time and place of their pronouncement. Certain oral pronouncements of Jesus, which had been memorized, in Greek, as we have seen, by one or more of the believers, were then repeated, slowly, for transcription by someone with scribal skills, an anonymous figure like the other scribes of that era.

But all the evidence from Qumran loudly declares that the Israelite scribes were not mere transcribers or copyists but active and even aggressive editors of even the most sacred of texts. And so, if the conversion of Jesus's sayings from an oral recollection into a written Greek text represented by the (hypothetical) textual Q was the work of a scribe, so too was its organization, its narrative insertions like the story of the centurion's slave (Luke 7:1–10) and the other additions and emendations that modern study of Q has detected in it.⁴⁵

43 M. Richard, "Apo phônês," *Byzantion* 20 (1950): 191–222.

44 Cf. Matt 26:25; John 1:38; 3:2. On the usages of these terms, see Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Abridged in One Volume*, trans. and abridged Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 164 (*didaskalos*) and 559–562 (*mathêtês*).

45 Kloppenborg, *Formation of Q*; Kloppenborg Verbin, *Excavating Q*. Tracing the redactional history of a hypothetical document is, of course, a fraught enterprise.

If oral preaching of the type reflected, though not reproduced, in the early sermons in Acts, was the model or, perhaps better, the starting point for the literary biographical Gospel, the oral *kerygma* of the first believers also left its unmistakable mark on the new genre of the good news.⁴⁶ The point of the sermon was to enlighten and, more fundamentally, to persuade, and that remained the principal aim of the Gospel form. What began as distinct fragments of Jesus memories were wrought in the apostolic sermon as a cohesive rhetorical form whose goal was, as in all such, to move listeners to belief, in this instance belief that Jesus of Nazareth was both Messiah and Lord who would achieve salvation for Israel.

The Gospels, while ostensibly biographies, still carry this rhetorical strain in their DNA. The argument and the “evidence” for Jesus’s claims are still much the same in the Gospels as those put forward in the early sermons: namely, the Jesus events and their scriptural underpinning. In the Gospels, however, the arrangement is more literary, the material more anecdotal, and the scriptural supports far more explicit; and there is, moreover, an extended and detailed biographical narrative arranged in chronological order. But it is not mere narrative; in the new Gospel form there is a renewed emphasis on Jesus’s teaching that is recollected in the form of aphorisms and parables. Earlier sayings sources, oral or written like Q, have been put to extensive use, but now no longer as anthologies. In the Gospels, that same instructional material has been converted into chronological narrative, not terribly skillfully, by bundling sayings into groups and providing some scant local context and a chronological link—“and then,” “on the next day,” “on the Sabbath”—between them.

Paul was aware that the various versions of the good news being preached in the mid-50s might be quite different one from the other, depending on the preacher. This situation was already leading to confusion and even sectarianism in Christian communities. It was a condition that Paul attempted to quell by insisting that, despite the different versions, there was really but one single Gospel of Jesus Christ (Gal 1:6–12). And if there was any doubt about the others, Paul suggested measuring their teaching against his own, which came to him directly from the Lord. It was not, obviously, an entirely practical suggestion.

The problem began to be solved—and others raised—with the appearance of the written gospels, which began to circulate in the new codex form by the beginning of the second century.⁴⁷ The good news was now committed to

46 James D.G. Dunn, *A New Perspective on Jesus: What the Quest for the Historical Jesus Missed* (London: SPCK, 2005), 42–53.

47 Writing was normally committed to rolls (*volumina*) of parchment, the codex bound together sheets of papyrus at one edge in the manner of a modern book. The papyrus

writing and so enjoyed a somewhat higher degree of fixity than the preached versions echoing from one end of the Mediterranean to the other. More importantly, the literary good news presented another, quite different approach to Jesus. While the preached versions seem to have provided little or no information about the person of Jesus, the new written Gospel was all about the man. It was clearly the same Jesus, and it invoked the same argument of his fulfillment of Biblical prophecy to demonstrate that he was indeed the promised Messiah. But the new Gospel was much more besides. It reported Jesus's own teachings regarding the kingdom in his own words, it highlighted his miracles, and it cast an emphatic narrative light of Jesus's sufferings and death and their significance; and it validated by eyewitness testimony Jesus's miraculous resurrection from the dead.

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codex was cheaper to manufacture and easier to handle and transport: Colin H. Roberts and Theodore C. Skeat, *The Birth of the Codex* (London: Oxford University Press, 1983); Loveday Alexander, "Ancient Book Production and the Circulation of the Gospels," in *The Gospels For All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*, ed. Richard J. Bauckham (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 71–111; David C. Parker, *The Living Text of the Gospels* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 8–30, and on its textual repercussions, 196–202.

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Fifteenth-Century Hebrew Literature: Some Reflections on Textual Transmission for a Modern Edition

Arturo Prats Oliván

One of the things that remains to be done in medieval Hebrew philology is the preparation of an edition of the literary corpus (both poetry and prose) from fifteenth-century Iberia, particularly the Kingdom of Aragon. These poets belonged to a literary movement that called itself a “circle or group of poets”¹ organized in the city of Zaragoza around the figure of Shelomo de Piera² and his disciple, Don Vidal ben Labi.³ Among the members of this group were many of the foremost Jewish intellectuals of the day, such as Ashtruk Rimokh, who converted to Christianity and took the name Françesc de Sant Jordi.⁴ One of

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- 1 About this movement, see: Ángel Sáenz-Badillos and Judit Targarona Borrás, “La creación poética de los judíos aragoneses,” in *Aragón Sefarad*, ed. Alfredo Romero Santamaría and Miguel Ángel Motis Dolader, 2 vols. (Zaragoza: Diputación de Zaragoza, 2005), 1:467–483; Raymond P. Scheindlin, “Secular Hebrew Poetry in Fifteenth-Century Spain,” in *Crisis and Creativity in the Sephardic World, 1391–1648*, ed. Benjamin R. Gampel (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 25–37; Scheindlin, “The Hebrew Qasida in Spain,” in *Qasida Poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa*, ed. Stefan Sperl and Christopher Shackle, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 1:121–135.
 - 2 On this poet, see: Judit Targarona Borrás, “El *Dīwān* de Šelomoh ben Meshulam de Piera: Estado de la cuestión,” in *Jewish Studies at the Turn of the Twentieth Century: Proceedings of the 6th EAJS Congress, Toledo, July 1998*, ed. Judit Targarona Borrás and Angel Sáenz-Badillos, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 1:541–551; Targarona Borrás, “Correspondencia literaria entre Vidal Abenvenist y Salomón de Piera según el *Dīwān* de De Piera,” in *Actes del II Congrès per a l'Estudi dels Jueus en Territoris de Llengua Catalana* (Barcelona: Institut Europeu de la Mediterrània, 2005), 289–308; Judit Targarona Borrás and Tirza Vardi, “Literary Correspondence Between Vidal Abenvenist and Solomon de Piera,” *REJ* 167 (2008): 405–509; Judit Targarona Borrás and Raymond P. Scheindlin, “Literary Correspondence between Vidal Benvenist ben Lavi and Solomon ben Meshulam de Piera,” *REJ* 160 (2001): 61–133.
 - 3 Also of note was Vidal (Yosef) Abenvenist ben Labi (Gonzalo) de la Caballeria. On this poet see Targarona Borrás and Scheindlin, “Literary Correspondence”; Targarona Borrás and Vardi, “Literary Correspondence,” 410–412 regarding his name identification.
 - 4 For this poet, see: Ḥayyim Schirmann, *The History of Hebrew Poetry in Christian Spain and Southern France* (Hebrew), ed., supplemented, and annotated by Ezra Fleischer (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1997), 614–617; Frank Talmage, “The Françesc de Sant Jordi—Solomon Bonafed Letters,” in *Studies in Medieval Jewish History and Literature*, ed. Isadore Twersky (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 337–364.

the youngest members of the group, Shelomo Bonafed,⁵ kept the literary legacy of its founders alive for many years after they converted to Christianity at the time of the Disputation of Tortosa.⁶ This corpus of prose and poetry is one of the most extensive from the Middle Ages and yet did not receive the attention it deserved from scholars until well into the twentieth century.

Although there are editions of some texts by authors such as Shelomo Bonafed, Shelomo de Piera, and Vidal ben Labi,⁷ the majority of texts remain unpublished. In the second half of the twentieth century, there was increased interest in this literary period thanks to the work of scholars such as Ángel Sáenz-Badillos and Judit Targarona Borrás,⁸ among others,⁹ and, more recently, the work of Ram ben Shalom on Yom Tov ben Ḥana (Abenhanya).¹⁰ Unfortunately, to date, the number of texts that remain in manuscript is still greater than those that can be read in published editions. To make them known in their entirety is, as I commented at the beginning of this essay, one of the future challenges of medieval Hebrew literary studies.

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- 5 For this poet see: Abraham Gross, "The Poet Solomon Bonafed and the Events of His Generation" (Hebrew), in *The Frank Talmage Memorial Volume*, ed. Barry D. Walfish (Haifa: Haifa University, 1993), 35–61; Ana María Bejarano Escanilla, "Shelomoh Bonafed, poeta y polemista hebreo (s. xiv–xv)" (PhD diss, Universidad de Barcelona, 1989); Bejarano Escanilla, "Selomoh ben Reuben Bonafed, poeta y polemista," *Anuari de Filologia. Secció E. Estudis hebreus i arameus* 14 (1991): 87–101; Ángel Sáenz-Badillos, "Selomoh Bonafed at the Crossroad of Hebrew and Romance Cultures," in *Encuentros y Desencuentros: Spanish Jewish Cultural Interaction Throughout History*, ed. C. Carrete Parrondo, M. Dascal, F. Márquez Villanueva, and A. Sáenz-Badillos (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Publishing Projects, 2000), 343–379; Sáenz-Badillos, "Šelomoh Bonafed, último gran poeta de Sēfarad, y la poesía hebrea," *eHumanista: Journal of Iberian Studies* 2 (2002): 1–22; Sáenz-Badillos, "Strophic Poems in the diwān of Šelomoh Bonafed" (Hebrew), in *Studies in Hebrew Literature of the Middle Ages and Renaissance in Honor of Professor Yonah David*, ed. Tova Rosen and Avner Holtzman, *Te'uda* 19 (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 2002), 21–46.
- 6 The Disputation of Tortosa (1412–1413) was an event orchestrated by Pope Benedict XIII and Yehoshua ha-Lorqui (Pablo de Santa María), and supported by King Fernando, to convert Jews of the kingdom through debate. Don Vidal ben Labi de la Caballeria converted during the Disputation and Shelomo de Piera probably did the same at about that time.
- 7 Most of these editions are in the form of articles (see notes 2–4) or incorporated into other studies, as in the case of Yitzhak Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain* (Hebrew), revised ed. (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1959).
- 8 See notes 1–4 above.
- 9 We should also note Matti Huss, ed., *Don Vidal Benvenist's Melitsat Efer ve-Dinah: Studies and Critical Edition* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2003).
- 10 Ram Ben-Shalom, "The Courtier as the 'Scepter of Judah': The Letters and Panegyrics to Courtiers of Yomtov ben Hana, Scribe of the Jewish Community of Montalbán" (Hebrew), in *Ot LeTova: Essays in Honor of Professor Tova Rosen*, ed. Eli Yassif, Haviva Ishay, and Uriah Kfir (Beer Sheva: Heksherim Institute for Jewish and Israeli Literature, 2012), 196–224.

In planning the edition of a medieval Hebrew literary work, the models that serve as reference are principally the editions of the great authors of the Andalusí golden age (mainly the eleventh and twelfth centuries) that were published at the end of the nineteenth century and especially the beginning of the twentieth.¹¹ The so-called critical editions that were produced in the field of Hebrew philology were based (and today many continue to be based) on Lachmanian models that seek to recover an author's supposed original, thereafter corrupted through successive manuscript copies. Thanks to these editions, we are able today to read the work of authors such as Judah Halevi,¹² to cite one of the most iconic poets of al-Andalus; yet these editions disregard the physical medium of the text, the manuscript codex, in favor of an "ideal" text and do not allow readers to see the specific contexts of these works or take into account their complex transmission process.¹³

During the twentieth century, great progress was made in the edition of medieval works in the field of Romance philology. The growing interest in popular lyric and, above all, in epic prompted new questions about the methods for producing editions of texts. Until that point, classical philology proposed an "archeological" method of searching for an original for the works of Aristotle or Plato or even the text of the Bible, but could one search for the original of works like *El poema del Mio Cid* or *La Chanson de Roland*? How useful was it to try to find a supposed original of a poem that circulated—and even originated—in infinite variants, that "lived in the variant"?¹⁴ These questions, voiced by authors such as Bernard Cerquiglino,¹⁵ gave rise to a new approach to textual edition that no longer sought out the original but rather attempted to situate the text (the poem or the literary work) in general in its real context, focusing on the object of the manuscript not as a mere physical medium for an

11 See: Tova Rosen and Eli Yassif, "The Study of Hebrew Literature of the Middle Ages: Major Trends and Goals," in *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Studies*, ed. Martin Goodman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 241–294; Ángel Sáenz-Badillos, "El estudio de la poesía y la prosa hispanohebraica en los últimos cincuenta años," *Miscelánea de Estudios Árabes y Hebreos* 50 (2001): 133–161.

12 Rosen and Yassif, "Study of Hebrew Literature," 251.

13 For a consideration of the problems surrounding critical editions of medieval philosophical works in Hebrew and Arabic, see Colette Sirat, "Les éditions critiques: un mythe?" in *Les problèmes posés par l'édition critique des textes anciens et médiévaux*, ed. Jacqueline Hamesse (Louvain: Institut d'études médiévales, 1992), 159–171.

14 Ramón Menéndez Pidal said, in reference to the epic genre, that it "exists only in variants." See Bernard Cerquiglino, *In Praise of the Variant: A Critical History of Philology*, trans. Betsy Wing (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 38.

15 Cerquiglino, *In Praise of the Variant*.

“abstract” ideal text, but as the format in which the work lived and which constituted it. Along the same lines, attention was paid to the transmission of the text and to its place within the manuscript as a whole artifact, and the search for an author’s “original” work divorced from its co-text came to be questioned. This approach to editions taken by “New Philology” has also been challenged by scholars such as John Dagenais, who suggests that critical editions are not conducive to an understanding of medieval “scriptum” culture and that the only way to experience reading and literature as they were experienced in the Middle Ages is to study the manuscript artifact itself (the codex) directly.¹⁶

Despite these developments in the field of Romance literature, scholars of Hebrew literature continued to seek to produce an edition of the author’s recension original. In my current project, I attempt to take into account all of the aforementioned questions in order to find a way to edit these texts that respects the manuscript culture to which they belong and reflects the complexity of their transmission. In this article, I explore the stages of transmission that fifteenth-century Hebrew literature went through as it was passed down to us today. This exploration will give the reader an idea of the problems involved in preparing a critical edition of this corpus and will allow us to reflect on some methodological issues.

As these texts circulated, they went through different stages or phases of transmission, during which their contents and form were altered, until at last they arrived at the form that they take today and that we can actually read. The first phase corresponds to the original format in which they emerged, as they were first composed, in the majority of cases as letters, but also as notes, attachments to letters, booklets, etc. None of these original formats has survived. The second phase—which I have called the “author’s recension”—consisted of the texts being copied from their original format into manuscripts by the author himself, who transformed and incorporated one or more selections of his writings in booklets. In the third phase, the texts were copied from these recensions or from the copies of compilers who were not the author, or even from an original, into other manuscripts wherein other works were incorporated within a new context, making up new miscellanies or literary collections of poems and letters that constitute the manuscript corpus that has come down to us, although in a fragmentary form. The fourth and last phase corresponds to the copies and editions of some of these letters and poems in the modern or contemporary period.

16 John Dagenais, *The Ethics of Reading in Manuscript Culture: Glossing the Libro de Buen Amor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 3–29.

As for the first phase, the original texts were created in the form of letters or as booklets appended to letters or even written on loose sheets of paper.¹⁷ It was not until after they had passed from hand to hand in this precarious format or had lain for a long time in chests that the authors themselves or other copyists compiled these texts and rewrote them to create new cultural artifacts. These original “loose sheets of paper” have not survived, but occasionally we can reconstruct the original format thanks to the fact that the sections were preserved (to a greater or lesser degree) in the versions copied in the authors’ recensions or in later manuscript copies. This is the case with the signatures (*ḥatimot*) and other writing that was on the outer fold of a letter (*ʿal ha-ketav*). In the letters that have been reconstructed from this period we find two basic types of literary structures: poem-letters and letters in prose. The letters in prose contain no poetry within their structure, although they might attach poems to the missive by copying them at the end of the letter itself. The poem-letters, on the other hand, include not only sections in prose, generally rhymed, but also poems; these are the most common form of literary correspondence among late-fourteenth-century and fifteenth-century authors. Judith Targarona Borrás and Raymond P. Scheindlin have described these literary structures on the basis of the correspondence between Shelomo de Piera and Don Vidal ben Labi.¹⁸

The original letters were addressed to specific contemporaries of the author with whom he carried on a correspondence or wished to, although the letters were probably read publicly¹⁹ in various contexts (synagogues, places of study, the homes of prominent people, meetings among friends, etc.) and were even written with the intention of their circulating in the communities to which they were sent.²⁰ In addition to letters addressed to specific people, a particular genre of letters is amply represented in this literary corpus: the so-called letters

17 On the original textual formats of the Romance *cancionero* poems, see: Ana M. Gómez-Bravo, “A huma senhora que lhe disse”: Sobre la práctica social de la autoría y la noción de texto en el *Cancioneiro geral* de Resende y la lírica cancioneril ibérica,” *La Corónica* 32 (2003): 43–64; Gómez-Bravo, “Memorias y archivos. Modelos de producción textual y antologías poéticas del siglo xv,” *Cancionero General* 2 (2004): 53–87.

18 Targarona Borrás and Scheindlin, “Literary Correspondence,” 70–71.

19 Eleazar Gutwirth, “Hebrew Letters, Hispanic Mail: Communication Among Fourteenth-Century Aragon Jewry,” in *Communication in the Jewish Diaspora: The Pre-Modern World*, ed. Sophia Menache (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 257–282.

20 An example is the case of Shelomo Bonafed’s letters connected to the satire depicting the Zaragoza aljama, known also as Bonafed’s dispute or polemic with the leaders of the Zaragoza aljama, thanks to J. Schirmann’s edition: Ḥayyim Schirmann, “Solomon Bonafed’s Polemic against the Grandees of Zaragoza” (Hebrew), *Qoveš ʿal Yad* 4 (1946): 8–64.

of recommendation or introduction, in Hebrew *'iggerot 'orhiyyot*. These literary epistles are elaborately wrought and were written to be presented by their carrier in communities other than his own or to different people or communal institutions with the purpose of vouching for the intentions of the carrier and thus helping him obtain what he was seeking, normally assistance in collecting for dowries for marriageable daughters²¹ or in finding them husbands, or simply to introduce the carrier in a new community that he was visiting for some reason. These letters were normally written by a well-known figure or the rabbi of the community of origin and signed by another respected individual from that community or a nearby one, with the possible addition of the names of further people.

In the second phase of transmission, these texts were compiled and written out, frequently by the author himself, as in the cases of Shelomo Bonafed and Shelomo de Piera. These compilations first took the form of collections of poems or “booklets,” intended to be addressed to a particular person or to circulate among a group of people, and then the form of *cancioneros*: manuscripts that include collections of Romance poetry and prose by different authors and that constitute the fifteenth century’s lyrical format par excellence. These recensions also included letters and poems by other authors with whom the first author corresponded, forming what scholars in the field call “cycles,” that is, groups of letters and poems that were exchanged between two or more authors, or groups of texts on a common theme that were addressed to the same recipient. In this way, the original letters were transformed into new texts by the authors themselves, sometimes changing the original meaning of the letters.

We find a good example of this literary and editorial phenomenon in two of the letters in rhymed prose that belong to the cycle of letters exchanged between Shelomo Bonafed and Senior ben Meir. Both letters—one by Bonafed and the other by Senior ben Meir—have been preserved in MS Mich. 155,²² as well as in MS Sassoon 590.²³ The two manuscripts, however, present dif-

21 Eleazar Gutwirth cites Yitshak Baer in Gutwirth, “On the Background to Cota’s *Epitalamio Burlusco*,” *Romanische Forschungen* 97 (1985): 4n20. He makes reference to a text about the founding of a charitable brotherhood in Zaragoza to raise money for dowries for poor and orphaned girls.

22 Hereafter referred to as Mich. 155. This manuscript is held in the Bodleian Library in Oxford and is described in: Adolf Neubauer and A.E. Cowley, *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library and in the College Libraries of Oxford*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1886–1906), 1:670–678 (no. 1984); Malachi Beit-Arié, et al., eds., *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library: Supplement of Addenda and Corrigenda to Vol. 1 (A. Neubauer’s Catalogue)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 359.

23 Hereafter referred to as Sassoon 590. This manuscript is held at the Bodleian Library in

ferent recensions of these letters, with noticeable differences between them. As we will see, Sassoon 590 is closer to the original letters exchanged between Bonafed and Senior ben Meir (i.e., the first phase of transmission), while Mich. 155 contains a version of the correspondence that is very close to the recension that Bonafed made of his work (i.e., the second phase of transmission).

In the heading of the cycle contained in Mich. 155, Bonafed situates the circumstances surrounding his writing to Senior ben Meir, explaining the poems that he includes and the prose texts that he wants to present:

And when I saw, a long time ago, that the poets Don Vidal Benvenist, blessed be his memory, and Don Vidal ben Labi, brought their poems before the sage R. Senior, I felt a writer's jealousy and I followed their footsteps with letters full of amorous words and pleasing poems and I imagined that maybe God blessed them because of the described theme, since they had been inspired by a spirit of grace to compose poems about him [Senior] and to exaggerate the beauty of his affairs and his compositions when this sage worthy of being clothed in the tunic of their praise appeared before them. For this reason, in spite of having grown old and being now gray in the art of composing verses, I came to this good hill, I sharpened my kidneys and my thoughts and I based these verses on the columns of their praise and I sent them to the aforementioned R. Senior in order to discover if my literary offering pleased him.

Mich. 155, fols. 47v–48r

As we can see, this is a literary cycle in which Bonafed seeks to compete with other poets by sending his “offering” of verses to R. Senior. Bonafed incorporates these poems into his recension and also includes another prose letter which he begins thus:

And when I heard it said that this sage desired to see how much talent I had for artistic prose, where rhyming is not necessary nor weighing thought in the balance, after having seen some of my metered poems, the breath of his desire blew in me and lifted me to my words' feet to run like a deer through the mountains of his high praise. I presented myself to him and began to say ...

Mich. 155, fol. 49v

Oxford (Ox. Hebre. 184) and is described in David S. Sassoon, *Ohel David: Descriptive Catalogue of the Hebrew and Samaritan Manuscripts in the Sassoon Library*, 2 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), 461–470.

In addition to this letter, Bonafed also includes the response from Senior ben Meir.

These two letters have survived in another version in Sassoon 590, with some significant differences between the two versions. The version preserved in Sassoon 590 does not include a similar literary opening to that found in Mich. 155 (translated above), as the text here is not a literary “offering,” but something less poetic. While the literary structure of the letters, written in florid rhymed prose, is identical in both versions, Sassoon 590 includes a section from each of them that is absent in Mich. 155 and that changes the meaning of the text. In the first letter, addressed by Bonafed to Senior, the main subject of the section in question is a legal consultation regarding the status of the *Aguna*,²⁴ and in the second letter, R. Senior ben Meir apologizes for not being able to provide an appropriate response to the question posed to him, since he does not have access to his books, which have been destroyed (probably during the confiscations of books that occurred following the Disputation of Tortosa)²⁵ and is not confident that he can settle the issue without them:

That is why I have not been able to assume the responsibility of pronouncing on halakah, especially after my sky toppled down to my ground and I lost, at the time of the destruction (*sha'at ha-shemad*), three books (*telata sedarim*)²⁶ with Rashi's and Nachmanides's commentaries, and I was left with only some study books (*limudiyut*) that were saved from the fire.

Sassoon 590, fols. 222–223

From one recension to the next, the meaning of the text changes. In Sassoon 590, we have two letters in which a message is sent requesting information, which the recipient is unable to provide and therefore sends his regrets: the letters in Sassoon 590 preserve a text that is closer to the first phase of transmission. Bonafed then used these same texts in the second phase of transmission—removing the entire section about the request for assistance in

24 In Hebrew, “tied” or “anchored.” See Ruth 1:13. Within halakah, it is the marital status of a married woman who is separated from her husband but is not divorced nor a widow. See Menachem Elon, “Agunah,” *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd ed., ed. Fred Skolkik and Michael Berenbaum, 22 vols. (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), 1:510–520.

25 Eleazar Gutwirth and Miguel Ángel Motis Dolader, “Twenty-Six Jewish Libraries from Fifteenth-Century Spain,” *The Library: Transactions of the Bibliographical Society* 18 (1996): 27–53.

26 He seems to be referring to copies of “orders” of the Talmud.

resolving a legal question and leaving only the sections that seemed to him to have greater “aesthetic” value—and incorporated them into a literary cycle intended to show “how much talent [he] had for artistic prose,” as he says in the opening he wrote to introduce the cycle in Mich. 155.

In this case, as in the cases of other poets like Shelomo de Piera, the headings of the letters and poems are essentially what make them distinctly literary pieces. The headings are an integral part of each unit of poetry or prose: written in Hebrew,²⁷ in the first person, and frequently composed in a highly elaborated rhymed prose, the headings contextualize each work and cycle in the literary miscellany, explaining the circumstances surrounding the composition of each poem, letter, or cycle. Occasionally they are so long that later copyists interpreted them as stand-alone texts—something that also happened with the sections in prose in the poem-letters—and copied them separately. Up to now, no fifteenth-century autograph manuscripts by any of these major poets has been discovered, but the study of Bonafed’s work indicates that there were copies that were very close to these “author’s booklets” or recensions, as in the case of Mich. 155, in which almost all the headings are in the first person and the date of the copy is around the second half of the fifteenth century.

A very good example of these authors’ recension booklets is Shelomo Bonafed’s satirical cycle against the Zaragoza *aljama*.²⁸ These texts seem to have been fashioned as a small stand-alone work, one of those “booklets” as the author himself calls them. It circulated in the form of letters to some of his contemporaries, which Bonafed sent with the intention of disseminating it more widely, entertaining his correspondents, and ridiculing the targets of his derision, mainly the community’s rabbi, Yosef Yeshua. These texts are an excellent example of how the author transformed them from their original epistolary form into an entity in their own right. They also exemplify how the epistolary nature of letters influences the plurality of later versions, since the author himself sent this work to different people and each time included a different version of the texts, as we can observe in the letter “When the stars of your sayings sang in unison” (*be-ran yaḥad koḳbe ḥmareḳa*) addressed to

27 We should point out the difference between these poetry compilations and the *dīwāns* of the classical Andalusī poets. The headings of the poems in the latter were composed in Arabic and the structure of the *dīwān* resembles that of the Arabic *dīwān*. See Uriel Simon, *Four Approaches to the Book of Psalms: From Saadiah Gaon to Abraham Ibn Ezra*, trans. Lenn J. Schramm (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), 220–224.

28 See note 20 above.

Noah Chinillo,²⁹ in which Bonafed references the satire that he had written ridiculing the leaders of the aljama:

After all, there is no way to deal with the scoundrels other than to lambast them in writing³⁰ and to pray for them. That is why I made an addition to the letter I have addressed to Ya'akob Albalag and I also wrote to his venerable father, Don Shelomo, in Romance and rhymed prose. This letter in Romance³¹ is mixed with the sacred tongue, which is worthy of my heart. The truth is that the booklet that I am sending to Your Excellency [Chinillo], I arranged for our fine brother Rabbi Abraham Saragosi, My God keep him, since he came by here with Rabbi ... May God keep him; and they told me that he was at your palace celebrating the feast of the Passover and therefore, my lord, do me the kindness of giving him my greetings and this booklet after Your Grace has read it and had a good laugh. The metered poems [that it contains] are excellent. It also includes the letter to Don Shelomo Albalag and retains its flavor,³² as well as new things in the letter to Ya'akob Albalag, as you will see at the end of the letter.

Sassoon 590, fols. 189–190

In addition to the “mobile” nature of these texts,³³ this letter also makes known the existence of a group of texts that are absent from the author’s recensions and the later copies in *cancioneros* and miscellanies that were produced after the fifteenth century. These were texts composed in “Romance,” probably Catalan, which either Bonafed himself or later copyists decided not to preserve. This same phenomenon is seen with regard to the production of other Hebrew poets of the same period, such as Shelomo de Piera.³⁴

29 For information about this physician-poet and his family, see: Alisa Mehuyas Ginio, “La familia Ginio (Chinillo, Chiniello, Tchenio, Tchnyo, Ginio): De Aragón a Salónica y Jerusalén,” *Miscelánea de Estudios Árabes y Hebreos* 41.2 (1992): 137–149; Edwin Seroussi, “Catorce canciones en romance como modelos de poemas hebreos del siglo xv,” *Sef* 65 (2005): 385–411.

30 Literally “narrate,” from the Hebrew root *s-p-r*.

31 Unfortunately, this letter has not been located.

32 Jer 48:11.

33 On this aspect of the “mobility” of the text and of the different “original” versions of a single poem, see Arturo Prats Oliván, “A Hebrew Poetry Contest in Early-Fifteenth-Century Zaragoza,” *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 6.2 (2014): 214–236.

34 Letters written in Romance are mentioned on numerous occasions, one of which is found in the opening of the letter addressed by Shelomo de Piera to Moshe Abbas: “I wrote a letter to Moshe Abbas in a foreign language (*la'az*)” (Mich. 155, fol. 223v).

On the basis of these compilations or recensions, various copyists in different periods copied this literature into manuscript miscellanies: the third phase in the transmission of these texts. The various manuscripts containing the works of fifteenth-century authors like Bonafed or Shelomo de Piera are the work of copyists who reorganized the earlier phases of the text, dismantling its structures and reshaping them by copying just the verse or just the prose in a letter, or only fragments of poems, or by changing and manipulating the opening or other sections of a letter. The manuscript copies of the works of these poets range chronologically, geographically, and culturally from the Kingdom of Aragon in the second half of the fifteenth century to nineteenth-century Baghdad, passing through Italy, Egypt, Constantinople: in short, all the places where those exiled in the Sefardic diaspora settled and where the Hispano-Hebrew cultural heritage was refashioned in new contexts. Just as the new cultural contexts in which these copies were conceived and produced changed, the contents of the copies and the criteria for including or eliminating literary materials likewise changed.

In the second half of the fifteenth century, literary miscellanies were produced that included the author's recensions and other literary materials, but these codices have not survived intact up to the present. Currently we only have factitious codices, from the fifteenth century and later, which gather together diverse literary material and preserve fragments of these miscellaneous codices, on the basis of which we can reconstruct the fifteenth-century Hebrew *cancioneros*. In some cases, they are quires that have been split (such as those preserved in Cincinnati)³⁵ or composite codices in which several independent units are bound together.³⁶ In some cases, these independent units are related to each other by virtue of being literary works from the same period and the same circle, as in the case of Mich. 155, whereas other composite codices contain very different kinds of material that were bound together during the modern period and thus constitute what is called an allo-genetic codex. The field of codicology is of enormous help in understanding the transmission of these literary texts in the fifteenth century and is an essential discipline for shedding light on the format of *cancioneros* from this period as well as on their

35 This manuscript is found broken up into different fragments (MSS 500, 316, 314, and 315) in the Klau Library of Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati University. All of these fragments belonged to the same codicological unit.

36 The terminology I use here comes from Johan Peter Gumbert, "Codicological Units: Towards a Terminology for the Stratigraphy of the Non-Homogeneous Codex," in *Il codice miscellaneo. Tipologie e funzioni. Atti del Convegno internazionale, Cassino 14–17 maggio 2003*, ed. Edoardo Crisci and Orzono Pecere (Casino: Università degli Studi di Cassino, 2004), 29.

composition. Unfortunately, a study of this kind has not been carried out on literary manuscripts from the fifteenth century, although the usefulness of such studies has been shown for understanding the transmission of other kinds of works.³⁷

An analysis of the contents of these miscellaneous manuscripts that we have called Hebrew *cancioneros* reveals that they are collections of various authors' works: sometimes preserving the author's recension (i.e., the second phase of transmission) and including in turn the work of other authors with whom the first author exchanged letters. A preliminary comparison with similar Romance *cancioneros* from the same period, particularly the Catalan *cancionero* preserved at the University of Zaragoza,³⁸ reveals many similarities as regards content and structure, but it would be premature to draw any conclusions at this point. Again preliminarily, it seems that these fifteenth-century Hebrew *cancioneros* have similarities and differences with both the Arabic tradition, in which the early transmission of the works of classical Hebrew Andalusí poets is embedded,³⁹ and the tradition of Romance *cancioneros*, which was just developing at this time in the Iberian Peninsula.

Some poems by authors of *cancioneros* were also transmitted in another format, distinct from the literary miscellany. This provides a further example of the meaning of a text changing as its transmission format changes. For example, some of Bonafed's liturgical poems were transmitted—in addition to in his literary *cancionero* (Mich. 155)—in the *Mahzor* format of the period in MS Mich. 290, which is a fifteenth-century manuscript copied on parchment and used for liturgical purposes. It contains some poems by this author and by other contemporary authors⁴⁰ that had already been adopted for liturgical use.

Compilations of poems and prose texts by fifteenth-century poets were put together in the Sefardic diaspora, beginning in the sixteenth century in Italy and the Ottoman Empire, and continuing up to the eighteenth century in Amsterdam. Most of these manuscripts attempt to abridge the poetic production of the fifteenth century as part of the "Sefardic literary legacy" that these communities construct as their common literary heritage. They typically include poems by classical Andalusí authors together with the miscellaneous work

37 Javier del Barco, "The Production and Transmission of Hebrew Miscellanies on Greek Geometry: A Case Study of MS Madrid, BNE 5474," *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies Newsletter* 5 (2013): 25–29.

38 Mariano Baselga y Ramírez, *El cancionero catalán de la Universidad de Zaragoza* (Zaragoza: Cacilio Gasca, Librero, 1896).

39 See Simon, *Four Approaches*, 220–224.

40 Seroussi, "Catorce canciones," 385–411.

of these fifteenth-century authors, as well as authors contemporary with the copyist, thus forming atemporal, communal Sefardic *cancioneros* that connect the diasporic present in Amsterdam, Baghdad, Istanbul, or Italy with a mythical past in al-Andalus. As displayed in MS Schoken 37 (compiled in Baghdad in the sixteenth century),⁴¹ MS Sassoon 590 (compiled perhaps in Italy in the seventeenth century),⁴² and the *Segulat Melakhim* manuscript (compiled in Amsterdam in the eighteenth century),⁴³ these collections include works by writers ranging from the eleventh-century poet Solomon ibn Gabirol to authors contemporary with the compilers of the miscellanies themselves. These manuscripts were probably copied from manuscripts from the fifteenth century or even earlier, as the copyists sometimes mention. They thus constitute genuine Hebrew *cancioneros*, through which different communities constructed their Hebrew cultural legacy.

After the invention of the printing press, the circulation of printed texts (as well as the manuscript copies made from those printed texts) affected how fifteenth-century works were preserved and understood. For example, in some cases texts were extracted from their contexts in *cancioneros* in order to be incorporated into other kinds of works. Such is the case of the letters exchanged between Françesc de Sant Jordi and Shelomo Bonafed,⁴⁴ whose distribution and copying took on a different dimension when they were incorporated by Isaac Akrish into *’iggeret ’ogeret*, a manual on religious polemics that brought

41 This codex is very well known since it was used as the basis for an early-twentieth-century edition of the secular poetry of Moses ibn Ezra and Solomon ibn Gabirol. See: Moses ibn Ezra, *Secular Poems* (Hebrew), ed. Heinrich Brody, 2 vols. (Berlin and Jerusalem: Schocken, 1935–1941), 17–19; Solomon ibn Gabirol, *Secular Poems* (Hebrew), eds. Haim Brody and Jefim Schirmann (Jerusalem: Schocken Institute, 1974), 711. The manuscript had an eventful career from the time it was copied in the seventeenth century in Baghdad, up to when it came into the hands of the bibliophile Schoken. The Schoken Institute has a copy in bound paper in various volumes, which was the one that I was able to consult. On the vicissitudes of this manuscript, see David Yellin, “Gilgulei ketav-yad,” *Moznayyim* 11 (1931): 11–12.

42 In his catalog, David Sassoon identifies the copyist of this manuscript as the same one who copied MS no. 595 in the catalog (Sassoon, *Ohel David*, 398). This latter manuscript was involved with an edition that was published in Venice, so it is possible that we are dealing with a copyist in Italy, though we do not know that for certain.

43 This manuscript is held at the ’ets ha-Ḥayyim Library (Livreria Montezinos) in Amsterdam and is described in Lajb Fuks and Renate G. Fuks-Mansfeld, *Hebrew and Judaic Manuscripts in Amsterdam Public Collections. Volume 2: Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Ets Haim/Livreria Montezinos Sephardic Community of Amsterdam* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 240–241.

44 Talmage, “Françesc de Sant Jordi.”

together disparate works by different medieval authors.⁴⁵ In this new context, Bonafed's and Françesc's letters were transformed into another, very different kind of literature from what they were as part of the recension preserved in Mich. 155. When the letters were extracted from their manuscript context, the poem that appeared in Bonafed's recension (Mich. 155) was eliminated, and the context of a fifteenth-century literary *cancionero* was removed in order for the letters to be used polemically to criticize Christian dogma in the new context of Constantinople's Sefardi community.

Finally, beginning with the Wissenschaft des Judentums movement, these miscellaneous manuscripts and printed works gave way to editions published in academic books or journals. Scholars such as Aharon Kaminka and Yosef Patai attempted to reclaim the poetic works of medieval Hebrew authors that were languishing in the silence of manuscripts.⁴⁶ Interest in publishing these texts has been taking hold since the beginning of the twentieth century in the academic world of the humanities, where some critical editions have been published that now serve as the basis for studies of all kinds.

Traditionally, the aim of editing texts has been to reconstruct, using the Lachmanian method, the second phase of transmission, the author's recension.⁴⁷ In this article, I propose a method for producing future critical editions of these texts focusing on their transmission in fifteenth-century *cancioneros* (i.e., the third phase of transmission), reconstructing their contents on the basis of fragments from extant miscellanies and supplemented by texts that have been preserved in later compilations. In order to do so, we should first identify the *cancioneros* from the period that have survived in fragmentary form, such as

45 Isaac Akrish (b. 1530), the son of an expelled Spanish Jew who lived in Naples and Thessaloniki, travelled throughout the Mediterranean seeking to save manuscripts. As a result of this search, he published various printed books in which he compiled the works that he had collected. One of these was *Iggeret Ogeret*, printed between 1575 and 1577: Isaac Akrish, ed., *Iggeret Ogeret* (Constantinople, 1577).

46 Aharon (Armand) Kaminka, "The Last Spanish Poets: the Diwan of R. Solomon Bonafed" (Hebrew) *Mizraḥ u-ma'arav* 2 (1895): 107–127; Kaminka, "Poetry and Belles Lettres of Solomon ben Rabbi Reuben Bonafed" (Hebrew), *Ha-Zofeh le-hokhmat Yisra'el* 10 (1926): 288–295, 12 (1928): 33–42; Yosef Patai, "Love Poetry of Solomon Bonafed" (Hebrew) *Ha-Zofeh le-hokhmat Yisra'el* 10 (1926): 220–223; Patai, "Secular Poetry of Solomon Bonafed," in *From the Secrets of Poetry: Lectures at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Ruben Mas, 1939), 67–85.

47 This is the case for texts such as Bonafed's polemic with the Zaragoza aljama, in which the editor "reconstructs" an original from the different versions extant in manuscripts. See note 20 above. This is also the goal of the editions of texts by Shelomo de Piera and Vidal Benvenist: *The Diwan* [of] *Solomon ben Meshullam Dapiera* (Hebrew), ed. Simon Bernstein (New York: Alim, 1942); Targarona Borrás and Vardi, "Literary Correspondence," 424.

Mich. 155, and publish their texts in full, following the order of the manuscript, as well as including other codicological features such as the notes and marginalia, textual divisions, etc.⁴⁸ In addition, there are texts dispersed among other manuscripts that are not properly fifteenth-century *cancioneros*, but that were copied from them, such as the cases where sections of prose or poetry that are incomplete or split from their *cancionero* context are collected into later literary compilations (this is true of the *Segulat Melakhim*). We should attempt to find the link with these extant materials and incorporate them (noting their provenance) in the appropriate sections of the original *cancioneros*, in order to fill in the lacunae left by the deterioration of the original codicological units in which fifteenth-century Hebrew *cancioneros* were transmitted. In this way, I believe we can finally have access to the whole literary corpus from the fifteenth century in a format that is suited to its contents and that remains as faithful as possible to the medieval artifact through which it has been transmitted.

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48 Initially, in order to make this project practicable, it should be undertaken in phases and divided according to "author's *cancioneros*," such as that of Shelomo Bonafed. This does not mean discarding texts by other authors that are part of these *cancioneros*, nor losing sight of the final goal, which should always be to reconstruct the corpus of the Hebrew *cancionero* in its entirety.

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Desert and Palace: Poetics of Place in Naṣrid Poems to the Prophet

Cynthia Robinson

He held out hold for the traces of passion, but they brought agony,
 Along with the breeze of ardent love, and emaciation gave instruction.
 He became the intimate companion of sighs, disquieted by memories of
 love.

And he wandered among the heights (*anjada*) [of Najd] with the people
 of passion ...¹

IBN ZAMRAK, recited at Muḥammad v's 1362 *mawlid*



On a December night in 1362, in the context of a particularly lavish celebration of the *mawlid*, the Prophet Muḥammad's birthday, Naṣrid sultan Muḥammad v invited members of Granada's Sufi confraternities to perform *dhikr* before the assembled crowd of dignitaries and distinguished guests. In addition to copious offerings of food and refreshment, the sultan had provided the setting—an open esplanade surrounded by the architectural and horticultural splendors of Granada's Alhambra—and the mood: ambient lighting and a series of *qasīdas* (or “odes”), including the verses by Ibn Zamrak cited above, composed specifically for the occasion and sung in heart-melting tones by a professional reciter, or *musmīʿ*. The result was—at least for some—mystical ecstasy.

These festivities, including an anthology of the verses recited, were thoroughly chronicled by Lisān al-Dīn ibn al-Khaṭīb (d. 1374).² Likewise, a good part

1 Lisān al-Dīn ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Nufādat al-jirāb fi ʿulālat al-Ightirāb*, ed. Aḥmad Mukhtār ʿAbd al-Fattāh ʿAbbādī (Cairo: Dār al-Kātib al-ʿArabī, 1968), 305; all translations, unless otherwise noted, are my own.

2 On the *mawlid*, see: Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Nufādat al-jirāb*; Emilio García Gómez, *Foco de antigua luz sobre la Alhambra: Desde un texto de Ibn el-Jatib en 1362* (Madrid: Instituto Egipcio de Estudios Islámicos en Madrid, 1988); N.J.G. Kaptein, *Muḥammad's Birthday Festival: Early History*

of the backdrop against which they transpired has been preserved, whether physically or through Ibn al-Khaṭīb's minute descriptions.³ Together, these vestiges of the past offer unique insight into the deployment of a particular symbolic language—both visual and verbal, in the latter case often articulated in the *nasīb* (or “amatory prelude”) section of the *qasīdas* performed—through which the Naṣrids both codified and shaped experience. On the occasion of the *mawlid*, this codification and shaping had both devotional and political ends: as noted, many of those present were reported to have experienced mystical ecstasy. Likewise, Muḥammad v's celebration of the Prophet's birthday was a lavish and very public bid for political legitimacy, aimed both at a local audience and a Mārinid one, as the Naṣrid dynasty sought to substantiate its claims to the status of caliphate.⁴

This essay will focus on two elements of the symbolic language referenced above. The first is light, which has long been recognized as a potent signifier in Islamic culture, particularly as devotions to the Prophet became more intense during the later medieval period, with Muḥammad being viewed as one of light's holiest manifestations.⁵ In both the visual and verbal realms of Naṣrid court culture, it exists in close contact with and relation to plants, flowers, and vegetation.⁶ The second symbolic element is that of place. It would be logical to expect that the *nasīb*s of the Naṣrid *qasīdas* recited on the occasion of the court's celebration of Muḥammad's birthday be employed to evoke the Ḥijāz, the land of his birth. Such, however, is not the case. Instead, much in the nostalgic key most recently examined by Alexander Elinson and

in the Central Muslim Lands and Development in the Muslim West until the 10th/16th Century (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 97–141; Cynthia Robinson, “Tents of Silk and Trees of Light in the Lands of Najd: The Aural and the Visual at a Mawlid Celebration in the Alhambra,” in *Music, Sound, and Architecture in Islam*, ed. Michael Frishkopf and Federico Spinetti (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2018), 199–227; Cynthia Robinson and Amalia Zomeño, “On Muḥammad v, Ibn al-Khaṭīb and Sufism,” in *The Articulation of Power in Medieval Iberia and the Maghrib*, ed. Amira K. Bennison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 153–174.

3 See below, under “The Setting.”

4 María Jesús Rubiera Mata, “El califato nazarí,” *Al-Qanṭara* 29 (2008): 293–305; Kaptein, *Muḥammad's Birthday Festival*; Robinson and Zomeño, “On Muḥammad v, Ibn al-Khaṭīb and Sufism.”

5 See Annemarie Schimmel, *And Muhammad Is His Messenger: The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 123–143, 290–294.

6 This has been explored in several of this author's previous publications. See especially: Cynthia Robinson, “Marginal Ornament: Poetics, Mimesis, and Devotion in the Palace of the Lions,” *Muqarnas* 25 (2008): 185–214; Robinson, “Tents of Silk.” This essay represents something of a continuation of the latter, further probing specific points—particularly the significance of the Najd—which it was not possible to explore fully in that instance.

Jaroslav Stetkevych,⁷ these compositions suggest a floating, difficult-to-pin-down desert-scape, located—when it is located anywhere—in Najd. Ibn Zamrak, in the verses cited above, makes the allusion subtly: through the use of the fourth-form verb *anjada*, which evokes wandering among highlands, or plateaus, adding a reference to the “people of passion” (*ahl al-‘ishq*), which his audience would associate with the storied and chaste Bedouin lovers of the *Jāhiliyya*. Other poets, as shall be seen in the pages that follow, make the reference more directly.

Though there was some disagreement about exactly what territories and land features comprised the Najd, medieval geographers and lexicographers concurred: Najd was the place where the purest Arabic was spoken.⁸ For others, its plateaus were witnesses to the crazed wanderings of madman Majnūn, as he followed the traces of his vanished beloved—it even contained the “oasis of Leyla.”⁹ Stetkevych qualifies Najd—in the context of the *nasīb*—not as a specific place or location, but rather as a moveable feast for poetic desire, longing, and nostalgia.¹⁰ For the Naṣrids, as will be argued in the pages that follow, Najd was all these things and more, and their particular version of the land of longing, wherever it existed—in the East, next door, or only in the collective Naṣrid imaginary—was a powerful component of a symbolic language that served the dynasty in its two-pronged quest for holiness and power.

These potent images of the Najd, however, made but fleeting appearances on the Naṣrid public stage: such lavishly orchestrated festivities in honor of the Prophet’s birthday were a one-off in Granada, at least as far as the court was concerned.¹¹ Official attitudes toward Sufism and the practices it encouraged hardened during ensuing years, and much sifting through primary sources will be required in order to determine whether such evocations persisted and under what circumstances.

I have divided what follows into four sections. The first describes, in some detail, the *mawlid* celebration at which Ibn Zamrak’s composition (*baits* of which were cited in the opening pages of this essay) was performed; the second describes, briefly, the setting—that is, the Alhambra. The third addresses

7 Alexander E. Elinson, *Looking Back at al-Andalus: The Poetics of Loss and Nostalgia in Medieval Arabic and Hebrew Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2009); Jaroslav Stetkevych, *The Zephyrs of Najd: The Poetics of Nostalgia in the Classical Arabic Nasīb* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 121.

8 Adolf Grohmann and K.S. McLachlan, “Najd,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 1954–2009), 8:864–866.

9 Ibid.

10 Stetkevych, *Zephyrs of Najd*.

11 See Robinson and Zomeño, “On Muḥammad v, Ibn al-Khaṭīb and Sufism.”

the politics that surrounded this “sacred” event, much of which involved concerns that, today at any rate, would be seen as “secular,” but which, in an age of little-to-no separation between mosque and state, had wide-reaching ramifications for all facets of culture, the “sacred” included. Finally, I will turn to “experience,” which will lead back to the question of place: of, Why Najd?

1 The Event

On a December evening in 1362, Naṣrid sultan Muḥammad v opened the palace gates to admit a flood of guests that, though no exact head count has been preserved, must have numbered in the hundreds.¹² Celebrations of the Prophet’s birthday, though they consistently encountered the mistrust and disapproval of the more conservative sectors of the religious hierarchy, were increasingly frequent from the thirteenth century on in Islamic contexts. They would appear to have had their beginnings in the “popular” spheres, rather than at court—they were frequent, for example, in Sufi establishments such as *khanqahs* and *zāwiyas*, and may first have taken place in Fatimid Egypt during the twelfth century; if this is the case, then the festivity would likely have Shīʿite connections, at least in its earliest days.¹³ Be that as it may, the *mawlid* quickly spread, both to the east and the west, with documented and influential manifestations in Mecca (where even the holiest of Meccan sanctuaries were opened to the public in honor of the celebration), Mosul—particularly notable were the celebrations in the district of Irbil organized by one of Saladin’s brothers-in-law—and across North Africa, with beginnings traceable to the thirteenth century, from whence it made its way to al-Andalus.¹⁴

The Naṣrid celebration was large, with a notable mixture of social classes in evidence, from the royal family, in all its numerous and not-always-amicable branches, to descendants of the Prophet (about whom more below), to members of local Sufi confraternities (those invited by the sultan to perform *dhikr*, about which more below), to diplomatic guests from the Mārinid court at

12 Again, for the event in question, see: Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Nuḥḍat*; García Gómez, *Foco de antigua luz*; Robinson and Zomeño, “On Muḥammad v, Ibn al-Khaṭīb and Sufism.”

13 Kaptein, *Muḥammad’s Birthday Festival*, 39–42.

14 Bárbara Boloix Gallardo, “Las primeras celebraciones del *Mawlid* en al-Andalus y Ceuta, según la *Tuḥfat al-muḡtarib* de al-Qaštālī y el *Maḡṣad al-ṣarīf* de al-Bādīsī,” *Anaquel de Estudios Árabes* 22 (2011): 79–96; Celia del Moral and Fernando N. Velázquez Basanta, “La casida mawlidiyya de Abu l-Qasim al-Barjī,” *Al-Andalus Maghreb* 2 (1994): 83–120; Ahmed Salmī, “Le genre des poèmes de nativité (*maulūdiyya-s*), dans le royaume de Grenade et au Maroc au XIII^e et XIV^e siècle,” *Hespéris* 43 (1956): 335–435.

Fez to the Granadan bon ton, to select Christians (likely merchants) specially invited for the occasion. The celebration began around sunset, with prayers and sermons and a procession involving hundreds of candles. Certain among the guests greeted the sultan personally, as he sat in state, and everyone assumed the place designated to him or her, thus composing a microcosm of the sultanate's social order.¹⁵

A lavish meal was served, and the majority of the night was given over to the recitation of poetic compositions produced especially for the occasion, among them the verses by Ibn Zamrak cited earlier, which will provide the centerpiece for the final, "experiential" section of this essay. The singer, or *musmi'*, was specially "imported" for the occasion, and went by the sobriquet "al-Mārinī," or "the Mārinid," his connections to that dynasty's court thus being clear, though he was reputed to have been born and educated in Mosul. These recitations were accompanied by the aforementioned performances of *dhikr* and dance by members of local Sufi confraternities. A final, lavish meal was served at dawn.¹⁶

The most important account we have of Muḥammad v's *mawlid* celebration, and quite a detailed one, we owe to Lisān al-Dīn ibn al-Khaṭīb, Naṣrid minister, courtier, historian, linguist and—*pace* the misgivings of some scholars on this score, I believe that he was one—Sufi.¹⁷ Despite his careful description of the equally careful choreography of the event in its many stages, one cannot help but come away with an impression of chaos—hundreds of people, the lavish meals, the brilliant lighting displays, sumptuous textiles, a reflective pond, and the dancing, the singing, the shouting by Sufis (and, likely, others) whenever a particularly well-turned phrase escaped the singer's lips.¹⁸ Add to this Ibn al-Khaṭīb's assertion that many of those present were transported into mystical ecstasy as they danced and listened: a tried and true, though not uncontested, Sufi technique for reaching ecstasy, *samā'* (often associated with *dhikr*) involving ritualized dancing. Now let us hold that (chaotic) thought as we step back to consider setting and politics before returning to the question of experience.

15 García Gómez, *Foco de antigua luz*, 101–105, 128–129 (Arabic), 150–151 (Spanish); Robinson and Zomeño, "On Muḥammad v, Ibn al-Khaṭīb and Sufism."

16 García Gómez, *Foco de antigua luz*, 129–133 (Arabic), 151–153 (Spanish).

17 Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Nufaḍat*, 291–327 (chapter 10). García Gómez's edition and translation, *Foco de antigua luz*, consists of selected passages from this original text.

18 For detailed discussion of the performances and visual effects orchestrated for Muḥammad v's *mawlid* celebration, see: Robinson, "Tents of Silk"; Robinson and Zomeño, "On Muḥammad v, Ibn al-Khaṭīb and Sufism."

2 The Setting

As mentioned, Muḥammad v's *mawlid* celebration was held in the precincts of the Naṣrid palace known to its fourteenth-century audience as *al-Qaṣr al-Ḥamrā'*, from which the Latinized name Alhambra is derived.¹⁹ The setting for these festivities seems to have been the patio or esplanade located between the *mishwār*, the fourteenth-century entrance to the complex,²⁰ and the entrance to the Palace of Comares, which served both Muḥammad v and his father as a throne room, with the sultan observing from within a lavish ceremonial tent confected of priceless textiles, set up in front of the tower/reception room (*bahw*) known today as the Torre de Machuca.²¹

In his account of the festivities, Ibn al-Khaṭīb describes a pond (*birka*) in front of the tower, surrounded by all manner of elaborate candelabra and other lighting devices:

Encircling²² the stone borders of the pool was a *thorny maze*²³ of *candelabras of crystal and bronze*, more numerous than any other royal house possesses, more even than the treasuries of the caliphs. Candlesticks with wide trays, tall columns and feet of ivory, hung with a multitude of recep-

19 The bibliography on the Alhambra is truly vast; useful starting points include: Antonio Fernández Puertas, "El Arte," in *El reino nazarí de Granada (1232–1492): Sociedad, vida y cultura*, ed. María Jesús Viguera Molíns et al., Historia de España Menéndez Pidal VIII/4 (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 2000), 191–284; Oleg Grabar, *The Alhambra*, rev. ed. (Sebastopol, CA: Solisist Press, 1992); José Miguel Puerta Vilchez, "La cultura y la creación artística," in *Historia del reino de Granada*, ed. Rafael Gerardo Peinado Santaella, Manuel Barrios Aguilera, and Francisco Andújar Castillo, 3 vols. (Granada: Legado Andalusi, 2000), 1:349–413; Puerta Vilchez, *Los códigos de utopía de la Alhambra de Granada* (Granada: Diputación Provincial de Granada, 1990); Puerta Vilchez, *Leer la Alhambra: Guía visual del monumento a través de sus inscripciones* (Madrid: Edilux, 2011); Juan Carlos Ruiz Souza, "El Palacio de los Leones de la Alhambra: ¿Madrasa, zawiya y tumba de Muhammad v? Estudio para un debate," *Al-Qanṭara* 22 (2011): 77–120; Ruiz Souza, "El Palacio de Comares de la Alhambra de Granada: Tipologías y funciones. Nuevas propuestas de estudio," *Cuadernos de la Alhambra* 40 (2004): 77–102.

20 Ruiz Souza, "El Palacio de Comares."

21 Ángel C. López López and Antonio Orihuela Uzal, "Una nueva interpretación del texto de Ibn al-Jatīb sobre la Alhambra en 1362," *Cuadernos de la Alhambra* 26 (1990): 121–144.

22 "Dāra bi" can also be translated as "revolving around" and—though Ibn al-Khaṭīb makes no further reference to the use of mechanical devices in the mise-en-scène—this is a possibility that should probably be borne in mind.

23 The word used here is *ḥasak*, which translates as "thorns," "spines," or "prickly herbs." As will be seen, fundamental to my argument will be Ibn al-Khaṭīb's comparison of these lighting devices to various sorts of vegetation.

tacles for candles, were also placed about the open space; you'd think they were [both] *actual trees and sculptures of copper*, the arrangement of whose many pieces had occupied artisans for days. The result elicited stupefaction and confounded thought. The candles were placed into the thorny bodies of the candelabras, of an appearance between gouged and turned with a lathe, *minbars* for the *trunks* (*j-dh-*) of wax. Countless sorts of lighting devices must also be listed: niche lamps, oil lamps, torch lights, large candles, and small lamps, according to the [space offered by] places, corners and nooks.

The intricate display of waxy columns and trunks was ministered to by the hands of the priests of the houses of God, as the large solar disks of wax were arranged, and wicks were ignited with fire:

Thus did that enormous tree, with its thicket of interlaced branches, bloom and illuminate (*azhara*) and the marvelous spectacle delight.²⁴

The overall effect of the spectacle—the lights, the movement, the reflections in the pond—insistently likens the devices to trees, and equally insistently links trees and vegetation with light in terms we might describe as “symbolic” within a cosmology where “symbols” or “allusions” (*ishārāt*) corresponding to what is seen or imagined while in ecstatic states represents greater Truth than the “reality” human beings saw and through which they moved in their everyday lives.²⁵ These concepts will be important to the exploration of experience undertaken below. Finally, as the ceremony progressed and night fell, it is practically certain that those present, at least while daylight lasted and their eyes remained open, given that they were outside, would also have looked, at least occasionally, up toward the surrounding hills that seem to wrap the Naṣrid palace complex in an evergreen embrace—toward, that is, the actual landscape that surrounded them—an important image to carry forward into the remaining sections of this essay.

24 Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Nufāḍat*, 277; García Gómez, *Foco de antigua luz*, 127–128 (Arabic), 148–149 (Spanish). This passage is also translated and discussed in Robinson, “Tents of Silk.” The translation has been slightly modified here.

25 Kristin Zahra Sands, *Ṣūfī Commentaries on the Qurʾān in Classical Islam* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 3, 17, 122–123.

3 The Politics

The following observation is perhaps a bit obvious, but it is nonetheless worth making, and doing so in the words of N.J.G. Kaptein, whose study of “the Prophet Muḥammad’s birthday” is still the obligatory starting point for any research concerning the *mawlid*: “An important element ... in almost all *mawlid* celebrations ... is the presence of guests ... [who demonstrated] their loyalty to their host simply by their presence.”²⁶ The *mawlid*, in other words, and still Kaptein’s, was intimately connected to political stability, and Muḥammad v’s 1362 celebration offers an excellent case in point.²⁷

Indeed, this particular celebration was organized, at least in part, to mark Muḥammad v’s return to the throne—he had spent the previous three years in exile in Morocco as a guest of the Mārinid court after having been ousted by his half-brother Isma‘īl II, who was overthrown less than a year later and murdered, along with his brother Qays, by his uncle Abū Sa‘īd. The uncle ruled for only slightly longer than his nephew: he was shortly overthrown by Muḥammad v, who would occupy the throne for the next twenty-nine years, only vacating it upon his death. Muḥammad v’s second reign constituted one of the longest of the dynasty, as well as one of the most stable periods of Naṣrid history.²⁸ One can indeed imagine that political stability and its demonstration would have been a highly coveted commodity in Granada in December of 1362.

Between the moment of his return and the day of the celebration, Muḥammad v undertook a major architectural project, one component of which was the “Palace of the Lions.” Though some have speculated that the *mawlid* might have been staged there, most scholars agree that this structure was not completed until sometime in the 1370s; indeed, it is possible that construction had not yet begun in December of 1362. Instead, as Ángel López López and Antonio Orihuela Uzal have demonstrated, the *mawlid* was held in the area that included the *mishwār* and surrounding patios and towers, which is described by Ibn al-Khaṭīb as having been newly and lavishly outfitted,

26 Kaptein, *Muḥammad’s Birthday Festival*, 43.

27 Kaptein, *Muḥammad’s Birthday Festival*, 104; Robinson and Zomeño, “On Muḥammad v, Ibn al-Khaṭīb and Sufism.”

28 For histories of the Naṣrid dynasty and detailed discussion of the political landscape, see: Aḥmad Mukhtār ‘Abd al-Fattāh al-Abbādi, *El reino de Granada en la época de Muḥammad v* (Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Islámicos, 1973); Rachel Arié, *L’Espagne musulmane au temps des Naṣrides (1232–1492)* (Paris: De Boccard, 1973); María Jesús Viguera Molins, ed., *El reino nazarí de Granada (1232–1492): Política, instituciones, espacio y economía*, Historia de España Menéndez Pidal VIII/3 (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 2000).

renovations and new constructions almost certainly heavily influenced by Mārinid precedents.²⁹

Ibn al-Khaṭīb had accompanied Muḥammad v for the majority of his exile in Morocco, enjoying the kindness of their host and protector, Sultan Abū ‘Inān, at *mawlid* celebrations, the most notable (according to the Mārinid chronicler, *qāḍī*, and Sufi Ibn Marzūq) being held in 1360. Ruiz has argued cogently for the importance of these contacts to the conception of the “Palace of the Lions,” as well as substantial time spent in a renowned *zāwiya* in Salé, with the renowned mystic Ibn ‘Āshir.³⁰

It has become commonplace among scholars to assert that Muḥammad v’s 1362 *mawlid* celebration was conceived “in imitation” of these panoplies witnessed at the Mārinid court.³¹ In other words, the Naṣrid cultural product is divested of political, social, and devotional significance because it is simply “a copy.” Imitation, of course, is the sincerest form of flattery, and there can be very little doubt that the festivities organized at the Alhambra were planned with Mārinid examples very much in mind—the dates line up perfectly. But the Naṣrids didn’t stop at mere imitation. Rather, they seem to have taken the Mārinid festivities apart, element by element, in order to trump them on each and every one.

The Naṣrids and the Mārinids were allies, when convenient. But they also hotly disputed territories, ports, and trading partners and privileges; these disputes were sometimes direct and other times oblique, with the kingdoms of Genoa, Castile, and Aragon employed as proxies.³² Meanwhile, poets, scholars,

29 See López López and Orihuela Uzal, “Una nueva interpretación.”

30 Ruiz Souza, “El Palacio de los Leones,” where he proposes the identification of the “Palace of the Lions” as a *madrasa* and *zāwiya* complex, a theory which has occasioned no small amount of critical debate, summed up in Robinson and Zomeño, “On Muḥammad v, Ibn al-Khaṭīb and Sufism.” For the time spent by Ibn al-Khaṭīb in Salé, see: Kaptein, *Muḥammad’s Birthday Festival*, 110; Jorge Lirola Delgado, “Ibn al-Jaṭīb al-Salmānī, Lisān al-Dīn,” in *Biblioteca de al-Andalus*, ed. Jorge Lirola Delgado and José Miguel Puerta Vilchez, 7 vols. and 1 vol. appendix (Almería: Fundación Ibn Tufayl de Estudios Arabes, 2004–2012), 643–698. For a concise summary of Ibn al-Khaṭīb’s life and work in English, see Alexander D. Knysh, “Ibn Al-Khaṭīb,” in *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: The Literature of Al-Andalus*, ed. María R. Menocal, Raymond P. Scheindlin, and Michael Sells (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 358–372.

31 Kaptein, *Muḥammad’s Birthday Festival*, 100–101.

32 On the complex international politics of the Naṣrid kingdom, see: Mercedes García-Arenal and María Jesús Viguera, eds., *Relaciones de la Península Ibérica con el Magreb (siglos XIII–XVI)* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1988); Antonio Peláez Rovira, *El emirato nazarí de Granada en el siglo xv: Dinámica política y fundamentos sociales de un Estado andalusí* (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 2009).

preachers, and judges, not to mention semi-itinerant Sufi sheikhs, crossed the straits frequently and with ease, sometimes switching alliances—as, in fact, did Ibn al-Khaṭīb—when it was expedient to do so. Any gesture of imitation in such a fluid context is a creative one, and in the particular case of the Naṣrids, the intent was to secure political legitimacy.³³

Sufism—or more specifically, a very public (albeit short-lived) alignment between Sufism and the ruling dynasty—was an important component of this strategy. Indeed, Ali Akhtar has recently argued that *taṣawwuf* as practiced in the middle of the fourteenth century—at the precise historical moment of Muḥammad v's *mawlid* celebration—might be most productively viewed as an arm of the state eagerly embraced at that time by the sultan to cement political stability.³⁴ The *mawlid* celebration, in fact, was a sort of debutante ball for this new face of the dynasty, an occasion on which, I suggest, the Naṣrids were invested in being “better” and more “authentic” Sufis than their Moroccan rivals and allies and in doing so publicly, point by point.

The first point of comparison was that of kinship to the Prophet. The intimate relationship cultivated by the Mārinid state with descendants of the Prophet, commonly referred to as *shurafā'*, is well attested.³⁵ While veneration of the “People of the House”—the Prophet's house, that is, or the *ahl al-bayt*—was common in Shī'ite contexts much earlier than the fourteenth century, and thus cannot be described as an exclusively “Sufi” phenomenon, it is also true that these devotions intensified, in both “popular” and official spheres, during the later Middle Ages, and often went hand in hand with the spread and “mainstreaming” of Sufism.³⁶ The presence of revered members of the *shurafā'* at Mārinid *mawlid* celebrations was de rigueur, and one of the most prominent groups of guests mentioned by Ibn al-Khaṭīb for the Naṣrid *mawlid* is the *Banū al-Fawāṭim*, or the “tribe of the two Fāṭimas.”³⁷ Designation

33 Robinson and Zomeño, “On Muḥammad v, Ibn al-Khaṭīb and Sufism.”

34 Ali Humayun Akhtar, “The Political Controversy over Graeco-Arabic Philosophy and Sufism in Nasrid Government: The Case of Ibn al-Khaṭīb in al-Andalus,” *IJMES* 47 (2015): 323–342.

35 Vincent J. Cornell, *Realm of the Saint: Power and Authority in Moroccan Sufism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998); Mercedes García-Arenal, “*Shurafā'* in the last years of al-Andalus and in the Morisco period: *Laylat al-mawlid* and genealogies of the Prophet Muḥammad,” in *Sayyids and Sharifs in Muslim Societies: The Living Links to the Prophet*, ed. Morimoto Kazuo (London: Routledge, 2012), 161–184.

36 Javier Albarrán Iruela, *Veneración y polémica: Muḥamad en la obra del Qāḍī 'Iyād* (Madrid: Ediciones de La Ergástula, 2015); Alexander D. Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism: A Short History* (Leiden: Brill, 2010); Schimmel, *And Muhammad Is His Messenger*, 123–143, 290–294.

37 García Gómez, *Foco de antigua luz*, 151. This could constitute a reference to the practicing of including al-Fawāṭim and al-'Awāṭik among the Prophet's kin, as noted by García-

of these descendants through the female line is not particularly common but is unquestioningly—and, in my view, correctly—accepted by Kaptein as a reference to descendants of the Prophet; this is despite García Gómez's dismissal of the phenomenon as "raro," in keeping with his consignment of Naṣrid culture and history to the curiosities bin.³⁸ This preference for the feminine line may well have been deliberate on the part of the Naṣrids, in an effort to confront and trump the cult of the Virgin that characterized devotions at the courts of their Christian Iberian allies and rivals.³⁹ Most important to note here is that the Naṣrids, through the presence of *Banū al-Fawāṭim*, were signaling to the Mārinids (doubtless taking advantage of the presence of such notable guests as Ibn Khaldūn and Ibn Marzūq) that they were fully equipped to compete in the laying of claims to *shurafā'* and in connecting them to their court and dynasty, however tenuously.

The second point of comparison would have been a mechanical clock: *mawlid* celebrations at both Naṣrid and Mārinid courts boasted one. In the Mārinid case, the device is described in a *mawlidīyya* dedicated to Abū 'Inān as having "twelve apertures, from which a mechanically operated bird appeared every hour," indicating the correct time on a bit of paper, thus setting in motion a process by which a diminutive statue of a slave girl emerged, bearing in turn her own bit of paper, on which a pledge of loyalty to the sultan was penned.⁴⁰ The Naṣrids' device was clearly inspired by the Mārinids' but was significantly more complex and integrated into the ceremony. Ibn al-Khaṭīb notes that its doors were shaped like *mihrābs*, and they, too, opened precisely at the top of each of the twelve hours of the festivity, releasing their own bits of paper, sans slave girls. Muḥammad v's clock was a bit more sober than the device ordered by his Moroccan counterpart: on each of the pieces of paper was inscribed one of the twelve poems of the hours Ibn al-Khaṭīb himself had composed for the occasion, some of which displayed significant Sufi content, particularly

Arenal, "Shurafā in the last years of al-Andalus," 168, citing Maribel Fierro, "On al-Fāṭimī and al-Fāṭimīyyūn," *JSAI* 20 (1996): 130–161. See also: Cynthia Robinson, "Where Have All the Boys Gone?: The Lady of the 'Sala de Justicia' Ceilings and Nasrid Poetics of Sacred and Profane Love," in *Eros and Sexuality in Islamic Art*, ed. Francesca Leoni and Mika Natif (London: Ashgate, 2013), 65–98.

38 Kaptein, *Muḥammad's Birthday Festival*, 109.

39 Cynthia Robinson, "Trees of Love, Trees of Knowledge: Toward the Definition of a Cross-Confessional Current in Late-Medieval Iberian Spirituality," *Medieval Encounters* 12 (2006): 388–435; Robinson, *Imagining the Passion in a Multiconfessional Castile: The Virgin, Christ, Devotions, and Images in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013).

40 Kaptein, *Muḥammad's Birthday Festival*, 106–107.

the poem that marked the hour for morning prayer, or *ṣubḥ*, which contains lines such as, “Truth (*al-ḥaqq*) witnessed with his presence; he did not hide his face.”⁴¹

The third point of comparison is that of ceremony and performance. Earlier it was mentioned that local Sufi confraternities were invited to perform *dhikr* at the Naṣrid *mawlid* celebration, and it will come as no surprise that the Mārinid sultans engaged in similar practices, inviting celebrated mystics to perform the *samāʿ* of the *laylat al-mawlid* with them.⁴² The exact circumstances under which this occurred—whether in the royal palace or elsewhere, and on what scale—are unclear, but it is likely safe to assume that Muḥammad v intended for the performance of “his” Sufis to be “bigger and better.”

Though it is tempting to see the panoply organized by the Naṣrids for the celebration of the *mawlid* at their court in December of 1362 as a cynical appropriation of the sincere devotions of Sufi mystics for the self-aggrandizing purposes of rival states, there was perhaps a bit more to it. Ibn al-Khaṭīb’s narration states that many of those present achieved mystical ecstasy. The veracity of this assertion has long been questioned by scholars: might it not, instead, be one more manifestation, among many, of the “religious cynicism” of the minister?⁴³ García Gómez, in fact, believed the cynicism to have been fully substantiated by Ibn al-Khaṭīb himself, in his choice of vocabulary to refer to those who attained union with the divine—“al-wājid wa-l-mutawājid,” rendered by García Gómez as “those who were truly enraptured and those who pretended to be so.”⁴⁴ Since the publication of García Gómez’s influential work, scholars have consistently followed his translation of this phrase. Examined carefully, however, it becomes clear that another translation, and another interpretation, is possible. In a 2004 study entitled *A Psychology of Early Sufi Samāʿ: Listening and Altered States*, Kenneth Avery demonstrated convincing links between the dancing, shouting—often in disorderly or nonsensical phrases which came to

41 García Gómez, *Foco de antigua luz*, 103, 131–132 (Arabic), 154–155 (Spanish). For the poem for *ṣubḥ*, see: *ibid.*, 140 (Arabic text), 167 (Spanish translation). See also Robinson and Zomeño, “On Muḥammad v, Ibn al-Khaṭīb and Sufism.”

42 Kaptein, *Muḥammad’s Birthday Festival*, 121–122; Paul Nwyia, *Ibn ‘Abbād de Ronda (1332–1390): Un mystique prédicateur à la Qarawīyīn de Fes* (Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1961), 43–80, esp. 67, cited apud Kaptein.

43 María Isabel Calero Secall, “El proceso de Ibn al-Jaṭīb,” *Al-Qanṭara* 22 (2001): 421–449; Lirola Delgado, “Ibn al-Jaṭīb al-Salmānī”; Emilio de Santiago Simón, *El Polígrafo granadino Ibn al-Jatib y el sufismo: Aportaciones para su estudio* (Granada: Diputación Provincial y Departamento de Historia del Islam de la Universidad de Granada, 1983).

44 García Gómez, *Foco de antigua luz*, 133 (Arabic), 156 (Spanish): “tanto los verdaderamente entusiasmados como los que declaraban serlo.”

be known as *shath*⁴⁵—along with fainting and other movements and utterances referenced by Ibn al-Khaṭīb, and scientifically documented conditions of trance, disassociation, and altered states.⁴⁶ The critical, even ironic, tone vis-à-vis Sufism that modern scholarship has imputed to Ibn al-Khaṭīb is rooted in one word—*al-mutawājjid*—the least kind translation of which would be “the fakers.” As Avery ably demonstrates, though, while the term as it appears in medieval Sufi texts or writings about Sufism dating to the medieval period often does indicate some consternation as to whose ecstasy was real and whose was not (an extremely difficult determination to make by any standard), it is also used to designate “those who are striving to attain ecstasy.” In a number of contexts—albeit all earlier and further east than Naṣrīd Granada; nonetheless, these manuals circulated widely—the word is best translated as “novices” or “apprentices,” those who are still learning the ropes.

Though he did criticize excesses and disruptive behavior on the part of some Sufis, Ibn al-Khaṭīb by all indications appears rather to have approved of them. Indeed, as Linda Jones demonstrates in a forthcoming essay, his writings likely helped to complete the process of mainstreaming Sufism in fourteenth-century Granadan society.⁴⁷ In light of these considerations, we might retranslate the sentence from Ibn al-Khaṭīb’s narration of the *mawlid*, giving a different nuance to *al-mutawājjid*:

Each time the professional reciter’s throat emitted a particularly passionate, ardor-inducing phrase, the Sufis and *fuqarā’*—both those who were enraptured⁴⁸ and those who were striving to become so [or “the novices”], following the example of their leaders⁴⁹—received it with great fervor; things got wild, there was nonstop dancing, mystical ecstasy triumphed throughout, and noisy shouts were raised.

45 Carl W. Ernst, *Words of Ecstasy in Sufism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), 12 offers the suggestive translation of this term as “movement,” “overflowing,” “shaking the house.”

46 Kenneth S. Avery, *A Psychology of Early Sufi Samā’: Listening and Altered States* (London: Routledge, 2004), 26–28.

47 Linda Gale Jones, “Sufi Preachers in the *al-Iḥāṭa fī akhbār Gharnāṭa* of Ibn al-Khaṭīb: New Perspectives on Mystical Devotion and Piety in Nasrīd Granada,” in *Constructions of Devotion across Islamic Lands*, ed. Ana Echevarría, Cynthia Robinson, and Amalia Zomeño (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming).

48 I have removed “truly” because it was added by García Gómez; there is no equivalent to “truly” in the original Arabic.

49 The fact there were “leaders” to be “followed” argues in favor of the reinterpretation I propose.

A very different sort of party indeed. Perhaps, rather than a simple making public (and perhaps a public sham) of something intimate and ineffable, the state of ecstasy was, in effect and in good faith, bestowed by the sultan upon his guests: the (generous) gift of mystical fulfillment, or at least the possibility thereof, along with all elements of the ceremonies and *mise-en-scène*.⁵⁰

The specific circumstances of the particular historical moment in which the *mawlid* festivity occurred also shore up the possibility of reclaiming “mystical authenticity” (in so far as such is ever possible) for Ibn al-Khaṭīb. A fact that scholarship knows but has a tendency to forget—though a reminder is offered in a recent article by Akhtar⁵¹—is that, prior to Ibn al-Khaṭīb’s ignominious end in a Mārinid prison following an inconclusive trial (which, though he had managed to avoid extradition, had left him besmirched with accusations of *zindiq* [heresy] and *ḥulūl* [incarnationism]), Ibn al-Khaṭīb’s Sufism had been taken seriously enough by Muḥammad v that he was asked to write a treatise in favor of it.⁵² Sufism (albeit carefully controlled under the watchful eye of the state) was to be the new badge of honor of the Naṣrid state, and Ibn al-Khaṭīb was to be its ambassador. Yet the resulting treatise, *Rawḍat al-taʿrīf bi-l-ḥubb al-sharīf* (The garden of knowledge of noble love),⁵³ moderate though it purported to be,⁵⁴ ended up providing Ibn al-Khaṭīb’s enemies with exactly the incendiary fodder they needed to bring him down.⁵⁵ Much like the dismissal

50 On the (ultimately unanswerable) question of “authenticity” in mystical experience, see: William Rory Dickson, “An American Sufism: The Naqshbandi-Haqqani Order as a Public Religion,” *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 43 (2014): 411–424; Jürgen Wasim Frembgen, “*Dhamāl* and the Performing Body: Trance Dance in the Devotional Sufi Practice of Pakistan,” *Journal of Sufi Studies* 1 (2012): 77–113; Paulo G. Pinto, “Mystical Bodies/Unruly Bodies: Experience, Empowerment and Subjectification in Syrian Sufism,” *Social Compass* 63 (2016): 197–212; Mattijs van de Port, “Circling around the Really Real: Spirit Possession Ceremonies and the Search for Authenticity in Bahian Candomblé,” *Ethos* 33 (2005): 149–179.

51 Akhtar, “Political Controversy.”

52 Akhtar, “Political Controversy”; Knysh, “Ibn Al-Khaṭīb”; Lirola Delgado, “Ibn al-Jaṭīb al-Salmānī.” All of these contain lengthy bibliographies.

53 Lisān al-Dīn ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Rawḍat al-taʿrīf bi-l-ḥubb al-sharīf*, ed. Muḥammad Kattānī. 2 vols. (Casablanca: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1970).

54 See especially José Miguel Puerta Vilchez, “La peripecia política y mística de Ibn al-Jaṭīb entre la Granada nazari y el Magreb meriní,” in *Historia del sufismo en al-Andalus: Maestros sufíes de al-Andalus y el Magreb*, ed. Amina González Costa and María Gracia López Anguita (Madrid: Almuzara, 2009), 41–66.

55 Akhtar, “Political Controversy”; Calero Secall, “El proceso de Ibn al-Jaṭīb”; Alexander D. Knysh, *Ibn ‘Arabī in the Later Islamic Tradition: The Making of a Polemical Image in Medieval Islam* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999), 72–96; Puerta Vilchez, “La peripecia política.”

of the “authenticity” of Ibn al-Khaṭīb’s Sufi inclinations, scholars have also dismissed out of hand the religious content of the virulent controversy stirred up by the minister’s treatise, pointing instead to Ibn al-Khaṭīb’s irascible nature, naked political ambition, and greed: the charges of heresy and incarnationism, in other words, were trumped up simply in order to allow his political enemies to more effectively persecute him. However, as Akhtar has pointed out, it isn’t necessary to adopt an either/or position in order to understand the conflict; instead, it should be regarded through the lens of both/and: Ibn al-Khaṭīb’s personal characteristics did indeed rub a lot of people the wrong way, but it is also true that crucial concepts were at stake—nothing less than the ways in which man might legitimately know God and, according to the Sufis, likewise be known by Him. The Sufis preferred direct access rather than a path mediated by more conservative religious scholars, being very much of the opinion that love was the way to get there and that such love was reciprocated by the deity, resulting in the ecstasy, however fleeting and impermanent, of mystical union.

Muḥammad v’s commission of the *Rawḍa* followed close on the heels of the 1362 *mawlid* celebration: the sovereign, during the early years of the 1360s, had clearly decided to set his kingdom along a public path of alliance with Sufism. At least two of the men who would later bring about Ibn Khaṭīb’s downfall were present at the *mawlid* celebration held in 1362, and one of these men—Ibn Zamrak—offered a *qaṣīda*, or ode, to the sultan specifically composed for the occasion. These compositions are at the center of the next and final section, as they, or parts of them, were directly responsible for the ecstatic shouts and fainting spells of the *wājid* and the *mutawājid*.⁵⁶ Ibn Zamrak—who authored the verses with which this study opened and was also Ibn al-Khaṭīb’s student—was a full and (given his presence at and participation in the event) certainly willing participant in the very public reification of many of the concepts which he would, a mere few years later, find so repellant. The reasons for this change in climate—though considerably beyond the scope of this essay—deserve a great deal more scholarly attention than they have received to date.

56 This observation was first made in Robinson and Zomeño, “On Muḥammad v, Ibn al-Khaṭīb and Sufism,” and its consequences are examined more thoroughly here and in Robinson, “Tents of Silk.”

4 The Experience

I believe that the default assumption—given the official convocation of local brotherhoods by the sultan, and their performance of *dhikr* at his request—should be that this experience, in all its facets, was intended to be a “Sufi” (or perhaps better said, given Ibn al-Khaṭīb’s description of it, a *mystical*) one. With this assumption, we will return to the poetic compositions produced for this occasion, and to the conundrum of “why Najd?” The twenty-five lengthy *qaṣīdas*, or odes, performed at the 1362 *mawlid* celebration at the Alhambra, of which the lines cited at the beginning of this essay form part, belong to a genre known as *mawlidīyyāt*, or poems for the Prophet’s birthday. As in the case of all Maghrebi or Andalusi cultural products, scholars have traditionally sought the origins of these compositions in the central Islamic lands; and since the celebration itself had Eastern precedents, such a search is not entirely without logic. Nonetheless, based on an assessment of the numerous *mawlidīyyāt* surveyed by Salmī, it seems that this particular poetic configuration is a product of a particular time—all were produced between the years 761 and 768 AH/1360 and 1367 CE—and place.⁵⁷ Therefore, we might consider the *mawlidīyyāt* as yet another point on which the two courts consciously engaged in rivalry and one-upmanship, and the remaining pages of this essay will be devoted to this very task.

Mawlidīyyāt are long compositions, frequently of eighty lines or more, each divided into the classic three sections that typified the *qaṣīda* from its earliest, pre-Islamic, desert-dwelling days.⁵⁸ They open with a nostalgic, amatory prelude, a *naṣīb* set in the abandoned desert campsite of the departed beloved. In this, they follow those earliest *qaṣīdas*, “Hanging Odes” or *mu’allaqāt*.⁵⁹ The *naṣīb* is followed by the *raḥīl*, or traveling section, which evokes the poet’s journey across arid deserts toward the safety of the patron’s court, finishing with praises, in the *madīḥ*, of the patron’s generosity, piety, and prowess in battle.

57 Salmī, “Le genre des poèmes.”

58 Del Moral and Velázquez Basanta, “La casida mawlidīyya”; Salmī, “Le genre des poèmes.” For a consideration of the sorts of *qaṣīdas* with which these *mawlidīyyāt* are in intertextual dialogue (among them al-Busīrī’s *Burda*), see Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, *The Mantle Odes: Arabic Praise Poems to the Prophet Muhammad* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010).

59 Michael A. Sells, *Desert Tracings: Six Classic Arabian Odes* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1989).

Though the *mawlidiyyāt* recited at Muḥammad v's *mawlid* have been maligned by scholars as over-long, repetitive, and even soporific,⁶⁰ Ibn al-Khaṭīb's narration of the 1362 Naṣrid festivities makes clear, as noted above, that it was in fact the most moving verses of these very compositions—almost certainly from the *naṣīb*, or amatory prelude—that drove many of those present to the heights of mystical ecstasy. Given that many of the poets and dignitaries present at the 1362 celebration had attended similar festivities at the Mārinid court, it is likely that there was a certain competitive edge in their planning and execution on either side of the straits. In a future study, I hope to undertake detailed comparisons, but our focus here is on the Naṣrids' compositions and their penchant for the Najd.⁶¹ Since these compositions were the vehicles of choice for those among the guests who wished to attain ecstasy, an examination of them in terms of nuances and intricacies is in order.⁶² This examination will reveal that the Naṣrids were very deliberate in their choice of Najd as a destination for their mystical voyage.

Let us turn for a moment to the *naṣīb* of a *mawlidiyya* composed by an Andalusī poet somewhat senior to Ibn Zamrak, known as al-Barjī.⁶³ Born in 1310, al-Barjī immigrated to North Africa, attaining high rank at the Mārinid court. The following composition, much favored in its day and praised as exemplary by Ibn al-Khaṭīb, was composed for and performed at the Mārinid sultan's *mawlid* celebration of 761/1360. It is thus practically certain that both Muḥammad v and Ibn al-Khaṭīb heard it.

When the censor appeared, a lover inclined toward passion (*wajd*),
One who'd never cared a fig for scoldings.

60 García Gómez, *Foco de antigua luz*, 105–108. In the best of cases, they are written off as rather unimaginative imitations of the Hanging Odes: Del Moral and Velázquez Basanta, “La casida mawlidiyya”; Salmī, “Le genre des poèmes.”

61 This essay is one among several that will lay the groundwork for a monograph in progress, provisionally entitled “A Sufi Aesthetic? Images, Devotion, Power and Mysticism in the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada.”

62 On other hand, Salmī—like the majority of the (few) scholars to have devoted attention to these compositions—considered them so interchangeable that he elected to translate a pastiche of *bait*s, rather than a single composition. See Salmī, “Le genre des poèmes.”

63 For the English translation, I have consulted Del Moral's and Velázquez Basanta's edition of the Arabic text as well as their Spanish translation. The composition was anthologized in Ibn al-Khaṭīb's *Iḥāta*, in al-Maqqarī's *Nafh al-ṭīb*, and in the *Nufādat al-jirāb*, where Ibn al-Khaṭīb originally reproduced it. See Del Moral and Velázquez Basanta, “La casida mawlidiyya,” 94, 97–98.

After separation, no room left for submission to patience,
 And he wasted his time who insisted on rightly guided admonish-
 ments.
 If not for distance, the lover wouldn't have spent an owl-eyed night in
 disconsolate confusion,
 Fighting off passion in secret, even as passion brought him to his
 knees.
 He confided to the night the secrets of his wild desire,
 With his tears as his scribes, taking dictation from his sorrows.
 Oh, bygone age spent in the sanctuaries of the east (*ḥimā'*), its moments
 generously
 Granting union on the absent one's return.
 Oh, neighbors, who entrusted, on their leaving, a conflagration
 To burn, wholeheartedly, the one who wastes away [because of
 them].
 Can you imagine the days bringing together our separation, as it was
 For us in those days, returning to the heart its plundered booty? ...

In the estimation of Del Moral and Velázquez Basanta, who rely heavily on the assessment of Salmī, this *naṣīb* is “typical.” The verses exude “a non-specific sentiment of love or sadness (*wajd*), the separation of the lovers, absence, the figure of the guard or censor (*ʿatīb*), an abandoned campsite—in this case, evocative of the Holy Sanctuaries, intimately connected to the life of the Prophet and referred to via the term *ḥimā'*,” the poet's distance from them filling him with nostalgia.⁶⁴

These lines are devoid of rhetorical frills and flourishes: they are concerned primarily with emotion and the floating, fleeting, and (for the most part) absent objects of these emotions. The complex and omnipresent garden references that would characterize court poetry beginning with the Abbasids in the ninth century are, likewise, absent. The spare quality of al-Barjī's verses might be contrasted with the compositions of poets who resided and worked at the Naṣrid court, such as in this poem by Ibn al-Khaṭīb, written a mere five years later and dedicated to the Naṣrid sultan on the occasion of his *mawlid* celebration:

[The flash of lightning] crowned the tops of the hills with blossoms
 (*nuwwār*);
 He wound rings of white flowers around the tender branches.

64 Del Moral and Velázquez Basanta, “La casida mawlidiyya,” 94–96.

Oh, but how quickly this garden is scattered by the eastern wind,
 Where once the bright smile of the white blooms flashed and the roses
 showed their confusion!
 Oh, land in whose valleys I passed my boyhood,
 Where now our pact is not honored,
 When the breeze weakens over her vacant courtyards,
 It takes up aromas of willow, wormwood and myrtle ...⁶⁵

Though in the opening verses of his *naṣīb*, Ibn al-Khaṭīb, like al-Barjī, locates his speaker in the traditional abandoned desert campsite, these lines also contain the metaphorical collapsing of white daisy petals (a flower not native to desert landscapes, but very frequently found among the complex ornaments of the Abbasid poetic garden) with teeth glimpsed between the laughing lips of the vanished beloved. The beloved's mouth is then itself collapsed into the larger landscape, producing the sort of complicated imagery revealed in—as eminent scholar of Arabic poetry Suzanne Stetkevych has effectively argued—by the sophisticated court poets and Baghdadi audiences, spawned by a poetic culture that had become a written and courtly as well as an oral one, in the ninth century.⁶⁶

In another composition and in a metaphorical sleight of hand similar to that executed by Ibn al-Khaṭīb, poet and *qāḍī* Ibn al-Ḥajj's poetic "I" grieves over the torn petals of "blooms of beauty" and the cruelty of his beloved's rejection, weaving yet another complex metaphor—blooms that become textiles or luxurious garments and vice versa—that literally fuses the two symbolic repertoires, that of the *Jāhiliyya*, or pre-Islamic ode, and that of the courtly *ghazal*:

[Alas for] the blooms of beauty in youth's garden,
 Sleeves rent asunder by their howdahs, calyxes bared;
 She bewitches; she can, if she wishes, on any given day,
 Throw lances of defamation, sending shudders [as they hit their
 mark].
 For her, man's reason is booty—
 That of those who die honorably from love's swiftness.
 Whenever she wills drunken ecstasy,
 She gives us a draught of her bad omens, instead of wine ...

65 Salmī, "Le genre des poèmes," 410 (Arabic), 411 (French). This *qaṣīda* is not among those included by Ibn al-Khaṭīb in the tenth chapter of his *Nuḥūdāt al-jirāb*.

66 Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām and the Poetics of the 'Abbāsīd Age* (Leiden: Brill, 1991).

Among that which passion has left to me is a flash of lightning—
 We imagined it glimmering from between the teeth of a smile.
 And the gust of a breeze, coming from a suit of armor—
 By her squalls, the [entire] caravan dies of passion's thirst ...⁶⁷

*Azhāru ḥusnīn bi-rawḍi-l-ṣabā/fataḡna al-hawādīju ‘anha kamāman
 Wa-fātinatin in tushā’u yawma ṭa’nin/ramīṭ kulla rumḥin hazzat qawā-
 man*

*Min al-sālibāti ‘aḡul al-rijāli/‘alā sur‘ati al-ḥubbi mātū kirāman
 Idhāmā arādat binā nashwatan/saḡatnā shamā’ilahā lā al-madāma ...
 Wa-mimmā athāra lī al-wajd barqun/thanannāhu bayna al-thanāyā ibti-
 sāman*

*Wa-nafḥatu riḥin atat min zarūdin/bi-habbatiha al-rakbu mātū huyā-
 man ...*

So well known and beloved, in fact, was the “daisy petal/flashing teeth of the beloved” simile, that Ibn al-Ḥajj didn’t even feel obligated to complete it by explicit mention of the flower. Rather, he adds on a component—the flash of lightning, all that cruel love has left behind.

The poetic style that facilitates these verbal pyrotechnics was known as *badī‘*, a term in itself evocative of the delight and surprise of newness, discovery, and invention. *Badī‘* was enthusiastically imported into al-Andalus in the eleventh century, by taifa-period poets and anthologists whose work was, three centuries later, highly favored at Naṣrid courts.⁶⁸ The Naṣrid poet, in essence, ushers his readers—and, more importantly, given that the composition was intended for oral performance, his listeners—into the precious and metaphorically rich garden of the Abbasid *ghazal*, or love lyric, with the garden itself, in each of its elements, standing in for the beloved’s body, whether human or divine, and overlaid across the caravan and abandoned campsite, through which palimpsest these latter still peep. Both locations, in other words, craggy desert landscape and precious manmade garden, function in this *mawlidīyya* as “the place of poetry.”

Indeed, the place of poetry by the later middle ages could—and often did in the verses of such poetic luminaries as Rūmī, Ḥāfez, Ibn ‘Arabī, and Ibn al-Fārid—contain the potential for interpretation in a devotional key.⁶⁹ Suzanne

67 Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Nufāḡat*, 301.

68 Cynthia Robinson, *In Praise of Song: The Making of Courty Culture in Al-Andalus and Provence, 1005–1134 A.D.* (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

69 Indeed, Ibn ‘Arabī produced his own commentary to his *Turjumān al-ashwāq* (Transla-

Stetkevych has persuasively argued that, in its earliest days, *badīʿ* was enmeshed in the existential conundrum posed by the Muʿtazilites, who employed metaphor in Qurʾānic interpretation in order to avoid allowing the deity to be compared to any of his creations.⁷⁰ In more recent work concerned with the rich semantic potential of the *badīʿ* style itself, she argues that, by the later middle ages, the use of this style in verses, as in the case of the Naṣrid *mawlidīyyāt*, composed for devotional purposes, makes of *badīʿ* a viable vehicle—equal, that is, to the content of the verses themselves—for the achievement of mystical enlightenment.⁷¹

Stetkevych's arguments are based in the age-old tension between poetry and the Qurʾān: the holy text's eloquence, while held to be unique (*ijāz al-Qurʾān*), was openly imitated (indeed, some might say rivaled) by poets.⁷² By the fourteenth century, in other words, a devotee's experience, in the context of festivities such as the Naṣrid *mawlid*, of lyrics such as the *naṣīb*s composed by Ibn Zamrak, Ibn al-Ḥajj, and Ibn al-Khaṭīb, might well be similar to a mystic's encounter with the continuous linguistic miracle of the Qurʾān. That is to say, the amatory preludes of these Naṣrid *mawlidīyyāt*, far from being—in the rather unfortunate words of Del Moral and Velázquez Basanta—"un puro ejercicio retórico" (a mere rhetorical exercise)⁷³—are potentially, if not sacred texts themselves, texts which open the door, at the moment of their performance, onto a journey of sacred experience.

So what about place? Where was this experience, this journey, envisioned as taking place? Al-Barjī's *naṣīb*, in fact, evokes a sort of nonplace: the abandoned campsite is a topos with no specific geographic referent to anchor it, if not that of the Meccan sanctuaries, but those are characterized as "far," so they themselves cannot be the setting—indeed, they are more fruitfully compared, as they frequently were, to an absent beloved. In the lines with which this essay opened, by contrast, Ibn Zamrak's speaker is portrayed as "anjada"-ing, that is, traveling the highlands of Najd: we know exactly where he is. In a similar

tor of desires) in order to leave no mistake in the matter. See: Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn al-ʿArabī, *Tarjumān al-ashwāq* (Beirut: Dār Sādir, 1966); Reynold A. Nicholson, trans., *The Tarjumān al-Ashwāq: A Collection of Mystical Odes by Muḥyīʿddīn Ibn al-ʿArabī* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1911).

70 Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām*.

71 Stetkevych, *Mantle Odes*, 75.

72 Muḥammad Khalaf-Allāh Aḥmad and Muḥammad Zaghlūl Sallām, eds., *Three Treatises on the Ijāz of the Qurʾān: Qurʾānic Studies and Literary Criticism*, trans. Issa J. Boullata (Reading: Garnet Publishing, 2014).

73 Del Moral and Velázquez Basanta, "La casida mawlidīyya," 96–97.

vein, Ibn al-Khaṭīb dedicates forty-three of the eighty-two verses of the *mawlidīyya* quoted above to the evocation of a thunderstorm in—where else?—Najd.

The flash of lightning is, arguably, the focal point of Ibn Khaṭīb's "Najdian" landscape, and it also torments the weeping Ibn al-Ḥajj in his lyrical lament, in the form of a cruel flash of the departing beloved's smile. There, indeed, the lightning is referred to as *bāriq al-najdī*, or "the lightning flash from Najd." To wit, a device imported from the "secular" terrain of "profane" love poetry, is turned, in both these compositions, into a focus of sacred meditation: as demonstrated in a variety of devotional literary formats dating to the later Middle Ages, the brilliant flash of lightning came to be widely understood as one of the metaphorical manners in which the Prophet might be evoked.⁷⁴ And in Ibn al-Khaṭīb's lines, in keeping with Sufi cosmological theory, Muḥammad is an active principle of creation, bringing the garden—quite literally—to life.⁷⁵

With these observations in mind, let us return briefly to Ibn al-Khaṭīb's description of the lighting display surrounding the pool at the center of the patio where Muḥammad v observed the festivities from within his ceremonial tent, cited above. The verb I have translated as "bloom and illuminate" is *azhara*. This word and its attending concept—the fusion of vegetation and light—was one particularly beloved by Sufis, and it is prominent in their interpretations, or *tafsīr*, of the Qur'ān. Kristin Zahra Sands, in one of the few analyses of Sufi Qur'ānic commentary available, has discussed how *azhara*, and indeed any verb having to do with the production or diffusion of light, would have been understood in the context of the Sufi concept of the divinity's use of divine light to "make" or "create" the Prophet.⁷⁶ In al-Andalus, this concept was further nuanced and enriched by the habitual metaphorical equation, in the contexts of poetry and rhymed prose, of plants and vegetation with light, particularly well exemplified in this passage from Ibn al-Khaṭīb's introduction to the *Rawḍat al-ta'rif*:

May God bless his servant and Prophet, our Lord Muḥammad, pearl in the necklace of His well-ordered lovers, merchant of the most coveted goods of His unity, girded with refulgent and radiant proofs and blinding

74 For a complete discussion of the symbolic repertoire related to the Prophet, see Schimmel, *And Muhammad Is His Messenger*.

75 Mohamed Haj Yusef, *Ibn 'Arabī—Time and Cosmology* (London: Routledge, 2008). This is also discussed in Robinson, "Tents of Silk."

76 Sands, *Ṣūfī Commentaries*, 122–123.

miracles, like the bursting forth of celestial branches which, like the sun, appear on the horizon, adorned with most excellently brilliant flower of all flowers (*zahr al-azhār*), like the restive thunder that leads the cloud-caravan, while the ardent breezes urge the forms of its branches into an embrace ...⁷⁷

These concepts are present intertextually in Ibn al-Khaṭīb's "Najdian" valley, which, in addition to its possibilities for being read as an evocation of the Prophet, is one that reflects, with striking exactitude and feature by feature, Jaroslav Stetkevych's description of the actual, physical place:

The most obvious characteristic of Najd is that it is the centrally located high plateau of the Arabian Peninsula. It is flanked by mountain ranges on the west and east and by inclement deserts on the north and south. There are only seasonal streams in Najd, as well as several springs that form oasis-like ponds surrounded by vegetation, but even these are not stable in their water level ...⁷⁸

These characteristics are the same ones highlighted by medieval geographers such as al-Hamdānī, Yāqūt, and others. And the Najd was famous for the sudden spring rainstorms such as that evoked by Ibn al-Ḥajj—described in detail by Ibn Jubayr, and giving rise to the refrain noted by al-Bakri, "saqa allāhu Najdan min rabʿin wa-ṣayfin"—which turned arid plains into blooming prairies, if only for the briefest of seasons.⁷⁹ Indeed, Ibn al-Ḥajj's *qasīda*, from which the verses quoted above were taken, begins with this line: *raʿyy allāhu najdan wa ḥayyā al-khayāman/wa-in ḥiyya ḥājīt li-qalbī gharāman* ("May God preserve Najd, and give long life to her tents, even tho' they've spurned my infatuated heart"). The poet thus locates the rest of his composition, not only in Stetkevych's indefinite and protean Najd, the object of poetic longing, but in a sustained evocation of the actual, physical place.

Earlier, it was suggested that the visual panoply enjoyed by guests at Muḥammad v's *mawlid* celebration would have included the hills covered with ever-green and scrubby brush that seem to wrap the Naṣrid palace complex in a craggy embrace, a landscape much more evocative of the highlands Najd than of deserts of the Ḥijāz. It is probable that most of those present would have

77 Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Rawḍat al-taʿrīf*, 79–80.

78 Stetkevych, *Zephyrs of Najd*, 121.

79 Grohmann and McLachlan, "Najd," with in-text primary source citations.

been aware of these similarities, either through personal experience or secondhand knowledge, and it is not too much of a stretch, I think, to imagine that those who organized the *mawlid* festivities took advantage of them. The ceremonial tent occupied by Muḥammad v and his most esteemed courtiers would surely have called to the minds of all those who saw it the mythical tents whose occupants so cruelly disdained Abū Ishāq ibn al-Ḥajj, but which, hopeless with lovesick longing, he blesses anyway. With its heavy panels of silk brocade densely embroidered with deep green leaves and flowering branches, as described through the metaphor-rich conventions of *wasf* by Ibn al-Khaṭīb, was itself fused with the fleeting beauty of the garden set into the high, arid plains of Najd, suddenly burst into flower after a torrential rainstorm, as described by the same author in the verses cited above. The patio, with its shimmering pool surrounded by a dense thicket of wax trunks and bronze branches ablaze with white flower-lights, for whose generous preservation Abū Ishāq ibn al-Ḥajj had, likewise, prayed, could be none other than the “oasis-like ponds” referenced by medieval geographers,⁸⁰ surrounded by verdant vegetation. Muḥammad v, in other words, appears to have spent lavishly and ostentatiously on a reproduction—a sort of visual panoply of *translatio*—in order to evoke a very particular sense of place.

But why Najd? If we recall the competition, mentioned earlier, between the Naṣrids and the Mārinids over whose court boasted more and more noble *shurafāʾ*, and view this competitive edge as part of a larger quest on the part of the Naṣrid dynasty to promote its claims to the status of caliphate, the choice will begin to make a certain amount of sense. It was also mentioned earlier that the Naṣrids made a rather particular use of the feminine line of descent in order to make these claims, referring to the *Banū al-Fawāṭim*, or “Tribe of the Two Fāṭimas.” The Naṣrids were not the only ones to make these claims through references to Fāṭima, as Maribel Fierro has demonstrated; those who do so, however, are generally more than conscious of the fact that their actual claims to kinship with the Prophet are tenuous to nonexistent.⁸¹ Indeed, though they clearly went to great lengths to *imply* such connections, the Naṣrids never actually claimed, in so many words, that they themselves were descended from the Prophet; instead they had their court literati spill a great deal of ink in order to cement and publicize their almost certainly fabricated bloodline leading back to the Yemeni Banū Khazraj, who were among the “Companions” or “Helpers”—the *Anṣār*—of the Prophet.⁸²

80 Grohmann and McLachlan, “Nad̄jd.”

81 Fierro, “On al-Fāṭimī and al-Fāṭimīyyūn.”

82 Bárbara Boloix Gallardo, “The Genealogical Legitimization of the Naṣrid Dynasty: The

I would suggest that such insistent references to, and such a lavish evocation of, Najd were part of a similar tactic: if claims to bloodline connections to the Prophet's family, and thus to the Ḥijāz, were unsustainable, shift the focus elsewhere, and ensure that that association appears even more desirable (and, as will be seen, possessed of more local resonance) than the Ḥijāz. In the early pages of this essay, mention was made of an unfortunate gentleman by the name of Qays, third son of the Naṣrid sultan Isma'īl II, whose uncle took the precaution of getting rid of him as well when he stole the throne from his father. "Qays," many readers will know, was also the given name of an individual much more famous as "Majnūn" ("the crazy one," or "the madman"). The beloved tale is well known: Majnūn, sometime during the earliest days of Islam, or perhaps the waning days of the *Jāhiliyya*, pined for love of a woman named Layla, whose hand he was denied. This caused him to lose control of his faculties to the point that he spent the remainder of his life wandering in the wilderness and living among the beasts, reciting brilliant and heartrending love poetry when the spirit moved him.⁸³

Najd, not the Ḥijāz, was the birthplace of this original pair of star-crossed lovers, whose love became one of the earliest hits to perform the feat of crossing over from the realm of the secular into the sacred, as a metaphor for the ecstatic, shared (but ultimately impossible to sustain while on earth) love between mystic and deity.⁸⁴ Indeed, a number of references to the Madman and his Lady of the Night are found in Naṣrid verses collected by Ibn al-Khaṭīb, thus demonstrating their popularity at the Naṣrid court.⁸⁵ Ibn al-Khaṭīb's presentation of them does not indicate whether these compositions were intended for sacred or secular purposes, but like many poems on similar themes, they could have served equally well for either, and most probably did.

Alleged Anṣārī Origins of the Banū Naṣr," in Bennison, *Articulation of Power*, 61–86; Rubiera Mata, "El califato nazarī." For Naṣrid genealogical legitimacy, see also Maribel Fierro, "The Ansaris, Nasir al-Din, and the Nasrids in al-Andalus," *JSAI* 32 (2006): 232–247.

83 Qāsim Ḥaddād, *Akhhār majnūn Laylā* (Bahrain: al-Kalimah li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzī', 1996); André Miquel, *Majnūn et Laylā: L'Amour fou* (Paris: Sindbad, 1984); Miquel, *Deux histoires d'amour: De Majnūn à Tristan* (Paris: Odeile Jacob, 1996). The most famous version of the tale is Niẓāmī Ganjavī, *The Story of Layla and Majnun*, ed. and trans. Rudolf Gelpke, in collaboration with E. Mattin and G. Hill (Oxford: Cassimer, 1966).

84 For the interpretation of the tale in a mystical key, see: Joyce Åkesson, *Arabic Love Poetry from the Desert: Majnūn Leyla, Arabic Text, Commentary, and Translations* (Lund, Sweden: Pallas Athena Distribution, 2012); Yeşim Aksan and Dilek Kantar, "No Wellness Feels Better than This Sickness: Love Metaphors from a Cross-Cultural Perspective," *Metaphor and Symbol* 23 (2008): 262–291; Luce López-Baralt, "St. John's Nocturnal Beloved Could Have Been Named 'Layla,'" *Medieval Encounters* 12 (2006): 436–461.

85 Robinson, "Where Have All the Boys Gone," 72–77.

The Najd, then, the ur-place of poetry and of the purest Arabic language,⁸⁶ in the context of that Naṣrid *mawlidiyyāt*, has for all intents and purposes usurped the place of pilgrimage, and Muḥammad v and company were certainly most gratified when the eminent scholar and poet Ibn Khaldūn, who, as mentioned earlier, hailed from the Mārinid court, addressed the assembled company on the occasion of the Naṣrid celebration of the *mawlid*, as “Oh, people of Najd (*yā ahla Najdī*), of a land more beautiful than Firdaws (that is, Paradise) itself!”⁸⁷ Indeed, the *shaykh*, *faqīh*, *kātib*, and *qāḍī* Abū Ishāq ibn al-Ḥajj, whose *qasīda* was quoted earlier, deliberately evokes Majnūn himself, conjuring “dwelling places who fell in love with the one who wandered among them,”⁸⁸ thus offering, to the ecstatic dancers present at Muḥammad v’s *mawlid* celebration, the seductive possibility of assuming the persona of that quintessential lover, who was equally available for secular and sacred purposes.

These evocations of the Najd also held local resonances for the residents of Granada, given that the capital possessed its own quartier known by that same name—a place where, as Ibn Baṭṭūta recounts in his well-known travel narrative, numerous Sufi lodges were located.⁸⁹ The Granadan Najd was also, according to Morisco sources, a locale which, among several others in the vicinity of the Naṣrid capital, was known for strange and apparently spontaneous bright lights and luminosities associated with the presence of graves of holy ones (*sulaḥā*) and manifestations of divine presence.⁹⁰ Though we possess little concrete information concerning the devotional landscape of Granada and its environs during the fourteenth century, it is at least possible, and indeed probable, that the Morisco tradition is founded in Naṣrid precedents.

In conclusion I’d like to return once more to the Naṣrids’ decision to call attention to members of the “Tribe of the Two Fāṭimas” at the 1362 *mawlid* celebration. I believe that this decision has a great deal to do with Granada’s physical proximity to, and diplomatic and cultural intimacy with, the Christian kingdoms of Castile and Aragon, where the cult of the Virgin had, in contemporary terms, gone viral, and with a number of characteristics that were

86 Grohmann and McLachlan, “Najd.”

87 Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Nufāḍat*, 297.

88 Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Nufāḍat*, 301.

89 Evariste Lévi-Provençal, “La visite d’Ibn Battuta à Grenade,” in *Mélanges Offerts à William Marçais par l’Institut d’études islamiques de l’Université de Paris* (Paris: Éditions G.P. Maisonneuve, 1950), 216.

90 A. Katie Harris, *From Muslim to Christian Granada: Inventing a City’s Past in Early Modern Spain* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 40–45.

uniquely Iberian (and in some cases, uniquely Castilian).⁹¹ As I have suggested elsewhere, the realm of the sacred in the Naṣrid sultanate—the devotional landscape of its imaginary—was consistently prone to slippage toward the feminine.⁹² Earlier, I highlighted a passage of the introduction to a treatise on Sufism entitled *Rawḍat al-taʿrīf bi-l-ḥubb al-sharīf*, in which Ibn al-Khaṭīb metaphorically collapsed images of the Prophet with those of trees, and he performed similar metaphorical pyrotechnics in a feminine key: at the very center of his treatise is the “tree of love,” or “shajarat al-ḥubb,” which he, literally, incarnates as a Lady (so maybe he was guilty of incarnationism, or *ḥulūl*, after all).⁹³ In another *naṣīb*, he links his lady-tree both to things celestial, and to a flash of lightning:

Is that the tinkling of your jewels, or the heart's guardians,
 Leaning toward one another in idle chatter?
 Is that the glint (of a necklace) at your throat, or the flash of lightning?
 Could it be the blinding glitter of your earrings? Or maybe it's Gemini.
 Oh, bān tree (f.)! The leaves of youth find protection and patronage in
 her shadow;
 It is as though my heart, among them, were a dove.
 Oh, full moon, by whose glow the noble night-journeyer through the
 waterless desert
 Is rightly guided—my Laylā is night, and my dark night is Laylā!
 Shall I complain of you (f.)? Or shall I complain to you of my burning
 passion?
 You are the remedy, but from you came the malaise.⁹⁴

This lyric is almost certainly a tip of the hat toward the famous Sufi *ghazal* by equally famed Egyptian mystical poet Ibn al-Fāriḍ, “Was that Layla’s fire?”⁹⁵

91 Robinson, *Imagining the Passion*.

92 Robinson, “Marginal Ornament,” 205–207; Robinson, “Where Have All the Boys Gone”; Cynthia Robinson and Bárbara Boloix Gallardo, “Nasrid Religiosity in al-Bunnāhī’s ‘al-Maqāma al-Nakhliyya’ (SLE Árabe 1653),” in *Constructions of Devotion across Islamic Lands*, ed. Echevarría, Robinson, and Zomeño (forthcoming).

93 Robinson, “Where Have All the Boys Gone,” 77–81; Robinson and Boloix Gallardo, “Nasrid Religiosity.”

94 Lisān al-Dīn ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Dīwān Lisān al-Dīn Ibn al-Khaṭīb al-Salmānī*, ed. Muḥammad Miftāh (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1409/1989), 1:93. Also cited in Robinson, “Where Have All the Boys Gone,” 70.

95 On Ibn al-Fāriḍ, see Th. Emil Homerin, *Passion Before Me, My Fate Behind: Ibn al-Fāriḍ and*

Perhaps, as they danced 'round the oasis (i.e., pond) at the center of the glimmering re-creation of Najd offered to them by Muḥammad v—in exchange, of course, for their support in the cause of the legitimization of the Naṣrid dynasty—the ecstatic members of Sufi confraternities convoked for the occasion, imagining themselves love-crazed Majnūns in the most spiritual of keys, caught fleeting glimpses of Layla among the fiery branches of the candelabra-trees, images which, according to the Sufi cosmologies in which they were most certainly steeped, were *real*.⁹⁶ Realer, indeed, than real—these visions visited upon them by the divine (with a bit of help, perhaps, from the poet, the reciter, and Muḥammad v's lavish display) were Truth incarnate, and everything else but lies and shadows.

Evocations of the Najd, which collapsed immediate surroundings with distant, imagined ones, were merely one component of the multimedia panoply orchestrated by the sultan on the occasion of the 1362 celebration of the *mawlid* at the Naṣrid court, albeit an important one. The fact that *mawlid* festivities were never again repeated on such a scale at the Granadan court makes it difficult, if not impossible, to trace their repercussions in Naṣrid culture at large. Likewise, it is not easy to determine—though future research will hopefully offer at least a partial answer—whether the concept of the Najd as focus of mystical longing had meaning and staying power beyond the relatively restricted sphere of the court. Perhaps its presence in the Naṣrid cultural landscape was as fleeting and evanescent as the sensations conjured by the heartrending notes of the reciter's voice, as he intoned the *nasībs* of Ibn al-Ḥajjī, Ibn al-Khaṭīb, and Ibn Zamrak against a blaze of candlelight reflected in a glittering pond, one December night in 1362.

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96 Sands, *Ṣūfī Commentaries*, 122–123.

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The Story of the Crooked Preacher by Jacob ben El‘azar

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The story translated below is the eighth in a collection of ten maqāmāt¹ called *Sefer ha-Meshalim* (The book of fables) by Jacob ben El‘azar, a late twelfth- and early thirteenth-century Jewish author from Toledo.² Unlike his more famous contemporary and compatriot Judah al-Ḥarīzī, whose collection of maqāmāt, *Sefer Tahkemoni*, was copied dozens of times and was familiar to readers throughout the generations,³ Jacob ben El‘azar remained rather anonymous, even to literati and scholars. A single manuscript of *Sefer ha-Meshalim* (copied in 1268) surfaced in the mid-nineteenth century but had to wait until the second half of the twentieth century for its gradual exposure by Jefim Schirmann.⁴

All ten stories by Ben El‘azar open with the phrase “Thus said Lemuel, son of Ithiel,” utilizing the patronymic formulation of the narrator’s name as is standard in Arabic maqāmāt. By choosing these particular Hebrew names, Ben El‘azar cleverly embedded himself in two acclaimed literary legacies: (a) ancient Hebrew gnomic literature, and (b) the Arabic-Hebrew tradition of the maqāma. Lemuel and Ithiel are two sages mentioned in the biblical book of *Mishle* (which the title *Sefer ha-Meshalim* is also related to).⁵ Additionally,

1 For the genre, see: Rina Drory, “The Maqama,” in *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: The Literature of Al-Andalus*, ed. María Rosa Menocal, Raymond P. Scheindlin, and Michael Sells (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2000), 190–210; Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila, *Maqama: A History of a Genre* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002).

2 As concluded by Matti Huss (in Benayahu Volume, II 2019), the work is likely to have been written in the early 20s of the thirteenth-century. For more on the author and his work, see Ḥayyim Schirmann, *The History of Hebrew Poetry in Christian Spain and Southern France* (Hebrew), ed., supplemented, and annotated by Ezra Fleischer (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1997), 222–255. Ben El‘azar was also a translator from the Arabic, his most famous translation being the narrative collection *Kalīla and Dimna*.

3 It was first printed in Istanbul as early as 1478. Al-Ḥarīzī is also the translator of al-Ḥarīrī’s *Maqāmāt* and Maimonides’s *Guide*.

4 Abraham Geiger published an introduction to the work in 1857. Schirmann published six of its maqāmāt between 1939 and 1976. The full work, edited by Yona David, was inaccurately titled *The Love Stories of Jacob ben El‘azar (1170–1233?)* (Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Ramot, 1992–1993).

5 Prov 30:2 and 31:1. *Mashal* is a multivalent word in Hebrew, meaning fable, parable, story,

Ithiel, connects the author/narrator to the narrator in *Maḥberot Itiel*—Judah al-Ḥarīzī's Hebrew translation of the renowned *Maqāmāt* by the eleventh-century al-Ḥarīrī of Basra.

Unlike in classical *maqāmāt* where a single narrator tells about a single hero (usually a wandering charlatan who, appearing each time in another disguise, extorts money from people and then disappears), Ben El'azar's narrator is not obligated to either a single hero nor to a single narrative formula—hence, his narrative experimentalism and his openness to various influences.

Although *Sefer ha-Meshalim* does not come close to al-Ḥarīzī's phenomenal rhetorical virtuosity, Ben El'azar's choice of materials and imaginative plots surpasses even those of the more famous master. Besides commonplace topics (e.g., poetic competitions and disputations between opposites), Ben El'azar's *maqāmāt* feature themes such as exotic adventures in palaces in a mythic Orient, duels (one with a black giant, another between two women warriors), transvestism, courtly love, bigamy, spiritual love, pedophilia, and so on and so forth.⁶ Under the generic umbrella of the “*maqāma*,” Ben El'azar introduced a variety of literary modes (e.g., romance, allegory, satire) inspired by both Arabic and Romance sources. Jonathan Decter has expounded at length on Ben El'azar as a case-study of thirteenth-century Hebrew literature in a hybrid Arabic/Romance environment.⁷ The eighth *maqāma* translated here “deviates from the regular topics of *belles-lettres* of the period.”⁸

poem, maxim, saying, simile, allegory, satire, example, byword, etc. Virtually all of these meanings are applicable to *Sefer ha-Meshalim*.

6 Schirmann, *History of Hebrew Poetry*, 224–240, discusses themes, sources, and problems in Ben El'azar. Jonathan P. Decter, *Iberian Jewish Literature: Between al-Andalus and Christian Europe* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007) explores Ben El'azar's entire collection in comparison with al-Ḥarīzī's *Tahkemoni*. For themes and specific *maqāmas* see Decter's index, s.v. *Sefer ha-Meshalim*, 301–302. For discussions of the first and sixth *maqāmas* see Tova Rosen, *Unveiling Eve: Reading Gender in Medieval Hebrew Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 95–102, 159–167. For the sixth and eighth *maqāmas*, see Abraham Melamed, *The Image of the Black in Jewish Culture: A History of the Other*, trans. Betty Sigler Rozen (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003), 160–168. I have translated the entire sixth *maqāma*: see Rosen, “Love and Race in a Thirteenth-Century Romance in Hebrew, with a Translation of *The Story of Maskil and Peninah* by Jacob Ben El'azar,” in *Confronting the Present with the Past: Essays in Honour of Sheila Delaney*, special issue of *Florilegium* 23.1, ed. A.E. Christa Canitz and Andrew Taylor (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006), 155–172. For discussion of the eighth *maqāma*, see Ḥayyim Schirmann, “A Tale of a Hypocritical Old Man,” in *Studies in the History of Hebrew Poetry and Drama* (Hebrew), 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 1979), 1:375–388. Decter dedicated to the eighth *maqāma* an exhaustive analysis, *Iberian Jewish Literature*, 164–174, 186–188, 211.

7 See Decter, *Iberian Jewish Literature*, esp. 136–156.

8 Schirmann, *History of Hebrew Poetry*, 230.

In the exposition to the eighth maqāma, the narrator Lemu'el ben Ithiel, presents himself as a veteran traveler who, roaming the roads of the world and visiting its great cities, has experienced riches and poverty and befriended villains as well as nobles. Functioning here both as a narrator and a protagonist, Lemuel arrives at a city of justice and peace, but soon reveals that it reeks of evil and corruption. He plans to escape it but is halted by a huge gathering in the city square. The crowd is fascinated by a beard of gargantuan measures belonging to a preacher by the revolting name of Akhbor. This humongous and unruly beard is extensively and exaggeratedly described, here and throughout the story. In his long and florid sermon, the old man urges them to repent their sins and promises them that—if only they give to charity—God will pardon them and let them rest in His shade. The sermon includes two exempla telling about the punishment of those who refused to help the needy. The narrator senses the dramatic irony produced by the dissonance between the ludicrous spectacle and the pious sermon. The crowd enjoys the show and pays Akhbor's assistants generously. Lemuel gets suspicious. He secretly follows the preacher and of his two assistants who walk home loaded with the loot.⁹

They arrive at a luxurious mansion. From his hiding place Lemuel is able to see the patio, the pool, the flower-beds, and all the precious items unlawfully obtained by Akhbor. Peering now into the inner rooms Lemuel sees Akhbor partying in an Andalusian style—dining, drinking, singing, dancing, and flirting—with four young maidservants. While drinking, each of the four girls improvises a wine-poem in an elegant classical style, and Akhbor retorts with a poem of his own.¹⁰

As the maidservants leave, a most unattractive Kushite (black African) woman enters the room to have enthusiastic intercourse with Akhbor. Lemuel is disgusted and infuriated with Akhbor's choice of sexual partner.¹¹ Interrupt-

9 Up to this point, the narrative closely follows the line of a standard maqāma. Several classical maqāmāt feature an eloquent charlatan donning a religious guise (of a preacher, a dervish, a mufti, or a pilgrim) who extorts money from the audience. See, for instance, al-Ḥarīrī's *Maqāmāt*, nos. 1, 11, 12, 28, 39, and 41. Judah ben Solomon al-Ḥarīzī, *Maḥberot Itiel* (ed. Yitzḥaq Peretz, Tel Aviv: Maḥbarot le-sifrut, 1951), nos. 1, 11, and 12; Judah al-Ḥarīzī, *Taḥkemoni or The Tales of Heman the Ezraite* (Hebrew), ed. Joseph Yahalom and Naoya Katsumata (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 2011), nos. 2 and 4.

10 A similar scene occurs in al-Ḥarīrī's twelfth maqāma in which a false dervish disappears after extorting money from a group of travelers. Later, they meet him carousing in a wine tavern surrounded by female musicians who improvise wine songs similar to the ones sung in our maqāma.

11 Schirmann, "Tale of a Hypocritical" and Melamed, *Image of the Black* (see note 6 above)

ing the couple, he reproaches Akhbor for having sex with an old black woman. Lemuel beats the couple and strips them of their clothes. At this point Akhbor, angry, and Lemuel, furious, conduct a witty disputation over the pros and cons of having sex with dark versus with fair women. Lemuel calls back the four girls to tell them about the scandal, and they too grow infuriated at Akhbor. Each of them insults him in prose, and then improvises a smutty song about him and about his filthy beard.¹² Next, the four girls symbolically castrate Akhbor by plucking his beard off; then they beat him to death and cast his corpse into a ditch.

The killing of Akhbor deviates from the normal ending of the classical *maqāma*. In a classical plot, the impostor, after being chided by the narrator, manages to disappear, only to appear again in the next episode of fraud. Unlike the classical narrator, who admires the impostor's eloquence and, hence, finally forgives him, Lemuel abhors Akhbor, and finally kills him. As Decter shows (see below), the murder is the logical consequence of the narrator's moral critique. However, the death of the villain is not the end of this moral tale, as the author supplemented the story with a totally unrelated happy ending: days later, we find the onetime maidservants, now transformed into four courtly ladies, strolling in a blooming orchard. Four young and inexperienced gentlemen make advances to them. The women are displeased with the men's lacking style of courting and undertake to teach them a lesson in the art of courtly love. Then the women suggest that the four gentlemen cast lots to each win his designated wife. The four couples marry happily "celebrating their youth."

The epilogue seems completely detached from the main body of the story. The cruel scene of abuse and murder is utterly forgotten. The four Andalusian-style maidservants turn into young ladies. Four young gentlemen replace the licentious, decadent old man. Carnal eroticism wanes and courtly love reigns. The scenery changes from a Muslim palace-garden (*hortus conclusus*) into the European *hortus ludi* so familiar from Romance literature.¹³ The two last sections, with their contrasting images and opposed sets of values, are not

discuss this unambiguously racist aspect. Both state that Ben El'azar's racism was influenced by the Arab stance against blacks.

12 In the style of the Arabic *hijā'* ("invective") or *mujun* ("bawdiness"). According to Robert McKinney, *The Case of Rhyme Versus Reason: Ibn Al-Rūmī and his Poetics in Context* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 151 and n. 83, poems expressing contempt for long beards are included in Ibn Abī 'Awn, *Kitāb al-Tashbihāt*, 306–307, and in Ibn al-Rūmī, *Dīwān*, 4:1150 (poem no. 1193).

13 See Decter, *Iberian Jewish Literature*, 186–188.

seamed together by any narrative device. Does this abrupt rupture result from the writer's shortcoming, or may we read it as epitomizing the encounter between the two cultures among which Spanish Jews found themselves in the thirteenth century? Decter maintains that although Ben El'azar did not compose "a manifesto on the place of Andalusian values in post-Andalusian Jewish culture ..., the topic of cultural transition was never far beneath the surface of [his] writing."

Who does Akhbor represent? Schirmann considered this *maqāma* to be "A Tale about a Hypocritical Old Man" (as he titled his 1979 article). He stressed the Tartuffe-like motif of the impostor who hides his crudeness behind a (bearded) pious face, and added that the author must have disliked individuals who used their beards as to attest to their honesty. He suggested that it is not improbable that the story mirrors a Jewish reality. Is the bearded preacher in fact Jewish? If we ignore the dense mosaic of biblical Hebrew phraseology, we find that neither the sermon, nor the rest of the *maqāma* contains any specifically Jewish echoes. On the other hand, the text presents a motley puzzle of ethnic and religious identities. The bearded preacher, his audience, and even the content of his sermon, might be Muslim as well as Jewish. The fair girls could be Arab; the black maid is probably an African slave.¹⁴ And, as if to further complicate the picture, Akhbor is named after a biblical king of Edom, which in a medieval Jewish context signifies Christianity.¹⁵ Decter conclusively anchors the theme in thirteenth-century Jewish Iberia, claiming that "Akhbor is a caricature of the Andalusian-style aristocrat" and his murder is "a fantasy of revolution" against this Jewish leadership, which was given to avarice, lust, and wine.¹⁶

A strange feature in this story is the prominence of the theme of the beard—Akhbor's beard in particular, and beards in general. Beards are hyperbolically described, excessively discussed, and thoroughly typologized throughout this work, occupying nearly one third of it. Nonetheless, the beard plays no diagetic role in the story, and contributes nothing to the progress of the narrative. There are only two instances where the beard does have a role in the plot (albeit a passive one). One is when Akhbor's beard is stared at by the crowd as a spectacular object, and the other is in the punishment scene, when it is yanked and plucked out by the four girls. As if to prove the preacher's foolishness, the

14 Schirmann, "Tale of a Hypocritical," 385 n28, identified the maidservants as non-Jewish concubines, of the kind rabbis warned against later in the thirteenth century.

15 See commentary, note 63.

16 Decter, *Iberian Jewish Literature*, 172. See also *ibid.*, 211 for his deliberations concerning a historical contextualization of this story.

bearded preacher himself cautions his listeners against individuals with long beards who are known for both their foolishness and crudeness.¹⁷ The relation between long beards and short minds is known in Arabic satirical literature.

Akhbor's abundant and unruly beard is described as a humongous tree "with *branches* sprouting out of her, dividing hither and thither, and *offshoots* and *flanks*, and *sprouts*, and *boughs*, and *limbs*, and *wings* that were spreading all around her (italics are mine—T.R.)"¹⁸

Please note the remarkable resemblance between Ben El'azar's "branchy" diction and the imagery used by the Russian critic Mikhail Bakhtin (in his book on Rabelais) where he studies the grotesque body:

The grotesque ... is looking to that which protrudes from the body, all that seeks out to go beyond the body's confines. Special attention is given to *shoots and branches*, to all that prolongs the body ... This is why the essential role belongs to those parts of the grotesque body in which it outgrows its own self, transgressing its own body ... Thus the artistic logic of the grotesque image ignores the closed, smooth, and impenetrable surface of the body and retains only its excrescences (*sprouts, buds*) ... only that which leads beyond the body's limited space (italics are mine—T.R.).¹⁹

Akhbor's beard is, by any standard, grotesque. In the poem composed by the first maidservant, his beard is described as a jungle, or a paradise of sorts where small and large animals live peacefully together (lines 65–66, 359–377). This poem splendidly illustrates Bakhtin's idea that the grotesque body "is not separated from the world by clearly defined boundaries; it is blended with the world, with animals and objects"; "it swallows the world."²⁰

Protruding body parts (noses, phalluses, beards), says Bakhtin, "are predominantly subject to ... exaggeration, to hyperbolization; they can lead an independent life, for they hide the rest of the body, as something secondary."²¹ He speaks about "the pathos of exaggeration" in the grotesque, "the joyful lavishness of

17 I am grateful to my friend András Hámori of Princeton for referring me to Abū l-Faraj ibn al-Jawzī, *Akhbār al-ḥamqā wa-l-mughaffalīn*, ed. Kāzīm al-Muzaffar (Najaf: Manshūrāt al-Maktaba al-Ḥaydariyya, 1966), 15–16 where long beards are ridiculed and are held as sign of foolishness. See also note 13 below.

18 Lines 62–66 in the translation; emphasis mine. For more references to beard(s) in the text, see lines 68–72, 115–118, 125–127, 357–425.

19 Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 316–317; emphasis mine.

20 *Ibid.*, 26–27, 317.

21 *Ibid.*, 317.

description," "the drunkenness with hyperbole," which are rooted, in his view, in the merriment of the carnival, and in the liberating laughter that springs out of the material body itself, out of what he calls "the lower bodily stratum."²² Degradation and debasement are the essential principle of both the grotesque and the carnival. Carnival laughter involves fights, beatings, abuse, and curses, which are all targeted at the lower parts of the body. All these gestures pull the body downward to its lower parts and to the underworld.²³

Echoes of the carnival's liberating laughter are heard in our story too. Consider the humorous scene in which the four cultivated maidservants compete in verbal mudslinging and smearing with dirt (lines 357–425). This scatological humor is, according to Bakhtin, a trace of carnival games such as besmirching others with mud or tossing dung.²⁴ In the diatribe composed by the four girls, the old man's dirty beard epitomizes his dirty sexual habits. Hence, their songs lower the beard to the nether region of the body (the anus, lines 400, 403, 408), and further down to Sheol (i.e., the underworld, lines 359, 365, 417, 424).

The logic of the carnival (with its various inversions, such as upside-down, king-clown, male-female, etc.) may perhaps also account for the author's choice to render the Hebrew masculine *zaqan* (beard) as feminine. Schirmann suggested that this was influenced by the feminine words for beard in Arabic (*liḥya*) or Spanish (*barba*). But this does not explain the choice of this grammatical irregularity. Akhbor's feminization culminates in his being punished "as women who commit adultery are punished" (Ezek 16:38) (lines 122, 426). In the Bible these words relate to the lynching of adulterous Jerusalem; her former lovers will strip her and reveal her private parts in front of a crowd; they will break her back, and let the crowd stone her. Akhbor's lynching (lines 425–427) parodies this biblical ritual. He too will be stripped by his former female lovers, his beard will be plucked off (hinting at castration), and he will be beaten to death by them.



The translation offered below aims at a middle path between being too literal and too liberal. The occasional awkwardness of the English translation reflects problematic constructions in the Hebrew original. Scholars have related stylistic oddities in *Sefer ha-Meshalim* to errors and additions introduced by the

22 Ibid., 306, 23, 315–320, as well as the whole of chapter 6: "Images of the Material Bodily Lower Stratum" (368–436).

23 Ibid., 311, 370–371.

24 Ibid., 146–148.

copyist of the work's single manuscript. Additionally, biblical phraseology, while elevating the style, often interrupts the smooth flow of the text by introducing ambiguities and evoking irrelevant echoes. The resulting enigmatic style is challenging not only for the translator and the foreign reader but also for the reader of the original Hebrew. For clarity's sake (rather than for the sake of elegance), I have smoothed out certain difficult or cumbersome expressions. Where a biblical phrase (not just a single word) is involved, I have consulted various standard English translations of the Old Testament. Biblical references are according the Hebrew Bible. In the prose sections they appear between parentheses. Those relating to the poems are referred to in the notes.

1 Translation

Thus said Lemuel, son of Ithiel:

Since my youth I have been roaming about, from nation to nation and from kingdom to kingdom. And as travelers and wayfarers are wont to do, I would sleep—at times in deserts and forests, at times in unwalled towns (Lev 25:31), at times in the streets, at times in the squares (Prov 7:12). I would spend my 5
nights at times sleeping on ivory beds or slouching on couches (Amos 6:4), at times with weeds twined around my head (Jonah 2:6), naked, unclothed (Job 24:7). By day I would wearily walk with my crippled legs (2 Sam 4:4), with neither bread nor water. Such are the affairs of wayfarers—a time for amusement, a time for bemusement; a time for living like plebes, a time for living like 10
kings.

Then I made my poem saying:

A human being never stays the same but changes by the hour.
Now he sits, now he stands; now he moves, now he stays.
Now he's weak, now he's strong; now he's rich, now he's broke. 15
Now he laughs, now he's in tears; now he builds, now he tears.
Now he's merry, now he fears; now he's honest, now he errs.
He worships God at sunrise, but fails to pray at sunset.
He relies on his wealth, but his wealth will betray him indeed.
He thinks he leans on worldly fame, but his staff is a broken reed. 20
He wearies himself to get rich, but sickens his heart all the same.
Who can count, or recount, the events of one's lifetime?
His wages changes from time to time, even as much as ten times.
And finally, when you will call him, there will be no voice, no response.

And I have witnessed wonders great and awesome, and met with many a man, 25
ignoble and noble. And I arrived at a city whose dwellers were rich and whose merchants were princes (Isa 23:8). Gold was nothing to them, and silver they weighed on the scales (Isa 46:6). This city was to my liking; all my sorrows were gone. And when I saw it I said: "Here will I dwell, for I have desired this city" (Ps 132:14). 30

Then I made my poem saying:

Choose always to live in a city whose dwellers are noblemen,
Rich and content in their riches, intelligent and of good judgment,
Who welcome you kindly, ever smiling, never angered;
Who, if calamity ever befell them, would be utterly staggered— 35

Among such lot would you safely dwell, and your soul would ever be well.

And I woke up early in the morning to observe its people and dwellers and its streets and squares, and I found its people all fraudulent and faulty. Seeing
 40 their wickedness, I said: "I will go to the leaders and speak to them, for it is they who make the laws and the rulings." But [I found that] they [too] have broken the burden and burst the bonds (Jer 5:5). Their judges were false; they were like evening-wolves that leave no bone till the morning (Zeph 3:3). And their
 45 followers were all whitewash smearers (Ezek 13:11), plasterers of lies (Job 13:4), slanderers who betray and abuse each his own brother. The righteous were giving in to the wicked (Prov 25:26) and the wicked grew fat as the heifer in the grass (Jer 50:11). They ensnare those who reprove them at the [city]-gate (Isa 29:21). They are all evil and sinful, and the city is full of perversion (Ezek 9:9).

[...]

50 When I saw them distorting justice (Deut 16:19) and taking bribes, I said: "I may perish one day by their hand (1Sam 27:1), for their path is beset by thorny hurdles (Prov 15:19) and obstacles. There is nothing better for me than to escape into the land of the Philistines (1Sam 27:1)."

I hardly finished saying this to myself when I heard an uproar, like the sound
 55 of war, and I asked: "What is that noise coming from the city?" (1Kgs 1:41). No sooner an old man [approached from] the street to a circle where people, young and old, were gathering. He was walking slowly, leaning on his staff, and his steps being so small that no air could come between one and the next (Job 41:16). He looked like a righteous and blameless person, and I said to myself:
 60 "Now will righteousness flourish and wickedness will perish, and the earth will open for salvation to bear fruit" (Isa 45:8).

And his name was Akhbor from the Mount of Tabor. And he had a beard with branches sprouting out of her, dividing hither and thither (2Kgs 17:21) and offshoots and flanks, and sprouts, and boughs, and limbs, and wings that
 65 were spreading all around her (Ezek 17:21). Calves were grazing there; they were lounging there and eating her branches bare (Isa 27:10). And all her beholders marveled at her and were in awe at the sight of her.

And the congregation gathered to view her, and they crowded around and drew near her and were discouraged, and reached closer and were dismayed
 70 (Job 4:5). He was bent under her weight, having no strength. He walked among the mass of people, collapsing under his load (Exod 23:5). The people were numerous like the sand of the sea which cannot be measured (Hos 1:10). They followed him until he arrived at the street where the people have gathered, and everyone who drew near him stopped to stare at him (2Sam 20:12).

And I watched and saw that they were setting up a place for him (1Sam. 15:12) and preparing a chair for him to climb on when he performs. In the meantime he was standing there, leaning on his servant, looking like an angel. And I said [in my heart]: "He will now do good unto you, He who sent an angel to you." And he fixed his mantle on his shoulder, and hissed and wagged his head (Lam 2:15). I was startled, gazing in silence, and remained troubled by the vision (Dan 8:28). 75 80

Then I made my poem saying:

If his beard is genuine, he will indeed rouse them from the slumber of sin.

Be their crimes [numerous] like sand—his virtue will atone for them. 85

Be they unruly or twisted—he will rebuke them as [a father rebukes his] sons.

Be they dispersed or scattered—he will gather them like a shepherd.

Be they bent or crooked—he will apprise them of [divine] mercy.

Be they soiled with sins—God will cast their sins in the depth of the sea. 90

For He shall hide them in His pavilion and shelter them in His shelter.

And people around him were chattering, while others were silent; some were screaming, others murmuring. Thus Akhbor signaled to his young assistant, on whose arm he was leaning, to rebuke them: "If you have gathered in order to scream or murmur—then you may turn around and clear off!" Seeing him so enraged they remained still and silent. Akhbor then opened his mouth and admonished them with forthright words, while raising his voice and waving with one hand and with the other. Then he spoke softly with tears in his eyes: "Blessed is the man who purifies his heart because his sins trouble him (Ps 38:18) and his evil-doings oppress him (Isa 53:5). He will sit in the Shelter of the Most High, expecting His mercy, and there will he make himself a shelter" (Jonah 4:5). 95 100

And he made his poem saying:

My heart pleads to God, forever imploring its King.

Sweet is His name on my tongue; His memory is honey and nectar in my mouth. 105

Drought or floods are naught to me, for He will hide me in His tent.

Hope for His salvation and wait! Blessed is he who awaits Him.

[And he continued:] "Let me begin with words of praise, for praise befits Him (Ps 33:1) who created heavens and earth by the Word, and hanged the earth 110

upon nothing (Job 26:7), and created humans on it to be a peculiar treasure unto him (Ps 135:4). Hence, listen to a hymn of praise!

115 Lend your ear, [my daughter], and listen and learn and be humble, and go to the house of prayer, and set your heart on the right path (Jer 31:20), and purify and cleanse yourself, and watch and be cautious. Be not swindled by men with disgraceful and rebellious beards scorched by the hot wind (Gen 41:23), nor be baffled by men of falsehood and concealment, [two] heads growing on a single stalk (Gen 41:22). They entice with words from books. They sooth with false visions and vain seductions (Lam 2:14). Yet, they have not healed the hurt of the
120 daughter of my people (Jer 8:11) who go on grieving and groaning (Ezek 9:4). Surely you know what was said about disgraceful beards scorched by the hot wind: ‘And I will punish thee, as women who commit adultery are punished!’” (Ezek 16:38).

And he made his poem saying:

125 Do not be alarmed by beards or gray hairs—distrust them and put them to the test!
For often you hope to find wheat, but find unsightly thorns instead.
Likewise, because a man looks poor, you often assume he is just, when
in fact he grinds the faces of the poor to dust.
130 The bread of the poor is his lust. He is like a dog who returns to its own vomit, to feast on it.
Do not say: “He will succeed in escaping,” for he will never be forgiven or absolved.
[...]

135 “And I adjure you by the Shelter of the Most High (Ps 91:1) that you have pity on the poor and the destitute, and that you do not blaspheme Him when a poor man adjures you by the Name of the Shelter of the Most High. The likes of this happened to a certain poor man. He knocked on a door asking for some bits of food, and the owner of the house tossed a penny to him. The poor man adjured
140 him, saying: ‘By the Shelter of the Most High, will you give me some wheat as well since my small children suffer of hunger and thirst.’ But the owner of the house lied to him, whereby he ‘denied the principle’ [of God’s existence and providence]. He said: ‘And how can you adjure me by the Shelter of the Most High? Do you not see that I myself am poor and destitute?’ And it so happened
145 that before he even finished saying it, he was overcome by pain and devastation. His Creator inflicted him with blindness and madness and destruction (Deut 28:28). And a voice came out saying: ‘Thus shall it be done (Esth 6:9) to the man who blasphemes the Shelter of the Most High!’ And you, my brethren,

learn a lesson so that in the day of wrath and fury you will find shelter in the Shelter of the Most High!"

150

And he made his poem saying:

Blessed is he whose prayers are heeded. The Shade of his Maker will crown his head.

In the Day of Fury he will be safe and free of fear, for God's Shade is his shelter.

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He will be rescued from the archers the day they set their arrow upon the string.

He will be saved in the heart of the ocean without a sail, without an oar. [But] he who blasphemes God's Shelter will dissolve in his caustic sins.

[...]

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I dream I am sitting in God's Shelter, but only the Rock of my Salvation, He alone can make [my dream] come true. [...]

And he went on saying things chaste and pure, while all remained silent. And he said to them: "My brothers, why do you pursue riches? Why do you harden your hearts? Listen to the story of the two neighbors, one rich and the other poor. The rich man was a [diligent] merchant, getting up early each morning. The poor man was once starving for three days and three nights (Esth 4:16) until there was no breath left in him (1Kgs 17:17) from hunger and thirst. On the fourth day, relying on the mercy of the Rider of Heavens (Ps 68:33), he took his cane and went out, distressed and aching, until he arrived at the merchant's house. And he said to him: 'Will you resuscitate your servant's heart? Please hurry.' The merchant who was [still] under the influence of [yesternight's] wine yelled at him and treated him like nothing, saying to him: 'How dare you come to me at dawn?' And he answered: 'Because my head is dizzy [from hunger].' And the poor man kneeled before his feet, then went off and sat aside facing him. And the merchant yelled at him again saying: 'Don't you see that you are a disgrace to yourself? I know how evil-minded you are! Why are you still here, and what do you reckon, and what do you think?' And the guest answered: 'Do I count on your wealth? I rely on Him who converts hearts and cancels schemes (Job 5:12), that He may convert your heart too!' No sooner did the merchant hear this than God converted his heart.

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And there was a certain man whom the merchant favored, and he appointed him to be his clerk, entrusting him with all of his possessions. He thus wrote to the clerk a note to give the poor man four shekels. But his hand erred, and his heart was distracted, and while intending to write to him, 'Give him four shekels and no more,' he actually wrote, 'Give him four hundred silver shekels.' The poor

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man then took the note from his hand and went to the clerk. The clerk weighed the money for him and he put it under his robes. And the merchant came and asked the clerk about the money and the note. [Realizing what happened] he
 190 said to the poor man: ‘Will you not possess what your God gives you to possess? (Judg 11:24). [It is] He [who] caused my hand to err and to give you all my fortune and glory. For it is He who enriches and impoverishes (1Sam 2:7), plants and uproots, protects the faithful (Ps 31:24) and silences the speech of orators (Job 12:20). He reigns over the proud and the humble (Is 2:12), and over
 195 the deceiver and the deceived (Job 12:17).’

A man thinks he is wise, but it is otherwise—
 A bright man might get poor while a fool prospers.
 A righteous man might err, and a rich one might be unhappy.
 One wanders up hills and down vales begging for food and clothes,
 200 Another one delights in God’s bounty and bourgeons like fish,
 Yet another one begins happily but ends up with a bitter heart.
 God will judge them all, lifting the humble and humbling the lofty.
 He is the one for whom everyone waits and awaits.”

When he ended telling the parable, one of the elders of the circle stood up and
 205 said: “Do you not know that this most venerable sage is eighty years of age? Be abashed by the breadth of his beard and by the abundance of her branches and boughs (Isa 80:12), and by the burgeoning of her young twigs! And now reward him according to his righteousness and give him, each of you, the earrings from your booty (Judg 8:24).” The elder was standing there among the
 210 herds [of people], repeating his words, not once and not twice, until the hearts of the crowd melted and became as water (Josh 7:5). And he called on two of Akhbor’s assistants to go and collect money from the people. And the heart of the people turned soft and carefree, and they gave him each a coin and a robe or a mantle, each as much as he was able (Ezek 46:7). And Akhbor’s two
 215 young men carried to him the silver and the gold, and he bowed and blessed the crowd and said: “As I have said, all I ask from you is the generosity of your hearts alone.”

And he made his poem saying:

The Maker of Hearts purifies hearts at His Will.
 220 He toughens and stiffens hearts—then attunes them to His will.
 He hardens them—then sets them aright. At His call they pour out like
 the water of the sea.
 Likewise are your souls and your spirits committed in my hands.

“Likewise, may God divert your hearts towards His Favor, and direct your desires towards His Will. He will wait to pardon you (Isa 30:18). He will spare you and have mercy on you. May your soul be bound in the bundle of the living” (1Sam. 25, 29). And Akhbor bowed again and went away and the crowd scattered and went each to his home. 225

And I said in my heart: “Let me follow this old man to find out whether he is a [true] prophet or a [false] visionary, a noble person or an ignoble one.” And Akhbor took his two young men with him. He walked and I followed him. He entered his house, took his shoes off, threw his staff aside and put his belongings in his [private] room. 230

His house had ten gates like the mansions of nobility. Had my tongue not been too short to tell what my eyes beheld, I could describe its design (Ezek 43:11) and courtyards and bastions. Who could describe the water and the pool, and the birds and the birdcages, and the variety of trees and roses and flowers, and the spoons and the scoops, and the wine jugs and the wine cups, and the styles of clothing, and the vessels of silver and gold and copper?! And I said in my heart, “From whom has he taken [all these]? From villains or from noblemen? [How] has he made all this wealth and [obtained] all these possessions? Did he have no shame to take from rich and poor alike and get himself all these riches?” Thus was I convinced that the man was of villain seed, harsh and evil in his dealings (1Sam 25:3). 235 240

Some men prosper on theft and thrive on their victims' tears. 245

Some look respectful with their gray hair and their beards—but portraits painted on a wall look livelier.

Some have dashing beards—but beards smeared with tar are prettier.

Some have long beards incurably diseased with sins, which spread their rot all around. 250

Their beards are moist with the marrow of their bone, but their brains are as empty as their heads.

Some men are wise in their own eyes, but wisdom is far from them.

Some men, heavier than the sand of the sea, crush people of wisdom under their load. 255

Some are stinging like thorns, or prick like a prickle in the eye.

Some beards belong to cheats who eat the belongings of the poor as if they were sweets;

They feed on food grabbed from the poor, and even when already rich they go on gulping it all, whether sour-bread, crackers, or wafers. 260

They have forgotten Him, who hears a pauper's cry and listens to the moans of them who entreat Him.

Those who have filled their satchel with theft will have to empty it tomorrow.

- 265 In the meantime, four girls came out. They were moving in splendor, like the full moon walks [across the sky] (Job 31:26). They kissed [Akhbor's] hands and stripped him of his clothes. Then they sat at a table set with all of his [favorite] foods and delicate fruits, and spoons and goblets carved with buds (1 Kgs 6:18), and old wine, and flowers and roses, and running waters, and royal refinements.
- 270 And while Akhbor was reclining at his table (Song 1:12), his heart merry [with wine] (Esth 1:10), he said to his girls [who were holding] in their hands zithers and harps and rattles and cymbals (2 Sam 6:5)—“Awake, awake, sing a song!” (Judg 5:12).

And one of them chanted, saying:

- 275 Wine—like lightning, like fire—ignites a drinker's heart with its spark.
Bitter—yet sweeter than honey—it revives, like myrrh, like balm.
If there is grief in a man's heart—wine will kill it with its troops of
delight.
It turns a miser's heart kind, and his fist into an open palm.

- 280 Then the second one chanted, saying:

“Behold the shine of the wine behind a glass that looks like ice—
Can't you see its hidden glance? Its red eye peering through the glass?”
And when they failed to unravel the secret of glass and glance, I said:
“Think of the stars; though hidden in heaven—their light spreads out!”

- 285 Then the third one chanted, saying:

- A blushing gazelle, the glass in her hand is filled with the blood of the slain.
From the blush of her face and her glass all faces flush, and frocks and flasks.
- 290 So bright is their light that it dulls the moon and the stars, which bow to them now.
Should the gazelle and the glass be put in the pitch of the night—all shades would fade and night would shine bright.

Then the fourth one chanted, saying:

When vineyard's-daughter is poured out, she looks like a doe pouring
 tears over a lover who left her— 295
 Nevertheless, she kills all worries at once; all pain is slain with her lance.
 Her beauty stirs lust, turning a soft heart into a lion's heart.
 You ask: "How does her glow glean through the glass to show her mass?"
 "Can't you see a pretty doe from behind her veil? Isn't the wine likewise 300
 veiled by the glass?
 Hence, arise, friend! It's time to drink and enjoy her glorious glance."

And Akhbor said: "Your mouths have spoken and your hands have fulfilled
 (1Kgs 8:24). Many a man has been slain (Prov 7:26) by your lovely songs. And
 now that you have aroused me, I too will sing my piece (Job 32:17)." 305
 And he made his poem saying:

Crystal cups, when empty of wine, are white, and clear, and pure,
 But filled with the tears of the vines, they turn into red and gold.
 Sparks bounce in the cups, as if firebrands have kindled their fire there.
 Did they blush or are they shy? Why, then, is the color of full cups unlike 310
 that of the void?
 Likewise are the gazelles—their faces blush when they meet their
 sweethearts;
 They blush from the blood of lovers whose hearts they stole and abused.
 Arise, you pretty gazelle, serve me big cups instead of small! 315
 O that the beloved's mouth were my cup, for it is sweeter than any bowl!
 It is the rule to drink from the lips of a lovely gazelle; indeed it is a
 lover's goal!

And the girls said to him: "Well done; your poems are more pleasing than those
 of many worthy [poets]." And he rose up and approached them to play, and 320
 was falling upon one bosom and the other, and they too rose up to play. And
 he danced with a heart full of cheer and fire until he tired. Then he lay down,
 closed his eyelids, covered his face and pretended to fall into a deep slumber.
 He stayed silent and motionless [as if] not noticing that the girls left out to the
 courtyard. 325

As they left, he called out softly and a Kushite woman came out [from
 another] room. She was all black. Her lips were like embers snatched from a
 blaze (Amos 4:11), her eyes—flames, and her nostrils—[gaping] windows. [See-
 ing her] I exclaimed: "Does harlotry befit such an old worn hag (Ezek 23:42)?"
 Watching their foul deeds, I got so frenzied that I beat them and stripped them 330
 of their clothes and left them naked and barefoot (Mic 1:8), for I envied their

folly (Ps 73:3). And Akhbor said: “Hands off! Why do you treat your servants like this (Exod 5:15)? It is indeed because ignorant people [like you] have no taste for the rotten figs (Jer 29:17)!”

335 And he made his poem saying:

When my groins ache, I use figs as a secret cure.

But only the rotten ones work! Study medicine, you boor!

And as I rebuked him for his folly and fraud he made yet another poem:

Why loathe a black woman? Can one's eye do without its black [pupil]?

340 I prefer a black woman to a fair one who looks like sickly skin.

[...]

And I replied to his silly words, “Answer a fool according to his folly”

(Prov 26:4)!

Why compare a smelly black woman to a fair one who smells of myrrh?

345 She is like a lily in a lover's hand, delight and glory to every eye.

Black women—all of them—are brainless, silly, loud and stubborn.

I'll whisper to the ear of any Kushite woman: “Return to where you were born!”

And I said to Akhbor, “What have you to drink the waters of the black river” (Jer 2:18)? And he replied, “And aren't lovers of fair girls like the riders of white she-
350 asses (Judg 5:10)?!” [Upon this] I screamed bitterly and the girls came in, for I raised my voice. I told them what Akhbor had said, and they cursed him and vilified him terribly, laughing at the hairs of his beard for being so long and so white, and knowing nothing and understanding nothing (Ps 82:5). Fair is black
355 unto him, and black is bright. He is uncontrollably drawn to the black ones, and precisely because they are so dark!

And one of them said: “The man with the crushed testicle (Lev 21:20) has dug in the dark (Job 24:16)! I had seen his beard imposing fear and terror onto the hearts of all her beholders (acc. to Ezek 26:17), [but now I see] her nethermost
360 reaching the depths of Sheol (Deut 32:22)! Its green branches give refuge for the conies (Ps 104:18). There are hiding places in between the branches. Foxes walk there (Lam 5:18) and fleas doze there, for the days are so long there (Gen 26:8).”

And she made her poem saying:

365 Akhbor's beard is the beard of a foolish shepherd; her branches [go] in every side and ward.

She grew long until she reached down to Sheol. She did it so forcefully that she wearied herself.

I saw small animals crawling inside her, so I asked, “[Do] monkeys hide [there]?”

And I saw bird-like things flying in her, and fleas settling and nesting
inside her. 370

And the answer was: "Akhbor's beard is a forest, with wild birds and lit-
tle foxes;

The dart-snake nests and lays eggs in there, and conies too find refuge in
there. 375

They all abide there in safety and peace, each under their tranquil vine
And their fig tree, forever lush and fresh under in the shade of Akhbor's
beard."

And the second one said: "When I [first] saw Akhbor's hair, all white from old
age, no single black hair, I deemed him faultless. [But] he has made his bed in 380
darkness (Job 17:13)! He fornicated with the [black] daughters of Ham (Num
25:1)! He worked in the coals (Isa 44:12)! Therefore, I hollered at his wicked
beard: 'Woe to you, filthy and polluted (Zeph 3:1)! Hitherto I had deemed her
a beard of reason and knowledge, and here she was—a beard of shame and
fury!'" 385

Then she made her poem saying:

I mistook Akhbor's beard for the beard of a doctor who treats the sick;
For a beard of justice and rectitude, a beard of glory and a shield of
defense.

But I found her to be a beard of shame, a beard of dishonor, a beard of 390
disgrace.

[Her whiteness] suits Akhbor's dark face as dung befits rubbish.

Hence, not with a razor shall she be shaven—she will be cut down with
a piece of broken pottery!

Satan blocked Akhbor's sight, and beautified blackness to his eyes. 395

He made him see dark as bright, and caused beauty to subside.

He made him favor stench to perfume and rotten flesh to a pretty sash.

And the third one said: "I saw Akhbor's beard, elegant and handsome, fruitful
and full of branches, and I deemed her hair to be proper and pure. She brought
forth branches; she shot forth sprigs that grew long to the rim of his robes and 400
stretched down to his feet. [Upper] hair reached [nether] hair, and [higher]
wing touched [lower] wing, and I said: 'I had thought—and how could I?—his
beard's hair to be of reason and talent—and here it is sliding down the slope of
his anus!'"

And she made her poem saying: 405

Is there a man as handsome as Akhbor with such a majestic beard?
 My heart was lured by his beard, which is as long as it is incurable.
 I examined her and found her planted in filth and stuck in dung.
 She is rooted in his face, but reaches down to the slope of his anus.
 410 Her boughs extend to all sides, each branch straying its own way.
 Her wool is enough for a mule's packsaddle, a blanket, and a hedge for
 a sheep-pen. [As it is writ]: "And thou shalt have a blanket upon thy
 weapon, and cover thy excrement with the blanket."

415 And the fourth one said: "May her scum be washed (Ezek 24:6), and may the
 content of her gizzard be removed with its own feathers (Lev 1:16). For her hairs
 are sinful and wicked. They are a delusion, a charade (Jer 10:15). Though she is
 old and senile, though she is white as hail—she will be brought down to Sheol
 (Isa 14:11)."
 And she made her poem saying:

420 When I saw Akhbor's beard, my heart trembled and feared.
 I thought he was blameless, and here he is—a defier of God!
 His beard, though eaten by moth, is white like snow and hail.
 And though she drank the purifying water, she shall be brought down to
 Sheol!

425 Then came the four of them and smote him and plucked [his beard] off and
 punished him as the women who commit adultery are punished (Ezek 16:38).
 One pulled his beard, the other plucked its hair, and they tortured him and did
 not halt until he died from the wounds that they wounded him (2 Chr 22:6), for
 they killed him indeed (Jer 26:19). They fettered him and threw him in one of
 430 the pits (2 Sam 8:17), and they said: "Let not such a corrupted man stay with us,
 for that would be a disgrace to us" (Gen 34:14).

Sometime afterwards the girls went out to the vineyards to pasture in the gar-
 dens and gather roses (Song 6:2). They ambled in orchards and rambled among
 myrtles (Zech 1:8), wearing coats of many colors (Gen 57:3), telling tales, rid-
 435 dling riddles and singing sweet songs about the blossom of the vines (Song 2:13),
 and about the vines, and about the budding of the flowers. And they parleyed
 about the trees and the roses and the buds. At noontime they slouched by the
 water-pools in the shade, playing their viols and harps.

440 And four boys peered through the windows (Song 2:9) and listened to their
 singing and their playing of their instruments, and mused to the sound of their
 music. The girls noticed them, and said: "Who is it listening to our voices (Songs
 8:13), standing behind our walls (Song 2:9)? Are you for us or for our foes (Josh

5:13)?” And towards evening the boys left their hiding place and drew nearer and nearer (2Sam 18:25), and when they came close enough they curtsied and then kneeled low to them. And they sat in two camps, boys here and girls there. 445
 And the boys marveled one at another (Gen 43:33) at seeing the girls’ beauty and their good looks and the radiance of their faces. And they whispered to each other: “Pray that they may become our wives!”

And the girls heard it and said: “Let us understand your words, and put them to the test to find out whether there is any truth in you (Gen 42:16). How shall we know that you are not spies (Gen 42:44)? Have you no shame to come and invade our privacy? And why did you not say to yourselves: ‘After staying [some time] hidden from their eyes, let us now pass over unto them and reveal ourselves (1Sam 14:8), but if they say “Come up to us,” then we will go up (1Sam 14:10)?” 450
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And one of them made her poem saying:

When suitors knock on the doors of gazelles—do they not breach the law?

Are they boobs, or boors, or fools? Or are they just in love?

Suitors should not approach gazelles just because they are seized by desire. 460

Lovers are not to satisfy their desire; with words alone they should flatter.

If they are lovers, let them give a sign or a token and wait until they are proven worthy. 465

If they are lovers of Love, they should restrain [their desire].

For lovers are always sick of heart, enflamed with fire.

They always whine, they go wild and howl from a hurting heart.

If you are [real] lovers—where are the tears shed on your faces?

Where are the pleas of love? Where are the sweet phrases? 470

Where have the great lovers gone, they who knew to win gazelles over?

They who voiced the love carved on the walls of their hearts?

Gone they are [...], despite their strength and all their might!

“You, suitors, will be tested not by arguments alone [but by deeds].

Come, hurry up, and break the fetters of bachelorhood! 475

Inherit each his spouse; draw lots, until each obtains his share.

For a man should leave his father and mother and cling to a lovely gazelle!”

They hurried then, cast their lots, and grasped each his wife.

They rejoiced in their arising youth and embraced their beloveds. 480

2 Commentary

1. **Thus said ...**—an opening formula in *maqāmāt*. **Lemuel, Ithiel**—biblical authors of proverbs (Prov 30:2; 31:1). (And see more about the names in the introduction above). 6. **on ivory beds**—i.e., like the rich. 7. **with weed etc.**—like vagabonds. 14–17. **now ... now ...**—the Hebrew echoes Eccl 3: “There is time for ... and time for ...”. 20. **broken reed**—Is 36:6. 23. **wages ... ten times**—based on Jacob’s complaint to Laban: “You have changed my wages ten times” (Gen 31:41). **wages**—here: fortune, luck, chance. 24. **no ... answer**—1 Kgs 18:26. 27–28. **Gold ... scales**—because it was abundant. 29–30. **Here ... city**—an ironic use of God’s words about Zion. 34. **intelligent, etc.**—Ps 119:66. 35. **staggered**—taken by surprise, since having always been safe and complacent. (The Hebrew phrase is “with a throbbing heart” following Gen 41:8 and Dan 2:1). 42. **burden ... bonds**—of law and morality. 43. **evening**—Heb. *‘erev*. The word may also mean “steppe”; hence also: “steppe-wolves.” 49. Omitted here is a poem of thirty lines describing the protagonist’s wanderings in search of an ideal city, founded on justice and benevolence. 51–52. **I may ... Philistines**—David’s words when escaping from Saul. 53. **Philistines**—in Hebrew-Andalusi usage: Berbers (e.g., in Samuel ibn Naghrila’s war poems). Read against Iberian geopolitics, it seems that the speaker plans to flee from Christian Spain to al-Andalus, or to North Africa, both ruled at the time of the author by the Almohad Berbers. 56. **circle**—a public square. 57–58. **Young and old**—the Hebrew is based on 2 Kgs 3:21: “All who were able to put on armor and upward were summoned.” 59. **no air, etc.**—a humorous use of the description of the whale’s teeth in Job 41:8. 62. **Akhbor**—Father of Hanan, King of Edom (Gen 36:38–39). Mentioned also in 2 Kgs 22:14. 63. **her**—here and hereafter, the beard is regarded as grammatically feminine, possibly following the Arabic (*lihya*) or the Spanish (*barba*) for “beard.” 63–66. Based on depictions of trees in prophecies of destruction by Isaiah and Ezekiel. 69. **discouraged ... dismayed**—after Eliphaz’s reply to Job (“But now trouble comes to you, and you are discouraged; it reaches you, and you are dismayed”). 71. **collapsing ... load**—said about a donkey. 72. **numerous, etc.**—Hos 2:1. 79. **like an angel**—angelic, innocent. **angel desire**—also: messenger. 78. **do good**—save from punishment and destruction. ... **sent an angel**—“God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it” (1 Chr 21:15), but then ordered the angel to stop destruction. 83. **If his beard is genuine**—then it will follow that he is a genuine prophet. **them**—his sinful listeners. **rouse them**—wake his listeners with his preaching. 83–91. Note the adjectives throughout the poem: **genuine, [numerous], unruly, twisted, dispersed, crooked, filthy**—all of them relate both to the hair of a beard and to human sins. 90. **sins ...**

sea—after Micah 7:19. 91. **hide, etc.**—following Ps 27:5; 91:1. 107. **hide ... tent**—Ps 27:5. 108. **Blessed ... awaits**—Dan 12:12. 110. **by the Word**—when “He spake and the world came into being” (from the Jewish prayer, based on Gen 1:2). 111. **humans ... treasure**—Ps 135:4 refers specifically to the people of Israel who are called God’s *segula* (treasure). 113. **[my daughter]**—the address is to the congregation. The apostrophe is inferred from line 120. This part of the sermon alludes to several prophetic exhortations addressed to the Daughter of Jerusalem or Zion. 115–117. **Be not ... baffled**—echoing Jer 29:8–10. The audience is warned by a bearded man against all sorts of bearded men. 116. **men with disgraceful and rebellious beards**—The Hebrew reads *‘baalei zqan harafot u-meradim’*. The word *herpa* (sing. of *harafot*) is used in contexts of female sexual transgression (e.g., Is 47:3). *Mardut* (from root *m-r-d* rebel), refers to a rebellious wife, or (according to Rashi on 2Sam 20:30) to a whore. And see also note to line 124 below. 116. **scorched by the hot wind ... growing on a single stalk**—these expressions allude to ‘the ears of corn’ seen in Joseph’s dream: “seven ears came up in one stalk, full and good, and ... seven ears, withered, thin, and scorched by the east wind, sprung up after them” (Gen 41:22–23). “Full” and “thin” may perhaps hint at styles of beards. 117–118. **growing on a single stalk**—relates to the vices of “falsehood and concealment” which usually accompany each other. 123. **punish, etc.**—relates to the punishment of sinful women (Ezek 16:38), and anticipates Akhbor’s shameful punishment in lines 425–431. 129. **grinds ... poor**—extorts the poor and humiliates them (Is 3:15). 130–131. **dog ... vomit**—Prov 26:11. 135. **succeed in escaping**—Ezek 17:5. 134. Omitted here is a whole passage with exhortations against avarice and pleas for charity. 135. **I adjure, etc.**—this formula of adjuring “in the name of the Shelter of the Most High” (see also lines 137, 140, 148 below) occurs in Arabic. 136. **“denied the principle”**—a Talmudic expression for heresy (e.g. Bava Batra, 16:2) **blaspheme Him**—by taking His name in vain, which is prohibited by the second commandment (Exod 20:7). 154. **Day of Fury**—the Day of the Lord (Is 13:9). 156–157. **archers ... string**—according to Ps 11:2. 159. **dissolve ... caustic**—according to Prov 25:12. 160. Two difficult lines have been omitted. 169. **Rider of heavens**—God (Ps. 68:5). 179. **converts hearts**—according to 1Sam 10:9, Ps 105:25. 193. **protects the faithful**—Ps 31:24. in the Hebrew Bible. 204. **circle**—see line 56. 209. **your booty**—that you stole from the poor. (And Judg 8:25 continues: “For they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.” This might suggest that the preacher and his audience were actually Muslims). 210. **among the herds**—the text reads “among the sheepfolds,” following Judg 5:16. 220. **At ... sea**—Amos 5:8. 223. **spirits ... hands**—following Ps 31:6. Akhbor compares his rhetorical influence to God’s power. 225. **wait**—until the sinners

repent. 231. **took ... him**—a playful allusion on Abraham when going to the binding of Isaac accompanied by his two boys. (Gen 22:3). 234–235. **tongue ... short**—incapability of expressing oneself. 237. **birdcages**—alternatively: latticework. 240. **villains**—(a) plebes; (b) rascals. 243. **harsh, etc.**—said in 1 Sam 25:3 about a man called Naval (literally villain), whose name denotes his villainy. 245. **Victims' tears**—Eccl 4:1. 246–247. **portraits ... wall**—following Ezek 23:14. 249. **long**—Heb. fem.: *arukha*, repeated twice in the line, means respectively, “long” (adj.) and “cure” (n.). 251. **Their ... bone**—i.e., they are self-complacent. **moist ... bone**—Job 21–24. 254. **heavier ... sea**—Job 6:3. 255. **crush ... load**—according to Amos 2:13. 256. **thorns ... prickle**—Num 33:55. 260. **sour-bread, etc.**—Lev 2:4. 261. **Hears, etc.**—according to Job 34:28. 268. **carved ... buds**—said about decorations in Solomon's temple. 270. **heart merry**—said about King of Persia, Ahasuerus, when drunk. 272. **Awake, etc.**—from the Song of Deborah. 275–318. A series of five wine poems in the tradition of Arabic and Hebrew wine poetry. Common motifs are: Wine is bitter and sweet; it kills and revives; it is fire and water; it changes its drinker's nature; its light dulls the luminaries of heaven; it resembles the handsome wine-bearer (boy or girl). Common is also the use of the colors red, white, and black. 277–278. **troops**—since the cups are served one after the other. 281. **Behold ... you ... think**—the poet inquires the guests about the astonishing features of wine. 282. **red eye**—refers both to the red sparkles of the wine and to the reddened eyes of the drunk guest. 283. **secret**—the riddle addressed to the guest. 287. **blushing**—from the redness of the wine. 286–293. Several motifs from both love poetry and wine poetry merge here: the wine-bearer's hands and face are reddened by the reflection coming from the wineglass; wine is grapes' blood; the beloved is both shy and cruel; she slays her lovers and dips her hands in their blood. 286–287. **blood ... slain**—Num 23:24. The line alludes also to the “foreign (or adulterous) woman” who “has slain many” (Prov 7:26). 288. **face ... glass**—these are the only sources of light in the banquet. 290–291. **their ... them**—refer to the gazelles and the glasses. **bow**—in humility. 296. **vineyard's-daughter**—the wine. 296. **tears**—shed by a heartbroken lover are said (in love poems) to be mixed with blood. Wine (“grapes' blood”) drunk in parties was usually mixed with water, hence its resemblance to a lover's tears. 304. **she**—wine personified as woman. 310. A dialogue between the poet and the guest. 299. **mass**—in Hebrew: *yesod*, a word used in philosophy for matter, substance (see Ibn Gabirol's *Kingly Crown*, section 1). Here it refers to the “body” of the wine. 300. The poet's answer to his own question. 303. **Your ... fulfilled**—King Solomon's words to God. 304. **Many ... slain**—see line 287 above. 305. **aroused**—my desire, and also: inspired me. **I ... piece**—Job's words to his

friends. 309. **firebrands**—both in the sense of “coals” and “agitators” (like in Is 50:11). 308. **they**—the cups. 312. **Likewise**—the wine and the cup are compared to a pair of lovers; wine is the male and the cup is the blushing female. 324. **motionless**—Heb. *mishta'eh* (as in Gen 24:21) means usually “motionless with awe or wonder.” 337. **Kushite**—a black African woman, like Moses's wife (Num 12:1). 328. **windows**—the Hebrew here is *shequfim*, a much-debated biblical word used to describe the windows in Solomon's temple (1 Kgs 6:4). 331. **envied**—was filled with fanatical zeal (and perhaps also “envied” in the literal sense). 334. **rotten figs**—which are dark and “too spoiled to eat” (Jer 29:17) relate to both the woman's dark skin and her old age. 336. **cure**—against impotence; aphrodisiac. 340. **sickly skin**—Lev 13:4. 341. The line is undecipherable in the manuscript. 341. **Answer a fool etc.**—the opposite of Proverbs 26:4: “Do *not* answer, etc.” 346. **Brainless, etc.**—said about the “adulterous woman” in Prov 7:11. 348. **the black river**—“Shiḥor” (from the Hebrew root for blackness) is a derogatory name for the Nile. **to drink ... Shiḥor**—here: to have sex with a black woman. 354. **Knowing ... nothing**—said about the wicked (Ps 82:5). **walk about in darkness**—continuation of Ps 82:5. Here it relates to Ps 82:5. Here it relates to the “senile” hairs of the beard, and see also line 417. The words “walk about in darkness” insinuate to Akhbor's secret relationship with the black woman (and see also line 356). 355. **because ... dark**—based on Ex 9:32: “because they are *afilot* [they ripen late].” Our text replaces *afilot* with *afelot* (dark). 356. **crushed testicle**—one of the physical defects listed in Leviticus which disqualify a man from serving as a priest. And see also note to line 381. 356–357. **dug in the dark**—meaning here: “had intercourse with a dark woman.” 359. **reaching ... Sheol**—said of God's wrath (Deut 32:22). **Sheol**—the underworld. 360. **Foxes walk there**—said about ruined Zion. 363. **foolish shepherd**—Zach 11:15. 364. **every side**—i.e., it is unruly. 365–366. **she wearied herself**—i.e., the longer and heavier the beard grew, it brought about its own demise by gravitating deeper to the underworld. This parodies Ezek 24:12, relating to said about sinful Jerusalem whose “scum has not been removed out of her” (Ezek 24:12). R. David Qimḥi, a Bible commentator and Ben Elazar's contemporary, comments: “she wearied herself making her lies.” Here it relates to Akhbor's beard: the longer and heavier it grew it gravitated deeper to the underworld, thus causing its own demise. This parodies Ezek 24:12, relating to Jerusalem. Additionally, it may also parody the description of the fall of the tyrant King of Babylon whose hubris and enormous power cast him down to Sheol (Is 14:11–19): “How ... have you been cast down to the earth ... brought down to Sheol, to the depths of the pit ... you are cast ... like a rejected branch.” The latter connotation forecasts Akhbor's fall and his being cast into a pit in lines

429–430 below. 371–372. **little foxes**—Songs 2:15. 373. **dart ... eggs**—Is 34:15. **conies ... refuge**—see line 373 above. 375. **safety and peace**—Is 32:17. 375–376. **under ... tree**—Micah 4:4. **lush and fresh**—Ps 92:14 (Hebrew Bible 15). 379–380. **made ... darkness**—here: had intercourse with the black woman. 380. **Ham**—Noah's son, who was the father of Kush (Gen 10:6), and hence, ancestor of black Africans. 381. **worked in coals**—another metaphor for having sex with a black woman. 382. **filthy and polluted**—in the feminine, said about sinful Jerusalem. 387–388. **shield of defense**—Is 4:5. 391. **dark face**—the opposite of the ideal of beauty, which is dark hair and fair face. 392. **razor ... shaven**—a metaphor for total destruction, following Is 7:20: “On that day, the Lord will shave with a razor hired ... the head and the pubic hair, and will get rid of the beard as well.” **cut down**—shaven; decimated. **with a piece of pottery**—like the one Job (2:8) had scratched himself with. 396. The line follows Is 3:24: “Instead of fragrance there will be a stench; instead of a sash, a rope (*niqpah*).” R. David Qimḥi reads *niqpah* as rotten flesh and comments that the wound will be so painful that no belt could be put on it. 397–398. **fruitful ... branches**—from the description of the vine in Ezek 19:10. 398–399. **brought ... sprigs**—from the description of the cedar in Ezek 17:6. 401. **wing touched wing**—from the description of the cherubim in Solomon's temple (1Kgs. 6:28). 403. **anus**—the Hebrew text uses the euphemism “Beth Horon” (a place name in Judea, Josh 10:11) which means literally: “the place of the hole.” (This is also the expression for anus in Immanuel of Rome, Chapter 23). 406. **long ... incurable**—both “long” and “cure” are from the root *a-r-kh*, and see also note to line 249 above. 402. **slope etc.**—see line 406. 410. **blanket**—Heb.: *Masekha*, as is its meaning in Is 28:20. 412–413. **thou ... blanket**—following the injunction that each soldier should carry a digging tool next to his weapon to cover his stools with (Deut 23:14). In the poem the spade is replaced by a blanket, hinting at Akhbor's beard, which covers his “weapon” (penis, as well as his anus). 414–415. **scum ... washed**—said about sinful Jerusalem. **may ... feathers**—in Leviticus, a bird's gizzard has to be cleaned with its own feather before it is sacrificed. **gizzard**—a food-pouch in birds full of half-digested food (refers here to Akhbor's filthy sins). **her**—the beard's. **own feather**—the scum of the beard should be removed using the beard's own hair. 417. **Though ... as hail**—a humoristic take on the prophet's address to Jerusalem: “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red as crimson, they shall be as wool” (Is 1:18). **Senile**—see also line 417. 423. **white ... snow**—see line 417 above. 423–424. **the purifying water**—the bitter water given to a *sotah* (a wife suspected of adultery) to drink, in order to test her (Num 5). see note 378 above. 425. **smote ... off**—following Is 50:6. 426. **as ... adultery**—“And I will punish you as women

who commit adultery and shed blood are punished ... And I will give you into their hands ... They shall strip you of your clothes and take your beautiful jewels and leave you naked and bare. They shall bring up a crowd against you, and they shall stone you and cut you to pieces with their swords" (Ezek 16:38–40). And see also line 123. **441. killed him indeed**—contrary to R. David Qimḥi's comment on Ezek 16:38: "as women who commit adultery are punished—namely, that they are stoned; not that they will kill her." This punishment is anticipated in lines 122–123 above. **452–454. invade our privacy**—the text says, in fact, "expose our nakedness," following Gen 42:9. **466–467.** The situation is based on 1 Sam 14: 8–10, where Jonathan hides from the Philistines. **we will go up**—and the biblical verse continues: "for the Lord has given them into our hands, and this will be the sign to us" (1 Sam 14:10). **them**—the four girls. **458. the law**—the rules of Courtly Love. **464. proven worthy**—after they have been put to the test by the beloved ladies. **465. Love**—as allegorical figure appears in medieval European romance, and also in Ben El'azar's first maqāma. **472. [...]**—two unclear words in the manuscript. **474. bachelorhood**—the Hebrew word here is *nedudim*, usually meaning in poetry: departure, loneliness. **475. draw lots**—a wife will be assigned to each of the men by casting lots, in the same way as the Land of Israel was divided between the twelve tribes (Num 26:56; 32:18). **476. For ... cling**—following Gen 2:24. **479. arising youth**—following Ps 103:5: "so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's."

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Ohev Nashim and *Minḥat Yehudah Sone*⁷ *ha-Nashim*: New Fragments of a Debate*

Aurora Salvatierra Ossorio

According to the author himself, Yedaiah ha-Penini ben Abraham Bedersi was eighteen years old and living in Arles when he wrote the book *Tziltzal kenafayyim* (Fluttering of wings), known also by the name *Ohev Nashim* (The woman lover).¹ Dedicated to Meir and Yehudah, sons of the nobleman Salomon Dels-Enfantz,² this youthful work written in the last years of the thirteenth century or the very early fourteenth century recounts the battle of Wisdom and her army against the fools who scorn marriage and women. Like other texts written at an early age, this story testifies to Yedaiah's interest in *belles-lettres* and his mastery of different models of literary discourse. But ha-Penini soon would be recognized for his contributions to the fields of philosophy, ethics, and science and his greatest prestige is, indeed, due to his legacy in these areas. These circumstances help to explain why his *melitzah*, his story in rhymed prose, has generally received much less attention than his works like *Behinat ha-olam* (The examination of the world), a treatise on ethics written in painstakingly precise prose, and his *Iggeret ha-hitnatzlut* (The letter of the apology), a defense of philosophy addressed to Solomon ben Abraham Adret.

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1 For a general introduction to the author and his legacy, see Abraham Solomon Halkin and Ruth Glasner, "Jedaiah ben Abraham Bedersi," *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd ed., ed. Fred Skolkik and Michael Berenbaum, 22 vols. (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), 11:100–101. See also Ḥayyim Schirmann, *The History of Hebrew Poetry in Christian Spain and Southern France* (Hebrew), ed., supplemented, and annotated by Ezra Fleischer (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1997), 2:505–513. Of particular interest is the entry on ha-Penini by Ernest Renan, *Les Écrivains juifs français du XIV^e siècle* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1893; repr., Nendel/Liechtenstein: Kraus, 1971), 350–403.

2 Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Opp. Add. Qu. 144, fol. 1r, lines 1–12. The fragments from *Ohev Nashim* cited or translated in this study are based on the reading of this manuscript. For biographical information about the Delz-Enfantz family, see Henry Gross, *Gallia Judaica: Dictionnaire géographique de la France d'après les sources rabbiniques* (Paris: L. Cerf, 1897; repr., Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 159–160.

Ohev Nashim forms part of a group of medieval works traditionally associated with more prestigious and widely disseminated pieces. In fact, its survival in the collective memory is due in large part to its relationship to a text written some ninety years earlier, to which Yedaiah's name is often linked. This is the well-known story by Yehudah ibn Shabbetai *Minḥat Yehudah Sone' ha-Nashim* (The offering of Judah the Misogynist),³ an extremely popular and widely read story.⁴ Because of its fame and literary quality, reading and analyzing this text has become a required first step in understanding the debate that produced *Ohev Nashim*.

Such an interrelationship between texts is similarly on display in the first two responses to *Minḥat Yehudah*: *'Ezrat ha-Nashim* (In defense of women) and *'En Mishpat* (The fount of law),⁵ both written in 1210 by an anonymous author living in Burgos known only by his first name, Yiṣḥaq. These pieces criticize Ibn Shabbetai's misogynistic attitude and constitute the earliest literary controversy in Hebrew related to attacks on, or in defense of, women.⁶ In general, both are cited in connection to Ibn Shabbetai's story, are studied based on that work, and constitute a literary grouping that has come to be seen as inseparable. However, a study of the manuscript transmission raises questions about whether they were always viewed as a textual corpus. In fact, as far as is known, only one of the three extant copies of *'Ezrat ha-Nashim* contains the two other works: London-Montefiore Library 458 (NLI f-5358), a text written in Sefardic script dating back to the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries.⁷ This manuscript includes *Minḥat Yehudah Sone' ha-Nashim* (fols. 1–25),⁸ *'Ezrat ha-Nashim* (fols. 26–33), and *'En Mishpat* (fols. 33–39), the last of which has only been passed down in this source, with the last two pages in very poor condition. On the other hand, Bodleian Library MS Heb. f. 10⁹ (NLI f-27724) and Jewish Theological Seminary

3 The text was published by Matti Huss, Critical Editions of "Minḥat Yehudah", "Ezrat hanashim" and "Ein mishpat": with prefaces, variants, sources and annotations, 2 vols. (PhD diss., Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1991). Henceforth, Huss, *Minḥat Yehudah*.

4 Indicated by the fact that the book is currently extant in more than twenty manuscripts and two early sixteenth-century editions. See Huss, *Minḥat Yehudah*, 1:190–191.

5 Both texts were published by Huss, *Minḥat Yehudah*, 2:100–121.

6 Although other texts from the period discuss the defects and virtues of women (e.g., *Sefer Sha'shu'im* and *Tahkemoni*), they did not stir up similar controversy between different works and authors.

7 Hartwig Hirschfeld, *Catalogue of the Hebrew MSS of the Montefiore Library and of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Jews' College London* (Farnborough: Gregg, 1969), 136. See also Huss, *Minḥat Yehudah*, 1:287–291.

8 According to Huss, this is the second edition of the work completed by the author himself around 1225 with many glosses and additions with respect to the first version. Huss, *Minḥat Yehudah*, 1:198–207.

9 Adolf Neubauer and A.E. Cowley, *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian*

MS 1533 (NLI f-28455), both of which were copied in the eighteenth century, contain *Ezrat ha-Nashim* alone, in eight and seven folios respectively.

In the case of *Ohev Nashim*, the text has usually been read and interpreted on the basis of the relationship that ha-Penini establishes between his story and *Minhat Yehudah*. This link is quite evident from the first lines written by the poet:

Deprived of them¹⁰ for some days, I delighted during leisurely moments in the stories of the ancients, in their poetry and poems (*piyyutim*) of old. There I saw a pure, short story in rhymed prose (*melitzah*) by the great poet Yehudah ben Shabbetay ha-Levi, the so-called *Sone' Nashim*. It is one of the most praiseworthy stories written in literary language among the books. Then I said: I will climb the palm trees of rhetoric, I will take hold of their boughs, and I will write a book that exaggerates the praise of women to the contrary of this book. I will do so as an offering to the two stars I mentioned and I will make them judges to decide between us.¹¹

This connection is also maintained at the end of the work when the fame of ha-Penini's book has reached the Garden of Eden, where Yehudah ibn Shabbetay is resting. Furious, he decides to leave paradise to defend his honor and that of his *Minhat*. The result is an exceptional face-off between the two authors that concludes in a trial without winners:

Tobiyah¹² has worked great wonders with his grace, and reason is with him. However, since you (Ibn Shabbetay) are such an honourable person and will find a livelihood through your book, we will give you a verdict divided into two parts, we will deliver an impartial judgment neither in his favor nor in yours.¹³

Library and in the College Libraries of Oxford, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1886–1906), 2:179.

10 Meir and Yehudah Dels-Enfantz.

11 Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Opp. Add. Qu. 144, fol. 1r, lines 1–12.

12 This is probably the Hebrew form of his Provençal name, En Bonet. See Gross, *Gallia Judaica*, 101; Schirmann, *History of Hebrew Poetry in Christian Spain and Southern France*, 506.

13 Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Opp. Add. Qu. 144, fol. 22r, lines 10–21; Hayyim Schirmann, *Hebrew Poetry in Spain and Provence* (Hebrew), 2nd ed., 4 vols. (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute; Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1960–1961), 4:495. Cf. Arié Schippers, "Abraham Bedeři, Yeda'ya Ha-Penini, and the Literary Traditions of Medieval Spain and Provence," in *Mittav Yosef: Yosef Tobi*

There are more than enough arguments to understand how over time *Ohev Nashim* was added to the previous works attributed to Yiṣḥaq of Burgos and came to be considered a member of a textual corpus formed around the debate for or against women begun by Ibn Shabbetai. However, the manuscript tradition has reflected neither this convergence, nor the interrelationship between the texts. In fact, there was previously no record of *Minḥat Yehudah* and *Ohev Nashim* having been copied together, debunking, to some extent, the idea of their interdependence.

1 ***Ohev Nashim* and *Minḥat Yehudah*: Jewish Theological Seminary
MS 10774 (Formerly Boesky 76)**

To date, only two manuscript copies of Yedaiah Bedersi's *Ohev Nashim* have been identified. The most well known of them is held in the Oxford Bodleian Library, MS Opp. Add. Qu 144¹⁴ (NLI f-21678), which has served as the base text for the edition and study of the work here. Specifically, this is the source edited by Adolf Neubauer in 1884,¹⁵ annotated by Senior Sachs¹⁶ in 1894 and reprinted by Abraham Meir Habermann in his *Shalosh maqamot 'al ha-nashim*.¹⁷ The manuscript is written on paper in cursive Provençal letters and was quite possibly copied in the early fifteenth century. It is in a good state of preservation without a colophon or mention of the copyist or recipient and contains three works written in the same hand and with the same ink: *Ohev Nashim* (fols. 1–23), *Iggeret ha-musar* (Treatise on ethics) by Shem Tov ibn Falaquera (fols. 24–47), *Wikuaḥ ha-torani im ha-filosof* (A debate between the man of faith and the philosopher) (fols. 48–59), and a nearly complete copy of the second part of *Ezer ha-Dat* by Isaac Polgar.

Jubilee Volume (Hebrew), ed. Ayelet Oettinger and Danny Bar-Maoz, 3 vols. (Haifa: The Center for the Study of Jewish Culture in Spain and Islamic Lands, 2011), 1:370.

- 14 Neubauer and Cowley, *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts*, 2:398.
- 15 Adolf Neubauer, "Jedaiah hap-Penini's אִוְהַב נָשִׁים: Edited from a Unique Manuscript in the Bodleian Library" in *Jubelschrift zum neunzigsten Geburtstag des Dr. L. Zunz* (Berlin: Louis Gerschel, 1884), 1–19 (Hebrew section). Moritz Steinschneider made some interesting corrections to this edition, "Zur Frauenliteratur," *Israelitische Letterbode* 12 (1888): 67–69.
- 16 Senior Sachs, "Tiqune ha-shirim she-ba-sefer Ohev nashim le-R. Yedayah ha-Penini ha-Berdesi u-bi'urihem," *Matmone Mistarim. Part Two*, ed. Heinrich Brody (Krakow: J. Fisher, 1894), 1–20.
- 17 Abraham Meir Habermann, *Shalosh maqamot 'al ha-nashim* (Jerusalem: Ben-Uri, 1971), 54–72.

A second copy of ha-Penini's work came to light in the 1970s: Boesky 76, currently in Jewish Theological Seminary MS 10774 (NLI f-75722). This manuscript, which has not been edited until now, formed part of the Silberstein-Boesky Charitable Foundation collection and was lent to JTS where it was deposited in the rare book room. It was microfilmed there on October 1, 1987.¹⁸ Along with other texts in this collection, this work was auctioned by Sotheby's in December 2004 and acquired by JTS. The only known fact about its former owners is that it belonged to the Picciotto family, a leading Sefardic family that settled in Aleppo in the eighteenth century and was quite well-known due to their business activities, consular services, and cultural patronage. Specifically, the manuscript is signed by Hay Moses Picciotto¹⁹ (d. 1816), a community leader, respected scholar, and author of the *Sefer va-Yahel Moshe* (The Book of "And Moses Assembled").²⁰

To the best of my knowledge, this manuscript has not been used to date in studies that include *Ohev Nashim* or its author.²¹ This copy is described in the Sotheby's catalog as a text with variants, generally of little relevance, with respect to the Bodleian Library, MS Opp. Add. Qu 144. Neither the NLI nor the JTS electronic catalog notes any relevant peculiarity.

However, nothing could be further from the truth. When I started to read the manuscript, I discovered that the first folios (specifically up to folio 11r) did indeed follow the Bodleian Library copy with relatively few changes. However, at that point some surprises were in store. Firstly, a large number of the following folios were out of order and the plot sequence broke down at different points. The greatest surprise lay on folio 16 with the appearance of the names Taḥkemoni and Zerah. At first, I toyed with the idea that this could be seen as an intentional choice on the part of Yedaiah to play with characters from the work to which he was responding. However, upon further reading, it was possible to identify some fragments going up to folio 18b corresponding to different episodes from *Minḥat Yehudah*. This section then continued with *Ohev Nashim*, although other passages from *Minḥat Yehudah* continued to be interspersed on folios 21 and 25. Specifically, the Boesky copy contains five folios from Ibn Shabbetai's text:

18 This is the microfilm that can be consulted at the National Library of Israel (f-75722).

19 On folios 21r and 23r.

20 On the Picciottos see Abraham Marcus, "Picciotto Family," *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World*, ed. Norman A. Stillman, 5 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 4:57–60.

21 It is interesting that this manuscript is also not mentioned in Schirmann, *History of Hebrew Poetry in Christian Spain and Southern France*, 2:505–506.

- Folio 16 (16r+16v): Loose folio.²² This contains part of Taḥkemoni's testament (in Huss, *Minḥat Yehudah*, vol. 2, lines 201–241).
- Folios 17–18 (17r, 17v, 18r, 18v): These are two folios that are attached although they belong to two different parts of the story and do not have any plot continuity with the earlier folio. Folio 17 (in Huss, *Minḥat Yehudah*, vol. 2, lines 461–505) includes words from Zeraḥ to Kozbi and part of the dialogue between Zeraḥ and his lover.²³ Folio 18 (in Huss, *Minḥat Yehudah*, vol. 2, lines 241–285), which would link to folio 16, goes back to Taḥkemoni's testament, the mourning over his death, and the encounter with Zeraḥ and his three friends.
- Folio 21 (21r–21v): Loose folio (in Huss, *Minḥat Yehudah*, vol. 2, lines 371–416). This contains the dialogue between Kozbi and her husband and with Zeraḥ.
- Folio 25 (25r–25v): Loose folio (in Huss, *Minḥat Yehudah*, vol. 2, lines 328–371). This contains Zeraḥ's dream.

Clearly, the order of these folios in the manuscript is not correct. Compared with the known versions of *Minḥat Yehudah*, the sequence should be the following: folios 16+18, folios 25+21, and folio 17. In the rest of the manuscript as well, the pages corresponding to *Ohev Nashim* are out of order at certain points with respect to the text that they are copying.²⁴

The state of preservation of Jewish Theological Seminary MS 10774, written by a single copyist in the same hand, may explain the current arrangement. The folios are in a small cardboard box and are unbound. The manuscript is severely damaged by damp-staining, especially on the margins, with a severe loss of text. The folios that contain the fragments from *Minḥat Yehudah* are loose folios 16, 21, and 25 and attached folios 17 and 18. One possible hypothesis is that humidity separated the folios and that there was some confusion when regrouping the pages during the “reconstruction” process. In my opinion, this codex must have included at least two works: *Ohev Nashim* and *Minḥat Yehudah*. If it contained any more at one time, traces of them no longer exist.

22 This loose folio, as with the others loose folios in the codex, has the same formal and material features as the rest of manuscript pages.

23 In the text, Zeraḥ (and his friends) opposes marriage. He is determined to return the order to the world that was taken away by women and turn celibacy into an expression of rectitude. Kozbi, an astute go-between, helps the women to defeat Zeraḥ. She selects a beautiful and talented maiden, Ayalah, to tempt him. The seductive girl seduces Zeraḥ and he agrees to marry her. During the wedding, Kozbi will place a grotesque old hag, Ritzpa, in Ayalah's place.

24 Specifically, folios 19–20 and folios 22–24.

The passages in the work by Ibn Shabbetai that have been preserved in this copy follow the first version of *Minḥat Yehudah*.²⁵

2 Jewish Theological Seminary MS 10774 and the Culture of the Late Medieval Debate

JTS MS 10774 is, then, the only manuscript version that preserves material traces of the relationship between *Ohev Nashim* and *Minḥat Yehudah* and the understanding that they formed part of a single debate. This codex seems to recognize the formal and thematic tie between the two works and prioritizes the dispute over women and marriage as a common element between them.

The formula of the debate is also a very important link between the works held in the Bodleian Library, MS Opp. Add. Qu 144 (*Ohev Nashim*, *Iggeret hamusar*, and *Vikuaḥ ha-torani im ha-filosof*). These are texts in which it is easy to find common features that help to explain why they were included in the same codex. Among other things, all are written in rhymed prose with interspersed poems, and all give a leading role to Wisdom, with dialogue and dispute being a central element. Arguments are made in favor of and against marriage, regarding the best model of good conduct, and regarding religious perfection. In every case, one of the characters ideologically reflects the author's ideological position in these discussions,²⁶ while other characters express more or less opposite positions. Their creators were three thirteenth- and fourteenth-century intellectuals (Ibn Falaquera, Yedaiah, and Polgar) who advocated the reconciliation of faith and reason in their thinking and recognized the value of studying the secular sciences. With a common cultural background (the controversies that shook the northern Peninsular and Provençal Jewish communities), their texts combine philosophy, ethics, and literature to defend and popularize a model of knowledge and education akin to the thinking of Maimonides through recourse to the structure of dialogue and the juxtaposition of the opinions of the characters.²⁷

25 Huss, *Minḥat Yehudah*, 2:194–196.

26 Heman is an alter ego of Ibn Falaquera, Yedediah/Tobiyah of ha-Penini, and the character of the philosopher of Polgar.

27 The inclusion of *Ohev Nashim* in the Oxford Bodleian Library MS. Opp. Add. Qu 144 is interesting. Its presence in this manuscript appears to correspond more to its being a text that disseminates a model of instruction and learning than belonging to the genre of defending or attacking women. Perhaps, at least as a hypothesis, the work might have been understood by its audience as an allegorical debate, an idea fostered beginning with the prologue.

In JTS MS 10774, the debate put forth has different dimensions and meanings. The two stories copied here, *Ohev Nashim* and *Minḥat Yehudah*, are presented as two sides of a controversy that also had their authors facing off against each other. These characters do not only argue within the text: another dispute sets the creators and the very works against each other. Thus, the controversy inherent in the topic rises above the limits of the stories to include the writers and their skill as men of letters:

The news reached as far as Yehudah ibn Shabbetay (who was found) among the radiant hosts in Eden, the garden of God (Ezek 28:13). He is Yehudah, known among the people as the woman hater. And this man stopped upon hearing my (Yedaiah's) words and flew to me (Isa 6:6); he trembled and the hair on his head bristled, he left his tent in the garden protected by a guardian and entrusted his delicacies and his aromas to an angel. Yehudah came down from where his brothers were (Gen 38:1) and stood in a public place to talk with me. I (Yedaiah) was emboldened, because the hand of God was upon me (Ezek 7:28). He had a bandage over his eyes (1Kgs 20:38), a writer's inkbottle at his side (Ezek 9:2); his legs ships of Tarshish, his body like topaz (Dan 10:6). He held a sword like that of the Ammonites (2Sam 12:9) and his voice was like that of a multitude (Dan 10:6) and he spoke his pure tongue with ease. His words were sweeter than honey, his lips dropped sweetness as the honeycomb (Song 4:11). I looked at him and recognized that he was one of the stars of heaven (Isa 13:10). I said: Listen to me, my lord, your secret is hidden, your servant hears you. And Yehudah ibn Shabbetay said: What are you thinking to trouble my soul? Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up? (1Sam 28:15). What I esteem, you desert; what I hate, you love. Now you renounce the dispute and seek peace, when you have brought me this far?²⁸ (2Sam 7:18).²⁹

This is a well-known phenomenon dating back to the early fifteenth century. Particularly in the Catalonian-Provençal region, poets gave the impression of belonging to a community, to a "virtuoso circle"³⁰ which conceived of their

28 I.e., from Eden to Earth.

29 Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Opp. Add. Qu. 144, fol. 21r, lines 20–25 and fol. 21v, lines 1–9. See Hayyim Schirmann, *Hebrew Poetry in Spain and Provence* (Hebrew), 2nd ed., 4 vols. (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute; Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1960–1961), 4:492. My translation follows the manuscript, which differs in some cases from the reading proposed by Schirmann.

30 Adrian Armstrong, *The Virtuoso Circle: Competition, Collaboration and Complexity in*

efforts as a response to existing works. They recognized the value of preceding and contemporary texts, while at the same time challenging them: rewriting them in an attempt to show their mastery through elaborate textual games, in which each participant tried to surpass his predecessor with the complicity of his audience. During this time a literary creation was inseparable from the response to it, its provocation, its competition, and the system of social relationships that created group identities. Examples of this phenomenon include the well-known poetic institutions of the period like the Cour Amoreuse and the Consistoire de la Gaie Science, in which groups of authors created and enjoyed competing with poetry in collaboration. They were, in the words of Jane H.M. Taylor, “a group of poets who mark their belonging to a particular social and cultural elite by the expertise with which they can manipulate the givens of the original into new imaginary settings, and by the confidence with which they can count on the reader’s textual and intertextual expertise.”³¹ In this respect, looking at the *Ohev Nashim*, this type of practice could serve as a backdrop for the story presented by ha-Penini and an essential part of the debate proposed in his work.

As with other texts written in the vernacular, JTS MS 10774 contains a debate in which authors from different time periods participate, forming diachronic communities. They are not connected by a shared moment in history, but by the existence of an initial work to which they respond, along with others. Two well-known examples are the debate surrounding *The Romance of the Rose*, which was written around 1230 and continued to reverberate two hundred years later,³² and, in Hebrew letters, the dispute begun by Abraham Sarteano in 1490 about the goodness/wickedness of women, which continued well into the sixteenth century.³³

Late Medieval French Poetry (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2012).

31 Jane H.M. Taylor, *The Poetry of François Villon: Text and Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 11.

32 *The Romance of the Rose*, an allegorical love poem begun in the thirteenth century by Guillaume de Lorris and completed by Jean de Meun, was the most influential and controversial literary work of the French Middle Ages. Christine de Pizan sparked the literary debate with her *Querelle de la Rose* (c. 1400), a critique of misogynist doctrines. The controversy resurfaces over the following years in, among other works, *The Triumph of Women* (1438) by Juan Rodríguez de Padrón or *The Champion of Women* (1440–1442) by Martin le Franc. See Christine de Pizan, *Debate of the Romance of the Rose*, ed. and trans. David F. Hult (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2010).

33 Sarteano, an Italian Hebrew poet, wrote a poem entitled *Sone’ ha-Nashim* in which he censures women. Abraham’s book was discussed by, among others, Avigdor Fano in his *Ozer Nashim* and by Elijah Genazzano in his *Melitsot* in the second half of fifteenth century. See

The textual transmission is very revealing in this respect. The physical evidence preserved in the manuscripts helps us to analyze how the literary pieces were understood when copied and how that perception changed over time. Like the codex under study here, many fifteenth-century medieval manuscripts contain poems and other literary pieces alongside the works to which they are responding.³⁴ They thus create communities of texts that ask to be read one after the other and acquire a particular resonance when they are found in the same material framework. They also echo a literary concept that constructs social relationships and a poetic practice that connects a work with preceding and contemporary works. In this respect, the manuscript is not only followed by a *querelle* for or against women, but by a manifestation of a culture of competition and debate that strongly connects the two stories in it. The manuscript reflects an intertextual dialectic where each text appropriates and transforms the other and echoes a participatory culture featuring a “collaborative debating community.”³⁵ From this point of view, it is interesting that London-Montefiore Library 458, the only manuscript that contains *Minḥat Yehudah Sone’ ha-Nashim*, *‘Ezrat ha-Nashim*, and *‘En Mishpat*, was copied at the end of the fourteenth or early fifteenth century, close in time to the codex that is the subject of this essay.

The appearance of fragments from *Minḥat Yehudah* in JTS MS 10774, then, reveals the existence of at least one more copy of this story to add to those already known and it contributes interesting variants. However, it also offers a unique testimony to the textual community that the two works created in the late medieval era. This codex constitutes a material trace of a dialogic exchange between debating poets and communities in a Jewish context. Like their contemporaries, members of this group did not only read and interpret texts, but also responded to them in a game between opponents where the texts were the combatants. These written responses, the material loci where they converge, and the way in which they are organized in the manuscripts create a network of playful relationships and are arguably key elements when trying to understand the dynamics of the composition, transmission, and reception of these works in the fifteenth century.

Dan Pagis, “The Poetic Debate on the Worth of Women: A Reflection of Change in Hebrew Poetry” (Hebrew), in *Poetry Aptly Explained: Studies and Essays on Medieval Hebrew Poetry*, ed. Ezra Fleischer (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University 1993), 124–165.

34 Emma Cayley, “Debating Communities: Revealing Meaning in Late-Medieval French Manuscript Collections,” *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 105.2 (2004): 191–201.

35 This expression is used by Emma Cayley in her suggestive *Debate and Dialogue: Alain Chartier in His Cultural Context* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006). On the meaning of the term “collaborative debating community,” see especially 5–8.

3 Description of the Manuscript

New York, Jewish Theological Seminary MS 10774 (NLI 75722), formerly Boesky 76.

Contents: 30 paper folios; measurements 233×139 (143×92) mm.

Language and type of writing: Hebrew. Sefardic semi-cursive hand.

Dating: fifteenth century.

Place of writing and copyist: Unknown. A single copyist. There is no colophon.

Arrangement of the text: Text is arranged in a single column with 24 lines on each folio, except for the 25 lines on 21r. Where there is poetry, the two hemistichs of the verse are divided into two columns and the first is marked with three full stops. There is indication of the title of the work (*Ohev ha-Nashim*) in the upper margin of folio 1r. Another hand adds the same title on 2r, 3r, and 19r. There is a word crossed out on 18r. The beginning of some fragments is written with a larger letter. There are some annotations in the margins in a later hand (21r and 25r). There are writing tests (23r) and the owner's signature (Moses Hay Picciotto) on 21r and 23r. There are no catchwords.

Units and foliation: Folios 1–10 belong to the same unit, a *quinion*. Folios 11 and 12 are loose. Folios 13, 14, and 15 form part of another unit, a *quaternion*, along with the final folios 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30. The rest of the folios are found between folios 15 and 26: 16 is a loose folio; 17 and 18 are attached; 19, 20, and 21 are loose folios; 22 and 23 are attached; 24 and 25 are loose folios. It appears that the loose pages were attached to the rest at some point in time. The units are sewn. There is later foliation in pencil in Arabic numbers in the upper left margin of the recto folios. This numbering must have been added after JTS acquired the manuscript since it does not appear in the version microfilmed in 1987 that can be accessed today at the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts at the National Library of Israel.

State of preservation: There is damp-staining affecting the extant text and causing the loss of important parts of the manuscript, especially on the margins. It is not bound, and the block of folios is protected by a small cardboard box. There is no marbled paper.

Other information:

Owners: Moses Hay Pigoto.

Origin: Silberstein-Boesky Charitable Foundation. Ivan F. Boesky and Seema Boesky Family Manuscript Collection. Auctioned by Sotheby's in 2004 and acquired by JTS.³⁶

36 Sotheby's [Firm], *Fine books and Manuscripts including Americana and Judaica* [New York, 2 and 3 December 2004], lot 40, 59]. New York: n.p 2004.)

Microform: Microfilmed at the JTS on 1/10/1987. A copy of this microfilm can be found at the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts in the NLI (f-75722).

Electronic access: JTS. Digitization funded by the Dr. Georgette Bennett and Dr. Leonard Polonsky Digitization Project: http://garfield.jtsa.edu:8881/R/-?func=dbin-jump-full&object_id=121355&silos_library=GEN01

4 Edition

What follows is an edition of the folios of *Minḥat Yehudah Sone' ha-Nashim* in the New York, Jewish Theological Seminary MS. 10774, which are unedited to date. In the edition, I indicate the numbering that appears in the JTS manuscript although I have chosen to order the fragments according to their contents to make it easier to read them. I note the variants with respect to M. Huss's edition of the first version of the work (*Minḥat Yehudah*, 2:1–35) based on MSS. London-British Library Add. 27113. The correspondence between the manuscript folios and the lines of this text are as follows: 16r–16v (lines 201–241); 18r–18v (lines 241–285); 25r–25v (lines 328–371); 21r–21v (lines 371–416); 17r–17v (lines 461–505).

Symbols used in the edition:

/	separates the units of rhymed prose
//	end of the manuscript line
[Variant
+ [Addition
– [Omission
[]	strikethrough word
[..]	Two dots refer to a lacuna of one or two characters.
[...]	Three dots refer to a missing word.
[.....]	Nine dots refer to an indefinite number of missing words in the line.

16א

// [.....]

// [.....]

בני [.....] בפיהם עם [.....] //

// [.....] וצילם/ צאנה ואלפים כלם/ דרכם //

5 [.....] המה יאבדו ואתה תעמוד/ בני הנשוי ת[.....] //

// [.....] עד שאול הגיע/ ובחורי ישראל הכריע/ [.....] //

// [.....] מן העשיריהם הניס רבבה/ ויכם וירדפם //

// [.....] הייתי גם זקנתי/ לא ראיתי נשוי מצליח דרכו //

// [.....] חשכו/ וישא משלו ויאמר //

10 [.....] בעלי נשים/ עין פתח ידך ואמור חמש //

// [.....] אשה ואל תחמור/ יפיה אשר ימס בחום שמש //

// [.....] על לבך היום/ השח גאון תפארתך אמש //

// [.....] תה קומתך תמר/ חיש תהלך כפוף כמו חרמש //

בני הט אזניך ושמע דברי חכמים/ למען ייטב לך והארכת //

15 ימים/ כל המרבה שיחה עם האשה/ סופו לגיהנם פתוחה //

// [.....] בעודך רך תקברך/ ובכלות כחך תעזבך/ כל נתח טוב תאכל מן //

// [.....] המטעמים/ ותגיש לפניך העצמים/ תרמית הנשים ונכליהן/ מי //

// [.....] יהן/ כמה גבוהים השפילו/ כמה יגונים הנחילו/ כמה //

// [.....] גבורים כשלו מאין מקימם/ וכשל גם יהודה עמם //

20 וישא משלו ויאמר //

כל היקום הכו בעורון/ ונבון דברים סף ותם דעו //

// [.....] כי יח[.....] גבר בים סוער/ טבע ויבא אחריו רעו //

בני אל תחמוד יפיה בלבבך/ ובערתה הרע מקרבך //

16ב

// [.....]

// [.....]

// [.....]

// [.....] ואת היבשה [.....] //

// [.....] האלהים ימלט מקרבה/ וחוטא ילכד בה/ [.....] //

// [.....] הנשוי וקורותיו/ ולא זכרתי חצי תלאותיו/ [.....] //

30 בני שים בלבך להבין ולהורות/ אלה החוק [.....] //

// [.....] על דר וסוחרת בעט ברזל ועופרת [.....] //

4 צאנה] צנה 7 ויכם] וינס 8 גם] עם 13 תהלך] תהלוך 14 אזניך] אזנך 15 לגיהנם] לגהנם 18 יגונים] יגונות 19 כשלו] + בהן 22 ויבא] ויגד 23 תחמוד] תחמד 30 בלבך] לבך

ובקומך/ כי הם חייך ואורך ימיד/ והנני [.....] //
 תולה ארץ על בלימה/ וייצר את האדם עפר מן [.....] //
 עליו תרדמה/ ויפח באפיו נשמה / ויקח אחת [.....] //
 וישת חשך סביבותיו/ לכל ישמע הסוד הזה על [.....] //
 לרעיד היושבים לפניך/ ומה לך לספר אל הנבל [.....] // 5
 על גרגרותיהם ענקי/ לכסיל יאות להנשא לחרפתו [.....] //
 כל עורב למינו / ויהי כאשר כלה תחכמוני [....] //
 הבן והמליצה/ והמוסר והעצה/ ויקם זרח בנו //
 על אפיו ארצה/ ויאמר לאביו יהי אלהיך עמך/ כי כל רז וכל/ 10
 סתום לא עממך / הורתני דרך נכונה/ הנחלה והמנוחה//
 ימלא משאלותיך אל/ וירבו כמותך בישראל/ באמת נקרא //
 שמך תחכמוני/ כי חכמתני ושכל טוב הודעתני / ואם לא//
 אשים במשמרת דבריך הנכוחים והנעימים/ וחטאתי //
 לאבי כל הימים/ כי מי אחריד יבין שמועה/ ומי יורה דעה//
 ויפל תחכמוני לצוות את בנו וכל אנשי שלומיו // 15
 יגוע ויאסף אל עמיו/ ויספדו לו כל אוהביו לפנים//

18א

באבל גדול [.....] //
 [.....] זרח [.....] //
 שנתים לפני הרעש/ בן מאה שנה היה תחכמוני [.....] //
 רוחו/ לא כהתה עינו ולא נס ליחו/ מלבד עשרים שנה [....] // 20
 בימי עלומיו/ על כן לא באו במספר ימיו/ כי בקחתו אשה [....] //
 אשר לא ידע ללכת אל עיר/ וכאשר גדל ראה את ערותה/ [....] //
 את כל אשר לו ויגרש אותה/ ולא יספה שוב אליו עוד/ ולא ידע//
 בפש מאד/ ויכתוב זרח דברי אביו וכל אשר אמר/ ויתן אותם//
 במשמר/ כל המזכיר לו אשה עליו ילעג וישחק/ וגער בו ונס ממרחק// 25
 ויבחר לו שלשת רעים/ נדיבי לב ושועים/ כי רדפו אחרי //
 השכל מימי נעורים/ לקחת מוסר השכל ומשפט//
 ומישרים/ ואלה שמותם/ למשפחותם לבית אבותם/ נתנאל בן//
 מהלאל אבי נועם בן עמינדב אחיטב בן אבישוע וילוח אליהם//
 ויתחבר עמהם/ ויאמרו לו הנה המקום צר ממנו/ והנשים יושבות// 30
 בקרבנו/ ואנחנו יראים מתרמיתן/ פן נלכד בשחיתותן/ עתה//
 נבחרה לנו מקום לגור פן נאשם/ ארץ לא עבר בה איש ולא ישב אדם//
 שם/ ויאמר אליהם חפצי כחפציכם/ ורצוני כרצונכם/ פנו וסעו//

2 האדם] האדמה 3 ויפח] ויקח || באפיו נשמה] - 6 גרגרותיהם] גרגרתיהם 8 הבן] הבין || בנו] + וישתחו 10 עממך] + כי || הורתני] הוריתיני 13 במשמרת] + כל || הנכוחים והנעימים] - || וחטאתי] חטאתי 16 ויגוע] +וימת || אוהביו] יודעיו 20 ליחו] ליחה 22 ראה] וראה 23 לו] + 24 ויכתוב] ויכתב 25 במשמר] +מן היום הוא 27 השכל] + דק 29 מהלאל] מהללאל || עמינדב] עבינדב || אחיטב] אחיטוב 31 בשחיתותן] בשחיתותם 33 כחפציכם] כחפצכם

לכם/ וילכו משם הלוך ונסוע/ למצוא לנפשם מרגוע/ חלפו נהרות//
 ועברו מעברות/ ודרכו מסילות/ ארחות עקלקלות/ עד אשר באו//
 אל נחל הבשור/ מקום אשר אין שם מחסור/ על שפתו כל מיני מגדים//
 כפרים עם נדרים/ וכל עצי פרי עליו שתולים/ מיימינים ומשמאלים//
 5 וכל אלה עבות הבדים ופארות תשלחנה/ ויחצו הנה והנה/ וכל עופר//
 וצבי יתלונן/ תחת כל עץ רענן/ וצפור כל כנף יסתופף לענפיהם//
 ועל עליהם פרשו כנפיהם/ פעם יהגו צחות ופעם עלגים/ המצפצפים//

18ב

//[.....]

//[.....]

10 // [.....] יצפצפו וכנפיהם פרושים//
 וגלות יורדות על החצבים/ והרוח תרחף בין הדסים//
 [.....] כל איש שש בצלו/ ופרותיו בפירותיו עמוסים//

ויאמרו עד פה דרכה רגלינו/ כי באה נחלתינו אלינו/ פה//

תחנותנו/ כי היא מנוחתנו/ וישבו בין//

15 ההדסים/ שמחים נעלסים/ פעם יורו חקות ופעם משפטים//

[...] לאכל ולשתות נוטים/ פעם משחקים ופעם מלעיגים//

כי כן ימי משפט וימי התענוגים/ חדש בשנה יעלה זרח בכל//

שנוי/ להוכיח שלומי אמוניו/ בכל מקום אשר//

יפנה/ כה יענה/ גורו לכם מפני חרב נטושה/ אל תגשו אל אשה//

20 בקשו רוחה/ בקשו רוחה והנחה/ הרחיקו מעליכם בעלי//

נזמים/ למען תאריכון ימים/ מה לעולמים להבאיש ריחם//

תפארת בחורים כחם/ כי לא יעטו כלימה ובושה/ אם נשמרו//

הנערים אך מאשה/ רוע הנשוי לעד לא יכלה/ מנפש ועד בשר//

יכלה/ כל הנושא/ בחשך שמו יכוסה/ כאבו יגדל/ וכבודו ידל//

25 השומע ישמע והחדל יחדל/ כל בעל אשה גרש יגרש/ פן ישומם//

ויורש/ המשכיל בתוכחתי נפשו יצור/ ודבר שפתים אך למחסור//

כה יעשה זרח וכה רעיוניו פתאים מחכימים/ וכה משפטו כל הימים//

המשכילים שמרו תורתו ולא עזבו כל ימי חייהם/ ורבים מעמי//

הארץ מתייהרים כי נפל פחד זרח עליהם/ ובכל מדינת ומדינה//

30 אשר דבר זרח מגיע/ לענה לכל הנשים השביע//

ותועדה כלן קטנות וגדולות/ אלמנות ובתולות//

1 וילכו] – 2 מסילות] מסלות 4 מיימינים] מימינים || ומשמאלים] ומשמאלים] [אלים] 5 עבות] עבותה || הבדים] בדים 6 לענפיהם] בענפיהם 7 פרשו] יפרשו 11 החצבים] החצצים 14 תחנותנו] תחנותינו || מנוחתנו] מנוחתינו 15 נעלסים] ונעלסים 19 נטושה] לטושה 20 רוחה] – || והנחה] הנחה 21 מה לעולמים] אל עולמים 22 בחורים] בחרים || כלימה] כלמה 28 עזבו] עזבוה || חייהם] ימיהם 30 זרח] + ודעתו || לענה] + ורוש

25א

//[.....]
 [.....] אליה עלינו לתת כל אשר ת[.....]
 תערוצי ובכל זאת זרח פחדים באזניו/ ורוח יחלוף על פניו//
 באישון לילה ואפלה/ בחלום חזיון לילה//

5 על זמן תבטח אשר רגע/ יצוץ לך טובו ולא יגמול//
 תלין בטוב לבב ולא תדע/ אם יהיה מחר כיום אתמול//

וייקץ משנתו בפחד ורעדה/ויקץ ויחרד חרדה/ והנה אימה חשכה//
 גדולה נופלת עליו/ וישמע את הקול מדבר אליו//

10 לך ישן בערש תענוגים/ ורוח שעשועים נשבה בו//
 אמור מי זה אשר רע לא יגורו/ ואי נדיב זמן לא יעציבו//

עוד זה מדבר/ ואחריו ישאג קול סלעים משבר//

הלא תעיר להתבונן/ זמן רע אותך יפץ//
 ויבא יום אשר תאמר/ אהה אין לי בר חפץ//

15 זיהי בבקר ויקרא לכל אחיו ולכל מליציו/ ולכל אוהביו יועציו//
 ויספר להם ברוח נבואה / אל כל התלאה והמראות//

אשר ראה/ ויאמרו לו אל תשם לבך לרעיונים/ במאסר הגוף//
 נתונים/ כי שקר הם מתנבאים/ ויהגו אך נכאים/ וישב על//
 מושבו כפעם בפעם/ להטיב לבו באמרי נועם/ והזמן כאויב//
 רדפו/ ולא עמד כי יי הדפו/ זיהי בחצי הלילה בנפול//

20 תרדמה על אנשים/ ולחזות בנועם יי ישוטטו//
 הנפשים/ והנה רוח נשאתהו וישליכהו באחד הגיאות/ [...]
 גורי אריות ופריצי חיות/ והנה אחת מהן תפשה בו [...]
 שרשיו/ והחזיקה במבושיו/ ותפתח את פיה ולבלוע [...]
 חיה רעה אכלתהו/ וייקץ משנתו וחיים ממות בוחר/ [...]

25ב

25 [.....] חלום [.....] בדרך [...] על פי//
 [...] עמוקה/ וכמעט מארץ שפל/ ואל תוך השוחה [...]
 זיהי בבקר ותתפעם רוחו/ וכשל כחו/ ואבד נצחו/ ימות לבו//
 [...] ונשמה לא נותרה בו/ ויאמרו לו אחיו מה לך יושב//
 משמים/ ופניך נזעמים/ ויאמר להם בחלומי כנגע נראה לי//

3 זרח] +שומר דברי אביו ומצותו/ ומחזיק בתומתו/ עד כלתה אליו הרעה/ וקרן עזו נגדעה/ והנה קול
 4 לילה] -; + חשך || חזיון בחזיון 6 כיום] כמו 7 ויקץ] - 12 תעיר] תעור 14 אוהביו] +
 ולכל 15 נבואה] נבאה 16 לבך] - 19 רדפו] נרדפו 22 גורי] - 27 ימות] וימת

- חזות קשה הוגד לי/ ויאמרו לו אלהים יענה את שלומיך/ ספר//
 לנו חלומיך/ ויספר להם החלום אשר ראהו/ ואת כל המראה//
 אשר קראהו/ ויאמרו לא אשר האלהים עושה עמך/ לא העלים//
 ממך/ השוחה והחיה/ חלום אחד הוא יהיה/ אל שחת הנשוי//
 תפול ואשם תאשם/ זעום יי יפול שם/ כי עוד מעט מזער//
 עם אשה תלוה ותתחבר/ קבורת חמור תקבר/ הוא//
 החיה אשר באת והשוחה/ אשר נפלת בה/ ועתה אל יחר בעיניך//
 כי זה מספר חלומך וחזונך/ ויהי כשמוע זרח את דבריהם//
 ויגער בהם/ ויקצוף עליהם/ וידבר קשות אליהם/ מספר//
 החלום ושברכס/ יחולו על ראשיכם/ למשל תהיו ולשנינה//
 כי לא דברתם אלי נכונה/ ולכם לנחלה ולמורשה/ יתן יי את//
 האשה/ כי שקר טפלתם/ וחמס דברתם/ ותשב ביניהם//
 האהבה שנאה/ והידידות קנאה/ ויגוסו ממנו כי הבהילם//
 פחדו/ ויותר הוא לבדו//
 וכזבי לקחה את התרפים/ ותשם בידיה את//
 אשפים הכשפים/ וחיי הנשמות היא//
 העפרה היקרה/ מעדן גן אלהים לקוחה/ ושמה אילה שלוחה//
 ותאמר כזבי לאישך איך עצתך לאיש אשר אנחנו//
 הולכים אליו/ להשיבו מדרכיו ומעלליו/ ויאמר לכי את//
- 218
- את בראשונה והרבי עליו [.....]//
 ומלאתי את דבריך והאיש הזקן נחפ[.....]//
 ויקח בידו את האש ואת המאכלת/ וילכו של[.....]//
 הזקן והנערה וכזבי/ עד מקום הצבי/ ותתפלל כזבי //
 ותאמר/ הנה לשלום מר לי מר/ המקרה במים עליו[...]//
 בנו גלות עליות ותחתיות/ ויחבר באנשים/ וימאס בנשים//
 המצמיח לאיש זקן וערלה/ לשם ולתהלה/ ונתן בבנות [...]//
 תבערה וקברות התאוה/ השמן לב האיש הזה ועיניו השע//
 להוסיף על חטאתו פשע/ ויהי ככלותה להתפלל התפילה/ ותצא//
 אל זרח האהלה/ וזרח אשר בנעימים נפלו חבליו/ לא ידע כי יי//
 סר מעליו/ ותעמוד כזבי המרשעת לפניו/ והנה הנגע עמד//
 בעיניו/ ותשא משלה ותאמר יאריך אלהים שלותך//
 כל ימיד על אדמתך/ ארץ ממנה יצא לחם/ וכמוד יצא//
- 20
25
30

1 שלומיך] שלומך 2 חלומיך] חלומך || ואת] את || המראה] - 4 הוא יהיה] היה || שחת] שוחת 5 ואשם] ואשום 6 הוא] היא 7 באת] + בקרבה || יחר] + לך ואל ירע 8 חלומך] חלומיך || וחזונך] וחזיוניך || את] - 10 ושברכס] ושברכס 12 ותשב] ותשוב 15 את] - 16 הכשפים] + ומכל בגדים חמודים ומכל כסף וזהב/ שש עגלות צב/ ותקרא לנערה כלעלת תעלומות 17 היקרה] - 24 מר] - 25 גלות] גולות || עליות] + וגולות || ותחתיות] תחתיות 28 להתפלל] + את 30 ותעמוד] ותעמד

מרחס/ בי אדוני האיש כמוך יושב משמים/ מפוזר ביד//
 העמים/ ואיה רעיתך לנגדך/ ומדוע אתה יושב לבדך/ ואידך//
 מקומך שמיר ושית/ ותפארת אדם לשבת בית/ הלא ידעת//
 אם לא שמעת/ לא טוב היות אדם לבדו/ אעשה לו עזר כנגדו//
 והדבר ידוע בלי כחד/ כי טובים השנים מן האחד/ ויאמר// 5
 אליה באמת נקראי שמך כזבי/ כי תכזבי/ ושוא תחברי//
 כדבר אחת הנבלות תדברי/ ברצות יי דרכי איש מכל רע//
 יגורו/ בדד ינחנו/ והלילה לי להשחית נחלתי/ עושה רמיה//
 לא ישב בקרב ביתי/ היא עודה מדברת/ ולשונה כאש [...]//
 ואמת מפיה נעדרת/ והנה האיש הזקן מ[...]]// 10
 יגע מרוב הדרך/ זקנו עד הברך/ מעקש דרכיו [...]]//
 וטובה לא תמצא בו משתחוה וכורע [...]]//

21ב

[.....] והוא נשען על/

[.....] אמרי [...]]//

קחה מוסר ואל תלך/ בדרך שובב// 15
 ואם העוה זמן דרכך/ שאל זקן חכם לבב//
 הלא קבל בנו עמרם/ בחכמתו עצת חובב//

וילך הלוד וקרב/ ובוטה כמדקרות חרב/ אברך את יי אשר//
 יעצני/ ובדרך אמת הנחני/ ויתן בפי אמרות טהורות/ לפקוח//
 עינים עורות/ ומי עור כי אם זרח/ השם היעלות עליו// 20
 לטורח/ זולתו עד שערי מות תגיענו/ ואיש עצתו תודיענו//
 וישא משלו ויאמר//

ברצות יי להשמיד/ עול ויחפוץ במותו//
 עיניו יעור ויקשה/ לבו ויחשיך עצתו//

בני אל תקשיח לבך לקול מורך/ ואל תתן את פידך// 25
 לחטיא את בשרך/ כי יי סר מעליך/ שלחני אליך//
 ויאמר אלי על תחכמוני ועל זרח נהרה אל תופע/ כי משורש//
 נחש יצא צפע/ ואולם חי אני לא ישוב מרשעו ומחטאתו//
 לרעה תהיה אחריתו/ ועתה בני ירא את אלהיך ומצותו//
 [...] תפרע / אל תוסף על דבריו ואל תגרע/ ולך יהי למעוז// 30

1 אדוני אדני || מפוזר] + ומפורד 2 ואידך] ואיה; +עלה 5 כי] - 7 מכל] ומכל 8 יגורו
 + יי || להשחית] אם אשחית; + את 9 עודה] עודנה 15 בדרך] +לבך 21 זולתו]
 אולתו || תגיענו] תגענו 25 אל] - || ואל] אל 26 יי] + אשר 27 אלי] לי || משורש]
 משרש 29 את] + יי || ומצותו] ומצותי

ולמחסה/ אם את הדבר הזה תעשה/ גער בכל שטן/ ובזאת//
 [...] יך אל תקטן/ כי שאל נא לדור אחרון ובונן לחקר אבותם//
 [...] ויעשה בתבניתם/ וזה דרך העולם ונתיבו/ וכל אדם//
 [...] ולמי כל חמדת הצבאות/ הנה לך תכון ותאות//
 עיני כל הבתולות עליך/ ותשקתן אליך/ ומדוע שפל//
 בעיניך מראיהן/ וכל הנשים יתנו יקר לבעליהן/ כל הנושא//

17א

//[.....]
 //[.....]
 [...] מכס נסוגים/ כספך היה לסיגים [...] //
 הבוטחים על יי ועל טובו/ זהב לא יחפצו בו/ [...] //
 [...] ות בכספך חכם ונבר/ לא כן הדבר/ ואם [...] //
 [...] אני/ כמקרה הכסיל גם אני יקרני/ ותרא [...] //
 יכלה לפתותו/ ותפן ותלך מאתו/ ותאמר לאשה [...] //
 לנערה המעונגה והגבירה/ אשר אין לא תמורה/ אולי [...] //
 זוהר הלחיים / ואודם השפתיים/ כי האדם יראה לעינים//
 ובראות אותה יחל דברו/ כי ידעתי את יצרו/ וילכו אחרי//
 העלמה/ היפיפיה והתמה/ ותעדה עדי זהב על לבושה/ ותשם//
 כתר מלכות בראשה/ ותבא ותעמוד כשחר בעלותו/ [...] //
 בצאתו/ והיא מתהלכת ועל נערותיה מתרפקת/ ועל לב//
 חושקיה דופקת/ תרשיע צדיקים והיא מצדקת/ ועיניה//
 יריבון והיא שותקת/ מתקרבת ומתרחקת/ ותקח הנבל//
 ותחזק יתריו/ ותשמיע צחות אמריו/ ותעמוד נוכח זרח//
 ניתן קולה ותשא משלה//

ידמה שער דוד ואור פניו שמש והענן יכסנו//
 החן מנת חלקו ואהבתו היתה מנתו וכוסנו//

מושיב יחידים ביתה יבין לבך/ לעשות ענף לשאת פרי//
 באבך/ מה נפלאה האהבה/ מה יקרה יום קרבה/ כי//
 עוררתי לעמוד לפניך/ לראות היום זוהר פניך/ קום ידידי//
 רעה אמונים/ ורד בגנים ללקוט שושנים/ נטעי נעמנים//
 כי כבר נראו הנצנים/ פתח הסמדר הנצו הרמונים/ שני//

1 ולמחסה] ולמחזה || ובזאת] וכזאת 2 אחרון] ראשון || ובונן] וכונן 4 הנה] הלא
 5 ותשקתן] ותשקתן 10 ועל] - || טובו] וטובו 13 ותלך] ותצא 17 והתמה]
 והתמימה || ותעדה] ותעדי 22 ותחזק] והחזק || ותשמיע] ותשמע || ותעמוד נוכח] ותעמד נכח
 23 ניתן] ותחנן || משלה] +תאמר 24 דוד] דודי 25 מנתו] מנתנו 26 ביתה] - || יבין] יכין
 27 מה] ומה 28 עוררתי] עוררתי || זוהר] - 29 רעה] ורעה

ב17

// [.....]
 לעינים] // [.....]
 ויהי [.....] זוהר פניה/ כשמוע שיריה וענייניה/ וטיטב//
 הנערה בעיניו/ ותשא חן וחסד לפניו/ ויען ויאמר//
 בלב נער קשורה אולת/ ומיי אשה משכלת /השכל והחכמה// 5
 לפחת [..] שה/ לזאת יקרא אשה/ וישכח כל דברי אביו אשר צוה//
 וכל נתיבותיו עוה/ זרח היה יודע בשיר וענייניו/ וכמוהו לא היה//
 [...] // וישב אותה דבר כפי שכלו/ וישא משלו //

פניך מראה הבקר/ ושערך מראה הערב//
 איך יבהליך יונה זיוך/ ושער ראשך ככנף עורב// 10

ותרא הנערה כי מצאה חן ביניו/ וכי טוב שיריה יפיק רצונו//

אל תרהו מעיני עופר/ אם למות יטו כל חי//
 אם ישוך היה כל ה/ נשוך ראה אותו וחי//

ויאמר זרח השיר הזה הפליאני/ ומצפון הראני/ אחוה//
 דעי אף אני/ וישא משלו ויאמר// 15

הסבי את עיניך מ/ נגדי שהם הרהיבוני//
 כי גבותם דרכו קשתם/ ובחצי מות ירוני//

אף היא תשיב אמריה/ ותשמיעהו מטוב שיריה//
 ותשא עוד משליה//

בפני עופר כוכב זורח/ ובגן לחייו שושן פורח// 20
 לילה ויום זוהר פניו/ יזרח על כן נקרא זרח//

וישא משלו ויאמר//

מה לך צבית חן תרדפי אחרי/ נפש אשר לא מעלה בך מעל//
 אם אומרה לרעות בשושני לח/ ייד שרפים עומדים ממעל//

3 כשמוע] וכשמעו 4 חן] - || וחסד] חסד 5 וחכמה] והיופי 8 משלו] +ויאמר 10 יבהליך] יבהילוך 11 רצונו] רצוני; +ותוסף שאת משלה ותאמר 13 ישוך]+בם 18 ותשמיעהו] ותשמיענו 19 עוד] - || משליה] משלה; +תאמר 20 לחייו] לחיו || פורח] פרח 21 זרח] +ויוסף גם הוא 22 וישה] ושאת 23 תרדפי] לרדף

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Ḥever the Pious: Some Aspects of Religion in the *Taḥkemoni* by Judah al-Ḥarīzī

Raymond P. Scheindlin

We do not ordinarily think of religion as one of the classical maqāma's main themes. In describing the maqāma, the secondary literature focuses mainly on the picaresque escapades of the protagonist, particularly on the varied ways in which he puts his rhetorical skills to use in order to induce people to part with their money. When the protagonist appears as a religious preacher, he often turns out to be a sensualist and a cynical manipulator. True, Hamadhānī's *Maqāmāt* contains two chapters in which a preacher is sincere (11 and 26), and al-Ḥarīrī's Abū Zayd turns to religion in the final chapters of his book. But Abū Zayd behaves pretty badly throughout most of al-Ḥarīrī's maqāmāt, and his conversion makes literary sense only because we have known him to have led a bad life.

1 Ḥever's Religious Sensibility

Al-Ḥarīzī's Hebrew maqāma collection, known in modern times as the *Taḥkemoni*,¹ shares this character, to some extent. The protagonist, whose name is Ḥever Haqēini, appears in many guises and deploys his rhetorical skills for pecuniary gain. Yet only four of his adventures—"Cadged Dinner" (21/9), "Father and Son" (17/29), "Doctor" (43/30), and "Amulets" (38/28)—involve remunerative deceptions, and a fifth deception story—"Seven Girls" (13/20)—merely tells of a practical joke. Thus, Ḥever's treachery, far from being a characteristic feature of al-Ḥarīzī's Hebrew maqāmāt, is actually only an occasional

1 References to the *Taḥkemoni* are to the edition by Joseph Yahalom and Naoya Katsumata (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 2010). Chapter numbers are given first in accordance with this edition, followed by a virgule (/) and the chapter number in earlier printed editions and in the translation by David S. Segal, *The Book of Taḥkemoni: Jewish Tales from Medieval Spain* (London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2001). Line numbers are in accordance with the Yahalom-Katsumata edition. The English chapter titles used in this paper are my own, invented in the hope of making it easy for readers familiar with the collection to identify the episodes without having to look them up by number.

feature of the collection. The narrator, Heiman ha-Ezrahi, occasionally lets us know that he does not have much confidence in the veracity of Hever's stories;² but in these cases, Hever is not loosening anyone's money bag; he is merely being entertaining. For the most part, when Hever gains money, it is because he has given value, in the form of an impressive speech or a literary performance. He is therefore more like an itinerant entertainer than a confidence man. And from time to time, he appears as an actual man of God. We will return to this; but first, let us consider what the book says about itself in the introduction.³

The rhymed prose Hebrew introduction to the *Tahkemoni* starts the book off on a serious religious and quasi-philosophical note.⁴ Wisdom, says the author, teaches us to begin by praising God; and this the author does for no fewer than 113 lines, turning the customary invocation of God into an expansive rhymed-prose treatise on the nature of the universe and the soul (lines 27–140). Al-Ḥarīzī spins his praises of God into a broad outline of the whole Neoplatonic scheme in which the Intellect and the Soul emanate from the One, drawing heavily on Ibn Gabirol's poetic description of the nature of God and the cosmos in his poetic religious meditation *Keter malkhut*.⁵ There is nothing really Jewish about the invocation except the language in which it is composed; if it were translated into Arabic, Latin, or, for that matter, English, there would be no knowing what religion or culture the speaker belonged to other than he is heir to medieval religious Neoplatonism.

The author pays particular attention to the soul. God creates the soul (personified and feminine) as a pure creature, and keeps her by him until it is time for her to be joined with a body. Then she encounters God's messenger beside the "well of wisdom" along the "road to vision" (*be-derekh shur*, line 64), and he instructs her as to how to behave once in the body. At a person's death, God opens the eyes of the properly cultivated soul, and she beholds the Well of the Intellect (lines 100–105). Descending to the well, described as the "liv-

2 E.g., in "Marriage" (29/6), "Rooster" (10/10), "Merchant's Invitation" (25/34), and "Quarreling Couple" (34/41).

3 The discussion that follows deals only with the actual introduction, i.e., the material that appears before chapter 1 ("Opening Maqāma"). Although chapter 1 covers some of the same subject matter as the introduction, it frames that matter differently and serves a different kind of introductory function from that of the introduction itself.

4 The Hebrew introduction is preceded by an Arabic introduction, more conventional in form, announcing that the purpose of the book is the vindication and cultivation of the Hebrew language, themes that return forcefully in the Hebrew introduction and in "Opening Maqāma" (1/1).

5 The parallels to *Keter malkhut* are faithfully pointed out by Yahalom and Katsumata in the notes to their edition.

ing source" (*meqor ḥayim*), she fills her pitcher with the mysteries of the divine world, ascends, and drinks.

This well reappears later in the introduction (lines 221–251). Using language deriving from the story of the meeting of Abraham's servant with Rebecca (Gen 24), al-Ḥarīzī describes himself as arriving at the well of wisdom, hoping to drink its waters. He declares that he will take as his bride the girl who comes to draw the waters of eloquence from that well for him. Presently, one of the daughters of Wisdom appears. She identifies herself as the Hebrew language. They marry, and she bears him a mighty son—presumably, the book *Taḥkemoni* itself.

The imagery according to which the soul finds God's messenger beside the well of wisdom and the poet finds the Hebrew language at the well of wisdom seems to imply that there is a direct line from God to the Intellect to the Hebrew language. But there is no Jewish doctrine in the introduction—no Torah, no religious law, no covenant between God and Israel, no exile or prayer for redemption. The introduction evokes a religion of a spiritual-philosophical kind in which the only Jewish element is the Hebrew language. What is the place of the Torah in all this? Al-Ḥarīzī might say that the Hebrew language provides access to the divine world because it is the language of the Torah. He might say this—but he does not. It is as if the language itself is the key to the spiritual world, without reference to sacred scripture.⁶

The introduction is written from a Jewish point of view, but the Jewishness of that point of view is not the Jewish religion as a set of beliefs and observances but the Jewish perspective on Arabic (and therefore Islamic) culture. There is no need to repeat here the story of how al-Ḥarīzī came to compose the *Taḥkemoni*—his statement that the prestige of al-Ḥarīrī's maqāmāt induced him to compose the *Taḥkemoni* as a vindication of the Hebrew language in the face of the Arabic challenge—for al-Ḥarīzī himself tells the story twice (in the introduction and in the opening maqāma 1/1), and no scholarly treatment of the *Taḥkemoni* fails to refer to it. This competition with Arabic—brought up in the book's Arabic introduction, in the Hebrew rhymed-prose introduction, and in the opening maqāma—is what has drawn the most attention in discussions of al-Ḥarīzī's purpose in writing the book.

But the rhymed prose of the Hebrew introduction begins by preparing the reader for something else: a book of religious edification, a guide to the cultivation of the intellect leading to access to the divine world, with the Hebrew

⁶ It is otherwise in the opening maqāma (1/1), where the author asserts that Hebrew is superior to Arabic because it is the language of revelation (lines 82–84), but this chapter lacks the philosophical underpinnings of the Hebrew introduction.

language serving as the vehicle. It further suggests that this is a book for Jews who are also cosmopolitan intellectuals of a philosophical bent. It implies a promise that the book will stimulate the intellect, with no hint that the book is meant to provide entertainment and worldly literary pleasures. If we had only the first 251 lines of the introduction—in other words, everything that the author says before he mentions al-Ḥarīrī—we would never associate the *Tahkemoni* with the picaresque and would never think of Ḥever as a trickster; rather, we would think that we were about to read a book dealing with religion and virtue of a cosmopolitan and philosophical type. This expectation turns out to be false, for the book is, on the whole, entertaining, worldly, and literary, but the author's promise starts the reader off with different expectations.

Seven chapters of the *Tahkemoni's* fifty have religion as their main topic. In none of these chapters is Ḥever a cheat or a trickster or even a funny man; in each of them, he is completely serious and sincere. Furthermore, in two chapters that are *not* specifically about religion ("Reversible Epistle" [7/8], "Proverbs" [21/44]), he appears as a revered teacher surrounded by a circle of devoted disciples, and this image is not reversed by anagnorisis at the end of the story. In this paper, I propose to examine the varieties of religious sensibility attributed by al-Ḥarīzī to his chief character.

2 Ḥever as a Religious Preacher

In "Preacher" (2/2), Heiman, the *Tahkemoni's* narrator, has heard of a great preacher in a distant land whose powerful preaching leads men to contrition. Wishing to benefit spiritually from hearing him, Heiman traverses oceans and enters the "house of prayer" (he does not use a more specific term for a synagogue). After a religious service, Ḥever makes his appearance, but he is not described; he simply plunges into his sermon, which is an eloquent and lengthy harangue (lines 18–190), followed by a short poem. Heiman is appropriately moved to repent his sins. Then he approaches and discovers that it is Ḥever; he stays with him for several days "to gather the fruit of his wisdom," and then returns to his homeland. Thus, in his first appearance after the opening *maqāma*, Ḥever is depicted as a pious preacher with not a hint of deceit about him.

The basic theme of his sermon is one that is common to Jewish and Islamic preaching: a person should keep in mind that death is a certainty and that after death, God will judge and reward or punish; it therefore behooves a person to live in a state of constant repentance and to eschew worldly temptations to sin. There is hardly anything in the sermon that a rabbi could object to. Yet the

rhetoric comes straight out of Islamic preaching: Repentance is described as a traveler's provision for the great journey of death. The mundane world (*tevel* in Hebrew, representing *dunyā* in Arabic) is depicted at length as a seductress, even a succubus. The judgment after death, merging into the final resurrection and judgment of all mankind, is depicted as a frightening and intimidating event. The theme of treacherous *tevel/dunyā* returns, and the listener is exhorted to contemplate the dead in order to reach an emotional state favorable to repentance. These themes are common in Arabic preaching.⁷ There are four such sermons in al-Ḥarīrī's maqāmāt (1, 11, 21, and 41); they are present as motifs in the Hebrew liturgical poetry and *zuhd* poetry composed in the Judaeo-Arabic cultural sphere but are never dwelt on at such length and with such intensity. The famous penitential prose prayers by Nisi Nahrawānī, Saadia Gaon, and Bahya ibn Paquda contain nothing comparable but draw most of their language from the rabbinic tradition.⁸ The four sermons on repentance by Abraham Bar Ḥiyya contain nothing comparable but draw mostly from the rabbinic and philosophical traditions.⁹ Even Ibn Paquda's book on the inner life of religion, *al-Hidāya ilā farā'id al-qulūb* (Guide to the duties of the heart)—the whole conception of which derives from Islamic models and which draws heavily, sometimes verbatim, from Sufi texts—contains nothing comparable.

The one thing in the sermon that a rabbi might object to occurs at the end of the poem that follows the sermon, when Ḥever says, "If you wash your hearts and become very pure / you will see the face of God." (This motif comes up again in the maqāmāt "Soul vs. Body" and "Moses," both discussed below.) Jewish preaching promises the beatific vision of God in the afterlife, using indirect expressions such as the promise that the righteous will bask in the light of the *shekhina* (divine presence) or even see the face of the *shekhina*; but the Jewish

7 A classic denunciation of *dunyā* is found in the epistle of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī included in Ibn Abī l-Dunyā's *Kitāb Dhamm al-dunyā*, ed. Ella Almagor (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1984), 18–20. The Qur'ān is replete with visions of the punishments that await the wicked; see, e.g., Q Ma'arij 70:1–18; Q Muddaththir 74:27–56; Q Ghāshiyā 88:1–16.

8 Nisi al-Nahrawānī's poem is found in *Maḥzor kol hashana kefi minhaq q.q. italyani*, ed. Samuel David Luzzatto, 2 vols. (Livorno: Solomon Belporte and Partner, 1856), 1:91b–92b; Saadia ben Joseph Gaon's poem in *Siddur rav Sa'adya Ga'on*, ed. Israel Davidson, Simha Assaf, and Issachar Joel, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem: Mekitsé nirdamim, 1963), 64–81; and Bahya ben Joseph ibn Paquda's in *Torat ḥovot ha-levavot*, ed. and Heb. trans. Joseph Qaflī (Jerusalem: Aqiba Joseph, 1972/73), 432–434.

9 Abraham bar Ḥiyya, *Hegyon ha-nefesh ha-'atzuvah*, ed. Geoffrey Wigoder (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1971); *The Meditation of the Sad Soul*, trans. Geoffrey Wigoder (New York: Schocken, 1968).

tradition avoids the expression “to see the face of God,” except in connection with Moses.¹⁰ In Islam, the expression “face of God” is much more at home, being found repeatedly in the Qur’ān itself (Q 2:115, 13:22, 16:98, 28:88, 75:22–23, etc.). Clearly, al-Ḥarīzī has few inhibitions about drawing on Islamic religious language when the substance is common to both religions. Even if al-Ḥarīzī meant seeing the face of God as a figure of speech for union with the Intellect, the image would be religiously jarring.

Ḥever is again a perfectly respectable and revered teacher in “Two Prayers” (4/14). Heiman has crossed the ocean and arrives in Gaza, where he sees a great palace and, in it, a dignitary surrounded by disciples who are studying various subjects under his guidance. One of the disciples asks the master to teach them a prayer that will protect them and break through to the throne of God. Ḥever (for it is he) responds with not one but two prayers. Like the two private prayers by Saadiah, one is general, and the other is penitential. When the penitential prayer is over, the chapter ends without reverting to the frame. In the first, the opening invocation (lines 21–98) is in the poetic and philosophical style of Ibn Gabirol’s *Keter malkhut*, like the language used at the opening of the book.¹¹ The body of the prayer (lines 99–144) is a petition that God help the worshiper to shun sin, to live in accordance with the gratitude he owes God, and to save him from punishment on the day of judgment. It ends with the distinctively Jewish formula “Blessed are you, O God, who hears prayer.” This first prayer is eloquent, but the second prayer (lines 146–269) is rhetorically stunning. It is written in a style of rhymed prose markedly different from that of the first prayer—in fact, distinct from the rhymed prose of the rest of the book. Although in both the introduction and the first chapter, al-Ḥarīzī cites al-Ḥarīrī as his model, his rhymed prose on the whole resembles that of Hamadhānī; only in this second prayer does his language reach the density and difficulty of al-Ḥarīrī’s style. As in the case of the sermon, the two prayers are nearly devoid of such Jewish themes as Torah, religious law, covenant between God and Israel, exile, and hope for redemption.

We meet Ḥever again as a sober teacher of religious values in “Soul vs. Body” (5/13). After living some time in pursuit of worldly pleasures, Heiman decides to turn to religion and repentance. He is sitting in conversation with Ḥever, when Ḥever announces that he has decided to leave this unnamed country and return to his homeland. “Ask what gift I should give you before I am taken from

10 Rabbinic and mystical Jewish conceptions of seeing God are expounded at length by Elliot R. Wolfson, in his *Through a Speculum That Shines: Vision and Imagination in Medieval Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

11 The parallels are duly cited by Yahalom and Katsumata in their notes to the text.

you." The words are an echo of Elijah's parting words to his disciple Elisha (2 Kgs 2:9). The situation also recalls the endings of two more closely contemporary works: *The Kuzari*, by Judah Halevi; and *The Prince and the Ascetic*, by Abraham ibn Ḥasdai, in which a sage, about to depart from the disciple forever, is begged for and bestows his final teaching.¹² Words and situation associate Ḥever with authoritative teachers of divine wisdom.

Heiman begs to know the mysteries of the soul and the body and to learn how reward and punishment are distributed among them after death. Ḥever responds with a debate between Soul and Body in which each contends that the other should bear the responsibility for a man's sins. Finally, Intellect steps in with an admonition to the Soul to make the effort to keep herself pure, followed by a long poem in the same spirit. Soul responds with a long poem explaining how she is impeded in this effort by being trapped in the body, but Intellect encourages Soul to work harder at it, promising divine reward. Soul is comforted.

This debate does have its source in a Jewish text, a short homily in which, at the final judgment, Body and Soul each accuse the other before God of responsibility for a man's sins, and God responds by reuniting them for judgment.¹³ Al-Ḥarīzī has conflated this homily about bodily resurrection with the Neoplatonic scheme in which the soul is trapped in the body and thereby prevented from returning to its divine source unless it makes use of its rational part to keep itself pure so that it can eventually achieve release. Unlike the homily, al-Ḥarīzī's debate ends not by restoring the unity of body and soul but by showing the soul how to rise above the body, in which it is only temporarily imprisoned. Despite the echoes of the Jewish source, the debate fits neatly into the intellectual framework adumbrated in the Neoplatonic invocation that opens the book; it would be just as much at home in an Islamic as in a Jewish context. Ḥever reinforces his image as an authoritative teacher of religious wisdom in the poem with which he concludes the chapter: "I am Ḥever, the associate of the wise ... I rouse sleeping souls with reproachful preaching sharp as arrows ... Happy is the man who roots out sin from his heart and plants therein goodly plants, for he will be illuminated with the light of eternal life and succeed in

12 Judah Halevi, *Kitāb al-Radd wa-l-dalīl fi l-dīn al-dhalīl (Kitāb al-Khazārī)*, ed. David H. Baneth and Haggai Ben-Shammai (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1977), 227; Abraham ibn Ḥasdai, *Ben ha-melekh ve-ha-nazir*, ed. Abraham Meir Habermann (Tel Aviv: Mosad ha-Rav Kuk, 1950), 187 ff.

13 Judah al-Ḥarīzī, *Kitāb al-Durar: A Book in Praise of God and the Israelite Communities (Judaeo-Arabic and Hebrew)*, ed. Joshua Blau, Paul Fenton, and Joseph Yahalom (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 2009), 194–201.

seeing his Creator's light face-to-face." This is another occurrence of this religious motif that seems so out of place in a Jewish religious text.

3 Hever and Judaism

The three chapters discussed thus far establish Hever as a sincere and revered preacher of religious values that, though acceptable within the framework of the Jewish tradition, have ties to Neoplatonic spirituality and that are expressed by means of language deriving from a mixture of Jewish and Islamic sources. In the chapters to be dealt with next, the subject matter is more specifically Jewish.

In "Sects" (31/17), Heiman, on a quest for wisdom, finds Hever sitting at the head of a group of scholars who appear to be his disciples. They beg him to instruct them about the Samaritans and the Karaites, two communities that reject the rabbinic tradition. Hever responds with a brief denunciation of the Samaritans and a lengthy and more rounded treatment of the Karaites. He begins by stating (lines 29–30) that although the Karaites have the Torah, they cannot be considered part of "our community." This position is surprising in view of the abundant evidence that the Karaites, though sometimes attacked by rabbinic authorities, were understood by Jews and Muslims alike to be Jews. Hever then describes an imaginary debate between a Karaite and a Rabbanite (lines 43 ff.). In view of the treatment of the Samaritans, we expect this debate to climax in a thundering denunciation of the Karaite position, but al-Ḥarīzī permits his imaginary Karaite to present his case quite fairly. The debate is conducted first in prose and then in verse. The Karaite scores some good points, but the Rabbanite trips him up on the problem of the Sabbath lamp. (Karaite exegetes interpret Exodus 35:3 to mean that one may neither light a fire on the Sabbath nor permit one to burn that was lit before the Sabbath; they therefore forbid the lighting of the Sabbath candles. The Rabbanites say that a light may remain lit if it was kindled before the Sabbath, and they regard the Sabbath candles as an essential ritual. In refutation of the Karaite position, the Rabbanite points out that in the Temple, sacrifices were burned on the Sabbath itself, proving that some rituals override the prohibition of lighting a fire on the Sabbath; all the more should it be permitted for a light to remain lit if it was kindled before the Sabbath.) The Karaite concedes the justice of the Rabbanite position but feels that he is obliged to follow his ancestral traditions. The Rabbanite points out that by doing so, he is merely passing his error on to the next generation. Vanquished, the Karaite becomes a Rabbanite. It is hardly surprising that the Rabbanite wins in this confrontation, but it is noteworthy

that al-Ḥarīzī does not demolish the Karaite but permits him to defend himself forcefully to the last. In any case, Ḥever appears in this chapter as an intellectual defender of the rabbinic tradition.

In “Cantor” (30/24), Ḥever again functions as a stalwart defender of rabbinic authority. He tells Heiman about his visit to a synagogue in Mosul, where he had arrived in the course of his travels. Ḥever had hoped to preach there and was encouraged when he learned, through gossiping with the worshippers awaiting the start of the service, that the congregation was full of scholars and had a learned cantor. The cantor arrives but turns out to be crude and ignorant. There are good jokes aplenty here for readers who are familiar with the liturgy, as al-Ḥarīzī satirizes the cantor (and, by extension, the congregation who so admire him) by listing his mistakes in reciting the prayers. But the cantor’s ignorance of Hebrew is only a warm-up to the main focus of the chapter, which turns on a technical point about the Jewish liturgy.

The cantor follows the typical medieval practice of interweaving the standard prayers with optional liturgical poems, but he overdoes it, singing so many of the latter that most of the congregation either fall asleep in their places or get up and leave. An argument ensues among the remaining congregants. One man complains that by causing the congregants to leave before the service is over, the cantor has, in effect, caused them to ignore the obligatory standard prayers in favor of the optional liturgical poems. Another congregant defends the cantor on the grounds that the poems are better than the prayers and that they are an ancestral tradition and therefore indispensable. The first congregant replies at length to the effect that liturgical poems are fine when the congregation and the cantor are learned enough to understand them and to keep them in the right proportion to the obligatory prayers, but this community is so ignorant that they are actually forbidden to recite liturgical poetry. At this, the cantor’s defender, like the Karaite in the previous example, yields, and the story ends. But there is a sequel: apparently stepping out of the fictional mode, Ḥever (or al-Ḥarīzī himself) reports with dismay that someone in the community of Arbel has argued that the standard prayers are actually optional and the liturgical poems obligatory, a position that anyone with the slightest knowledge of rabbinic traditions knows is absurd. This view is refuted in a lengthy poem that ends the chapter.

Although Ḥever does not claim to have taken part in the argument himself, the presentation makes it clear that he is deeply invested in it and that his own position is the standard rabbinic one. From the presentation, it seems clear that the important thing about this whole debate is not the absurd disagreement about the proper relationship between standard prayers and optional liturgical poetry but the ignorance of the community.

This, I think, is the only chapter of the *Taḥkemoni* that deals with a matter of religious law, and in that way, it is one of the most internally directed stories. As a lampoon of a particular community, it has much in common with the denunciations of a number of communities in the semiautobiographical chapter “Travels” (39/46), in which Mosul and some other communities are targets for his satire. (With the exception of one of its grandees, Mosul comes off better in al-Ḥarīzī’s fully autobiographical Arabic *maqāma*, *Kitāb al-Durar*.¹⁴) But in al-Ḥarīzī’s fictional world, Ḥever functions in this chapter as a pious and learned preacher and as an intellectual defender of rabbinic tradition, just as he was in “Sects.”

At the beginning of “Jerusalem” (16/28), Heiman arrives in the Holy City and recites a lengthy poem in its praise, expressing gratitude for having been granted the opportunity to see it and lamenting its debased condition.¹⁵ Reverting to rhymed prose, he devotes only six lines to recounting his tour of the holy sites; he provides no poetic description of what he saw or the religious uplift that he might have experienced. Most of his report concerns his conversation with someone he met there. Presuming this person to be a local, Heiman questions him as to how the Jews happened to return to the city after having been expelled during the Crusades. In what may be the only historical event mentioned in the entire book, the informant explains that Saladin, after retaking the city for Islam, permitted the Jews’ return. He then goes on to report that the Jewish community of the Holy City is riven by tensions and dissension that spoil the pleasure of living there. He concludes with a poetic tirade against communal strife. Asked for his name, the speaker informs Heiman that he is none other than Ḥever. Ḥever has turned out to be a good informant, as well as a man who is concerned for the welfare of the community and indignant about those who are less so. Thus the chapter contains both praise of an idealized Jerusalem and bitterness at the reality. The visitor is starry-eyed, the resident coldly factual.¹⁶

14 In an unexpected authorial intrusion in the first of the two prayers in 4/14 (lines 90–92), Ḥever proclaims al-Ḥarīzī’s gratitude for having been granted the opportunity to see Jerusalem.

15 In the Toporovsky edition of the *Taḥkemoni*, Ḥever comes across rather differently in this chapter, for in answer to the question about his identity, he replies by “laughing at my sorrow,” and thus appears cynical, as pointed out by Segal in *Book of Taḥkemoni*, 555–556. But Yahalom and Katsumata’s reading “laughing at what I said,” i.e., laughing at my not recognizing him and having to ask his name, seems more appropriate to the situation and therefore is probably the better reading.

16 Printed and translated in Raymond P. Scheindlin, *The Song of the Distant Dove: Judah Halevi’s Pilgrimage* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 172–177.

In “Ezra and Ezekiel” (23/35), Ḥever tells Heiman that back in al-Andalus he often heard people speak of Ezra and his miracles so he crossed the ocean to see for himself. In Palestine, he learned that Ezra had been buried in Iraq and that the tomb had long ago been destroyed and the place laid waste—but that 160 years earlier, a shepherd had been told the location of the tomb in a dream. The prophecy was confirmed by a miracle when the shepherd, who was blind, regained his sight. Since then, a miraculous, brilliant light shines over the tomb every night, and the place is venerated by Muslims as well as Jews. Ḥever determines to see it for himself. He visits the grave, sees the light, ascertains that it is truly a divine light and not merely a trick played on the Jews by the Muslim villagers or the result of natural combustion of sulfur in the soil. The account is followed by two poems in honor of the tomb.

All this is just like Islamic popular piety, with its reverence for the graves of pious men of old and stories of miracles attesting to the holiness of the saint. The visiting of saints’ tombs (*ziyāra*) is widely attested to this day among the Jewish communities in (or originating in) the Islamic cultural sphere as well, and al-Ḥarīzī’s detail about the same grave being venerated by both Muslims and Jews is confirmed by medieval sources and modern practice.¹⁷

But there is no mention of the *baraka* that is typically attributed to religious shrines in Islamic texts, and there is one distinctively Jewish religious value that al-Ḥarīzī does stress: the vindication of the Jewish claim to a special relationship with God. This had been rendered doubtful because of the destruction of the Temple and the Jewish kingdom in Palestine, by the scattering of the Jews, and by their reduction to subordinate status among the nations—but the miracle of Ezra’s tomb seems to the narrator to be confirmation by God that this covenant with Israel is intact. Here Ḥever speaks in the interests of the Jewish community.

Now comes a surprise: the discussion of Ezra’s grave is followed by a very long poem on the tomb of Ezekiel, which the narrator says that he also visited. Between the poems to Ezra and the poem on Ezekiel, there is no transition except the note, “I composed this poem when I was at the grave of our Lord Ezekiel the Prophet,” nor is there a story about Ezekiel’s tomb parallel to the story of the tomb of Ezra. The poem on Ezekiel does, however, mention as a miracle that Ezekiel’s body has not putrefied after his death.

A peculiar feature of this poem is that it is formally in the same pattern as Judah Halevi’s famous “Ode to Zion”; we might have expected such a *mu‘arāḍa*

17 Josef M. Meri, *The Cult of Saints Among Muslims and Jews in Medieval Syria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 229–240, includes a full discussion of the veneration of the tomb of Ezekiel, including pictures of the tomb.

in the chapter on Jerusalem, but the long poem in honor of Jerusalem is modeled on a different poem by Halevi.¹⁸ In the poem on Ezekiel, the poet expresses the wish that he could spend the rest of his life living near the tomb; he declares any man happy whom Ezekiel brings near to dwell in his courts. These lines allude to the Psalmist's longing for the Temple courts (Ps 65:5); more to the point, they allude to the concluding lines of Halevi's poem.¹⁹ It seems that al-Ḥarīzī has gone out of his way to write of Ezekiel's tomb in terms ordinarily applied to Jerusalem. This is a remarkable elevation of the grave of Ezekiel to the status of the Holy Temple. The notion—even if it is only literary hyperbole—that the speaker would wish to spend the rest of his life living near the tomb is also remarkable; it evokes the Islamic religious type of the *jār allāh*, the person who establishes his residence at or near a shrine and thereby becomes a “neighbor of God.” It is an elusive idea but also recalls Judah Halevi's resolution to go to Jerusalem not as a mere pilgrimage but in order to settle on the holy soil and die there. Finally, though Ezekiel's tomb is a well-attested object of veneration for Jews and Muslims alike, I do not know of any precedent in Jewish literary history for personal devotion to Ezekiel or of prayer to Ezekiel for intercession with God such as the one with which the poem ends.²⁰

Similarly extraordinary is the prayer that is the subject of “Moses” (22/15). Heiman has gone to sea on a merchant ship, but the ship has gone down in a storm and he has lost all his goods. As he sits at home mourning his losses, Heiman's friends come to console him; Ḥever is among them. Ḥever says that he would gladly help Heiman with money if he had any, but since he doesn't, he will provide Heiman with something else that will prove helpful: a prayer that is guaranteed to open the gates of heaven and induce God, in turn, to open the treasury of his bounty. He refers to the prayer as *tefilah le-mosheh, ish ha-elohim*. We assume that Ḥever means “A prayer by Moses, the Man of God,” in accordance with the use of the phrase at the beginning of Psalm 90. But, reading the prayer, we are astonished to see that it is not a prayer *by* Moses but a prayer *to* Moses.

The greater part of the prayer consists of the invocation of Moses (lines 24–94), only a few lines being devoted to the petition itself (lines 95–106). The invocation is a lengthy composition on Moses's virtues, what in an Islamic work would be called his *manāqib* (“virtues”); it is such a rich mixture of rab-

18 As pointed out by Yahalom and Katsumata at Judah al-Ḥarīzī, *Taḥkemoni*, 261.

19 Printed and translated in Scheindlin, *Song of the Distant Dove*, 172–177.

20 Meri, *Cult of Saints*, 229–240, includes a full discussion of the veneration of the tomb of Ezekiel, including pictures of the tomb.

binic, Neoplatonic, and Islamic elements as to deserve a separate study, which I hope to accomplish in due course. Particularly striking are its use of motifs associated with Muḥammad since the early centuries of Islam: light, spiritual preexistence, and, especially, the notion of the primordial, spermatic descent of his exalted nature to him through a succession of pure ancestors male and female. When al-Ḥarīzī says that there emanated upon Moses from the highest sphere *zohar* 'al-zohar ("light upon light"), it is hard to escape the impression that he is thinking of the phrase *nūrun 'alā nūrīn* from the Qur'ān's "Light Verse" (Q 24:35).²¹

The petition is a plea for Moses's intercession with God on behalf of the worshiper. Yet intercessory prayer is strongly discouraged by the rabbinic tradition. There are some prayers to the ancestors and prophets for intercession in the Jewish tradition of public liturgy, when it is the people as a whole praying for forgiveness for collective sin and for the restoration of Jewish sovereignty in the Land of Israel. But Moses is rarely invoked for even this purpose, except as one among other patriarchs and prophets whose help is sought in begging divine forgiveness. Muḥammad, on the other hand, was appealed to as an intercessor regularly since the early Islamic age, especially for intercession on the day of judgment, but also for personal needs.²² It would therefore seem natural to seek the inspiration for al-Ḥarīzī's composition in Islamic piety. Nor is it likely that such a prayer was entirely foreign in spirit to al-Ḥarīzī's readers. Strange as it may seem to us, if al-Ḥarīzī put such a prayer into a work from which he intended to earn a livelihood, he must have expected that his potential readers and patrons would not find it objectionable.

21 See Uri Rubin, "Preexistence and Light: Aspects of the Concept of Nūr Muḥammad," *Israel Oriental Studies* 5 (1975): 62–119. Some exegetes associated Muḥammad with the expression "light upon light" in the Light Verse; see Gerhard Böwering, "The Light Verse: Qur'anic Text and Šūfī Interpretation," *Oriens* 36 (2001): 113–144, esp. 133–134.

22 Tor Andrae, *Die Person Muhammads in Lehre und Glauben seiner Gemeinde* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1917), 235 ff. (Muḥammad as intercessor), 313–333 (preexistence), and, esp., 386–387 (prayer to Muḥammad). See Annemarie Schimmel, *And Muhammad Is His Messenger: The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 84–92. In identifying rabbinic literature as the precursor of prayers to Muḥammad for intercession, Andrae confuses intercessory prayer with the rabbinic notion of the merit of the ancestors. For Islamic petition to saints for worldly benefits, see Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, trans. C.R. Barber and S.M. Stern, ed. S.M. Stern, 2 vols. (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1967–1971), 2:282–286.

4 Religion in the *Taḥkemoni*

This survey of the chapters of the *Taḥkemoni* devoted to religion permit us to make the following generalizations:

1. Given the seriousness of the book's opening and the chapters on religion discussed here, we have to modify our view of the book as a work of entertainment in which religious exhortations are delivered tongue in cheek. Nor is it adequate to regard the book merely as a riposte to Arabic/Islamic claims to linguistic and literary superiority. The *Taḥkemoni* makes this claim, but it also makes a claim to be religiously edifying.
2. The religion preached by the *Taḥkemoni* as a book and by Hever as its protagonist is a mix of philosophical, Islamic, and Jewish elements. The philosophical element is dominant in a number of episodes, especially the introduction and "Soul vs. Body." The Jewish element most strongly emphasized is the Hebrew language, with ritual coming up only in "Cantor" and the legal system only in "Sects." Messianic motifs appear sporadically but are not a main focus of any episode except "Astrologer" (24/22), which is not dealt with here.²³ Religious elements derived from Islam range from imagery and rhetorical style in the preaching episodes to specific religious themes such as the face of God, the practice of *ziyāra*, and notions about Moses that derive from the Islamic veneration of Muḥammad. This openness to Islamic elements is surprising in a work that professes to be a vindication of Jewish culture, as represented by the Hebrew language, against Islamic culture, as represented by Arabic and its parade achievement in al-Ḥarizī's time, the *maqāmāt* of al-Ḥarīrī.
3. Hever Haqeni is only occasionally a trickster. He is always a master of language, sometimes an itinerant entertainer who makes his living with his

23 I have not included a discussion of this fascinating episode here because my purpose in this paper is to survey the representation of religion only in those episodes of the *Taḥkemoni* that are clearly focused on religious topics, whereas the outstanding feature of "Astrologer" is its narrative of the encounter between a group of Jewish youths and a Muslim astrologer. The messianic motif is a secret, the unraveling of which motivates the narrative, but it is not itself the subject of the chapter. Both the honoree of this *Festschrift* and I have published studies of this chapter. See Ross Brann, "The Silence of the Jews: Judah al-Ḥarizī's Picaresque Tale of the Muslim Astrologer," in his *Power in the Portrayal: Representations of Jews and Muslims in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Islamic Spain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 140–159; and Scheindlin, "Al-Harizi's Astrologer: A Document of Jewish-Muslim Relations," *Studies in Muslim-Jewish Relations* 1 (1993): 165–175.

tongue, and sometimes—more often than a trickster, and often enough to demand our attention—a revered religious teacher.

4. Ḥever sometimes even serves as a champion of rabbinic orthodoxy, as in “Cantor” and “Sects.” He speaks as a Jewish loyalist in “Astrologer,” “Ezra and Ezekiel,” and, in passing, in many other passages in the work. There is no need to view this traditionalism as being in conflict with the religious cosmopolitanism of the second point, for the *Taḥkemoni* is not a work of philosophy that purports to lay out a unified intellectual system. Ḥever often boasts of his varied personae, and this feature of his character must reflect the varied intellectual commitments of al-Ḥarīzī himself and of his audience, the cultured Jewish elite of the Arabic-speaking world.

This paper has dealt only with the chapters of the *Taḥkemoni* that are overtly concerned with religion, not touching on the many religious motifs that come up casually in the course of this ample book. I hope at least to have demonstrated that al-Ḥarīzī’s original maqāma collection is far from the spirit of transgression and cynicism that is usually thought to be characteristic of the maqāma; that Ḥever Haqēini, for all his varied transformations, does not at all resemble al-Ḥarīrī’s Abū Zayd; and that although al-Ḥarīzī gives al-Ḥarīrī’s maqāmāt a central role in his account of the origin of the *Taḥkemoni*, his own work is of a rather different character. His intentions are still not completely clear, but they will never be understood if we do not give more attention to the sincere, though complex and sometimes contradictory, religious ideas that he treated at such length and with such originality.

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Well-Ordered Growth: Meanings and Aesthetics of the Almohad Mosque of Seville

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In 1172, four years after being declared caliph of the Almohad empire, Abū Ya‘qūb Yūsuf ibn ‘Abd al-Mu‘min (d. 1184) summoned a team of architects, artisans, and laborers to the city of Seville. Before becoming caliph, Abū Ya‘qūb had governed Seville from 1157 to 1163, and he now intended to adorn the city with the palaces and public infrastructure that would befit its status as the empire’s Iberian capital. He also intended to give it a new Friday mosque, whose enormous dimensions of 100 by 150 meters would rival those of the Great Mosque of Córdoba. Work proceeded quickly for a building of this size, and most of the prayer hall was finished by 1176. In 1184, Abū Ya‘qūb Yūsuf ordered the construction of the mosque’s minaret, a project that his son and successor, Abū Yūsuf Ya‘qūb ibn Yūsuf ibn ‘Abd al-Mu‘min, known by the regnal name al-Manṣūr (d. 1199), would complete. In a dramatic ceremony typical of al-Manṣūr’s court, a large cloth covering the minaret’s apex was whisked away on March 19, 1198, revealing a finial of four massive, gold-plated spheres. The major chronicler for this period, Abū Marwān ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Muḥammad ibn Ṣāḥib al-Ṣalāt al-Bājjī (d. 1198), describes the finished building as “the most astonishing thing that had ever been seen or heard of.”¹

Due in part to its continued civic importance, the Mosque of Seville has enjoyed significant scholarly attention.² With one exception, though, these

1 ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Muḥammad ibn Ṣāḥib al-Ṣalāt, *Ta’rikh al-mann bi-l-imāma ‘ala-l-mustaḍ‘a-fin bi-an ja’alahum Allāh a’imma wa ja’alahum al-wāriṭhīn*, ed. ‘Abd al-Hādī al-Tāzī (Baghdad: Dār al-Ḥurriyya li-l-Tibā’a, 1979), 510. As an official chronicler and direct contemporary of the events he describes, Ibn Ṣāḥib al-Ṣalāt will be the principal primary historical source for this article. I give his chronology for the building, which I will discuss further below.

2 For detailed descriptions of the restoration efforts dedicated to the mosque’s patio, see the essays in Alfonso Jiménez Martín, ed., *Magna Hispalensis (I): Recuperación de la aljama almohade* (Seville: Aula Hernán Ruiz: Cabildo Metropolitano, 2002). On the urbanization of Almohad Seville, see: Magdalena Valor Piechotta and Ahmed Tahiri, eds., *Sevilla almohade* (Seville: Universidad de Sevilla, Junta de Andalucía, 1999); Magdalena Valor Piechotta, *Sevilla almohade* (Málaga: Editorial Sarriá, 2008); and Magdalena Valor Piechotta and Miguel Ángel Tabales Rodríguez, “Urbanismo y arquitectura almohades en Sevilla. Caracteres y especifici-

studies focus on construction history and archeology, rather than on the mosque's ornament.³ This approach is partially due to the building's state of preservation: in 1248, it was consecrated as a cathedral, undergoing massive alterations in the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries as a result. Accordingly, the first section of this essay reconstructs the building's original appearance as much as available sources—including extant construction, archeological information, and contemporaneous descriptions—permit.⁴ As its twelfth-century appearance takes shape, I will compare the Mosque of Seville to Marrakesh's Kutubiyya Mosque (prayer hall c. 1158, minaret as late as 1199), an earlier product of Almohad caliphal patronage that, like the Mosque of Seville, is located in an imperial capital. Unlike the Kutubiyya, though, the Mosque of Seville was a relatively ornate space, characterized by a more naturalistic depiction of vegetal forms and a more systemized ornamental program. Thus, the central questions of this study are: Why does this change happen, and why does it happen in Seville?

In partial answer, the second section of this paper forges a connection between the mosque's ornament and the written works of two of the building's contemporaries: Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ṭufayl al-Qaysī (d. 1185) and Abū al-Walīd Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Rushd, al-Ḥafīd (d. 1198). Both philosophers led active public lives marked by a close relationship to the Almohad caliphs, serving as advisers, physicians, and members of the *ṭalaba al-ḥadar* (an elite group of Almohad religious scholars that formed part of the caliph's entourage).⁵ Both men also wedded philosophy

dad," in *Los Almohades: Problemas y Perspectivas*, ed. Patrice Cressier, Maribel Fierro, and Luís Molina, 2 vols. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 1:189–222.

- 3 To my knowledge, only Juan Clemente Rodríguez Estévez, in *El alminar de Isbiliya: la Giralda en sus orígenes (1184–1198)* (Seville: Ayuntamiento de Sevilla, Área de Cultura, 1998) attempts an interpretation of the building's ornament. Limited space prohibits me from evaluating his argument here; the interested reader can consult Jessica Renee Streit, "Monumental Austerity: The Meanings and Aesthetic Development of Almohad Friday Mosques" (PhD diss., Cornell University, 2013), 67–70.
- 4 Part of my purpose is to provide an English-language description of the building to complement those published in Spanish. The most recent and complete is Alfonso Jiménez Martín, "Notas sobre la mezquita mayor de la Sevilla almohade," *Artígrama* 22 (2007): 131–158. For a virtual "tour" focusing on the building's structure, see *La Mezquita almohade de Sevilla y su conversión en Catedral*, DVD, directed by Antonio Almagro Gorbea (Granada: Escuela de Estudios Árabes, CSIC, 2009).
- 5 The debate over whether the Almohad caliphs were philosophers or the extent to which they understood philosophy as a discipline lies outside this study's scope. See Miquel Forcada, "Síntesis y contexto de las ciencias de los antiguos en época almohade," in Cressier, Fierro, and Molina, *Los almohades: Problemas y perspectivas*, 2:1091–1135, and Sarah Stroumsa,

to religion through the belief that humankind can infer the existence of God from the observation of the natural world. For Ibn Ṭufayl and Ibn Rushd, this deduction is possible because all human beings are endowed with a basic rational capacity and the world itself is an intrinsically rational place. I will argue that the Mosque of Seville develops these same themes: its prolific naturalistic ornament provided an opportunity to contemplate a representation of God's creation, while the structured ornament in its minaret aligns with the idea of a rationally ordered universe.

In doing so, I follow the important methodological models offered by scholars like Gülru Necipoğlu, Yasser Tabbaa, and Cynthia Robinson, who also read contemporary texts alongside architectural ornament in order to gain insights into the social, historical and religious contexts to which a building belongs.⁶ But before offering an analysis of building or text, I must first clarify their dating, dissemination, and relationship. Ibn Ṭufayl's only surviving work is the narrative *Risālat Ḥayy ibn Yaḳẓān fī asrār al-ḥikma al-mashriqīyya* (The treatise of Ḥayy ibn Yaḳẓān concerning the secrets of Eastern wisdom; hereafter *Risālat Ḥayy*).⁷ It is undated, although the consensus seems to be that he composed it between 1177 and 1182.⁸ *Risālat Ḥayy* was a popular treatise in both al-Andalus and abroad, leading Conrad to note that it has been "received by the Muslim public with interest and enthusiasm since its author's own time."⁹

Ibn Rushd wrote his *Kitāb Faṣl al-maḳāl wa-taqrīr mā bayna al-sharī'a wa-l-ḥikma min al-ittiṣāl* (Book of the decisive treatise determining the connection between the law and wisdom; hereafter *Decisive Treatise*) and the *Kitāb al-Kashf 'an manāḥij al-adilla fī 'aḳā'id al-milla* (Book of the exposition of religious argu-

"Philosophes almohades? Averroès, Maïmonide et l'idéologie almohade," in Cressier, Fierro, and Molina, *Los almohades: Problemas y perspectivas*, 2:1137–1162, for two views on this subject.

6 See Gülru Necipoğlu and Mohammad Al-Asad, *The Topkapı Scroll: Geometry and Ornament in Islamic Architecture: Topkapı Palace Museum Library Ms H. 1956* (Santa Monica: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1995); Cynthia Robinson, *In Praise of Song: The Making of Courtly Culture in Al-Andalus and Provence, 1005–1134 A.D.* (Leiden: Brill, 2002); and Yasser Tabbaa, *The Transformation of Islamic Art during the Sunni Revival* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001) for the seminal studies in this vein.

7 The standard Arabic edition of *Risālat Ḥayy* is *Ḥayy ben Yaḳḳhân: Roman philosophique d'Ibn Thofāil*, ed and trans. León Gauthier, 2nd ed. (Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1936). I use the English translation in Lenn Evan Goodman, trans., *Ibn Ṭufayl's Ḥayy Ibn Yaḳẓān: A Philosophical Tale* (New York: Twayne, 1972). Goodman gives the corresponding pages in Gauthier's edition alongside his translation.

8 Lawrence I. Conrad, "Introduction: The World of Ibn Ṭufayl," in *The World of Ibn Ṭufayl: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Ḥayy ibn Yaḳẓān*, ed. Lawrence I. Conrad (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 1–37.

9 Conrad, "Introduction," 3.

ments; hereafter *Exposition*) as a two-part series of explicitly religious works.¹⁰ Although he dated the *Exposition* to 1179–1180, Marc Geoffroy has discovered that it has two Arabic recensions: the earlier forms the basis of all modern editions, and the later remains unpublished in spite of significant emendations and additions.¹¹ Although Geoffroy does not postulate a date for the revisions, he convincingly argues that they were performed by Ibn Rushd himself, and, since they bring the text more closely in line with official Almohad doctrine, that they represent state censorship.¹² I was unable to consult the second version for the preparation of this essay but have used Geoffroy's summary of the substantive differences between the two versions to ensure that the passages of the *Exposition* that I cite below remained unchanged from one version to the next. This is significant because if the emendations reveal Almohad censorship, then the unchanged sections suggest Almohad authorization.

Ibn Šāḥib al-Šalāt helps to situate these texts within the Mosque of Seville's construction history. As mentioned above, the chronicler describes a nearly completed prayer hall in 1176, but Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf left Seville without inaugurating the building, casting doubt upon the extent to which it was finished.¹³ There does not seem to have been further work done on the building until 1184, when Abū Ya'qūb broke ground for the minaret. Although he died shortly thereafter, his son Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb al-Manṣūr continued the project and also ordered repairs for the prayer hall.¹⁴ This means that much of the building's interior predates our texts (although just how much is uncertain), while the minaret firmly postdates them. So, while I will argue for a clear relationship

10 The *Exposition* can be consulted in Arabic in Ibn Rushd (Averroes), *Al-Kaṣḥf 'an manāḥij al-adilla fi 'aqā'id al-milla*, av, *Naqd 'ilm al-kalām diddan 'alā al-tarsīm al-aydiyyūlūjī li-l-'aqida wa-difā'an 'an al-'ilm wa-ḥurriyyat al-ikhtiyār fi-l-fikr wa-l-fi'l*, ed. Muṣṭafā Ḥanafī and Muḥammad 'Ābid al-Jābirī (Beirut: Markaz Dirāsāt al-Waḥda al-'Arabiyya, 1998), and in English in *Faith and Reason in Islam: Averroes' Exposition of Religious Arguments*, trans. Ibrahim Najjar (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005). I use the English translation while citing the corresponding pages in Ḥanafī and Jābirī's edition. For the *Decisive Treatise and the Epistle Dedicatory*, see Averroes, *The Book of the Decisive Treatise Determining the Connection between the Law and Wisdom and Epistle Dedicatory*, trans. Charles E. Butterworth (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2001). This edition includes facing Arabic text.

11 See Marc Geoffroy, "Ibn Rushd et la théologie almohadiste: Une version inconnue du *Kitāb al-kaṣf 'an manāḥij al-adilla* dans deux manuscrits d'Istanbul," *Medioevo* 26 (2001): 327–356; Geoffroy, "À propos de l'almohadisme d'Averroès: L'Anthropomorphisme (*taḡsīm*) dans la seconde version du *Kitāb al-kaṣf 'an manāḥij al-adilla*," in Cressier, Fierro, and Molina, *Los almohades: Problemas y perspectivas*, 2:853–894.

12 Geoffroy, "À propos de l'almohadisme d'Averroès," 879.

13 Ibn Šāḥib al-Šalāt, *Ta'riḫ al-mann*, 514. See also Jiménez Martín, "Notas sobre la mezquita," 132–133.

14 Ibn Šāḥib al-Šalāt, *Ta'riḫ al-mann*, 516–521.

between the aforementioned philosophical works and the Mosque of Seville's ornament, I will not characterize the latter as a simple "translation" of textual language to visual idiom. Indeed, while the Mosque of Seville's innovations can be traced to its twelfth-century Andalusī milieu, much of its aesthetic remains true to Almohad artistic conventions. Instead, we might characterize both the texts and the mosque as products of an extended exchange of ideas. They represent continued efforts of prominent Almohads to wrestle with a key theological issue: the question of how the divine might manifest in the mundane.¹⁵

In focusing on the Almohad political and intellectual elite, I do not mean to ignore the Mosque of Seville's architects and builders. As is often the case, though, information regarding the latter is more limited. Ibn Ṣāhib al-Ṣalāt does inform us that the caliph brought the best architects and a multitude of specialized artisans to work on the building, a reasonable assumption for a work of this scale and importance.¹⁶ The chronicler also names Aḥmad ibn Bāṣuḥ as the project's director, who seems to have been aided by an engineer called Al-Ḥajj Ya'īsh.¹⁷ A different head architect, 'Alī Ghumārī, served Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb al-Manṣūr.¹⁸ These specialized workers circulated freely across the Straits of Gibraltar, assisting the Almohad caliphs as needed.¹⁹ For example, Al-Ḥajj

15 While I do not think it necessary for the texts to predate the mosque in order for them to shed interpretive light upon it, the privileged relationship that Ibn Ṭufayl and Ibn Rushd enjoyed with the caliph would have given them ample opportunity to expound the central ideas in these texts before setting them down in writing. In fact, there is specific evidence that Ibn Rushd discussed religion with the caliph: according to Ibn Ṣāhib al-Ṣalāt, he was involved in a heated theological debate with Abū Ya'qūb and other religious scholars during the Almohad siege of Huete in 1172. Somewhat out of character, the chronicler criticizes all the parties involved for allowing their discussions to distract them from battle, which they lost. See *Ta'rikh al-mann*, 532–533. Furthermore, Ibn Rushd wrote a short untitled letter known as the *Epistle Dedicatory* that prefaces the *Decisive Treatise* and *Exposition*. This text attempts to resolve the knotty theological question of God's knowledge of particulars, a topic that—according to the author—he and his unnamed addressee had already discussed. As Butterworth argues, the titulature and references to worldly power in the epistle point to Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf as the intended recipient. See Charles E. Butterworth, "Translator's Introduction to the *Epistle Dedicatory*," in Averroes, *Book of the Decisive Treatise*, xl–xli.

16 Butterworth, "Translator's Introduction," 510.

17 Butterworth, "Translator's Introduction," 509. Al-Ḥajj Ya'īsh is mentioned in Leopoldo Torres Balbás, "Arquitectos andaluces de las épocas almorávide y almohade," *Al-Andalus* 11 (1946): 216–217. Torres Balbás asserts that Al-Ḥajj Ya'īsh is responsible for the building's automated *maqṣūra* screen.

18 Ibn Ṣāhib al-Ṣalāt, *Ta'rikh al-mann*, 518–520.

19 In addition to the cited examples, Ibn Ṣāhib al-Ṣalāt notes that the various "experts" came both from Seville and other places in al-Andalus, as well as from Marrakesh and Fez. See *Ta'rikh al-mann*, 510.

Ya'ish, an Andalusian from Malaga, was in Marrakesh when called to Gibraltar to raise fortifications and a palace for Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf's father (Aḥmad bin Bāshuh, a Seville native, is also associated with this project).²⁰ On the other hand, 'Alī Ghumārī, whose name suggests a North African origin, worked on the Mosque of Seville's minaret while making frequent trips to Marrakesh.²¹ This fluidity impedes efforts to trace individual architects or workshops, which is further exacerbated by the paucity of information concerning the architects who worked on other Almohad buildings.

The main obstacle in reconstructing the fruit of these architects' labors is the massive, fifteenth-century cathedral standing in the former mosque's footprint. When Seville fell from Almohad hands into those of King Ferdinand III of Castile, the mosque was immediately consecrated as the city's cathedral. More gradually, the Castilians made modifications that accommodated both the Christian liturgy and the elaborate sepulchres of their kings.²² In the fifteenth century, what remained of the mosque's prayer hall was entirely replaced. Fortunately for our purposes, its portal, a few of its walls, its arcaded courtyard, and its minaret still stand. In the twelfth century, one accessed the Mosque of Seville either through one of twelve doors distributed on its east and west sides, or through the pointed horseshoe arch of the striking south portal (figure 14.1). Its doors were adorned with hexagonal cartouches containing pious phrases rendered in an ornamental Kufic script, and Qur'ānic inscriptions embellished the massive bronze door knockers.²³

Pointed horseshoe arcades surround the building's courtyard, from which the north and east faces of the mosque's minaret are clearly visible (figure 14.2). As its ornamental program is the best preserved of the entire building, we shall pause here to consider it in detail. Standing an imposing 64.5 meters (211.6 feet)

20 Torres Balbás, "Arquitectos andaluces," 216.

21 Torres Balbás, "Arquitectos andaluces," 218. Ghumāra is the former name of Morocco's Jebala region.

22 On the relationship of the crown to the new cathedral, see Teresa Laguna Paúl, "La capilla de los Reyes de la primitiva Catedral de Santa María de Sevilla y las relaciones de la Corona castellana con el cabildo hispalense en su etapa fundacional (1248–1285)," in *Maravillas de la España medieval: Tesoro sagrado y monarquía*, ed. Isidro G. Bango Torviso, (León: Junta de Castilla y León, 2001), 1:239–249. On the royal burial chapel, see Juan Carlos Ruiz Souza, "Capillas Reales funerarias catedralicias de Castilla y León: Nuevas hipótesis interpretativas de las catedrales de Sevilla, Córdoba y Toledo," *Anuario del Departamento de Historia y Teoría del Arte* 18 (2006): 9–29.

23 Q Nūr 24:36–37 and Q Hījr 15:46–48 adorn the door knockers. See María Antonia Martínez Núñez, "Ideología y Epigrafía Almohades," in Cressier, Fierro, and Molina, *Los almohades: Problemas y perspectivas*, 5–52, see especially 24–25; for the door's text, see *ibid.*, 14.



FIGURE 14.1 South Portal, Mosque of Seville
AUTHOR'S PHOTO



FIGURE 14.2 Minaret from courtyard, Mosque of Seville
AUTHOR'S PHOTO

tall, the Giralda—the name by which the tower is known today—is constructed almost entirely of brick (figure 14.3).²⁴ Its plan can be described as two hollow, square, “concentric” shafts. A ramp winds upward between the walls of the inner and outer shafts, granting access first to a series of seven inner chambers and finally to the tower’s summit. Though it has been masked and altered by sixteenth-century additions, the highest of these small chambers protrudes up from the minaret’s outer walls, a typical feature in Almohad minarets that also appears in the Kutubiyya Mosque (figure 14.4).

The distinctive, ordered nature of the Giralda’s ornamental program—concentrated on the tower’s upper two thirds—offer the richest opportunities for interpretation. Each ornamental panel begins at a different height: the northern face’s bottom register is the lowest of the four, followed in sequence by the western, southern and eastern bottom registers. This results in a staggered, sequential appearance that echoes the ramp’s ascent.²⁵ Although each of the Giralda’s faces receives a slightly different treatment, they all maintain a similar composition (figure 14.5). The panels are divided into two registers, each of which features a central unit flanked by two narrow, symmetrical panels of *sebka* (a trellis-like motif featuring diamond-shaped lozenges) that spring from two small, blind arches. The central units are also separated into two registers that contain two identical, recessed windows (the only exception is the lower window of the lower register of ornament on the tower’s west face, which has only one window). The windows are framed by a tall *alfiz* (a rectangular frame that encases an arch), whose corners were once filled with carved stucco.²⁶ Either a lambrequin or a polylobed arch surrounds the window units, and its *alfiz* contains either vegetal ornament or an additional *sebka* panel.

Although they are unified by their compositions, the ornamental details of the tower’s four faces differ appreciably. All four sides feature double-layered *sebka* in their upper registers, lending them a lighter appearance and a greater sense of depth. One can think of the layers in terms of a foreground—the net of *sebka* closest to the viewer, executed in a higher relief—a middle ground—the net of *sebka* visible through the negative spaces in the foreground, executed in

24 The two exceptions are reused marble columns dating to the tenth century and reused late antique marble masonry in the tower’s foundation.

25 Rodríguez Estévez, *El alminar de Isbiliya*, 75–76.

26 See Alfonso Jiménez Martín, “Las yeserías de la Giralda,” *Andalucía Islámica* 2–3 (1981–1982): 195–206. Jiménez argues, on the basis of nineteenth-century photographs, that these included “zoomorphic” figures. After examining the same photographs, I see nothing to suggest that this was the case.



FIGURE 14.3 Minaret, Mosque of Seville
AUTHOR'S PHOTO



FIGURE 14.4 Minaret, Kutubiyya Mosque, Marrakesh
AUTHOR'S PHOTO

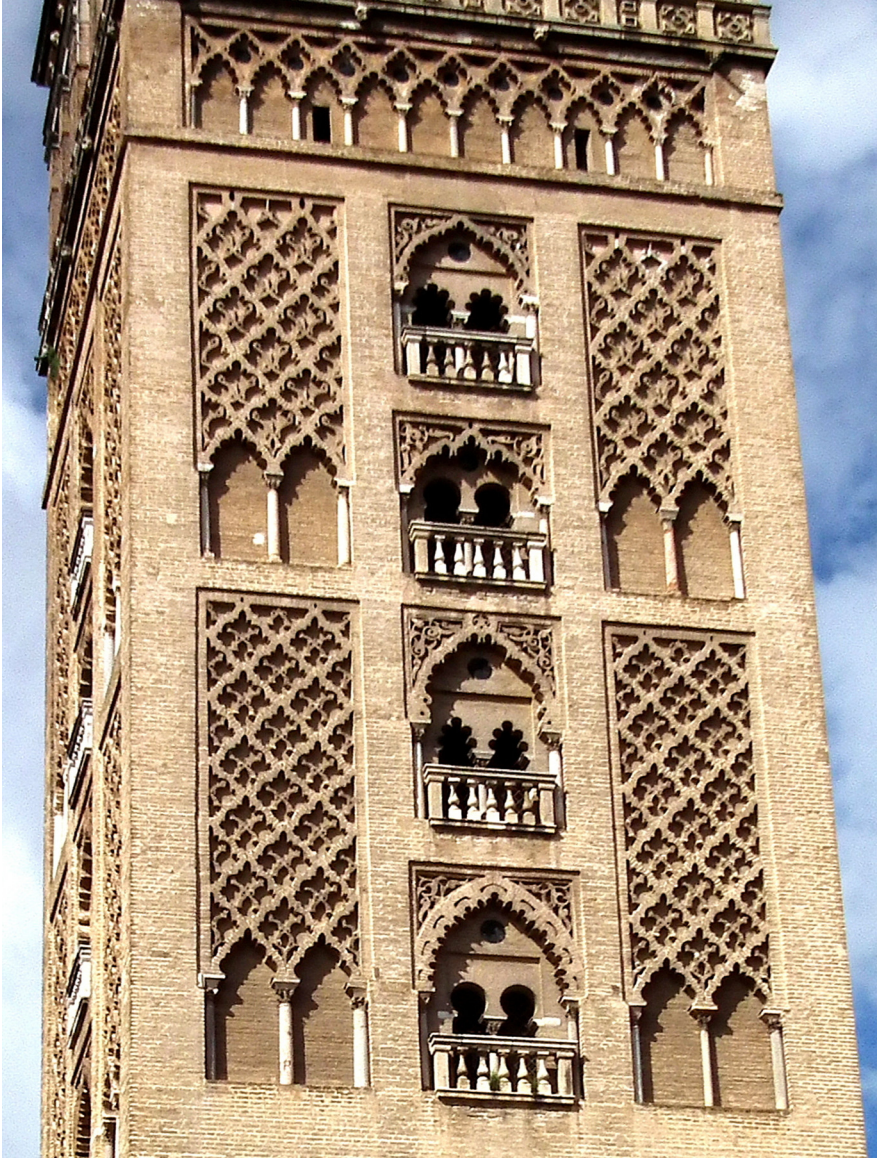


FIGURE 14.5 Detail of east façade, Minaret, Mosque of Seville
IMAGE COURTESY OF FERNANDO LÓPEZ

a lower relief—and a background—the flat wall of the minaret (figure 14.5). Double-layered *sebka* is also employed in the lower registers of the Giralda's southern and eastern sides, but those of the northern and western sides use single-layered *sebka* (compare figures 14.5 and 14.6). This pairing creates two compositional units: the north-west and south-east façades. A strict order can be observed in the tower's single-layered *sebka*: its lines spring directly from the small lambrequin arches below, and their contours replicate the arches' undulations with precision (figure 14.6). A similar rigor obtains in the foregrounded layer of the double-layered *sebka*. However, the middle-ground *sebka* departs from this pattern. Having no parent arch, the shapes of their serpentine, organic forms vary widely (compare upper and lower registers, figure 14.6).

The overall visual effect of the minaret's ornament is one of orderliness and sophisticated systemization, an effect as present in its structure as it is in its details, and one unique among Almohad minarets. To begin, the height at which each side's ornamental register begins reflects the ascent of the tower's ramp, meaning the ornament's external organization clearly reproduces the minaret's internal structure. Furthermore, the division of the Giralda's four sides into compositional pairs corresponds to two logical vantage points: one inside the courtyard, where the north and east façades are clearly visible, and the other in the adjacent Almohad palace, where the south and west sides could be seen as a unit.²⁷ The four faces of the tower are unified both by their symmetry, with panels of *sebka* flanking the central column of window openings, and by the repetition of basic decorative elements, with essentially the entire program deriving from architectural motifs. Even the *sebka*'s forms are systematized. While they mostly proceed logically from those of their parent arches, even the varied, exuberant lines of the middle-ground layer are contained. These latter elements introduce slight deviations from the overall decorative scheme, thereby adding visual interest. However, they are subordinated to the tower's overriding sense of order by virtue of their middle-ground position.

Viewed alongside the Kutubiyya Mosque's minaret, the Giralda's uniqueness is unmistakable. Although both towers feature monumental proportions—at 77 and 64.5 meters tall, respectively—and a similar plan, their ornamental programs differ significantly. Most basically, the Kutubiyya minaret's surface is not nearly as ornate as the Giralda's: the proportion of bare-to-decorated wall space is higher in the Kutubiyya tower than it is in Seville (compare figures 14.3 and 14.4). Unlike those of the Giralda, the relative height of Kutubiyya

27 Jiménez Martín, "Las yeserías," 87–89.

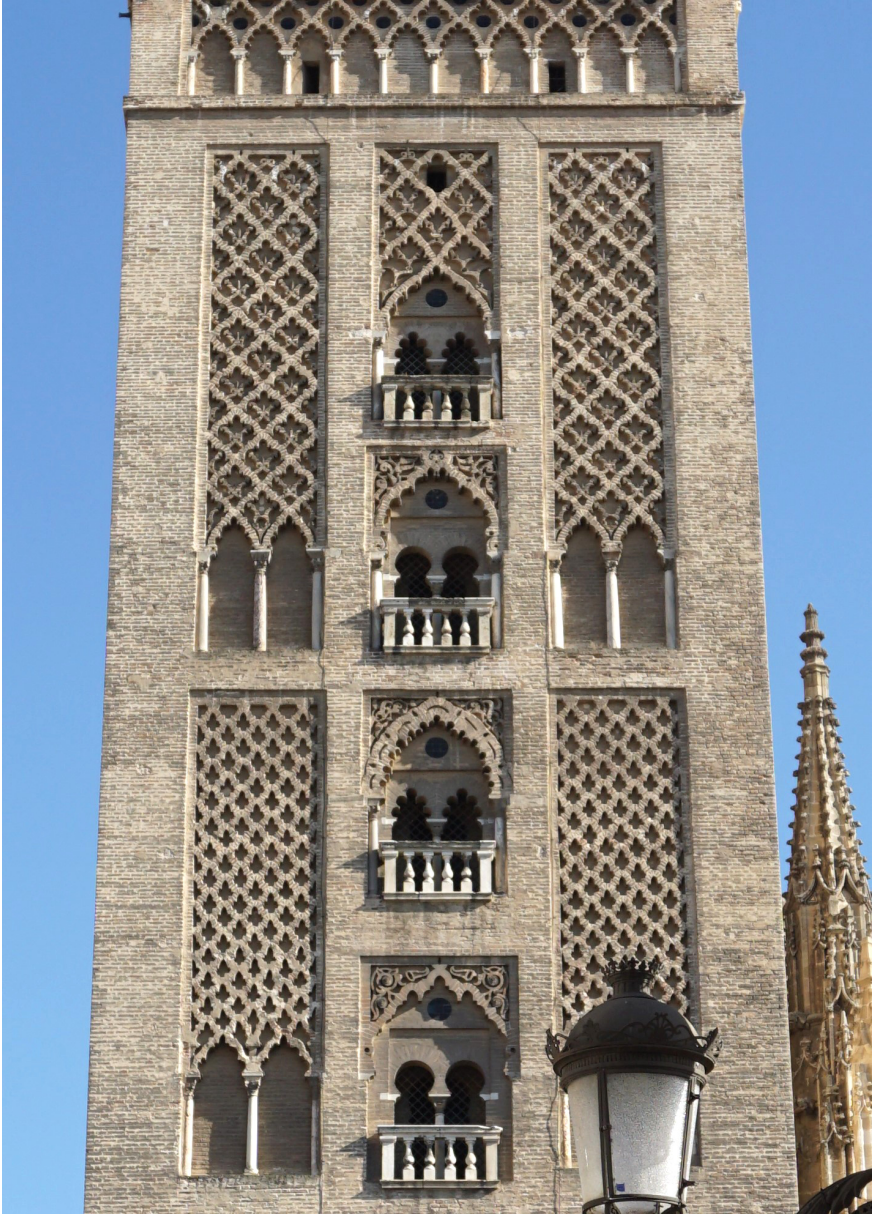


FIGURE 14.6 Detail of north façade, Minaret, Mosque of Seville
AUTHOR'S PHOTO

minaret's window openings and ornamental registers do not reflect the internal ascent of its ramp, as their staggered placement on the lower two-thirds of the tower is flattened in the upper two registers. The characteristic pairing of the Giralda's faces is also absent in the Kutubiyya tower; again with the exception of the latter's top registers, each side seems to be conceived independently of the others. Finally, although the Kutubiyya minaret features some familiar ornamental forms, such as lambrequin arches, polylobed arches, and several small panels of *sebka*, they, too, differ from the Giralda. There is no consistent compositional strategy for individual motifs, no double-layered *sebka*, and no rigorous consistency in the *sebka*'s forms: for example, in the minaret's uppermost chamber polylobed arches generate lambrequin-shaped *sebka* lozenges. When compared to the Giralda's ornate and carefully structured design, the spare ornament of the Kutubiyya minaret seems almost haphazard.

With these differences in mind, let us continue the tour of the Mosque of Seville. From the courtyard, one would have entered the mosque's prayer hall through a still-extant wide, pointed horseshoe arch. At this point in our reconstruction, though, we must rely on archeological data and descriptions of its interior. The Mosque of Seville featured a hypostyle plan with a wide axial nave. The seventeen naves and thirteen transepts of its prayer hall were separated by arcades that ran north-south and rested on rectangular piers.²⁸ Although the typologies of their arches is unknown, Almohad oratories generally utilize pointed horseshoe arches for the bulk of the prayer hall, with polylobed or lambrequin arches demarcating the qibla transept. As for the building's vaulting and ornament, Ibn Šāhib al-Šalāt provides the following description:

The architects exerted themselves for and took a special interest in the construction of the dome that was raised above the *mihrāb* of the mosque, showing the greatest enthusiasm in the stucco's workmanship; in the vaults of the building; and in the woodworking. All these labors were treated with extreme care.²⁹

After drawing attention to the fine craftsmanship of the stucco, domes, and wood—the latter likely referring to the ceilings—Ibn Šāhib al-Šalāt observes that the mosque's wooden minbar and *maqšūra* screen were worked in equally

28 Alfonso Jiménez Martín, "Las Mezquitas," in Valor Piechotta and Tahiri, *Sevilla almohade*, 100; Jiménez Martín, "Notas sobre la mezquita," 137–142.

29 Ibn Šāhib al-Šalāt, *Ta'rikh al-mann*, 513.



FIGURE 14.7 Larger stucco fragments, Pavilion of Offices, Mosque of Seville

fine measure.³⁰ Taken together, Ibn Ṣāhib al-Ṣalāt's descriptions indicate that the *mihrāb* area of the Mosque of Seville was richly ornamented.

Excavations performed in the Pavilion of Offices, an auxiliary group of administrative buildings abutting the western half of the cathedral's southern wall, help to confirm Ibn Ṣāhib al-Ṣalāt's assertions. In the stratum that corresponds to the period when the mosque was transformed into a cathedral, excavators uncovered a small cache of polychrome stucco fragments that they believe to have originated in the mosque's *mihrāb* area (figure 14.7).³¹ Before moving forward, though, I must address two problems that this recovered material presents. First, the stucco pieces were found on the exterior side of what would have been the mosque's interior qibla wall; however, as Huarte Cambria, Tabales Rodríguez, and Jiménez Sancho observe, the build-

30 Ibn Ṣāhib al-Ṣalāt, *Ta'rikh al-mann*, 514.

31 Miguel Ángel Tabales Rodríguez and Álvaro Jiménez Sancho, "Intervención arqueológica en el Pabellón de oficinas de la Catedral de Sevilla (1997–1998)," *Anuario arqueológico de Andalucía* 3 (2001): 432.

ing's thirteen- and fourteenth-century renovators habitually pierced through this wall, meaning that stucco from the building's *mihrāb* area could easily have wound up outside its walls.³² Second, because the excavated area in which the fragments were found spans only a fraction of the length of the qibla wall, further excavations could drastically change our understanding of the Mosque of Seville's interior. Having said that, this small set of fragments plus Ibn Šāhib al-Šalāt's description constitute the best evidence currently available in terms of reconstructing the prayer hall's ornamental program.

In her analysis of the stucco, Rosario Huarte Cambria correctly identifies small sections of architectural forms that suggest both *sebka* and blind polylobed arches (see figure 14.7, largest fragment).³³ Carefully incised vegetal ornament, observable in almost all the recovered stucco pieces, winds its way through this framework. Huarte Cambria concludes that the recovered material would have formed part of "a large panel of *sebka*, composed of a succession of interlaced polylobed arches, into which a complex design of vegetal motifs was inserted."³⁴ The pieces' size aligns with this interpretation: since the line in the largest stucco fragment traces a diamond-lozenge of *sebka*, we might double its height of around four inches to yield a minimum total height of one *sebka* unit at eight inches.³⁵ This size lozenge is far more appropriate for covering a relatively large surface, such as a wall, than for filling a smaller screen, panel, or ornamental detail.

In spite of its fragmentary state, the stucco points to several subtle, but significant, shifts in the Sevillian Almohad vegetal motifs. First, while the abstracted and linear forms of the Mosque of Seville's leaves are consistent with those of the Kutubiyya Mosque (Compare figures 14.7 and 14.8), their presentation has changed. In the Kutubiyya Mosque, fields of vegetal ornament are inserted into a single framing motif, as the two panels located high on its *mihrāb* façade exemplify (figure 14.8). In contrast, the Mosque of Seville's vegetation weaves through a lattice of trellis-like *sebka*. This strategy encourages a more mimetic "reading" of the relationship between architectonic and organic form: trellises

32 Rosario Huarte Cambria, "Fragmentos de yeserías relacionados con la aljama almohade de Sevilla," *Laboratorio de Arte* 14 (2001): 183; Tabales Rodríguez and Jiménez Sancho, "Intervención arqueológica," 432. Furthermore, the mosque's exterior features very little ornament, making it more likely that this material came from inside the building.

33 Huarte Cambria, "Fragmentos," 183.

34 Huarte Cambria, "Fragmentos," 183.

35 Maddeningly, Huarte Cambria does not specify the fragments' size, only giving a 1:2 ratio for the print edition of the journal. I calculated the approximate size of the fragments from the print dimensions.



FIGURE 14.8 Detail, *Mihrāb* façade, Kutubiyya Mosque, Marrakesh
AUTHOR'S PHOTO

covered with actual Mediterranean climbing plants—jasmine and acanthus spring to mind—must have graced many a Sevillian courtyard garden. Furthermore, whereas early Almohad mosques featured a nearly monochromatic color scheme (figure 14.9), the Mosque of Seville's stucco ornament was painted. A saturated red ochre couples with a mid-tone green to fill the spaces between white architectonic and vegetal motifs.³⁶ The marked contrast between the panel's painted background and the stark white of its *sebka* and vegetation pushes the latter toward the viewer, while the earthy hues of the pigments remain grounded in the natural world.³⁷

The final way that the Mosque of Seville's vegetal ornament departs from previous Almohad buildings is its prominence. Of course, Almohad mosques had always featured some vegetal motifs. Returning to the Kutubiyya as an example, one finds it on the Almohad-made capitals, on the *mihrāb* façade, and in the five domes of the *qibla* transept. However, the vegetal forms on the Kutubiyya's capitals seem small and insignificant when compared to the massive volumes of the stark, smooth arcades that they support (figure 14.9). When the Kutubiyya's vegetal ornament is concentrated into panels, they are located either high up on the *mihrāb* façade—where only a viewer in the first few bays of the building's central nave could have discerned their leaves and blooms—

36 Although unpublished, recent restorations of the Giralda have revealed that it, too, was painted. See Antonio J. Mora, "La Giralda era roja," *El País*, April 6, 2018. <https://elpais.com/cultura/2018/04/05/actualidad/1522933586290575.html>

37 In contemporary domestic architecture, the palette is not always naturalistic. See the essays in Julio Navarro Palazón, ed. *Casas y palacios de al-Andalus. Siglos XII y XIII* (Barcelona—Madrid: Lunwerg Editores S.A., 1995).



FIGURE 14.9 Prayer hall with *mihrāb* façade, Kutubiyya Mosque, Marrakesh
AUTHOR'S PHOTO

or at the base of a dome, where only someone directly below could have seen them (figure 14.10). In contrast, vegetation presented in larger panels—as the Mosque of Seville's would have been—was meant to be seen. Taken as a whole, the Mosque of Seville presents the viewer with a different experience than does the Kutubiyya Mosque. It displays more surface decoration, more vegetal ornament, and—in the Giralda—a more consciously-structured ornamental program.

Turning now to religious texts of Ibn Ṭufayl and Ibn Rushd, we will find a parallel focus on the natural world, which both men believe to be carefully structured by God. Ibn Ṭufayl's *Risālat Ḥayy* is a fictional biography of the story's protagonist, Ḥayy bin Yaqzān, who lives alone on an island from his birth until he reaches maturity. Most relevant to the present argument are Ḥayy's early years, during which he pursues two main activities: the observation of the natural world, and the discovery of spiritual truths by applying reason to his observations. In one case, Ḥayy systematically studies of all the physical things on the island, finding both wondrous variety and an underlying order that allows him to sort them into categories.³⁸ He also notices that each indi-

38 Some of Ḥayy's categories include animals, plants, minerals, different kinds of stones, water, vapor, fire, etc. See Goodman, trans., *Ibn Ṭufayl's Ḥayy Ibn Yaqzān*, 119.

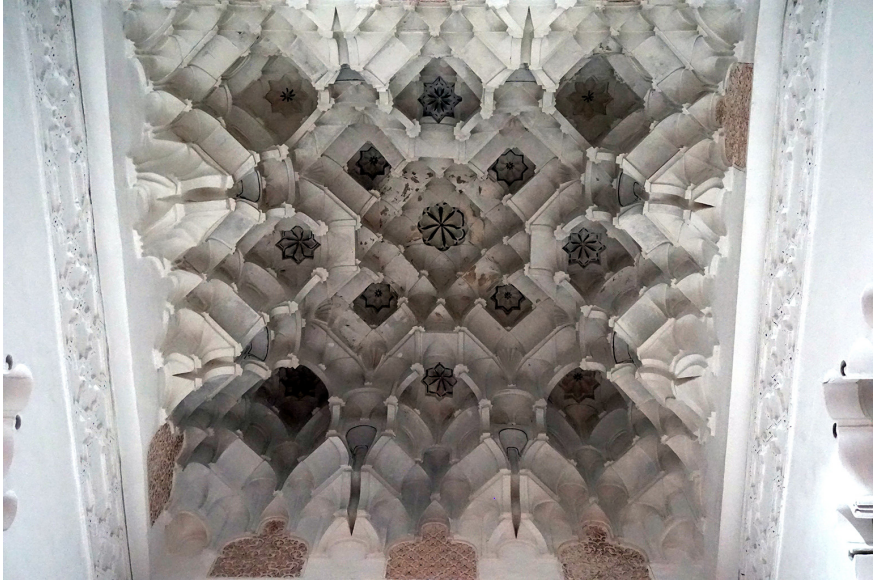


FIGURE 14.10 *Muqarnas* dome with vegetal screens at base, Kutubiyya Mosque, Marrakesh
AUTHOR'S PHOTO

vidual being is in fact made up of distinct parts: the organs of an animal; the roots, stem, leaves, and flowers of a plant. Upon further reflection, though, Ḥayy realizes that the all of the composite parts of each existing thing obey a single directive; for example, an animal's organs exist in order that it might continue living. Ḥayy identifies this single directive as the soul.³⁹ Expanding the scope of his study, Ḥayy considers all the discrete elements contained in the heavens and the world—as well as the very heavens and earth themselves—in which he finds similar variety. Once again, though, after careful thought he becomes convinced that all existing things form a part of a single, coherent universe. He then deduces that this singular existence must also have a single creator: God.⁴⁰ After this epiphany, Ḥayy sees the world as the product of a divine creator, and he marvels at the signs of the creator's wisdom.⁴¹

Ibn Rushd encourages Muslims to prove God's existence in much the same way that Ḥayy does: by observing creation and exercising reason. In the *Exposition*, for instance, he calls the faithful to notice how perfectly suited the earth is

39 Goodman, trans., Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqzān*, 117, 123–124.

40 Goodman, trans., Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqzān*, 130–131.

41 Goodman, trans., Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqzān*, 134.

to humankind's existence. After giving many examples, including the phenomena of night and day and the light from the sun and moon, Ibn Rushd declares that the earth's inhabitability cannot be coincidence. Instead, a knowing and willing agent, God, must have designed it purposefully, in a way that benefits human beings.⁴² In a second proof, Ibn Rushd states that all existing beings must have been caused to be, pausing to cite a Qur'anic passage that challenges humankind to create a single fly. He then declares that anything that is created requires a creator.⁴³ Given that human beings—the only earthly creatures endowed with reason—cannot even create a fly, the ultimate inventor of the observable world must be God.⁴⁴ These themes continue in the *Decisive Treatise*. Ibn Rushd opens by defining philosophy as “nothing more than reflection upon existing things and consideration of them insofar as they are an indication of the Artisan,” which he bolsters by citing several verses of the Qur'an that call on humans to observe and reflect on the world.⁴⁵ Since, Ibn Rushd continues, the commandment that humankind observe and study creation proceeds from God, one must undertake this investigation using the best possible method, which, he argues, is demonstrative reasoning.⁴⁶

Before returning to Mosque of Seville, a brief comparison of these texts is instructive. First, for both Ibn Ṭufayl and Ibn Rushd, Muslims can arrive at certain knowledge of God's existence (the affirmation of which is the most basic religious requirement of Islam) through observing the natural world. On the one hand, Ḥayy deduces the existence of the soul and God by investigating the natural phenomena on his island. On the other, both of Ibn Rushd's proofs involve observing the natural world and making logical inferences: all creation is inherently useful; all created things require a creator. Second, as the above examples also illustrate, study of the natural world must be combined with reason in order to bear fruit. Ḥayy's observations first lead him to notice the multiplicity and variety of existing things; only by thinking through them does he realize that their characteristics are unified by “a single directive,” the soul. Ibn Rushd's *Exposition* is a bit more abstract, but his simple, unqualified, and unexplained statement that “all created things require a creator” demonstrates a basic trust in his audience's rational faculty. More explicitly, the *Decisive Treatise* requires all who would study the natural world to be versed in demonstrative reasoning. Finally, both authors also assume that the world itself functions

42 Averroes, *Faith and Reason*, 33; *al-Kashf*, 118.

43 Averroes, *Faith and Reason*, 34; *al-Kashf*, 119. The citation is Q Ḥajj 22:73.

44 Averroes, *Faith and Reason*, 34; *al-Kashf*, 119.

45 Averroes, *Book of the Decisive Treatise*, 1–2.

46 Averroes, *Book of the Decisive Treatise*, 2–3.

in a rational way. For Ḥayy, the underlying order of the created world allows him to see unity in its variety, and to eventually know that a single created universe requires a single creator. For Ibn Rushd's reader, a rationally ordered world leads to the understanding that it was purposefully designed to sustain human life.

With the salient features of these texts in mind, I propose that the Mosque of Seville's vegetal ornament can be understood in part as a visual reformulation of this intellectual and theological current. The prayer hall's stucco offers the viewer a display of highly-visible leaves, winding through a trellis-like framework. In a Ṭufaylian or Rushdian system, this imagery of the natural world might lead a viewer to contemplate the fruits of God's creative labors or to reflect on God's role as creator. Having said that, the vegetal forms themselves are not simple illustrations of the verdant imagery that appears in these texts.⁴⁷ Indeed, the stucco leaves in the mosque of Seville are obviously abstracted: their precise, wedge-shaped incisions only suggest, and do not reproduce, the composite parts of Ḥayy's plants. In the largest stucco fragment reclaimed from the Mosque of Seville, for example, incisions divide its leftmost portion into three sections whose shapes merely evoke a central bud and flanking leaves (figure 14.7). This same stylized representation of plants is found in the Almohad-made capitals and small vegetal panels in the Kutubiyya Mosque (compare figures 14.7 and 14.8).

Elsewhere I have argued that early Almohad artistic conventions are characterized by abstract motifs and ornamental restraint, a solution that not only distanced them from the florid forms and lavish buildings of their predecessors and political rivals, the Almoravids, but also responded to early Almohad doctrine. Specifically, I noted that the Almohads' founder, a preacher, theologian, and ascetic named Ibn Ṭūmart (d. 1130), mistrusted the natural world as a source for understanding divine truth, and that he conceived of God as an entirely abstracted being, with no similarities to existing things. In

47 While Ibn Rushd refers to creation in more abstract terms, he uses Q 'Abasa 80:24–33 as an example of God's provisions for human beings: "Let Man consider his nourishment. / We poured the water abundantly; / Then, We split the earth wide open; / Then caused the grain to grow therein; / Together with vines green vegetation; / And olives and palm trees; / And gardens with dense trees, / And fruits and grass, / For your enjoyment and that of your cattle." Only the first line appears in the manuscript, but as note 44 of Najjar's commentary makes clear, the citation of only *āya* 24 implies their presence. See Averroes, *Faith and Reason*, 35. For his part, Ibn Ṭufayl describes how Ḥayy examines the various species of plants, "observing the likeness of all their members in leaf, branch flower, and fruit, and all the plant functions." Goodman, trans., *Ibn Ṭufayl's Ḥayy Ibn Yaqzān*, 119.

the artistic sphere, this led to highly abstracted vegetal forms and an overall reduction in the amount of vegetal ornament in religious buildings.⁴⁸ So, while the abstracted leaves in the Mosque of Seville are a far cry from the actual plants that Ḥayy or Ibn Rushd's audience might have contemplated, they continue the visual tradition developed in earlier Almohad buildings. At the same time, their polychromy and prominence constitute a departure from early Almohad austerity, one that—I would argue—acknowledges a Ṭufaylian or Rushdian formulation of the relationship between the natural and divine worlds.

Of course, simply observing creation is not enough for either of these authors. Even in a divinely ordered universe, both Ibn Ṭufayl and Ibn Rushd require their subjects to exercise reason on, or to think through, the implications of what they observe. Focusing on *Risālat Ḥayy*, Dominique Urvoy explores this idea in a way that has important implications for this study. One of his first observations brings us back to Ibn Tūmart, the Almohads' founder. Urvoy notes that Ibn Tūmart's doctrine assumes that a believer does not need the natural world in order to arrive at certain knowledge that God exists, an idea that dovetails with Ibn Tūmart's assertion—already encountered above—that God is absolutely unlike any created being.⁴⁹ According to Urvoy, *Risālat Ḥayy* reconciles Ibn Tūmart's abstracted, cerebral conception of God with Ibn Ṭufayl's outlook, which is rooted in Aristotelian empiricism.⁵⁰ Ibn Ṭufayl does not present this aspect of his tale explicitly, so Urvoy infers it from the text. In addition to explaining how the natural world serves as a mental stimulus for Ḥayy—thus wedding the natural world to deductive reasoning and, ultimately, religious truth—Urvoy also considers Ibn Ṭufayl's use of language. When Ḥayy arrives at a reasonable conclusion, Ibn Ṭufayl employs phrases such as “‘it occurred to him ...’ (*waqaʿa fi nafsihi ...*) and ‘it became practically certain to him ...’ (*kāna yaghlibu ʿalā zannihi ghalaba qawiya ...*).”⁵¹ Because the natural world can provide fodder for philosophical and even metaphysical reflection,

48 Streit, “Monumental Austerity,” 120–129.

49 Dominique Urvoy, “The Rationality of Everyday Life: An Andalusian Tradition? (Apropos of Ḥayy's First Experiences),” in Conrad, *World of Ibn Ṭufayl*, 38–51, see 40–41.

50 In an Andalusī Islamic context, Aristotelian philosophy seems to have begun in earnest with Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā ibn al-Šāʿigh al-Tujībī al-Andalusī al-Saraqustī ibn Bajja (d. 1139). Significantly, though, the search for signs of God's existence in the created world extends back into the tenth century with Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh bin Masarra al-Jabālī. See Emilio Tornero, “A Report on the Publication of Previously Unedited Works by Ibn Masarra,” in *The Formation of al-Andalus, Part 2: Language, Religion, Culture and the Sciences*, ed. Maribel Fierro and Julio Samsó (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 133–149.

51 Urvoy, “Rationality of Everyday Life,” 43.

Urvoy concludes, Ibn Ṭufayl espoused the “idea that everyday experience itself can be intrinsically rational.”⁵²

This is a familiar idea, but Urvoy goes a step further, suggesting that twelfth-century Andalusī society shared the philosopher’s conception of the world as an inherently rational place. To defend this hypothesis, he considers a wide range of contemporary sources. In one of them, a popular compendium of recipes, Urvoy notes an underlying organizational principle: by and large, the author of the recipe collection categorizes the dishes according to main ingredient or preparation method. More significantly, the author devotes a full third of the treatise to dishes for which more than one recipe exists, with an accompanying awareness of a given recipe’s evolution. For example, a simple peasant preparation of a vegetable- or semolina-based dish becomes increasingly expensive and complex—including additional ingredients such as spices, fats, or meats—when served to higher-class diners or when transferred from a rural to urban context. Taking the work as a whole, Urvoy sees a systematic presentation of recipes accompanied by logical explanations of their variants in a decidedly unacademic text: one that was written with grammatical errors and Andalusī colloquialisms for a literate, but popular audience. In spite of their differences in register, the author of the cookbook and Ibn Ṭufayl share the assumption that one might “apprehend rationally the totality of human life, including its most mundane aspects.”⁵³

Might this idea of an ordered, rational existence have affected artistic production as well? Urvoy seems to think so. In fact, he rather offhandedly remarks that the “arabesque in the decorative arts” and the Andalusī style of Qur’ān recitation share the aesthetic principle of a fixed theme embellished with variations.⁵⁴ A more specific association might posit that the rigorous structure of the Mosque of Seville’s minaret constitutes an additional creative product connected to a society that conceived of the world as an intrinsically rational place, a theory for which I offer the following support: First, it is worth recalling the Giralda’s principal visual effect of orderliness and structure, achieved by the conformity of the ornamental program to the internal ascent of the tower’s ramp, the compositional pairing and unity of its four faces, and the form of the tower’s most visible *sebka*, whose shapes replicate those of their parent arches. Second, although the tower’s ornament conforms to an underlying structure, it also makes room for variety. The effluent, organic formal variety of the middle-

52 Urvoy, “Rationality of Everyday Life,” 46.

53 Urvoy, “Rationality of Everyday Life,” 47–48.

54 Urvoy, “Rationality of Everyday Life,” 50. As Urvoy makes clear, this style of recitation differs from that of the eastern Islamic world.

ground *sebka* enlivens the tower's ornamental program without detracting from its overarching structure (figure 14.5). These phenomena align with Ḥayy's discovery of unity in the universe's infinite variety, with the inclusion and explanation of different versions of the same recipe in a twelfth-century Andalusian cookbook, and even with the aesthetics of variation present in Andalusī recitations of the Qur'ān. A quick glance at the Kutubiyya minaret's less structured program proves useful: only the top register features the compositional or ornamental unity of the Giralda, but even that is completely regular, with none of the deviations or flourishes that animate the Seville tower (figure 14.4).

As this study draws to a close, I would like to return to the questions I posed at its beginning: Why does the Mosque of Seville's ornamental program differ from that of previous Almohad oratories and why does this difference happen in Seville? In partial answer, I have suggested that the increased presence and naturalism of the building's vegetal ornament aligns with contemporary religious currents, which urge believers to seek signs of God's existence in the world that he created. In order to recognize those signs, though, the faithful must understand the natural world as one governed by divine logic. Like the Giralda's structured *sebka*, the universe functions as a system that—in spite of its apparent variety—remains fundamentally unified and ordered. As for the second question, one might begin by invoking Ibn Ṭufayl and Ibn Rushd, and even the caliph Abū Yaḳ'ūb Yūsuf as members of an Andalusī intellectual elite. But I would like to make one final observation regarding the Mosque of Seville's audience, with the knowledge that it merits more attention than I am able to give here.

Once more, a comparison to the Kutubiyya Mosque brings the issue into focus, this time on the city of Marrakesh. At the end of the eleventh century—right about the time that Ibn Ṭūmart was born—the ascendant Almoravid dynasty founded Marrakesh as their capital. In 1126, they gave it walls to defend against the growing threat of Ibn Ṭūmart's Almohads, who took the city anyway, in 1147. One of the conquerors' first acts was to close the ornate Almoravid Friday mosque and to found a new oratory—the Kutubiyya—in its place. In 1158, the Almohad caliph added an additional mosque to the first building (it is this second Kutubiyya that still stands today). The chronology breaks down when it comes to the Kutubiyya's minaret, although it is generally understood to have been finished before 1199. This construction history is significant because we cannot say with certainty that the Kutubiyya minaret predates the Giralda (finished by 'Alī Ghumārī before 1198). In fact, since we know that 'Alī Ghumārī traveled to and from Marrakesh as he worked in Seville, it is possible—although in no way demonstrable—that he had some hand in building the Kutubiyya minaret!

What remains certain is that the two buildings feature radically different ornamental programs. Their audiences differed as well. Because of its location in the capital city, the Kutubiyya Mosque's audience likely included, among others, a wide range of staunch Almohad supporters: from members of the tribes that filled the ranks of the first Almohad armies, to the cogs in the substantial Almohad bureaucratic machine, to the religious and political elite.⁵⁵ The latter must have been well versed in Ibn Tūmart's doctrine, and all would have been cognizant of his personal asceticism, both of which contributed to the Kutubiyya's austerity and the abstraction of its vegetal forms. With this in mind, perhaps Marrakesh was less suited to a new, more ornate, more *Almoravid*-seeming ornamental aesthetic, especially in the light of the symbolic closing of their former mosque. But Seville was different. Certainly, it was home to a number of Almohad religious scholars and administrators with expectations about how an Almohad building ought to look. But it was also part of a broader Andalusian culture made up of Aristotelian philosophers who advocated the study of the natural world and cookbook authors who expected the world to behave rationally. In the Mosque of Seville, then, the Kutubiyya's sparse, whitewashed vegetation turns invasive, covering the wall with new leaves that nevertheless remain true to their Almohad roots.

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55 For a fuller discussion, see Streit, "Monumental Austerity," 97–102.

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A Translation of Q Luqmān/31

Shawkat M. Toorawa

Alif–Lām–Mīm—verses in a Book full of Wisdom.*
A Guidance for the righteous and the kindly, who pray and give alms,
For whom the Last Day is a certainty—
To them, rightly guided by their Lord, certain Victory!

Others, ignorant and impudent, traffic in Error,
Lead believers off the Path—for this will they cower and suffer.
Dismissive, they say they hear nothing when others intone the Scripture.
Give them good news ... good news of their Torture!

But for those who believe and do good, Gardens of Pleasure
To dwell in forever—this is the promise of God, full of Wisdom, full of Power.

It is He who raised Heaven without supports,
Anchored sturdy mountains, scattered animals to all parts,
Sent rain from on high to nourish plants of all sorts.
This is God's Creation! Show Me what others have wrought!

The wrongdoers are deluded, in grave Error.

For the Wisdom We gave him, Luqmān was grateful—
Always be grateful to God, you will see it is beneficial.
What need has Almighty God of an ingrate's denial?—

—*My boy*, said Luqmān to his son, giving counsel:
Worship God alone!
Ascribing partners to God is grievous and hateful—

We charge people: care for your father
And, for having borne you as a burden, your mother

* For Ross—*mensch, mu'min, qudwah, ghawth* in dark hours, gentle counselor—*un merecido homenaje*: words from Scripture.

Nursing you a full year and another.
 Be grateful to Me and to them both, and remember:
 I am the Journey's end. There is no other.

If your parents ask you to worship any beside Me, out of ignorance,
 Do not obey them, but treat them with benevolence.
 Seek those who seek Me and you will see a Way without hindrance.
 I shall show each of you your ledger—all return to Me in the Last instance!

*—My boy, said Luqmān, if a mustard seed is hidden in a stone
 Or anywhere in earth or heaven
 God will find it—He is Adroit, Knowing.
 My boy, pray, enjoin good, and forbid wrong,
 When calamities befall, be strong—
 That is prudent and proper.
 And do not turn your nose up at another
 Nor strut about and stagger:
 God has no love for boasters who swagger.
 Be unassuming when you go on your way,
 And be soft when you have something to say—
 For God nothing is worse than a donkey's bray.*

Can you not see that God has placed every single thing
 In Heaven and Earth at your service, showered every conceivable blessing?
 Still there are those who argue about Him and bicker
 With no knowledge, no guidance, no luminous Scripture!
 When they are told, *Follow God's Revelation*, they say, *We far prefer
 To follow the ways of our father and forefather.*
 What? Even if Satan invites them to the blazing Fire!

Those who do Good and entrust their whole being to God
 Have grasped a secure handhold—
 For God controls everything.
 So do not fret over the disbelieving—
 They will all return to us and will be told
 What it is they did—God knows what they withhold.
 We grant them fleeting enjoyment ... then grievous torment!

If you ask them who created Earth and Heaven, they will say, *God.*
 Reply, *God be praised.* But most do not understand—
 Everything on Earth and in Heaven comes from God!

God Praiseworthy, Almighty, has need of no-one!
 If the seven seas and seven more were ink, and every tree a pen
 God's Words would not subside—
 God is full of Power, full of Wisdom.
 He created you as One, and will resurrect you as One—
 God hears and sees all, nothing is beyond His ken!
 See how He makes Day follow Night,
 How He placed the Moon and Sun
 On a fixed course for a fixed term
 How He knows every single thing you've done.

This is because God is Truth, and what they claim is Error.
 God is full of Might and Grandeur.
 See how the ships sail the seas by God's favor—
 He shows you His wondrous signs,
 Signs for the grateful, for those who never waver.
 When swells overwhelm them
 They pray to God in all sincerity
 When we deliver them to land, to safety
 Some have less certainty—
 But our signs are rejected only
 By those who revile and spew blasphemy!

Mankind! Fear God, and dread a Day
 When no parent will avail its child
 No child its parent avail!
 God's Promise is True, but this World's temptations
 Deceive and assail.
 Do not let them!
 And do not be led astray by the one who is sure to betray.

God alone knows the Last Hour.
 God alone causes rains to shower.
 God alone knows the unborn's gender.
 What you earn tomorrow no-one can say,
 Nor where you'll be when you pass away.

It is God's knowledge that encompasses all!
 God's knowledge that will prevail!

The Story of the Female Jewish Wine Merchant: An Example of Cultural Translation in Medieval Hebrew Literature

David Torollo

Three men gather in a house to eat and drink.* When they find themselves completely drunk and out of wine, they decide to go in search of more at the house of a Jewish female wine merchant. After obtaining the wine, they kill the woman and kidnap her daughter, who is raped by the men in the house. The next morning, fearing the girl's accusatory testimony, they kill her and flee the town. This story appears in a chapter of *Mishle he-'arav* (The Sayings of the Arabs), a Hebrew work on ethical and wisdom motifs by an unknown author who claims to be translating from the Arabic at the beginning of the thirteenth century in Christian Iberia or Provence. The story appears in chapter 28, entitled "Do not desire too much food as a stingy man; and do not be like those who gorge themselves on meat and drink too much wine." The significance of the story lies in the fact that it is the only place in the work where the author/translator depicts a character as a Jew. In this article I take the story of the Jewish female wine merchant as a witness to the phenomenon of translation that was developing within the Jewish communities in Christian Iberia and Provence. I begin with a brief introduction to the use and function of the short stories in the work *Mishle he-'arav*. After that, I offer the Hebrew transcription of the story of the Jewish female wine seller and provide the first published English translation. Then, I examine the motivations that led the author of the work to stress the religion of the wine seller and the consequences of this fact from a cultural translation perspective.¹ The objective is not to find the source and par-

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1 Cultural translation is the practice of translating texts that involves the incorporation of cultural awareness into its methodology. Two notable examples that illustrate the application

allels of the story but to understand its meaning in a specific cultural context. Therefore, this article offers my reading of the story as a multilayered text in which we can see intermingled traces of different cultural traditions: the story of the hermit Baršīšā, the doctrine of martyrdom in Judaism and *ḥudūd* crimes in Islamic law.

1 The Use of Short Stories in the *Mishle he-ʿarav*

The *Mishle he-ʿarav*, a work written in Hebrew and likely translated from Arabic, consists of fifty chapters on different ethical topics, mainly virtues and vices. Each chapter introduces wisdom content in various literary forms: prose (mainly short stories), rhymed prose, poetry, and clusters of biblical quotations. However, each chapter is independent from the others and the only links between them are the teachings on ethics and wisdom that they try to convey.

There are twenty-four short stories in the work scattered over several chapters.² The purpose of each story in the *Mishle he-ʿarav* is to exemplify the benefits of abstaining from a vice or the consequences of not upholding a virtue. In all, they deal with ten ethical concepts: the vanity of worldly pleasures (three stories), wisdom (one story), humility (one story), the king's generosity (two stories), the worst transgression (one story), forgiveness (two stories), gossiping (one story), tiresome people (one story), family (eight stories), and repentance (four stories).

of methodology are Luis M. Girón-Negrón, "How the Go-Between Cut Her Nose: Two Ibero-Medieval Translations of a *Kalilah wa Dimnah* Story," in *Under the Influence: Questioning the Comparative in Medieval Castile*, ed. Cynthia Robinson and Leyla Rouhi (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 231–259, and David A. Wacks, "The Cultural Context of the Translation of Calila e Dimna," in his *Framing Iberia: Maqāmāt and Frametale Narratives in Medieval Spain* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 86–128.

2 The terminology used by scholars to refer to short literary narratives is vague and variable. Some of the most commonly used terms to describe this genre include *exemplum*, *marshal*, *parable*, and *fable*, to name only a few examples. For the purpose of this article, I use the term *short story*, but I discuss the use of these terms in my PhD dissertation; see David Torollo, "El *Mišle he-ʿarab* [Los dichos de los árabes] y la tradición sapiencial hebrea (Península Ibérica y Provenza, s. XII y XIII)" (PhD diss., University of Salamanca, 2014), 135–139. For two other studies that outline this terminology, see Paloma Gracia and Juan Paredes Núñez, "Hacia una tipología de las formas breves medievales," in *Tipología de las formas narrativas breves románicas*, ed. Juan Paredes and Paloma Gracia (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1998), 7–13, and Eli Yassif, *The Hebrew Folktale: History, Genre, Meaning*, trans. Jacqueline S. Teitelbaum (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 121.

The fact that short stories work as stand-alone pieces explains why many of them are included within different textual genres in different languages, such as Arabic *adab* works, Hebrew *maḥbarot*, Spanish *literatura de castigos*, and Latin collections of sermons. Indeed, one of the main features of these literary compositions is their ability to travel from one cultural tradition to another, undergoing adaptations in the process.³ This phenomenon of the malleability of ethical material has also been pointed out by Sadan, who claims that whenever narrative materials travel a long way between different cultures, perceptions, or languages, they undergo great change.⁴

Unlike maqāmāt works, such as those by al-Hamadhānī or al-Ḥarīrī in Arabic and al-Ḥarīzī in Hebrew, the stories in the *Mishle he-ʿarav* do not share either a character or a narrator. The protagonists that appear in the stories are always anonymous stereotypical characters such as kings, old men, sages, miserable men seeking advice, and fathers giving counsel to their sons.⁵ The circumstances in which the plots develop vary greatly from story to story, but there are some common narrative elements that appear frequently: the gathering of wise men to discuss a particular topic, requests for advice from a sage or an old man, and the narration of the actions and behavior of sages and folkloric characters that lived in an idealized past.⁶

Another striking narrative feature in the stories in this work is the dichotomy between the behavior of the wise man and the behavior of the foolish man. This dichotomy introduces proper and advisable behavior in contrast with

3 Yassif, *Hebrew Folktale*, 265.

4 Joseph Sadan, "Jackals' Discourse: Examining the Hebrew Versions of Kalila wa-Dimna, Linguistic Factors and Norms of Translation," in *Le répertoire narratif arabe médiéval, transmission et ouverture: actes de Colloque international* (Liège, 15–17 septembre 2005), ed. Frédéric Bauden, Aboubakr Chraïbi, and Antonella Ghersetti (Geneva: Droz, 2008), 261.

5 For a study on the various stock characters that appear in Hebrew rhymed-prose works written in medieval Christian Iberia, see Ángeles Navarro Peiro, "Tipos sociales en la narrativa hebrea de la España cristiana," in *La sociedad medieval a través de la literatura hispanojudía: VI Curso de Cultura Hispano-Judía y Sefardí de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha*, ed. Ricardo Izquierdo and Ángel Sáenz-Badillos (Cuenca: Universidad de Castilla La Mancha, 1998), 257–277. In this study, the author analyzes the function and social role of kings, peasants, merchants, travelers, judges, poets, physicians, astrologers, etc.

6 All these motifs are described by Thompson as "quest accomplished with aid of prophet (sage, druid)" (H 1233.3.3), "wisdom (knowledge) from sage (teacher)" (J 152), and "wisdom from old person" (J 151); see Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature: A Classification of Narrative Elements in Folktales, Ballads, Myths, Fables, Mediaeval Romances, Exempla, Fabliaux, Jest-books, and Local Legends*, 6 vols. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955–1958).

improper and reprehensible conduct: the sage and the fool function as antagonists. Thus, the typical sage knows how to seek wisdom in every moment, values the admonishment of wise men, prefers the company of other sages and avoids foolish men, listens to others and deliberates thoroughly before replying, knows how to control his anger, is generous with his wealth, practices moderation in eating and drinking, etc. By contrast, the fool shuns wisdom, does not listen to others and replies without thinking, is arrogant, is ever ready to repeat the same sins, cannot abide to be admonished, is selfish and easily angered, and is naturally inclined to gluttony and drunkenness.⁷

This article focuses on a story that illustrates the general character of this collection—a story that is representative of many medieval exemplary tales, but it also is exceptional. It recounts the gathering of wise men to talk about the worst transgressions that a man can commit. One of the sages gathered there tells another story that constitutes the only occasion in this work where a character—a wine seller—is specifically identified. However, the character is not identified by name, but rather (and more importantly for shedding light on the phenomenon of cultural translation) by gender and religion: the wine seller is a Jewish woman. Why would a character be explicitly depicted as Jewish in a story in a Hebrew work for a Jewish audience? And why would that character be female?

2 The Story of the Jewish Female Wine Merchant

The Hebrew text that follows is taken from my edition of the work *Mishle he-ʿarav*. That edition is based on MS 5463 from the Biblioteca Nacional de España in Madrid.⁸ The numbers in brackets refer to folio numbers in that manuscript.

7 The combination of moral conduct and wisdom is noteworthy: wisdom is a practical matter, not abstract moral principles or theoretical philosophy but knowledge of how to live well in the world. This pragmatism is common to medieval exemplary literature in Romance, Latin, Hebrew, and Arabic.

8 Since the objective of this article is to analyze the story from the perspective of cultural translation, it does not make sense to include all the manuscript variants of the story. The reader interested in the manuscript tradition of the *Mishle he-ʿarav* can find detailed information in David Torollo, “El *Mišle he-ʿarab*,” 61–94. The critical edition of the story here presented can be found on pages 277–279.

א242 התקבצו מחכמי אמות העולם אנשים חכמים וידועים בבית אחד מהמלכים החסידים, ובניו ובני ביתו ובחורי ביתו לפניו, ויאמר לחכמים: "יזכור כל אחד מכם לנערים איזו היא דרך טובה שילך בה האדם ויצליח בדרכיו וישכיל במהלכיו". ויזכור כל אחד ואחד מהם לפי דעתו, והמלך אומר לבניו: "שמעו והאזינו והטו אזנכם ופתחו לבבכם ובינו". ויהי ככלותם לבאר המדות הטובות והנתיבות הנבונות, אמר להם: "יזכור כל אחד ואחד מכם איזו היא דרך רעה שיתרחק ממנה האדם, ואיזו היא עברה שינחילהו השומרו ממנה שם טוב בין הברואים, וימציאהו שטר טוב מבוראנו אבינו שבשמים". ויאמר אחד מהם: "שפיכות דמים, כי שופך דם האדם הורס בנין ומחריב עולם, והחכמים קוראים שם האדם "עולם קטן", וימות הנרצח ודמו לא ידום". ויאמר האחר: "השוכב עם אשה בעולת בעל,^a כי הוא עושה נבלה ושובר קרן בעל האשה ומביא, והוא חי, תחת העפר, וכאשר יקום איש על רעהו ורצחו נפש כן הדבר הזה,^b ועד כי הוא מוליד בן ממזר, ויש בזונות שתתעשת להפיל פרי בטנה והנה שפיכות דם". ויאמר האחר: "הגנב, כי יקוב חור בקיר בית חברו להוציא חיל אשר לא יגע בו ובעל הבית נרדם וישן, ואולי יקיץ ויקום להציל חילו, ויכו | האחד את האחד וימת אותו, והנה רצוח וגנוב ועוד, כי הגנבה גורמת

ב242

^a דב' כב, כב. ^b דב' כב, כו.

[One day] some of the most distinguished sages of all the nations gathered in the house of a pious king, who—surrounded by his sons and the members of his household, including the youngest of them—said to the sages: “[I want] each of you to tell the boys which is the good path a man should walk so he can succeed in his way of life and in his steps.” Each of them gave his opinion and the king said to his sons: “Listen, pay attention, incline your ears, open your hearts, and understand.” When the sages were done talking about good virtues and appropriate paths, [the king] said to them: “[I want] each of you to explain which is the bad path a man should depart from, and which is the transgression that will give those who avoid it a good name among men and will provide them a good reward from our Creator, our Father who is in the Heavens.” One of them said: “Murder, for he who sheds a man’s blood [is like] he who demolishes a building and destroys the world: that is why the sages call man a ‘microcosm,’⁹ because although the victim dies, his blood does not remain silent.”¹⁰ Another one said: “*The man who lies with another man’s wife,*¹¹ since he commits a despicable act, smashes the honor of the wife’s husband, and brings him to death¹² while he is still alive, *for this case is like that of a man attacking another and murdering him.*¹³ Furthermore, [it may happen] that he becomes the father of a bastard child, and there are among female adulterers those who purposefully abort the fruit of their womb: here is murder [too].” Another one said: “The thief, because he will punch a hole in the wall of his friend’s house to achieve wealth that he did not work for while the landlord is sleeping. But it may happen that he wakes up and tries to protect his wealth and they beat each other up until [eventually] one kills the other; and here is murder, theft and something else, since the theft causes a false oath.”

9 The idea that man (microcosm) is a personification of the universe (macrocosm) is very common in medieval philosophy in Christian, Islamic, and Jewish thinking, but it does not mean that they all use it in the same way. The Mishnah summarizes this idea in tractate Sanhedrin 4:5: “For that reason, men were created singly, to teach you that whoever destroys a single soul of Israel, Scripture accounts it as if he had destroyed a whole world, and whoever supports a single soul of Israel, Scripture accounts it as if he had supported a whole world.” The same idea is expressed in Q Mā’idah 5:32. For Christian versions of this idea, see Francisco Rico, *El pequeño mundo del hombre: Varia fortuna de una idea en las letras españolas* (Madrid: Castalia, 1970).

10 This can be read in relation to Genesis 4:10, when after Cain killed Abel, God says: “What have you done? Hark, your brother’s blood cries out to Me from the ground!”

11 Deut 22:22. Phrases in italics are biblical allusions within the text.

12 Lit. “under earth.”

13 Deut 22:26.

שבועת שוא". ויאמר האחר: "קשה מכלן עובד ע"ז, כי הוא משתחוה לאל נכר, מעשה ידי אדם עץ ואבן, אשר לא יראון ולא ישמעון, לא יאכלון ולא יריחון,^a וישכח יי עושהו ויצרו מבטן ומוציאו אל העולם, ומפרנסהו ומכסהו ומחיהו וממיתהו".

והיה בין החכמים איש זקן בא בימים,^b והיה שומע ומחריש. ויאמר לו המלך: "מדוע דברו אשר תוסיף שנותיך על שנותם ובינתך על בינתם, ואתה שותק ומחריש?". ויאמר: "כבר זכרו העברות המשונות, ומה אוסיף עוד?". ויאמר לו המלך: "אשביעך בסולח האשמים, ויודע העלומים, ובאשר ייטב לך באחרית הימים, היש עברה כאחת שזכרו חבריך?". ויען הישיש: "יש ויש, הטה אזנך ויבינו בניך!". ויתמהו החכמים, ויביטו כלם עם המלך אל פה הישיש, ויאמר לו: "ומה היא העודפת על אחת מאלה?". ויאמר: "יש עברה גוררת כל העברות אשר זכרתם, ומאספת אל נפשה כל הפשעים והיא האם וכל החטאות בניה וילדיה". ויאמרו לו: "ומה היא?". ויאמר להם: "שתות היין יותר מדאי. ואני מספר לכם את אשר השגתי בימי, ושמעתי באזני, וראיתי בעיני. דע, אדני המלך, כי הייתי במשרתי אביך מנעורי, והייתי עומד לפניו בין חברי, ויבאו השוטרים והסובבים בעיר ויספרו לו כי שלשה אנשים רעים | התקבצו בבית אחד מהם לאכול ולשתות, וישתו כל היום. והי כבא הלילה תם היין, ויצא אחד מהם ותבא במ רוח רעה^c ואש אוכלה^d לגמור תאותם ולהשלים שכרותם. והיה בעיר ישראלית מוכרת יין, ולא היה בידם כסף להביא אליה, ויצאו לילה ויקבו חור בקיר השכן, ויבאו אל ביתו ויקחו כל אשר מצאו.

א243

^a דב' ד, כח. ^b בר' בד, א. ^c ש"א טז, יד ושו' ט, כג. ^d יש' כט, ו וכו'.

Another one said: "The worst of all is the idol worshipper, since he kneels before a pagan god, *a man-made [god] of wood and stone, that cannot see or hear or eat or smell*,¹⁴ and he forgets his God, his Maker, the One who created him from the womb and put him in the world, the One who provides him livelihood, the One who protects him, the One who gives him life, and the One who causes him death."

Among the sages there was *an old man advanced in years*¹⁵ who had been listening without speaking. The king asked him: "Why have those whom you are older and wiser than spoken and you have remained silent without saying [anything]?" [The old man] answered: "They have already mentioned several transgressions, what can I add?" The king said: "I am begging you in the name of the One who forgives sins, knows concealed things, and is good to you at the end of the days, is there any other transgression like the ones already mentioned by your friends?" The old man replied: "Of course there is; incline your ear and may your sons understand [well]!" The sages were astonished and everyone, the king included, was staring at the mouth of the old man when the king said: "Which is the transgression that is worst than any of the aforementioned?" [The old man] replied: "There is a transgression that triggers all the transgressions that you have already mentioned, and which in itself combines all the sins, since it is the mother and all the sins are her children." They asked: "Which one?" [The old man] said: "Drinking wine more than enough. I am going to tell you what I experienced in the days [of my youth], heard with my ears, and saw with my eyes. Know, my lord the king, that when I was young I served your father, and [one day] I was with my friends before him when the guards who wander around the city came in. They told him that three evil men had gathered in the house of one of them to eat and drink; they had drunk for the whole day, and when the night arrived the wine was gone. Then, one of them went out and *an evil spirit*¹⁶ and *a consuming fire*¹⁷ came upon them to finish their lust and to complete their drunkenness. And it happened that there was in the city a Jewish female wine seller; but they did not have any money to bring her, so they went out at night, punched a hole in the neighbor's wall, broke into his home, and took all they could find. They left the house and hid the things that

14 Deut 4:28. This verse is usually interpreted by medieval Jewish commentators as an allusion to Christianity.

15 Gen 24:1.

16 1 Sam 16:14 and Judg 9:23.

17 Isa 29:6.

ויצאו והטמינו הגנבה אשר גנבו ויקחו ממנה אשר הוליכו בידם אל בית מוכרת היין. ויקראוה בשמה ותפתח להם ותדליק הנר ותתן אותו לבתה, והנערה יפה עד מאד. ותרץ האם אל היין ובתה תומכת את הנר, ויקחו הנאד מלא מיד האם וישלחו יד אליה ויחנקוה, ויחטפו הבת ויוליכוה לביתם. והיה לאחד מהם יחש על חברו ויט ידו אליה לשכב עמה קודם רעיו. ותקנא נפשם, ויתקע אחד מהם הסכין בבטנו וימיתהו. וישכבו עם הבתולה ויתעללו בה כל הלילה. ויהי בנשף, טרם יכיר איש את חברו^a ויצא היין מראשם, זכרו אשר עשו וייראו כי הנערה תגיד דבר אמה וכי הרעה האחת תחשוף הרעה האחרת ויהרגוה וינוסו. ויקצוף המלך אביך מאד וחמתו בערה בו.^b ויוציא שלישי ופרשיו אל הדרכים ולא מצאום וישבע כי לולי היה מוצא אותם כי יחתוך חתיכה חתיכה כל בשרם. והם חיים עד שימותו מיתה רעה. ולמקצת ימים הוגד למלך כי נסו אל רומה וישתחו לבעל. והנה שתות היין ואין כדת | הביא את כל העברות אשר זכרו חברי". ויאמר המלך לבניו: "קומו הבנים לקטו הפנינים".

243ב

^aרות ג, יד. ^bאס' א, יב.

they had stolen; and from what they had taken, they grabbed what they could put in their fists and marched toward the wine seller's house. They called her by her name; she opened [the door] to them, lit a candle, and gave [the candle] to her daughter, a very beautiful maiden. The mother rushed to get the wine while her daughter was holding the candle, and then [the men] took the full wine container from the mother's hands, attacked and strangled her, and then they kidnapped the daughter and brought her to their home. Since one of them belonged to a more eminent family than the others, he tilted his hand toward her in order to lie with her before his friends. They got jealous and one of them stabbed him in the abdomen and killed him. [After this] they lay with the virgin and raped her the whole night. [And then], early in the morning, *before one person could distinguish another*¹⁸ and when the [effects of the] wine abandoned their heads, they remembered what they had done and feared that the young girl would tell what had happened to her mother and that one wickedness would disclose another, so they killed her and fled. Your father, *the king, was greatly incensed, and his fury burned within him*.¹⁹ [He ordered] his knights and riders to search the roads, but they did not find them. [The king] swore that if he found them, he would cut their bodies into pieces, but they stayed alive instead of suffering a cruel death. Several days later, the king was told that they had fled to Rome and knelt before its god.²⁰ And here it is how drinking wine with no restraint triggers all the transgressions that my friends have mentioned." The king said to his sons: "My sons! Wake up and gather the pearls."

18 Ruth 3:14.

19 Esth 1:12.

20 Rome functions as another reference to Christianity, and its god is referred to in the text as Ba'al, who was the main god of the Phoenicians: this name was used to describe a foreign god in the medieval Jewish tradition.

3 Analysis

The aim of the analysis of the story that follows is to interpret its meaning in the multicultural context of Christian Iberia and Provence at the beginning of the thirteenth century, the place and time in which *Mishle he-ʿarav* was written. This analysis focuses on four main points: the motif of the concatenation of transgressions, the doctrine of martyrdom in Judaism, the *hudūd* crimes in Islamic law, and the depiction of the wine seller as a female Jew.

4 The Concatenation of Transgressions

There are numerous examples of stories showing how one sin leads to another, which suggests that the plot of this story is not at all new or original. In fact, the motif of the “three sins of the hermit” sums up very well how a vice may trigger several other vices.²¹ The story relates how a man proud of his virtue elects to commit the least of three sins—drunkenness, adultery, and murder—and before his intoxication wears off has committed the other two sins.²² According to Taylor, there are multiple Eastern parallels that fall into two separate groups: one with two characters, in which two maidens trick the two fallen angels Harūt and Marūt with wine in order to discover the greatest name of God and reach Paradise,²³ and another with one single character, Barṣīṣā.²⁴

The prototypical folkloric example of the concatenation of transgressions appears in the Arabic legend of Barṣīṣā, which shares several narrative elements with the story of the Jewish female wine merchant. Although the origin of the legend of Barṣīṣā is unknown, scholars suggest that it must have existed

21 This is motif J485 (“three sins of the hermit”), identified by Thompson in his *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*.

22 Archer Taylor, “The Three Sins of the Hermit,” *Modern Philology* 20.1 (1922): 61.

23 This story is mentioned in Q 2:102.

24 Taylor, “Three Sins of the Hermit,” 61. In fact, the story appears in a wide variety of medieval collections of *exempla* in Europe in different languages: Latin, Spanish, old French, German, etc. It is not the goal of this article to trace the motif; however, very interestingly, there is a modified Hebrew version in which a pagan king invites eleven Jewish sages to his palace and asks them to choose between eating pork, having sexual intercourse with pagan women, or drinking wine that has been consecrated to idols. Choosing what they believed to be the less damaging transgression, they drink the wine. Once drunk, they eat from the table all kind of meat, including pork, and when the meal is over they go to bed, and because of their intoxication they feel the need of company, committing therefore the three sins. See Contant Dorville, “Deux légendes rabbiniques,” *La Tradition* 2 (1888): 273–274.

before the advent of Islam, for almost all the Arabic versions set the tale among the Jewish tribes of the Arabian Peninsula.²⁵ In each and every version, Baršīšā commits four sins: rape, murder, taking a false oath, and idolatry.

In the plot of the tale shared by most of the Arabic versions, Baršīšā is a hermit who lives on top of a column that he made for himself so he could spend his days praying and fasting. Three brothers who are going on a long journey entrust their ailing sister to the hermit. Tempted by Satan, Baršīšā rapes the young woman and she gets pregnant. Fearing that the brothers and the rest of society will notice what has happened when the woman's belly begins to grow, the hermit, again tempted by Satan, decides to kill the young lady and bury her. When the brothers come back from the journey and ask after their sister, Baršīšā says that she has suffered a natural death and that he has buried her. Satan lets the brothers know what has really happened and they discover all the details. Fearing for his life, the hermit is again visited by Satan, who offers to release him from an imminent death if he worships him. When Baršīšā agrees, Satan disappears while reciting two verses from the Qur'an (Q 59:16–17).

While the basic narrative pattern is stable, there are many divergences between the different versions of the tale in what might be called "secondary aspects," such as the religious affiliation of the hermit (either Jewish or Christian), the place where he decides to withdraw, the reason why the three brothers (or sometimes a king) hand their ailing sister (or the king's daughter) over to the hermit, her family background, the place where she is buried, and the different tricks that Satan uses to tempt Baršīšā and to let the brothers know what has really happened.²⁶ How meaningful are these narrative variations? What can they tell us about the ways in which a "travelling tale" is adapted to local needs, as it moves through time and space?

To explore the interpretative possibilities of such narrative variations, I return to the *Mishle he-'arav* and discuss one fascinating narrative detail that is

25 Ángel González Palencia, "Precedentes islámicos de la leyenda de Garín," *Al-Andalus* 1 (1933): 353; María José Hermosilla, "La leyenda de Baršīšā según el ms. 63/2 j," *Al-Qanṭara* 9.1 (1988): 132–134. The historian and Qur'an exegete Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 923 CE) gives four different versions of the tale: *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī: Jāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl āy al-Qur'an*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākīr and Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākīr, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Maktabat ibn Taymiyyah, 1954), 28:50. Al-Ṭabarī's version is followed by other Arabic compilers of popular stories, such as Ibn Kathīr. See in *ET*³, s.v. "Baršīšā" (Juan P. Monferrer-Sala). The fact that almost all the Arabic versions set the story among the Jewish tribes of the Arabian Peninsula does not mean that the story has a Jewish origin per se; it would only indicate the antiquity that Arabs grant the story.

26 On the different versions of the legend of Baršīšā in Arabic literature, see González Palencia, "Precedentes islámicos de la leyenda de Garín."

unique within the larger motif pattern described here. The four sins that Baršīšā commits (rape, murder, false oath, idolatry) also appear in the tale of the Jewish female wine merchant. Nevertheless, the author of *Mishle he-ʿarav* puts theft on the same level as the rest of the transgressions and considers drinking too much wine, and not Satan, to be the cause of the concatenation of sins. These modifications constitute a very interesting clue for uncovering the layers of literary and cultural traditions in the story if analyzed against the background of the *yehareg ve-ʿal yaʿavor* doctrine of the Jewish tradition in the Babylonian Talmud and against the background of the concept of *ḥudūd* crimes in Islamic law or *sharīʿa*.

5 *Yehareg ve-ʿal yaʿavor* (“Be Killed but Do Not Transgress”)

The tractate Sanhedrin of the Mishnah deals with the rules of the Sanhedrin court, the death penalty, and several other criminal matters. The Gemara to that tractate, in Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 74a, says:

R. Johanan said in the name of R. Shimʿon b. Jehotzadaq: They voted and it was decided in the upper chambers of the house of Nitza in Lydda that every law in the Torah, if a man is commanded: “Transgress and you will not be killed,” he may transgress and not be killed, excepting idolatry, forbidden sexual relations, and murder.²⁷

What we have here is the doctrine that distinguishes between cases of *piquah nefesh* (*yaʿavor ve-ʿal yehareg*, “transgress but do not be killed”) and those of *mesirat nefesh* (*yehareg ve-ʿal yaʿavor*, “be killed but do not transgress”). In the first case, a Jew must violate any biblical and rabbinical commandment in order to save a human life, since life is the most sacred of God’s gifts. However, there are three kinds of transgressions that no Jew is allowed to commit under any circumstances: murder, forbidden sexual relations, and idolatry. Sacrificing one’s own life in order to avoid committing any of these three transgressions is considered to be the best example of *qiddush ha-shem*, or sanctification of God by dying for him.²⁸

²⁷ *b. Sanh.* 74a. The translation of the passage is mine.

²⁸ For an interesting study on the phenomenon of *qiddush ha-shem* within the Jewish communities in Ashkenaz and Sefarad in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, see Avraham Grossman, “Martyrdom in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries: Between Ashkenaz and the Muslim World” (Hebrew), *Peʿamim* 75 (1998): 27–46.

The story of the wine merchant offers a list of six transgressions put in the mouths of five of “the most distinguished sages of all the nations” (i.e., non-Jewish sages): murder, forbidden sexual relations, theft, false accusation, idolatry/apostasy, and drunkenness. Three of the sins committed by Baršīšā and the three sins for which Jews must choose death over transgression are included in this list of six wicked acts. However, how can the rest of the transgressions that appear in the list be explained?

The fact that the wine seller is identified as a female Jew indicates that her religious affiliation is likely different from that of the three men who commit the crimes. They are not Jews, but neither are they Christians: at the end of the story, the men flee to Rome, where they commit apostasy by worshipping the God of the city, the Christian God. Therefore, they must be Muslims. If we accept this hypothesis, a more plausible explanation that would explain the list of sins in the story should be looked for in the Arabic-Muslim tradition.

6 *Ḥudūd Crimes*

In a context where Islamic law is followed, there are several acts considered to be crimes against God that every Muslim ruler has the obligation and responsibility to punish: these are known as *ḥudūd* crimes because they involve violating a *ḥadd*, a “boundary” established by God either in the Qurʾān or in the Sunna. Each of the schools of jurisprudence differs as to the definition, features, evidentiary requirements, legal defenses, exonerating conditions, and applicable penalties for these crimes,²⁹ but all of them agree in considering six felonies to be *ḥudūd* crimes. These are: apostasy, theft, armed robbery, forbidden sexual relations, false accusation (mainly of forbidden sexual relations), and intoxication.³⁰

In the story of the Jewish female wine merchant, we find an account of these six *ḥudūd* crimes, with the exception of armed robbery and a slight modification of that related to false accusation: while the *ḥadd* crime refers to a false accusation of sexual immorality, in the story the expression *shevuʿat shav* (“false oath”) seems to refer to denying in the name of God something that has been

29 For a detailed study on different crimes and their punishment in the framework of *sharīʿa* law, see M. Cherif Bassiouni, “Crimes and the Criminal Process,” *Arab Law Quarterly* 12.3 (1997). On the *ḥudūd* crimes, see *ibid.*, 277–282.

30 For the *ḥudūd* crimes as defined in the Qurʾān, see, for example: Q 5:33 (armed robbery); Q 5:38 (theft); Q 5:90–91 (intoxication); Q Nahl 16:106 (apostasy); Q Nūr 24:2 (forbidden sexual relations); Q 24:4 and Q 24:6 (false accusation of forbidden sexual relations).

done, probably the theft. Curiously, one of the transgressions defined in Sanhedrin 74a that also appears in the story of the wine seller but that is not a *ḥadd* crime is murder, considered by Islamic law to be a crime against personal integrity and not a crime against God.

It is likely therefore that the original Arabic story consisted of a gradation of the *ḥudūd* crimes (intoxication, apostasy, forbidden sexual relations, theft, false accusation), in which murder was not included because it is not a *ḥadd* crime. However, it does appear in the Hebrew version of the story. It might be that the Hebrew translator, having the *mesirat ha-nefesh* doctrine in mind, decided to include murder in the first sage's speech. This Jewish touch fulfills the need to Judaize the Hebrew version by linking murder with the ideas about microcosm/macrocosm in Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5 and with Abel's blood crying out to God in Genesis 4:10.

7 The Jewish Female Wine Merchant

Returning to our story, we must not forget that this version is written in Hebrew for a Jewish audience. In order for the message to be useful from an ethical and moral point of view, the identity both of the perpetrators of the crime and the victims is crucial. It might appear to be more effective if the three evil men were Jews and served as a "negative example" of Jewish conduct. But this is not the case: their faith is unclear; they appear to be Muslim, but then they seem to convert to Christianity. In any case, they are Judaism's "others." The victims, on the other hand, are Jewish women. As I shall argue, this distribution along faith and gender lines raises interesting questions about the boundaries of moral and religious identities.

The *Mishle he-'arav* is a work written in Hebrew in the first half of the thirteenth century in Christian Iberia or Provence. The author claims in the introduction to be translating from Arabic. It is likely, then, that the story was contained in one or several Arabic works that the Hebrew author had in front of him while translating or compiling his own work. Jewish translators into Hebrew felt the need to Judaize the texts they were translating to make foreign cultural or religious elements more familiar to the new Jewish audience.³¹ For Muslims, it would be logical for the wine seller to be Jewish: a Muslim is

³¹ There are several methods for Judaizing a text in order for it to be accepted by a Jewish audience. The usual ones are the modification of the plot and the structure of the stories to make the content look more Jewish than it really is, the inclusion of biblical quotations (*shibbutz* style), and the use of biblical characters and contexts that are familiar to the

allowed neither to drink wine nor to sell it, so a Jewish wine seller would solve the dilemma.³² But for a Jewish audience, the significance changes: not only is wine permitted, but it is an integral part of many Jewish celebrations. Hence, the narrative detail can pass unchanged into the Hebrew. It does not have to be “Judaized” (in the way scholars have commonly argued) because the context Judaizes it already. Meaning is context dependent; as the context of reception changes, so does the significance of particular narrative components.

The Hebrew story introduces a non-Jewish king who gathers a group of non-Jewish sages so they can discuss the worst transgressions that men should avoid. Four of the sages mention murder, forbidden sexual relations, theft (with a false oath), and idolatry/apostasy. It is clear that the apostasy is conversion to Christianity, for the biblical verse that is quoted is Deuteronomy 4:28, usually associated with Christianity in the medieval exegetical tradition because it mentions a “man-made god of wood and stone.” The fifth sage says that drinking too much wine triggers the other sins and tells the story of the wine merchant. Since it is originally a non-Jewish sage telling a story for a non-Jewish audience, it would be unusual for that sage to choose Jews as protagonists of his story. They therefore must be Muslims who buy wine from a Jewish wine merchant, a legitimate purveyor of wine in the Islamic world, and who commit apostasy by converting to Christianity. However, the faith of the three protagonists is not mentioned, unlike that of the sages (non-Jews, since they are *ḥakhmei amot ha-’olam*, a specific formula in the Jewish tradition for non-Jewish sages) and that of the wine seller, who is a Jew. The biblical verse that mentions idol worshiping refers unequivocally to Christianity, and this fact would have been noticed by Jewish readers, who—whether they knew the Muslim religious affiliation

Jewish audience. A more detailed explanation on the Judaization of tales can be found in Yassif, *Hebrew Folktales*, 273–282.

32 Q 5:90 and 5:91 forbid Muslims to be involved in any way with alcoholic beverages. At the same time, in theory, Jews and Christians (females or males) are not allowed to sell wine to Muslims according to the Pact of ‘Umar, which regulates the relationships between the three religious communities, by granting protection and some religious freedom to Jews and Christians in exchange for the payment of a poll tax and the observance of several rules. However, the clauses of the Pact were applied differently depending on the time and place. On the trade of wine between Muslims and Christians, see Adday Hernández, “La compraventa de vino entre musulmanes y cristianos *ḍimmiés* a través de textos jurídicos *mālikíes* del Occidente islámico medieval,” in *The Legal Status of Ḍimmi-s in the Islamic West (second/eighth-ninth/fifteenth centuries)*, ed. Maribel Fierro and John Tolan (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 243–274; on the legal position of Jews in medieval Islam, see Mark Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 52–74.

of the three protagonists or not—would have identified with them against the Christians who were cast as “the other” in opposition to both Muslims and Jews within the context of the story.³³

Furthermore, that the wine seller is a female may suggest a warning for the Jewish audience, particularly for those who sell wine to members of a religion that does not allow its followers to drink it and that considers doing so a crime against God. The Jewish wine merchant, apparently known in town for her business since the three evil men “called her by her name,” also pays the price for her activity: she is robbed and murdered, and her daughter is raped and murdered too. Might this also be considered a warning against women selling wine or against women doing business at all?³⁴

Conclusion

On the basis of this analysis of various points where several cultural factors seem to intermingle in the story, we can conclude that it originates in the Arabic tradition. The Arabic tale would have presented a gradation of the *hudūd* crimes before a Muslim audience in which the worst of all of them would be drinking wine, since it causes the rest of the sins.

When the story is translated into Hebrew by the author/translator of *Mishle he-arav*, it undergoes several transformations. First, the Jewish identity of the wine merchant is preserved. The wine seller being male or female would not

33 Grossman claims that Christianity was considered a pagan religion by medieval Jews, especially because of the Holy Trinity, the statues found in churches and monasteries, rituals such as processions, etc. In contrast, Islam was seen more favorably, since it was considered a true monotheistic faith and did not thus really count as apostasy or idol worshipping. Jews felt that their religion had more in common with Islam than with Christianity, so the rejection of Christianity was much stronger than that of Islam. See Grossman, “Martyrdom in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries,” 30–34. This less negative attitude toward Islam explains why even Maimonides in his *Iggeret ha-Shemad* (Letter on Forced Apostasy) did not consider public conversion to Islam in difficult times to be apostasy. On Jews’ relations with and attitudes toward Christianity and Islam on different levels, see the comprehensive study in Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross*.

34 As stated above, the Pact of ‘Umar did not allow Jews and Christians to trade in wine. However, the Pact was inconsistently applied and its clauses were only of public interest in times of social turmoil. This would explain why the commercial transaction in the story takes place at night, by the light of a candle, so the public eye cannot see what is going on (i.e., that a Jew is selling wine to three Muslims or that three Muslims are buying wine from a Jew, both actions that are legally forbidden). In addition, we have here another detail that bridges communities: the association between women, wine, and sin.

make any difference for a Muslim audience as long as this figure remained a Jewish “other.” For a Jewish audience, however, the identity of the wine seller does make a considerable difference: in the Hebrew version, the character becomes female. This new context alters the meaning of the wine seller’s character and, as a Jewish woman, she embodies all of the features of the “internal other.” Furthermore, the depiction of the wine seller as female incites social criticism of women trading goods, such as wine, with Muslim customers and therefore acting against the law.

The text is Judaized further through the reorganization of the moral scheme and the inclusion of murder among the crimes committed. This places murder on a par with the rest of the transgressions that are mentioned, perhaps because the translator has the *yehareg ve-’alya’avor* doctrine in mind. The story is Judaized in yet another way through the inclusion of several biblical verses in the manner of *shibbutz*. At least three of them have been meticulously selected, since they refer to the three great transgressions that a Jew should not commit: Deuteronomy 22:22 refers to sexual immorality, Deuteronomy 22:26 to murder, and Deuteronomy 4:28 to apostasy.

Finally, wine is kept in the Hebrew story as the trigger of all evil actions. However, even the quantity of wine is dependent on the cultural setting: since it is not forbidden in Judaism as it is in Islam, the problem in the Hebrew version does not reside in drinking wine per se, as it would in an Islamic context, but in drinking *too much* wine.

At face value, the story introduces a Jewish woman selling wine to ostensibly Muslim men, who end up stealing the wine, raping her daughter, and killing both of them. On an ideological level, the story invites, even demands, a nonliteral reading. The translation of stories from Arabic into Hebrew is useful and proper since wisdom is a shared good. Cultural exchanges and contacts are acceptable and even encouraged, but intimacy and interaction between the faiths is not. In keeping the Jewish character of the wine seller and presenting her as a woman, the Jewish translator of the story reveals a pervasive anxiety over a loss of identity through the contact of the Jewish woman with the three Muslim men. The compromising of the communal identity brings the Jewish woman to her own tragic end. The mother and daughter are victims, but as women—daughters of Eve—they symbolize temptation and the crossing of boundaries.³⁵ The tale offers a commentary on the parable collec-

35 For an interesting study on the idolization and demonization of women in medieval Hebrew literature, see Tova Rosen, *Unveiling Eve: Reading Gender in Medieval Hebrew Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003).

tion as a whole. The short stories may offer wisdom from the Arabs (they are “*mishle he-‘arav*”) but they are also about them: wisdom, after all, does have its boundaries.

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Index

- Abraham Bar Hiyya 286
Abulafia, Todros 1
Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf, *see* Manšūr, al-
Abū Nuwās 127–129, 132
Abū Zayd 282, 296
Acts of the Apostles 175
‘Aguna 187
‘alamot 38, 52, 60
Allony, Nehemiah 130
activation 74
adultery 237
aesthetics 4, 67, 142, 188
 Almohad 298–323
 classical 94
 Sefardi 95–96, 102, 106, 133
Aḥdab, Isaac al- 7–8
Akhbor 233–236
Akhtar, Ali H. 4, 207, 211–212
Akrish, Isaac 192, 193n45
Alhambra 140, 198, 200, 203, 206, 213
aljama 188
allotment, *see* tashīm, al-
Almohad empire 4, 298–323
Almoravid dynasty 319–320, 322–323
Amichai, Yehuda 5, 140–160, 142n5
 “The Bull Returns” 146–147
amthāl 90
Ancona 10–11, 21–23
Andalus, Al- 1–3, 126, 129, 134, 144, 150–151, 192
anti-Judaism 153–155
anti-Semitism 152–155
antithesis 81, *see also* muqābala, al-
anus 237
apostasy 343–345, 347
Apter, Emily 159
Arabic language 24, 60, 131–134, 200, 223, 284
‘arabiyya 126, 130, 132
Aramaic 172–173
Arbel, Benjamin 27, 290
Aristotle 66, *see also* metaphor, Aristotelian
armed robbery 343
Armenians 9, 11, 14, 18, 30
Arragel, Moses 36n2, 39–40, 40n13, 40n14, 41–62
Ashkenaz 94, 98–104
assignment, *see* tashīm, al-
aṭlāl 128–129, 135
Averroes, *see* ibn Rushd, Abū al-Walid
 Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad
Avery, Kenneth 209–210
ayyelet 43–45
azhara 204, 219

badi 4, 65–91, 218
Bakhtin, Mikhail 6, 236–237
Banū al-Fawāṭim 207–208, 221, 223
Barjī, al- 214–216, 218
Baršīšā 330, 340–343
beard 233–237
Beatitudes 167
beauty 42–43, 49–51, 76–78, 90, 110, 121, 125, 133–134, 216, *see also* aesthetics
beaqarim 124
ben Abraham Bedersi, Yedaiah ha-Penini 5, 259–278
ben El‘azar, Jacob 5–6, 118, 231–257
ben Isaac, Solomon, *see* Rashi
ben ‘Itt’el, Lemu‘el 233
ben Labi, Don Vidal 180–181, 184, 186
ben Meir, Jacob *see* Rabbenu Tam
ben Meir, Senior 185–187
ben Saruq, Menaḥem 44, 49, 53
ben Shalom, Ram 181
Benveniste, Don Vidal 186
beqarim 124–125, 134
behavior 331–332
berat 17–18
Biblioteca Nacional de España MS 5463 332–339
bin Yaqzān, Ḥayy 316–320, 322
blame 65, 74, 82, 84
bloodline 221–222, *see also* Banū al-Fawāṭim
Bodleian Library MS Heb. f. 10 260–261
Bodleian Library MS Opp. Add. Qu 144 262–263, 265n27
Boesky 76, *see* Jewish Theological Seminary MS 10774
body 236, 287–288
Bonafed, Shelomo 181, 185–192

- border 3, 9–30, 156
 borrowing, *see* Isti'āra, Al-
 boundary, *see* Ḥudūd; *see* ḥadd
 Brann, Ross 1–8, 67, 118, 132, 140, 326
The Compunctious Poet 1
The Power in the Portrayal 2, 149
 bull-man 146–147
 Bull of Pardon 21
- caliphate 127, 199, 221
 campsite 127–128, 135n42, 213, 215–218
 cancioneros 185, 189–194
 capitulation agreement 13n13, 15, 30
 carnival 237
 Carrión, Santob de 64
 castration 234, 237
 categorization, *see* taqṣīm, al-
 cattle 124–125, 133–134, 136
 censorship 301
 Cerquiglini, Bernard 182–183
 Chinillo, Noah 189
 chreia 169, 169n21
 Christians 6–19, 28, 96, 164–165, 171, 175, 202
 Christianity 1, 130, 164–165, 170, 180–181,
 235, 344–346
 citizen 11, 16, 26, 30, 145, 154
 classification, *see* taqṣīm, al-
 clear indication, *see* waḥy wa-l-ishāra, al-
 clock 208
 closeness, *see* kirvah
 close reading 88, 142, 159
 Clement VII (pope) 20–21
 Cochineal 21–23
 Cohen, Mordechai Z. 71
 color 102, 122, 314–315, *see also* polychromy
 Commerce 10–15, 18–24
 Jewish 21–22
 Community 2–3, 55, 60, 96–99, 103–109,
 149–156, 185
 of Israel 44–45
 Ottoman Latin Rite 11n7, 14
 poetic 266–267
 Sefardi 27, 193
 textual 268
 Romaniote 110
 comparison 80
 completion, *see* tatmīm, al-
 Constantinople 12, 22, 193
 continuity 21–22, 144
- conversos 20–21
 Cornell University 3
 corsairs 11, 15, 17
 codex 35–36, 175, 182–183, 190, 264–265, 268
 copyist 174, 184, 188, 190, 192, 238, 262–264,
see also scribe
 context 2, 6, 345–347
 crimson 21, 23
 Crusades 291
 Customs 10, 15–17, 19, 22, 30–31
- Dagenais, John 183
 daisy petals 216–217
 Daniel, book of 169
 da Sori, Bonifacio 13
 David (Psalmist) 41–43, 46
 dawn 44, 120, 202
 debate 265–268, 288–290
 Decter, Jonathan 4, 6, 232, 234–235
 Demerode, Filippo 13
 derash 39, 44, 51, 54, 59
 desert 83, 121, 126–130, 132, 135, 140, 198–225
 diaspora 3, 9, 11, 19, 30–31, 153
 disciples 8, 174, 285, 287, 289
 dispute 15, 27, 81, 135, 152, 265–267
 Disputation of Tortosa 181, 187
 digression, *see* istiṭrād, al-
 diplomacy 17, 24–28, 30
 dhikr 198, 201, 202, 209, 213, *see also* Sufism
 dīwān 68, 91, 100, 188n27
 dove 55–56, 121
 dragoman 17–19, 29
 drunkenness 237, 340, 343
 dunyā 286
 Dursteler, Eric 10, 24
 Dutch Low Countries 19–28
- ecstasy
 mystical 198–199, 202, 204, 209–211, 214
 editors 165, 169–170
 editing 174, 193
 eighth, *see* sheminit
 elem reḥoqim 54–56
 Elinson, Alexander 199–200
 enjambment 78
En Mishpaṭ 260
 empiricism 320
 entendimiento 46
 epanalepsis 75

- eroticism 234
 España 144
 espionage 17, 25–26
 Esther 44
 ewe, *see* sheep
 exaggeration, *see* mubālagha, al-
 exception *see* istithnā', al-
 exegesis 36–60, 67
 extending *see* tabligh, al-
 Ezra, tomb of 292
 Ezekiel, tomb of 292–293
- Fakhreddine, Huda J. 128–129
 female Jewish wine merchant, *see* Jewish
 female wine merchant
 Ferdinand III of Castile 303
 Fierro, Maribel 221
 filling, *see* ḥashw, al-
 following, *see* tatbī', al-
 fool 259, 331–332
 France
 Northern 95, 98–99, 101–102, 104–105, 111
 fugitives 15, 17
- Gagliano brothers 14–15
 Gaon
 Saadia ben Joseph 35n1, 39n12, 50, 52,
 53, 59, 286–287
 García Gómez, Emilio 156–158, 208, 209
 garden 211, 215–219, 221, 234
 of Eden 261, 266
 Gat 40–41, 55–56
 gazelle 119, 122–123, 122n11, 125
 Genoese 9–30, *see also* Republic, Genoese;
 Merchants, Genoese
 genre 35, 60, 65, 86, 102–104, 331
 geullot 99, 102, 103
 ghazal 156–157, 216–217, 224
 Ghetto Vecchio 23
 Ghulū, al- 68, 80, 86–90
 Ghumārī, Alī 322
 gittit 37, 38, 40–41
 Giralda 306, 310, 312, 316, 321–322, *see also*
 Mosque of Seville
 globalism 159
 glosses 5, 35–60
 goats 83, 121, 129
 God 317–320
 face of 286–287
- Gospels 163–176
 Synoptic 165
 see also, John, Gospel of; Matthew, Gospel
 of; Mark, Gospel of; Luke, Gospel of;
 Thomas, Gospel of
 Granada 140–141, 149, 156, 158, 198, 205,
 223
 Nasrid 4, 200
 see also Najd
 Greek language 172–173, 172n34
 Greek people 15–17
 Grossman, Avraham 346n33
 Grotesque 236–237
 Gürkan, Emrah 10, 25
- Haberman, Abraham Meir 147, 262
 Habsburgs 25
 ḥadd 87, 343
 ha-Ezrahi, Heiman 283, 285, 287–293
 halakah 187
 Hanagid, Samuel, *see* ibn Naghrīla, Samuel
 ḥashw, al- 78
 Halevi, Judah 1, 7, 63, 100, 107–109, 124, 182,
 288, 292
 Hamadhāni, al- 282, 287, 331
 ha-Nagid, Samuel, *see* ibn Naghrīla, Samuel
 haraç 13, 15, 16
 Ḥarīrī of Basra, al- 118–120, 133, 232, 282–
 287, 295–296, 331
 Ḥarīzī, Judah al- 6, 118, 149n21, 231–232,
 282–296, 331
 hazkir 47
 Ḥātīmī, Abū 'Alī Muḥammad al- 4, 66–67,
 70, 72–76, 79, 81, 84
 Haqēini, Ḥever 282–296
 Harūt 340
 ḥazan 95, 99, 103–104, 106
 Heinrichs, Wolfhart 71, 82
 heritage 19, 101, 156, 159, 190–192
 Ḥijāz 4, 199, 220, 222
 hint, *see* waḥy wa-l-ishāra, al-
 Hispania 144
 historiography 2
 Hebrew poetry 1, 4, 5
 Arabized 151
 Andalusi 4, 180–194
 liturgical 94–111, 286, 290
 Sefardi 94–111, 131
 hellenization 1, 173

- Hollender, Elisabeth 5
 holy war 2, 3, *see also* Crusades
 Huarte Cambria, Rosario 313–314
 Ĥudūd 343, 346
 Ĥusn al-ibtidā' 69–70
 hyperbole, *see* ghulū, al-
- Iberian Peninsula 4, 35, 41, 129, 143–144, 150, 191
 ibn 'Abd al-Mu'min, Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf, *see* Manšūr, al-
 ibn al-Khaṭīb, Lisān al-Dīn 198–199, 202, 203, 205, 208–216, 219–222
 ibn 'Aqnīn, Joseph ben Judah ben Jacob 124
 ibn al-Fāriḍ 224
 ibn al-Ĥajj, Abū Ishāq 216, 219
 ibn al-Mu'tazz, 'Abd Allāh 66
 ibn Bāshuh, Aḥmad 302
 ibn Ezra, Abraham 43, 57–58, 100, 121
 ibn Ezra, Moses 1, 4, 7, 65–91
 Kitāb al-Muḥādara 4, 65–91
 Kitāb al-Ḥadiqa, 87–88
 ibn Gabirol, Solomon 6, 7, 8, 118–136, 192, 283
 Keter malkhut 283, 287
 We-shinei haševi 119, 131
 ibn García, Abū 'Amir 129
 ibn Ghiyyat, Isaac 7, 100
 ibn Ḥasdaī, Abraham 288
 ibn Ḥazm, 'Alī ibn Aḥmad ibn Sa'īd 63
 ibn Janāh, Jonah 43, 51, 55, 121
 ibn Khaldūn 223
 ibn Khalfūn, Isaac 122n11
 ibn Naghriḷa, Samuel 5, 86, 141–160
 ibn Parḥon, Solomon 120, 124
 ibn Paquda, Baḥya 286–287
 ibn Rushd, Abū al-Walīd Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad 70, 299–302, 302n15, 317–320, 319n47, 322
 Decisive Treatise 300
 Exposition 301, 317–319
 ibn Šāḥīb al-Šalāt al-Bājjī, Abū Marwān 'Abd al-Malik ibn Muḥammad 298, 301–303, 312–313
 ibn Shabbetai, Yehudah 260–266
 ibn Ṭufayl al-Qaysī, Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad 299–300, 302n15, 318–319
 Risālat Ḥayy 300, 316–317, 320–321
 ibn Tūmart 319–320, 322–323
 ibn Zamrak 198–202, 212, 218
Iggeret Ogeret 192
 identity 24, 96, 128, 151, 156, 344, 347
 Jewish 146, 149, 366
 national 142–143, 149–150, 153
 national poetic 141
 idolatry 341–343, 345
 imitation 4, 90, 136, 206–207
 insertion
 parenthetical, *see* i'tirāḍ, al-
 instrument
 musical 37, 39, 47, 48–49, 51, 53, 54n68, 56–57
 intercession 293–294
 intercourse 233–234
 Islamic studies 1, 148
 Isma'īl II (Nasrid Sultan) 222
 Istanbul 10
 isti'āra, al- 71
 istiṭrād, al- 68, 82
Istithnā', Al- 74, 79
 i'tirāḍ, al- 78–79
Jāhiliyya 216
 Jarden, Dov 125
 Jeduthun 48, 54
 Jesus 163–176
 as performer 165
 crucifixion of 170
 message of 166–168
 "Sermon on the Mount" 165
 as teacher 174
 writing and 166
 Jeremiah 174
 Jewish female wine merchant 329–348
 Jewishness 284
 Jewish Studies 1, 22, 148
 Jewish Theological Seminary MS 10774 5, 262–279
 Jewish Theological Seminary MS 1533 261
 Jews 2, 174, 285, 289–293, 343–346
 Marxist understanding of 151–155
 Sefardi/Sefaradi 19–30, 94–111, 130–136, 145–151, 235
 Jiménez Sancho, Álvaro 313–314
 John, Gospel of 164, 165n6
 John the Baptist 165, 169
 Jones, Linda 210

- Judaism 1, 19, 151–153, 289–294, 340, 344, 347, 363
- Judaization 344–347, 344n31
- Jumārī, ‘Alī 303
- Kaptein, N.J.G. 205, 208
- Karaites 289–290
- ketem 42–43
- kharja 107–108
- kingdoms, taifa 150
- kirvah 158–159
- Kitāb al-Muḥādara*, see ibn Ezra, Moses
- Kfir, Uriah 6
- Kues 313 98–111
- Kutubiyya Mosque 299, 310–312, 314–315, 322–323
- la‘az 56
- Lachmanian method 193
- language, Hebrew 284–285, 295
- law 16, 19, 300, 347
 - religious 5, 284, 287, 291, 330, 340, 342, 343–344
 - sumptuary 23, 26
- Layla 222–225, see also Majnūn
- le‘azim, see glosses
- Le-Kallat Ahavim* 110
- letters 184–188
- Levin, Israel 132
- Levites 39, 39n12, 58–59
- lidutun, see Jeduthun
- light 69, 198–199, 202–204, 219, 221, 223
- lightning 69, 215, 217, 219, 224
- Linhard, Tabea 145–146
- literacy 25, 173
- literary criticism 66–70, 86–87, 91
- literature
 - Hebrew 180–194, 329–348
 - medieval 140–160
 - national 159
- Llamas, José 36
- London-Montefiore Library 458 260, 268
- López López, Angel 205–206
- Lorca, Federico García 156–158
 - Diván del Tamarit* 156
- lohamim 146
- love 103, 108, 110, 212, 232, 234, see also poetry, love
- Luke, Gospel of 167
- ma‘alot 58–59
- Majnūn 200, 222–225, see also Layla
- maḥala 53–54
- maidservants 234–237
- Maimonides, Moses 265
- Manṣūr, al- 298, 301–303, 302n15
- manuscript 5, 96, 99, 103–104, 182–183
- maqāmāt 5, 6, 118, 231–257, 282–295, 331
- Mārinid court 199, 201, 205, 214, 221
- Mark, Gospel of 169, 170
- Marrakesh 299, 303, 322, 323
- Marūt 340
- Marx, Karl 153–155
- maskil 45–46
- Matthew, Gospel of 167
- mawlid 4, 198–225
- mawlidyyat 213–218, 223
- meals 202
- medievalism 143, 143n6
- Mediterranean 1, 3, 4, 9–30, 176
- melitzah 259, 261
- melody 46, 47, 50, 52, 60
- memorization 167, 173, 174
- Merchants
 - Genoese 9–30, 11–19
 - Sefardi 9–30
- metaphor 218
 - Aristotelian definition of 71
 - desert as 126–130
 - loan, see borrowing
 - see also simile
- meter 78, 104–105, 105n39
- Mexico 21
- Michel, João, see Nasi, João
- microcosm 335n9
- Middle Ages 2–3, 140–160
- Miguel Giovanni, see Nasi, João
- miḥrāb 312, 315
- mikhtam 41–43, 51, 56–57
- Minḥat Yehudah Sone’ ha-Nashim 260–279
- Minḥat Yehudah: ‘Ezrat ha-Nashim 260–261
- miscellanies 190–191
- Mishle 231
- Mishle he-‘arav* 329
- Mishnah 342
- mobility 189
- model poem, see poem, didactic
- Monroe, James T. 129

- money 154, 232, 244, 282–283, 293, 337
 Moor 2
 Moral, José María del 215, 218
 Moretti, Franco 159
 morning star 44–45
 Moses 293–294
 Mosque of Seville 298–323
 construction of 301
 architects of 302–303
 conversion to cathedral 303
 minaret of 306, 321
 plan of 312
 see also Kutubiyya Mosque
 MS Hunt. 268 35–62
 MS Mich. 155 185–192
 MS Sassoon 590 185–192
 mubālagha, al- 87
 Muḥammad v of Granada 199, 201, 203,
 205–212, 223
 mawlid celebration of 1362 199–225
 Muḥammad (Prophet) 198–199, 295
 mujānasa, al-, *see* paranomasia
 muṭābaqa, al-, *see* anthesis
 mutawājid, al- 210, 212
 muqābala, al- 81–82, *see* opposition
 murder 341–343, 347
 Muslims 235, 292, 317, 345

 nagid, *see* ibn Naghrīla, Samuel
 Nahrawānī, Nisi 286
 Najd 200–201, 213–214, 218–225
 Granadan 223
 narrativization 169
 nasīb 199, 213–214, 216, 218
 Nasi, João 20, 24
 Nasi, Joseph, *see* Nasi, João
 Nasrid dynasty 198–225
 Nation, Jewish 152
 Nationalism 140–160
 cultural 150, 156–160
 Naturalization 10, 14–19
 Boundaries of 10
 Necipoğlu, Gülru 300
 neginah 59
 neginat 57–58
 neginot 38110, 39
 Neoplatonism 288–289, 294
 Neubaer, Adolf 35, 262
 New Critics 142, 159

 New York University 1
 Nicholson, R.A. 147
 Nirenberg, David 155
 “novel style”, *see* badī

 Obed-Edom the Gittite 40
Ohev Nashim 259–278
ofanim 104–106
 opening, *see* Ḥusn al-ibtidāʾ
 opposition, *see* muqābala, al-
 Orhan (Ottoman Sultan) 13
 Orihuela Uzal, Antonio 205–206
 ornament 300, 303, 306–315, 322–323
 other 344
 Ottoman Empire 4, 9–31, 191
 Ottoman Sultanate 12, 28

 Pact of ‘Umar 346n34
 Pagis, Dan 118
 palace 198–225
 “Palace of Lions” 205
 parenthesis 79
 paranomasia 70–71, 81
 passing over, *see* tajawuz
 pastedowns 97, 97n11
 Paul 175
 epistles of 163–164, 167, 175
 Pavilion of Offices 313
 Pearce, S.J. 5
 pedagogy 65–91
 Pera 10, 11–19
 performance 107, 109
 musical 60
 oral 165–167
 philology 180–194
 Picciotto, Hay Moses 263
 Piera, Shelomo de 180–181, 184–185, 188,
 189
 place 199, 218
 prayer book, Ashkenazi 96
 prayer hall 312
 prefacing, *see* taṣdīr, al-
 Provence 99, 110, 329, 340, 344
 picaresque 282, 285
 piyyutim 5, 94–111, 261
 nonobligatory 98
 from Askenaz 101
 ordering of 102
 pleonasm, *see* tabligh, al-

- plot 232, 235, 263, 331, 340–341
 Podesta 12, 14
 poem 145–146, 157, 208
 didactic 65–91
 girdle 107
 wedding 110
 love 111
 Naşrid 198–225
 wine 127, 131, 233
 Poet 144, 147–156, 180, 191
 Poetics 2
 Arabic 65–91, 118
 Hebrew 119
 poetry 184
 Andalusi 140–160
 Arabic 4
 court 215
 desert 127
 see also Hebrew poetry
 polychromy 313–314, 319–320, 323
 praise 69–70, 74, 82, 283
 prayer 286–287, 293
 Preacher, Crude 231–257
 preaching 285–289
 printing press 192
 proverbs, *see Amthāl, see Mishle*
 Psalms 5
 Headings of 35–62
 Singing of 35–62

 Q source 168–175
 circulation of 170–171
 presentation of Jesus in 170n25
 qāḏī 216
 qaşīda 156–157, 198–199, 212, 213, 220
 qiddush ha-shem 342
 Qimḥi, David 36, 37, 39, 40, 43, 44, 51, 55,
 121
 Shorashim 40, 43, 44–45, 55
 Qimḥi, Joseph 8
 Qurʾān 294, *see also* Sūrah Luqmān

 Rabbanite 289–290
 Rabbenu Tam 98, 101, 102, 104–105
 rabbi 42, 44, 50, 103, 121, 188, 286
 rape 341–342, 347
 Rashi 36, 37, 40, 42, 46, 53, 59, 121
 Rawḏa 212
 reason 317–320

 recension 186–187, 189, 191, 193
 redaction criticism 168–170
 remembrance *see* hazkir
 repentance 285–286
 repetition, *see* tardīd, al-
 Republic
 Genoese 11, 11n6, 13
 Venetian 4, 11, 29
 resemblance, *see* simile
 reshuyot 102
 Residency permits 21–23
 resounding, *see* tardīd, al-
 rhyme 72–73, 105
 Rimokh, Ashtruk, *see* de Sant Jordi, Françesc
 rite
 Northern French 96–97
 Robinson, Cynthia 4, 300
Romance of the Rose 267
 Rosen, Tova 5
 Rothman, Natalie 10, 18, 24
 ruins 140, 158
 rupture 144

 Sabbath 98, 103, 106, 175, 289
 Sachs, Senior 262
 Sadan, Yosef 132–133
 Sadan, Joseph 331
 Sáenz-Badillos, Ángel 181
 sage 332, 345
 Saladin 291
 Sanhedrin 342
 Salvatierra Ossorio, Aurora 5
 samāʿ 202, 209, *see also dhikr*
 Samaritans 289–290
 Sands, Kristin Zahra 219
 Sant Jordi, Françesc de 180, 192
 Saragosi, Abraham 189
 Sarteano, Abraham 267
 Saruq, Ḥayyim 26–30
 Sassoon, David S. 147
 Satan 169, 341–342
 satire 189, 291
 sebka 306, 310, 312, 314–315, 321–322
Segulat Melakhim 194
 sermon 165, 165n6, 175, 233, 285, 288
 shatḥ 209–210
 Sheminit 37–40
 shevuʿat shav 343
 shurafāʾ 207–208

- Scheindlin, Raymond P. 6, 66, 184
 Schirmann, Ḥayyim 140, 147–148, 151–152,
 231, 235
 scribes 163n1, 173–174
 Sefarad 94–111, 144–145, 145n7, 157
Sefer ha-Meshalim 231–257
 sexual relations 341–343
 Shabbat
 Bereshit 101
 Ḥatan 101n26
 Shahrīmāns 9
 sheep 121–123, 125
 Shema Israel 103
 shibbutz 347
 short stories 330–332
 shoshanim 49–50
 shu'ūbiyya 126–127, 129–131
 shoshan, *see* shoshanim
 signatures 184
 Silberstein-Boesky Charitable Foundation
 263
 simile 78–80, 118–126, 133
 sin 285, 340
 society
 civil 153–155
 Solomon 119, 121, 124
Song of Songs 108, 121–124, 134
 soul 287–288, 317
 Spain 1–2, 7, 21–22
 Medieval 2, 144–147
 National 144–147, 156
 Jewish 144–147, 156, 235
 spectacle 204
 Spitzer, Leo 159
 state
 secular 153
 stock characters 331n5
 Stetkeyvch, Jaroslav 199–200, 220
 Stetkeyvch, Suzanne 216, 218
 Streit, Jessica 4, 6
 structures
 poetic 109
 stucco 313–315
 Style
 poetic 42, 217
 Subject 111n6, 14, 24, 10, 29
 Subjecthood
 transimperial 10, 29
 Venetian 10, 26
 Ottoman 10, 14–17, 24, 26
 Ottoman Sefardi 24, 27–30
 Sufism 200–202, 207, 208–211, 219, 223
 Sūrah Luqmān 326–328
 Tabales Rodríguez, Miguel Ángel 313–314
 Tabbāa, Yasser 300
 tablīgh, al- 75
 tajāwuz 77
 takhalluṣ, Ḥusn al- 83–86
Tahkemoni, Sefer ha- 6, 263–264, 282–296
 introduction of 285
 religion in 295–296
 ṭalaba al-ḥadar 299
 tardīd, al- 76
 Targarona Borrás, Judit 181, 184
 tariffs 27
 tashbīh, al-, *see* simile
 tashḥet 56–57
 tatbī', al- 76–77
 tatmīm, al- 77–78
 taqṣīm, al- 71–72, 81
 taṣḍīr, al- 75–76
 tashīm, al- 72–73
 Taylor, Archer 340
 Taylor, Jane H.M. 267
 teeth 119–120, 121–123, 217
 Temple 289
 tevel 286
 text
 written 173
 Thomas, Gospel of 168, 168n14
 Thessaloniki 27–28
 theft 343–347
 theme
 poetic 75
 Third Venetian-Genoese War 12
 “three sins of the hermit” 340–342, 340n24
 Tobi, Yosef 66–67
 toreadores 146
 Torollo, David 6
 Torre de Machuca 203
 tradition
 arab 128
 manuscript 262
 rabbinic 290–291, 294, 296
 transformation 234
 transgression 340–343, 345, 347
 transition 83

- translation 51, 58, 59, 60, 68, 157, 172, 329, 346
 cultural 329–348
- transmission
 textual 180–194, 268
- tribe of the two Fāṭimas, *see* Banū al-Fawāṭim
- Urvoy, Dominique 320–321
- values 127, 133, 151, 234–235, 287, 289
- van Gelder, Geert Jan 70, 83
- Velázquez Basanta, Fernando N. 215, 218
- Venetian Senate 22
- vice 330
- virtue 330
- vision 142
 augmented 142–143
- waḥy wa-l-ishāra, al- 73–74, 77
- wājīd 212
- wasf 221
- Wasserstein, David 148–149
- water 120
- weapons 157–158
- wine 340–342, 344–347, 345ⁿ³²
- wisdom 265, 285, 330, 347–348
- Wissenschaft des Judentums 193
- women 260–268, 347
- yedutun, *see* Jeduthun
- yehareg ve-'al ya'avor 347
- Yeshua, Yosef 188
- Yiṣḥaq of Burgos 262
- Zaragoza 180, 188
- Zeraḥ 263
- Zionism 150
- zoom 123