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RE-READING THE ARABIC SOURCES: JEWISH HISTORY AND THE MUSLIM CONQUESTS*

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Due to the thinness of Jewish historical sources from the period of early Islam, scholars have used a small number of reports found in Muslim traditional and historical literature (mostly in Arabic) to construct narratives of Jewish history. For the first/seventh and second/eighth centuries, a broadly conceived and widely accepted narrative is based upon outdated interpretive models and therefore requires revision. Jewish historiography of this period has yet to take into account current research in medieval Islamic history, some of which calls into question the use of Arabic sources by historians of early medieval Jews. By and large, information culled from these sources having to do with Jews in the period of the Muslim conquests of the first/seventh and late second/early eighth centuries is unreliable.

1. Islamic historiography and Jewish history: Looking for Jews in early medieval Islam

After more than 150 years since the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* moved scholarship toward critical and academic approaches to the study of Jewish history, a great deal of historical data has accumulated. In the process of structuring this data into interpretive models and historical narratives,

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some information has become so well established and accepted as to be canonized in scholarly consensus. For example, it is often repeated that after the Muslim conquests of the first/seventh century ninety percent of world Jewry lived under the new dominion.[1] Clearly demographic data such as this are not available for the period, and are the result of historical speculation. It is appropriate that such speculation be part and parcel of the historian's enterprise, especially when dealing with periods for which there is little solid historical information. However, once proclaimed, uncorroborated or unreliable historical claims can be repeated uncritically. Whether the ninety percent figure is true or not, in much historiography of the Jews it functions as a fact. This repetition is supported by the fact that the information appears to be a reasonable estimation. Its ubiquity is a consequence both of its seeming plausibility and of its unquestioned acceptability by scholars. However, plausibility does not constitute proof.

Other types of repetition are a consequence of the lack of sources for this period. Given the fact that for this period there is very little Jewish literary material of historical value, historians have combined a good deal of necessary speculation with information found in medieval Muslim (as well as Christian) sources. In the extensive historical tradition of medieval Islam there are only a very few passages that refer to Jews in this early period. Medieval Muslim historians are not much interested in Jews, nor in non-Muslims in general. And when they are, the contexts can lack clarity as ethnic or national identities are interwoven with religious ones. Also, the Jewish population was likely to have been so small as to be insignificant in the eyes of Muslim historians. Nonetheless, modern historians have used a very few passages extracted from Muslim tradition to construct expansive historical narratives. In this matter, as in the case of the ninety-percent figure, the plausibility of the sources seems apparent on the surface, and has thus contributed to the uncritical acceptance and repetition of medieval Muslim historical reports as reliable historical evidence. In light of significant new methodologies in the study of Islamic history, these sources must be reexamined.

To complicate matters, the lack of sources has led historians to extrapolate from the better-documented late third/ninth and fourth/tenth centuries—when Jews come into view through the geonic responsa, the

[1] I first heard this figure in 1982, when Zvi Ankori stated in lectures at the University of California, Berkeley, that 80 to 90 percent of the world Jewish population came under Muslim rule in the first/seventh and second/eighth centuries. The figure of 90 percent is repeated by Brody in *Geonim of Babylonia*, xx, and Ben-Sasson, "Varieties of Inter-Communal Relations," p. 17. Gerber claims 85 percent in "History of the Jews in the Middle East." Goitein more prudently identifies "the majority of the Jewish people," *Jews and Arabs*, p. 6.

Geniza materials, and the innovative literary trajectories exemplified in the output of Saadia and the early Karaites—back to the first/seventh and second/eighth centuries. The result is that the first/seventh and second/eighth centuries are given short shrift. Whereas the Jews in Arabia at the time of the Prophet Muḥammad have received scholarly attention, the first hundred and seventy-five years of Islam, including the momentous Muslim conquests, are usually glossed over for lack of ample and reliable historical evidence. Alternatively, they are handled with a speculative narrative based on those few thin passages extracted from the Arabic that are the subject of this study.

If the individual narrative fragments in Muslim sources on the conquests are examined critically by taking into account the historical and literary contexts of the source materials, then one must conclude that these passages are largely unreliable. That is, these few sources do not constitute adequate evidence for making claims often repeated by historians.

The problem lies in the very nature of early Muslim historiography. In the first instance, the problem of the reliability of early Muslim historical writing emerges from the history of this literary tradition itself. A few of the earliest extant texts come from the late second/eighth century, while more were written in the third/ninth and fourth/tenth centuries. The gap in time between first/seventh-century events and their representation in the later literary tradition suggests several grounds for the careful reader to adopt a hermeneutic of suspicion.

The late second/eighth and third/ninth-century Muslim historians whose works are extant often indicate that they used written works as sources. Their earliest written sources represent only one or two generations of literary activity among Muslims. Prior to the advent of a written tradition, memory of the Muslim conquests was transmitted orally among those who, in an Arab tribal context, had reasons for perpetuating the deeds of a tribal ancestor or magnification of the role of a particular clan or tribe. The interim of one hundred and fifty years or more between events and their literary description opens a wide range of possibility for information to become defective through unintentional and intentional reshaping. And as a consequence, the record shows a great deal of inconsistency and contradiction among reports of similar events and situations.[2] Early Muslims themselves observed that the reshaping of traditions associated with the prophet Muḥammad (*ḥadīth*) could take place at all stages of transmission, for a variety of reasons, so

[2]To cite only one example, see Hill, *Termination of hostilities*, for an effort at a quantitative analysis of the often contradictory terms recorded for conquered localities.

from the middle to late second/eighth century Muslim scholars of tradition developed methodologies for identifying what they deemed to be authentic traditions. In like manner, though not as rigorously, medieval Muslim historians sometimes cite their sources. Nonetheless, such traditional methodologies were themselves subject to manipulation, resulting in the reshaping and falsification of tradition.

If such straightforward historical problems are plain enough, larger trajectories within the early Muslim Arabic literary tradition add nuance and complexity to the issue. First, from obscure first/seventh-century beginnings, Islam had become in the third/ninth and fourth/tenth centuries more fully-developed and articulated as a religion and a cultural order. Its ideological system was invested in particular notions of a past whose present was triumphalist and universal.[3] The proponents of this vision were found in an emerging class of religious scholars whose interests included the systematization and coherent elucidation of Muslim law. In such contexts, "conquest history" of the first/seventh century had specific meaning in terms of later ideology, and as such, may or may not have been written in correspondence to the way things actually had occurred. Second, the emergence of the literary tradition follows closely on the rise of ʿAbbāsid rule, which in the late second/eighth and third/ninth centuries sought to justify its *dawla* ("turn," thus "revolution") and transform a less organized administration inherited from the Umayyads (661–750) into a coherent imperial system based upon universal norms.[4] In a region of the world with strong cultural attachment to the past and to legal notions of precedent, the past could conceivably serve or obstruct ʿAbbāsid efforts at mastery and systematization. Thus, the project of third/ninth and fourth/tenth-century historians was to collect reports about the past largely in order to historicize and justify contemporary policies and local situations in light of Islam's emerging sense of history and in light of the ʿAbbāsid *dawla.* They did not "do history" as we think of modern historical research, but used the past to define contemporary social and political relations. Chase Robinson summarizes this idea succinctly in *Empire and elites after the Muslim conquest*: "In prescribing conquest arrangements, conquest history thus describes post-conquest history."[5]

As early as 1947, long before the heated historiographical debates of Islamic historians in recent years, Robert Brunschvig pointed out that in the earliest source for the conquest of Egypt, North Africa, and Spain, the *Futūḥ Miṣr wa-akhbāruhā* of Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam (d. 257/871), de-

[3]For an interpretation, see Hodgson, *Venture of Islam,* vol. 1, pp. 315–358, chapter entitled, "The Sharʿī Islamic vision."

[4]Robinson, *Empire and elites*, p. 16.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

scriptions of the conquest were shaped by third/ninth-century legal conceptions of the Mālikī legal tradition.[6] However, it is not so simple as to say that the later literary texts represent realities of their own time to the exclusion of earlier periods. Although such a claim may, by and large, be true, the literary tradition has embedded within it evidence from all periods, from the first/seventh through the fourth/tenth centuries and even later, depending upon the source. The complexity of these problems requires a carefully considered archaeology of knowledge to be used by the historian to decide whether to accept or reject any particular report.

Trajectories in modern scholarship on early Islamic history have moved toward increased suspicion in regard to the reliability of historical information in medieval Muslim texts. A century ago, Goldziher demonstrated that many *ḥadīth* were late formulations,[7] and a half century later, Schacht showed that much of the first century of Muslim law was reformulated in the second/eighth and third/ninth centuries so that authoritative laws and the *ḥadīth* that undergirded them were understood to have originated with the Prophet Muḥammad.[8] It should be noted that similar approaches have been applied to *sīra* (biography of the Prophet) and the Qur'ān. The current historiographical debate was prompted by Crone and Cook's *Hagarism*, which is predicated on the idea that early Muslim historical writing cannot be used to construct coherent chronologies and narratives. Accordingly, a great deal of its historical treatment of early Islam is based on medieval Christian sources.[9] The debate was advanced significantly by the Noth/Conrad edition of *The early Arabic historical tradition: a source-critical study*, which uses a highly guarded approach to early Muslim historical writing, but at the same time, offers a methodology for using its Arabic texts to recover early history and, more importantly, to understand the historical setting of the sources and of the redaction of texts. Noth persuasively argues that the early historical tradition is composed of texts whose literary shaping is so complex as to distort and make obscure the history that it purports to describe. By identifying a range of literary topoi whose presence is ubiquitous throughout the material, Noth demonstrates that the literary character of early Arabic historical texts can obfuscate what historical value may be present.[10] More recently, increasingly nuanced

[6] Brunschvig, "Ibn ʿAbdalh'akam et la conquête." On Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam as a jurist, see Brockopp, *Early Mālikī law.*

[7] Goldziher, *Muslim studies.*

[8] Schacht, *Origins of Muhammadan jurisprudence.*

[9] Crone and Cook, *Hagarism, making of the Islamic world.*

[10] Noth and Conrad, *Early Arabic historical tradition.* The use of topoi is, in part, a consequence of the literary form and function of the *khabar*, which is a short report

and complex views of early Muslim history and its historiography have been put forward by Conrad, Hoyland, Donner, and Robinson.[11]

In the historiography on Jews of the early Islamic period, many studies have generally accepted at face value the meager Arabic sources on the Muslim conquests in order to support a scholarly meta-narrative whose sub-text has worked to mediate between the history of Jews in Christendom and those of Islam and between Islam as the midwife of medieval florescence (especially in the idea of the Golden Age in Spain) and as oppressor. Over a hundred years ago Heinrich Graetz declared that "though the fanatic Mussulmans scorned the Jews for their religion, they did not despise them as citizens, but showed great honor to worthy Jews."[12] In one sentence Graetz framed the dilemma for historians of the Jews as they worked toward historical judgment of the Islamic Middle Ages. A century later Mark Cohen and Norman Stillman demonstrated that the dilemma continues to occupy the minds of historians in a debate published in *Tikkun* magazine, captioned on the cover as "Oppression of Jews in Arab lands. Mark R. Cohen vs. Norman Stillman."[13] To say that this history is laden with implications for scholars and their contemporaneous readers is an understatement.

Moving toward the idea of the Golden Age of the Jews of Spain emanating from the *Wissenchaft des Judentums*, Graetz states in regard to the Umayyad caliphate that, "As the Mahometan empire grew in size, the activity of its Jewish inhabitants increased in proportion."[14] Since Graetz, this trajectory has been given a great deal of attention in Jew-

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that covers discreet, delimited topics. These were compiled by later Muslim scholars, giving their works a fragmented, episodic, and anecdotal character. See Rosenthal, *History of Muslim historiography*, pp. 59–63, and Leder, "Literary use of the *Khabar*."

[11] See Conrad's "The conquest of Arwād;" Donner, *Early Islamic conquests*, and now a more sophisticated method in *Narratives of Islamic origin*; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*; and Robinson, *Empire and elites*, and *idem, Islamic historiography.* Mention should also be made of Nevo and Koren's *Crossroads to Islam*, which completely re-writes the origins of Islam and Muslim ascendancy in the first/seventh century, but goes too far in its revisionism. Other scholars of conquest history include Kaegi, who uses Arabic sources credulously, while Collins generally rejects their historical reliability. See Kaegi, *Byzantium and the early Islamic conquests*; Collins, *The Arab conquest of Spain.*

[12] *History of the Jews*, vol. 3, p. 88.

[13] Mark R. Cohen, "The neo-lachrymose conception," and Norman Stillman, "Myth, countermyth, and distortion." Cohen went on to write *Under Crescent and Cross* to substantiate his point of view, summarizing the historiography on pages 3–14. Cantor briefly discusses the historiography in his popular book, *The sacred chain*, pp. 124–128.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 110. Cf. page 214, where he states, "But whilst the Mozarabs gave up their individuality, forgot their own language—Gothic Latin—could not even read the creeds and were ashamed of Christianity, the Jews of Spain, through this contact with the Arabs, only increased their love and enthusiasm for their mother-tongue, their holy law, and their religion."

ish historiography, both for good reasons and in support of non-scholarly agendas. As recently as 1994, this trajectory guided the distinguished medievalist Norman Cantor, who begins a chapter on the medieval Islamic world in his popular history of the Jews with an account of Córdoba in the year 1003 CE.[15] Focus on the later centuries of well-known literary and religious figures and of the extensive documentation of the Cairo Geniza has led to an elision of the early medieval period, a perspective that is now beginning to be questioned by historians. In the rush to a well-documented or romanticized Middle Ages, historians of the Jews have bypassed the period of early Islam.

More specialized historians have tried to say something about this early period by using medieval Arabic sources. What has emerged is a scholarly narrative whose implications are that Jews benefited from the conquests and consequently that they may have assisted the conquerors. Whereas the former point may rightly be sustained in terms of a long view of history, the latter requires reconsideration. To say that Jewish life in Muslim societies of later centuries demonstrates significant development in religious, legal, economic, literary, and intellectual aspects is certain. However, this historical judgment may not apply for the first Muslim century, especially in regard to the conquests. The scholarly consensus for understanding Jewish history in this period has not taken into account the difficult problems and methods of Muslim historiography.

Three aspects of these problems and methods in regard to Jews and the Muslim conquests will be treated below. Medieval primary sources and their use by historians are the subjects of this study.[16]

2. Sacred history and conquest narrative: Jews and Muḥammad's Tabūk campaign

In the context of Jewish history, these problems can be introduced by examining a late episode in the *sīra* literature, the biography of the Prophet Muḥammad. According to the traditional narrative, by 9/630 Muḥammad had consolidated power in the central Ḥijāz, taking Mecca from the Quraysh and defeating the Jews of Khaybar. Later that year, he sought to project Muslim power northwards toward Palestine-Syria by

[15] Cantor, *The sacred chain*, pp. 119–121.

[16] These include scholars such as Eliyahu Ashtor, André Chouraqui, Moshe Gil, H.Z. Hirschberg, and Norman Stillman. See Ashtor, *Jews of Moslem Spain*; Chouraqui, *Juifs d'Afrique du Nord*, and *Between East and West*; Gil, *History of Palestine*; Hirschberg, *History of the Jews in North Africa*; Stillman, *Jews of Arab lands*.

campaigning around Tabūk, in what is today northwestern Saudi Arabia.[17] This inconclusive campaign is portrayed enigmatically in the Arabic sources, and has been interpreted by modern historians as a failure at conquest or merely an expeditionary probe to test Byzantine strength.[18] For the purposes of this study, it is important to note that while in the area, Muḥammad is reported to have made several treaties with local peoples, including Jews. Texts of these treaties are preserved in the literary record as letters of protection issued by Muḥammad. These treaties are understood in Muslim tradition, along with a treaty made with the Christians of Najrān later in 9/630 or 10/631, to be a departure from the Prophet's earlier political settlements with the Jews of Medina and Khaybar. More importantly, these letters function as paradigms of accepted practice and as precedent in Muslim law for agreements that would be made with non-Muslims during the subsequent great conquests of the 10s/630s and 20s/640s.[19]

In accounts of the Tabūk campaign, treaties were made with the towns of Ayla (today Eilat/Aqaba), Maqnā, Adhruḥ, and Jarba. In the letter to the people of Maqnā, as reproduced in the early third/ninth-century *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt* of Ibn Saʿd, the Jewish identity of the town's inhabitants is explicit.[20] In regard to Adhruḥ and Jarba, which are about a mile apart, the Jewish identity of their inhabitants is not indicated in the letters, but is reported in later Arabic historical and geographical sources.[21]

Whereas conquest narratives as a whole exhibit a widely divergent and often contradictory set of agreements made with conquered peo-

[17]The main sources for the Tabūk campaign are: al-Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh*, pp. 270–274; al-Yaʿqūbī, *Taʾrīkh*, vol. 2, pp. 67–68; al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-maghāzī*, pp. 996–1038; Ibn Saʿd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, vol. 2, part 2, pp. 118–121; Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra*, pp. 893–906 (translated in Guillaume, *The life of Muḥammad*, pp. 602–609); al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, 1/1692–1704; al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, pp. 59–60. See Mayerson, "The first Muslim attacks on southern Palestine," pp. 169–177; and Killick, "Udruh and the early Islamic conquests."

[18]In *sīra* and *tafsīr* the discourse on the Tabūk campaign is directed toward those Arab warriors who hesitated or questioned their participation in the campaign. See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra*, *op. cit.*, most of which is concerned with this theme.

[19]Noth notes that in the early tradition concern for conquests and administration are closely tied together. See Noth and Conrad, *Early Arabic historical tradition*, pp. 48–53.

[20]The letter begins: "To the sons of Ḥanba, who are Jews of Maqnā, and the people of Maqnā, near Ayla..." (*ilā banī Ḥanba wa-hum Yahūd bi-Maqnā wa-ilā ahl Maqnā wa-Maqnā qarīb min Ayla...*). Ibn Saʿd, vol. 1, part 2, p. 28. The rendering *banī Ḥanba* could result from an orthographic error of *banī Ḥanīna*, thus yielding a Jewish name. On the use of this letter by medieval Jews, see Astren, "Gibeonite gambit."

[21]See Hirschberg, *Yisrael be-ʿArav*, pp. 152–155, and Schick, *Christian communities of Palestine*, p. 468.

ples,[22] the letters associated with the Tabūk campaign describe regularized policies and administration for defining the relationship between non-Muslims and Muslim authority that would only come into being centuries later. These anachronistic features of systematization better characterize ʿAbbāsid-era administration and theological thought of the late second/eighth and third/ninth centuries. Two features are prominent: tribute is assessed upon an entire community, city, or region and is exacted in lump sums, as in the cases of Ayla and Adhruḥ; and the *kharāj* (land tax) and *jizya* (poll tax) are regarded to be distinct and specifically assessed upon landowners and persons, as at Ayla.[23] In general, fully developed treaties of capitulation (*ṣulḥ*) attributed to Muḥammad or the Rāshidūn caliphs (11–40/632–661) are always suspect on the assumption that such instrumentalities had not yet come into existence. In the treaties of the Tabūk campaign, the inhabitants of the localities are required to relinquish the right to defend themselves, thereby placing themselves under Muslim protection. That is, the use of military force was reserved for Muslim authority. In fact, this constitutional element of later Islam is not consistent with the conquest narratives in general, since it is reported that some groups who submitted joined the ranks of the Muslim armies. Furthermore, such matters as lump sum tax assessments and distinct land and poll taxes require a centralized and orderly administration, something that existed neither in the northern Ḥijāz under Muḥammad nor by and large until the later Umayyad period (41–132/681–750), during which tribal organization and personal ties dominated the caliphate.

The underlying principles of law and government associated with these features of the treaties, that is, relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims, actually developed in the late second/eighth century as the ʿAbbāsid caliphate sought to systematize the hodge-podge of agreements made with non-Muslims during the conquests of the previous century. In fact, beginning with the conquests under the Rāshidūn and continuing under the Umayyads, law was mostly traditional and caliphal. What can be clearly identified as classical Muslim law begins to develop later, especially after the advent of the ʿAbbāsids. Only then would the articulation of such precedents and principles be necessary and meaningful.[24]

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[22]The works of Daniel Dennett, *Conversion and the poll tax*, and Frede Løkkegaard, *Islamic taxation in the classic period*, clearly demonstrate the disorderliness and ad hoc character of settlements with conquered peoples after the conquests. See also Simonsen, *Caliphal taxation system*, and Hill, *Termination of hostilities*.

[23]For the full terms, see Muḥammad's letter to Jarba in Ibn Saʿd, vol. 1, part 2, pp. 37–38, and the letters to Ayla and Maqnā, *ibid.*, pp. 28–29.

[24]See Schacht, *Origins of Muhammadan jurisprudence* and Zaman, *Religion and politics*.

As is seen throughout conquest narratives in general, later administrative and theological notions that exhibit systematic regularity for governing the presence of *dhimmī*s (protected peoples) in Muslim society were projected back to Muḥammad himself. These historicizations frame a kind of "Muḥammadan constitutionalism" by presenting Muḥammad as a precedent-setting paradigmatic law-giver, which is the same function he has for the contemporary pioneers of *ḥadīth* and *sharīʿa*. As such, his pronouncements and letters bore the authority of legal precedent and the weight of established tradition.

Historians of medieval Jews have followed the medieval Islamic historians by accepting the Tabūk campaign narratives and the treaties at face value. For example, Moshe Gil identifies key terminology in these letters that corresponds with later Muslim law in regard to protected peoples. These include *amān* or *amana* (letter of security), *jizya* (tax; only later specifically the poll-tax), *dhimma* (protection), and *jār* (giver of protection). Gil is not without historical perspective when commenting on these terms, noting that their meaning changes over time. He observes that the meaning of *muʾmin* (from *āmana*) in the first/seventh century might only refer to those who have accepted the security of Islamic power, as opposed to actually becoming "believers," as the term is understood later with a theologized meaning. The semantic range between "one who has submitted to Muslim power" and "believer" represents the difference between the first/seventh-century conquest society and later classical Islam. In the former, religious principles were not yet fully developed, and language for dealing with non-Muslims was pragmatic and non-theological. In the latter, the ideology of Islam as religion and imperial system needed to inform the terminology.

However, Gil does not develop the implications of his observation on linguistic shifts, whereby the very change of meaning highlights the uncoupling of first/seventh-century realities from later Muslim legalism.[25] In the end, he concludes that, "From such precedents, the basic legal outlook of Islam toward non-Muslims developed, becoming an integral part of Muslim martial law."[26] This conclusion follows too closely

[25]See Brett, "The Arab conquest," pp. 501–502 on the terminology of empire in the Egyptian context. On *muʾmin*, see also the discussion of de Prémare in *Les fondations de l'Islam*, and Popp, "Die frühe Islamgeschichte." In the so-called Constitution of Medina, Jews are understood to be part and parcel of the community of *muʾminūn*. See Gil, *Jews in Islamic countries*, pp. 21–45.

[26]Gil is referring to Muslim laws regarding warfare, *History of Palestine*, p. 30. Cf. Hirschberg, *Yisraʾel be-ʿArav*, pp. 152 ff. and 304. Gil also states (*History of Palestine*, p. 28) that these treaties mark "an important turning point in Muḥammad's attitude towards the Jews and the Christians," whereby he abandoned the "hard line towards the Jews in Medina." This statement reflects the traditional Muslim perspective on Jewish history in first/seventh-century Arabia as found in the biography

the ideology of medieval Muslim conquest narratives themselves wherein the Tabūk campaign treaties are paradigmatic. Thus, al-Balādhurī (d. 279/892) states: "Thus the first among the 'People of the Book' to pay poll-tax [*jizya*], so far as we know, were the people of Najrān who were Christian. Then, the people of Ayla, Adhruḥ and Adhriʿāt paid it in the battle of Tabūk" (*fa-kāna awwal man aʿṭā al-jizya min ahl al-kitāb ahl Najrān fīmā ʿalimnā wa-kānū Naṣārā, thumma aʿṭā ahl Ayla wa-Adhruḥ wa-ahl Adhriʿāt al-jizya fī ghazwat Tabūk*).[27] Likewise, al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) reports on these treaties in a section of his book concerned with the disposition of lands of the *sawād,* a region with highly profitable and complex administrative arrangements. It is reported that "'Umar and the Muslims acted with regard to the *jizya* and *dhimma* according to the custom enacted by the Messenger of God in this matter" (*wa-innamā ʿamila ʿUmar wa-'l-Muslimūn fī hādhā al-jizā' wa-'l-dhimma ʿalā ijriyyā mā ʿamila bihī rasūl Allāh fī dhālika*).[28]

With a revised approach to this material, a kind of history that describes these Jewish encounters with Muḥammad late in his career is simply not available. However, the sources offer a glimpse at third/ninth and fourth/tenth-century Muslim constitutionalism. In the Tabūk sources, the presence of conquest-era Jews is intertextually extrapolated from reports of Jews in other (post-conquest) literary sources.[29] The late reports of Jews in these locales (Ayla, Jarba and Adhruḥ) were rationalized and given sanction by the sacred history of the Prophet. There they are enshrined as paradigmatic examples of the contract of *dhimma.* From this reading of the sources, one might conclude that there were no Jews at Ayla, Adhruḥ, and Jarba in the first/seventh century, even though they were known from later geographical and historical sources to reside there in the third/ninth and fourth/tenth centuries. In fact, the texts may or may not be testimony for the first/seventh century, but there is no way to corroborate the reports from within the literary canon.

In general, these aspects of the Tabūk campaign anticipate the vast Muslim conquests that occur after the death of Muḥammad by providing prophetic authority for military expansion, specifically against the Byzantines, and sophisticated legal precedents for establishing sovereignty over non-Muslims by defining them as *dhimmī*s and exacting taxes from them. These functions bring into doubt their reliability as sources for Jewish history.

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of the prophet.

[27] *Futūḥ al-buldān*, p. 68; translation adapted from Hitti, *Origins of the Islamic state*, p. 105.

[28] Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, 1/2372–2374.

[29] It is reported by later Muslim geographers that Jews live in Ayla and its environs. See also Schick, *The Christian communities of Palestine*, p. 248.

3. Jews and the conquest of cities: three narratives in al-Balādhurī's *Futūḥ al-buldān*

A set of examples from conquest narratives of al-Shām will advance the argument. In al-Balādhurī's third/ninth-century work on the Muslim conquests, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, there are three narratives in which Jews have a role in the fall of an important city.

Al-Balādhurī reports that Ḥimṣ (ancient Emesa) was occupied by the Muslims early in the Syrian campaigns, but "when Heraclius massed his troops against the Muslims and the Muslims heard that they were coming to meet them at the Yarmūk, the Muslims refunded to the inhabitants of Ḥimṣ the *kharāj* they had taken from them saying, 'We are too busy to support and protect you. Take care of yourselves' " (*lammā jamaʿa Hiraql li-'l-Muslimīn al-jumūʿ wa-balagha al-muslimīn iqbāluhum ilayhim li-waqʿat al-Yarmūk raddū ʿalā ahl Ḥimṣ mā kānū akhadhū minhum min al-kharāj wa-qālū qad shughilnā ʿan nuṣratikum wa-'l-dafʿ ʿankum ʿalā amrikum*).[30] This refund signifies the transactional character of the relationship of rulers and the ruled in the political "constitution" of Islam as elaborated in later law and tradition. Anticipated by the Tabūk narratives, stories such as this one reflect the meaning of *dhimma* and its taxes (later *jizya* and *kharāj*). On practical grounds, it is unlikely that a military commander would relinquish a much needed resource at a time of crisis. The logistical exigencies of campaigning in Syria would have been demanding, including locating and accessing water, locating and acquiring food for personnel, and locating pasturage for animals, as well as other material needs.[31] It would be poor military leadership to dispose of funds immediately before an important battle, especially when strategic tribal alliances and other military initiatives might require them. The story serves later ideological purposes better than it explains military matters.

The people of Ḥimṣ then declare that they will repulse the army of Heraclius, saying, "We like your rule and justice better than the state of oppression and tyranny in which we were" (*la-wilāyatukum wa-ʿadlukum aḥabbu ilaynā mimmā kunnā fīhī min al-ẓulm wa-'l-ghashm*). Next, "The Jews rose and said, 'We swear by the Torah, no governor of Heraclius shall enter the city of Ḥimṣ unless we are first vanquished and exhausted!'

[30] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, p. 137. The translation is adapted from Hitti, *Origins*, pp. 210–211.

[31] For examples of this in pre-modern Syria, see Engels, *Alexander the Great*, esp. pp. 54–70; Amitai-Preiss, *Mamluks and Mongols*, pp. 225–229 ("Logistical limitations of Syria") and the references there.

Saying this they closed the gates of the city and guarded them. The inhabitants of the other cities—Christian and Jew—that had capitulated to the Muslims, did the same" (*wa-naḥaḍa al-Yahūd fa-qālū wa-'l-Tawrāt lā yadkhul ʿāmil Hiraql madīnat Ḥimṣ illā an nughlab wa-nujhad fa-aghlaqū al-abwāb wa-ḥarasūhā wa-kadhālika faʿala ahl al-mudun allatī ṣūliḥat min al-Naṣārā wa-'l-Yahūd*).[32] After the Battle of the Yarmūk, "they opened their cities, went out with singers and music players and paid the *kharāj*" (*fataḥū mudunahum wa-akhrajū al-muqallisīn fa-laʿibū wa-addaw al-kharāj*).[33]

The fact that the narrative begins and ends with *kharāj* strongly suggests later literary shaping in the interest of regularized administration. This is further supported by the phrase "rule and justice" uttered by the people of Ḥimṣ, which comes from standard Muslim political terminology as it evolved over later centuries. The story has the air of legend that signifies the transactional character of political dominion by stipulating the capitulation of Syrian cities. In contradiction, a Syriac source states that the invaders destroyed the city.[34] Whatever the truth behind the stories, the report in al-Balādhurī exemplifies Muḥammad's precedent established at Tabūk by describing this feature of later imperial administration as an element of the era of conquest.[35]

Given the harsh treatment endured by Jews earlier in the century after the Byzantine re-conquest of Palestine from the Persians, this story of Jewish collaboration with the invaders seems plausible.[36] But when the report moves to identifying the preference of all the inhabitants of Syria for Muslim rule and their subsequent celebratory welcome to the victorious new rulers as a general feature of events in a wide variety of places, the air of Muslim triumphalism and political ideology sounds. Neither is there reliable evidence that non-Chalcedonian Christians, a significant element in Syria, preferred Muslim rule over Byzantine orthodoxy, nor that Syrian Christians, not all of whom were non-Chalcedonian, welcomed the conquerors. Had they done so, one would expect that after the repudiation in 680 at the Sixth Ecumenical Council (Constantinople III) of a theology that tried to bridge the differences between Chal-

[32] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, p. 137. The translation is adapted from Hitti, *Origins*, p. 211.

[33] *Ibid.*

[34] In a British Museum manuscript discussed by Nöldeke and cited by Gil, *History of Palestine*, p. 46. This report may represent a Christian topos.

[35] Another recognized topos, that of a church partitioned by the Muslims for partial use as a mosque appears in al-Balādhurī's treatment of Ḥimṣ, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, p. 131. This topos will be discussed below.

[36] See Sharf, *Byzantine Jewry*, pp. 51–57, and *idem*, "Byzantine Jewry in the seventh century." See also Kaegi, *Heraclius*, s.v. "Jews" in index. Cf. Starr, *Jews in the Byzantine empire*.

cedonian and non-Chalcedonian Christianity, Greek writers would have denounced the non-Chalcedonians as traitors and collaborators.[37] They do not. We will return to this argument below in regard to the Jews.

The Ḥimṣ report is laden and therefore must be viewed with suspicion. Muslim triumph and ideological concern for orderly administration overrule accepting the information at face value.

Another description of Jewish agency appears in al-Balādhurī's reports on the fall of Tripoli during the caliphate of ʿUthmān (23–35/644–56). One morning, the Muslim besiegers awake to find the city evacuated. Subsequently, the governor of Syria (and later caliph) Muʿāwiya establishes a "large body" (*jamāʿa kabīra*) of Jews there.[38] In the sixth/twelfth century, the story is elaborated by Ibn ʿAsākir, who reports that after the Byzantine evacuation and burning of the city (an element not in al-Balādhurī) only a single Jew remained, who informed the Muslims about what had occurred.[39] The function of the Jewish informer in this narrative is to provide a reason for Muʿāwiya's settlement of Jews in the city. Elsewhere, al-Balādhurī explicitly describes the caliphal policy under the Umayyads of resettlement of the Mediterranean coastal cities of Syria that had become depopulated during the conquests through destruction and emigration,[40] and Ibn ʿAsākir describes the emplacement of a Jewish garrison in one of the city's three citadels after the conquest.[41] Whether Ibn ʿAsākir's supplement to al-Balādhurī's information is historically reliable, it is consistent with al-Balādhurī's report, and therefore in the context of the literary tradition is plausible. Nonetheless, Ibn ʿAsākir's narrative uses a form of the well-known topos of an informer's role in the conquest of a city.[42] Did the actions of a lone (unnamed) Jew lead to a substantial Jewish presence in Muslim Tripoli or did the later Jewish presence generate a myth of origins contextualized in Muslim memory? There is not enough information to know one way or another.

The topos of an informant appears in different forms in other conquest narratives, some involving Jews. According to al-Balādhurī, it is reported that the capture of Caesarea in 19/640 resulted from a Jew showing the Muslim attackers how to enter the city through an underground water conduit. As a result, he received an *amān* for himself

[37] Moorhead, "The Monophysite response to the Arab invasions."
[38] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, p. 127.
[39] Ibn Asākir, *Taʾrīkh madīnat Dimashq*, vol. 5, pp. 183–184.
[40] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, p. 128.
[41] Ibn Asākir, *Taʾrīkh madīnat Dimashq*, *op. cit.*
[42] The topos is central to the narrative of the fall of Arwād. See Conrad, "The conquest of Arwād," pp. 350–352, 383. Noth discusses the topos, *Early Arabic historical tradition*, pp. 24, 150–151.

and his *ahl*.[43] Whether *ahl* can be translated as "family" or "people" (possibly referring to Jews), is an interesting question that cannot be answered. On the face of it, the narrative appears to be completely plausible. Again, Byzantine anti-Jewish policies make the story seem plausible.

However, the literary form of the narrative follows a pattern found in reports of a number of other cities captured by the Muslim forces. In each of them some topographical feature or defensive element that the defenders have overlooked is used to enter the city. As described by Noth, patterns such as these are strong evidence for the reshaping of narratives, and therefore should arouse suspicion about the reliability of the sources.[44] In fact, this topos, or literary pattern, is found in narratives describing the capture of Damascus,[45] Babylon of Egypt,[46] Alexandria,[47] and Tustar (in Khūzistan).[48] The narrative as topos invites one to read with suspicion, since the function of this repeated pattern is to describe a city that had been taken by force and not by means of capitulation and a negotiated treaty.

In the Muslim historical tradition such narratives are used as evidence in debates to establish whether these cities were taken *ʿanwatan* (by force) or *ṣulḥan* (through agreement or a treaty), in the manner of cities in al-Balādhurī's report on al-Shām after the Battle of the Yarmūk. The distinction became important at the end of the first/seventh and during the second/eighth century under the later Umayyads and ʿAbbāsids, when the legal consequences of such "narratives of origin" might determine who pays what tax, how, and what descendents of Arab fighters may or may not be enrolled in the *dīwān* (register of pensioners). According to Muslim law as it evolved in the first/seventh and second/eighth centuries, the inhabitants of cities that came under Muslim rule by means of *ṣulḥ* (treaty) retained their property and paid taxes according to the terms of the city's treaty and Muslim law. Conceivably, they would live with less onerous taxation and fewer other restrictions. Those cities taken by means of *ʿanwa* were to be the absolute property of the conquerors, and as such, considered part of the *fayʾ* (immovable property) of the Muslims. The income from these properties were to be controlled by the Muslims or their ruler without the limitations of treaty or Muslim

[43] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, pp. 141–142.

[44] See *Early Arabic historical tradition*, pp. 19–20, and 167–168.

[45] Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, 1/2150–2155; al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, pp. 120–123. For analysis using form criticism, see Noth, "Futūḥ-history and Futūḥ historiography: the Muslim conquest of Damascus."

[46] Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, p. 63.

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 80.

[48] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, pp. 380–381; al-Dīnawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭiwāl*, pp. 138–139. Cf. Robinson, "Conquest of Khūzistān."

law as it pertained to *ṣulḥ*.[49]

With such administrative and legal concerns at stake, the reliability of the report that Jewish betrayal aided in the conquest of Caesarea becomes questionable. Topoi such as this function well both in historical and ideological contexts precisely because they are plausible. Literary reshaping without plausibility supports neither narrative consistency nor ideological objectives. In modern scholarship, this very plausibility has led scholars to treat these narratives as reliable historical reports.[50] On the contrary, when the narrative is recognized clearly as a literary topos, historical reliability must be given serious doubt. Only if corroborating evidence is produced can the narrative be rescued from this obscurity. In the case of Caesarea, Michael the Syrian confirms al-Balādhurī's *ʿanwa* narrative,[51] while the interpretation of the archaeological evidence is contested.[52] In the final analysis, there is no corroborating evidence to accept the narrative at face value, nor can one prove that post-conquest realities of Jewish life in Caesarea dictated a need for the memory of a Jewish role in the Muslim conquest of the city.

The accounts of the fall of Ḥimṣ, Tripoli, and Caesarea found in the *Futūḥ al-buldān* of al-Balādhurī (d. 279/892) are part of a synthetic view of the conquests whose narrative is built on the authority of writers from previous generations starting in the mid-first/seventh century.[53] It represents third/ninth-century views of the Muslim and caliphal past which offer justification and legitimization for Muslim dominion, caliphal rule,[54] and proper administration.[55] It is in the main concerned with demonstrating whether cities were taken *ʿanwatan* or

[49]On the distinction between *ṣulḥ* and *ʿanwa*, see Noth, "Zum Verhältnis von kalifaler Zentralgewalt." See also *idem*, "Some remarks."

[50]For example, Norman Stillman, a careful and judicious scholar, states that at Caesarea "the Muslims were able to penetrate the defenses with the aid of Jewish collaborators." See *Jews of Arab lands*, p. 23. Gil notes Noth's observation on the pattern of the topos in a footnote, but does not incorporate topos methodology into his analysis. See *History of Palestine*, p. 59.

[51]Michael the Syrian, p. 430 f.

[52]On the violent conquest of Caesarea, see Toombs, L.E., "Stratigraphy of Caesarea Maritima;" Wiemken, R.C. and Holum, K.G., "Joint expedition to Caesarea Maritima: Eighth Season;" Bull, R.J., Krentz, E., and Storvick, O., "Joint expedition to Caesarea Maritima: ninth season;" and Bull, R.J., Krentz, E., Storvick, O., and Spiro, M., "Joint expedition to Caesarea Maritima: tenth season." Reversing his original view, based in part on use of the literary sources, is Kenneth Holum, "Archaeological evidence for the fall of Byzantine Caesarea."

[53]This is what Robinson refers to as "phase II" in his model for the emergence of Islamic historical writing. See *Islamic historiography*, pp. 24–30.

[54]See Donner, *Narratives of Islamic origins*, pp. 174–182.

[55]*Ibid.*, pp. 166–173. Cf. Noth's taxonomy of primary and secondary themes in early Islamic historiography in *Early Arabic historical tradition*, pp. 26–61, esp. on administration, *ibid.*, pp. 35–37.

ṣulḥan and the consequent political and administrative arrangements that resulted. Fred Donner refers to it as a "convenient handbook from which an administrator could ascertain the appropriate principles for taxation in any place."[56] Scholarly wariness is further supported by the fact that al-Balādhurī had a close personal association with the ʿAbbāsid caliph al-Mutawakkil (regn. 232–247/847–861). In al-Balādhurī, literary reshaping evident in the use of topoi and a preoccupation with ʿ*anwa-ṣulḥ* distinctions create a textual environment in which critical suspicion should be entertained in regard to these reports.

4. Jews and the conquest of cities: the Muslim conquest of Spain

If we turn to Spain, the place of Jews in the conquest narratives leads to similar conclusions but offers suggestions for understanding conquest topoi. According to the anonymous source on the Muslim conquest of Spain, the *Akhbār majmūʿa fī fatḥ al-Andalus* (dated to the fifth/eleventh, or possibly the fourth/tenth century), at Córdoba in 92/711 the soldiers of Mughīth al-Rūmī are reported to have found a breach close to the top of the wall near where a tree stood and were able to surreptitiously enter the city and occupy the governor's palace.[57] The story fits the topos described for Caesarea and other cities, and should arouse suspicion.

The account of the conquest of Córdoba includes another known topos. The fourth/tenth-century al-Rāzī reports that after Muslim occupation of the city, the cathedral was partitioned into two halves, one each for Christians and Muslims.[58] Eliyahu Ashtor accepts this report uncritically as evidence for the existence of some kind of "formal understanding" between Christians and Muslims at the time. However, when one compares this narrative with reports of the conquest of Damascus in 14/635, one finds a similar story, which is better explained as a historicized representation of a city that was taken both *ṣulḥan* and ʿ*anwatan*, with correspondingly complicated tax and administrative arrangements in later centuries. For Damascus, Noth argues that a similar story helps explain the existence in later centuries of churches outside

[56] See Donner, *Narratives of Islamic origins*, p. 173.

[57] *Akhbār majmūʿa*, pp. 10–12. Also Ibn ʿIdhārī, vol. 2, p. 10; al-Rāzī, *Moro Rasis*, pp. 352–353.

[58] Al-Rāzī in *Fatḥ al-Andalus* (Alcántara ed.), pp. 22–23. Cf. al-Rāzī, *Moro Rasis*, pp. 352–354. Also Ibn ʿIdhārī, vol. 2, pp. 9–10; al-Maqqarī, vol. 1, p. 368 (citing al-Rāzī).

the city walls that had been destroyed in the conquest but were later rebuilt. The building of churches and synagogues would become problematic in Muslim law as it later developed, and thus required explanation which then appeared in the conquest narrative.[59] Accordingly, the report was shaped to provide explanation for both the Muslim conversion of the entire cathedral into a mosque (in spite of the "original" agreement which divided the cathedral) and the rebuilding of the destroyed churches, which is justified as compensation for Muslim appropriation of the entire cathedral. This topos appears in reports in a number of sources on the conquest of Ḥimṣ as well as for other cities.[60] It becomes evident that the historical reliability of these reports slips away as the legal exigencies of later centuries loom larger.

The two topoi discussed above, conquest by means of a defect or overlooked feature of a city's defenses and Jewish betrayal of a city, come together in a Crusader-era Latin text that describes the Muslim conquest of Hebron in Palestine, which took place perhaps in 17/638.[61] At first, the attackers "marveled" at the stout defenses of the city (*mirarentur murorem fortem*), but then some Jews approached them seeking security and the right to build a synagogue in front of the entrance to the Cave of Machpelah, the tomb of the biblical Jewish patriarchs. "If you will do this, we will show you where you should make a gateway" (*. . . sic, ubi portam facere debeatis, vobis ostendemus*).[62] The report functions to offer explanation for the double anomaly of the existence of a synagogue that was built after the establishment of political dominion by Christianity and then Islam, both of which developed supersessionist theologies that forbade the construction of new synagogues (and churches, in the case of Islam). For Christianity, the theology proclaiming that the new covenant superseded the old one placed a good deal of symbolic importance on the presence in Christian society of Jews, and therefore of synagogues. As a reflection of the obsolescence and arrested spiritual development of Judaism, only existing synagogues were to be permitted to stand. Although they could be repaired, new ones could not be con-

[59]On Muslim law regarding the building of *dhimmī* houses of worship, see Moshe Perlmann, *Shaykh Damanhūrī*. See also Noth, "Futūḥ-history and Futūḥ historiography."

[60]See the brief discussion in Wheatley, *Places where men pray together*, pp. 232–233.

[61]See the sixth/twelfth-century Crusader-era story entitled, *Canonici Hebronensis Tractatus de inventione sanctorum patriarchum Abraham, Ysaac, et Jacob* in *Recueil des historiens des croisades: historiens occidentaux*, p. 309. Known only from a ninth/fifteenth-century manuscript, the original text has to be dated after 1119–1120.

[62]Translated into English in Stillman, *Jews of Arab lands*, p. 152. The passage is discussed by Stillman in *ibid.*, pp. 23–24, and by Gil in *History of Palestine*, pp. 57–58.

structed. Muslim theology led to the development of similar rules for both synagogues and churches. They might not be destroyed, but new ones were not permitted to be built.[63] More important to how these ideas work in conquest narratives is the fact that the legal question of whether or not it is permitted for synagogues and churches to be repaired hinges on the manner in which its locality came under Muslim rule—by means of *ʿanwa* or *ṣulḥ*.[64]

In spite of these legal prohibitions, new synagogues were built, and the erection of a new synagogue could be justified against critics by stipulating a pre-Islamic Jewish presence at the contested location. For example, synagogues built in Baghdad, which was founded in 145/762, were rationalized by claiming that synagogues had existed on these sites under Persian rule in pre-Islamic times.[65] The existence of the synagogue in Hebron, known from Geniza evidence and most likely destroyed by the Crusaders,[66] could be defended with the strongest of claims by citing Scripture as evidence for an ancient Jewish presence there. Muslim legal questions surrounding Jewish and Christian places of worship and jurisprudential concern for the status of particular sites highlight the protean character of these narratives as memory, and correspondingly, make doubtful their historical reliability. Although there is no corroborating account of the Jewish betrayal of Hebron in any Muslim text, at some point in post-conquest history the story must have been told in order to explain the anomalous post-conquest presence of a synagogue. It then found its way into the Latin text.

Echoing the Jewish betrayal of Caesarea and Hebron are accounts of Jewish cooperation with the Muslim conquerors in Spain. The *Akhbār majmūʿa* reports that after the fall of Córdoba the responsibility for garrisoning the city was handed over to the Jews along with a "contingent" (or "number," *ṭāʾifa*) of Muslims.[67] It also reports mobilization of Jews

[63] See Perlmann, *Shaykh Damanhūrī*. Cf. the old, but still useful survey in Tritton, *Caliphs and their non-Muslim subjects*, pp. 37–60. This stipulation is first in the list of items in the so-called Pact of ʿUmar: "We shall not build in our cities or in their vicinity any new monasteries, churches, hermitages, or monks' cells. We shall not restore, by night or by day, any of them that have fallen into ruin or which are located in the Muslims' quarters." Translated by Stillman, *Jews of Arab lands*, pp. 157–58. On this topic, see *ibid.*, pp. 25–26, and the works cited there. See also Levy-Rubin, "*Shurūṭ ʿUmar*."

[64] For example, al-Nawāwī, *Minhāj al-ṭālibīn*, vol. 3, pp. 284–285.

[65] See Goitein, *Jews and Arabs*, pp. 68–69.

[66] Gil, *History of Palestine*, pp. 206-208.

[67] *Akhbār majmūʿa*, pp. 12 and 14; also repeated in al-Maqqarī, vol. 1, p. 166, who used *Akhbār majmūʿa* as a source. The passage is rearranged and translated into English in Stillman, *Jews of Arab lands*, p. 156.

to garrison towns during the conquest at Granada,[68] Elvira,[69] Seville,[70] Mérida,[71] and Beja.[72] In fact, it is described as a general policy of Ṭāriq b. Ziyād, the Muslim general.[73] However, other early sources on the conquest of Spain, Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam (3rd/9th c.) and the anonymous *Fatḥ al-Andalus* (ca. 500/1100), make no mention of this policy.[74]

It is not possible to positively ascertain the historicity of these narratives, in part because the texts are multi-layered. Some scholars postulate that these conquest narratives reflect struggles between the original conquerors of 92-94/711-13 and the later Andalusī Umayyad establishment.[75] However, these conquest traditions could have been generated at a number of different times in early Muslim Spain when questions regarding the status of conquered peoples and their relationships to local elites and local administration would have been brought to the fore. Such times include the Berber revolt beginning in 122/740 when Arab hegemony was challenged by Berbers, or shortly thereafter when the remnants of the Umayyad Syrian army that was defeated in North Africa were used to defeat the Berbers in Spain. As a result, the Syrian army organized according to the *jund*s was established in al-Andalus in 125/743.[76] For many years the original conquest elites (*baladiyyūn*) and the newcomer Syrians (*Shāmiyyūn*) competed for power. Earlier, an attempt at administrative intervention on the part of the eastern caliphate is reported during the governorship of al-Samḥ b. Mālik al-Khawlānī, who was instructed by the Umayyad caliph ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (regn. 99–101/717–720) to determine which lands were *ṣulḥ* and

[68] *Akhbār majmūʿa*, p. 12.

[69] *Ibid.*; not specified at this location in al-Maqqarī, vol. 1, p. 166.

[70] *Akhbār majmūʿa*, p. 16; Ibn al-Athīr, vol. 4, p. 447; al-Maqqarī, vol. 1, p. 170.

[71] *Akhbār majmūʿa*, p. 16.

[72] *Ibid.* See also Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, *Historia de rebus Hispaniae sive historia Gothica*, book 3, chapter 23, p. 112. On Rodrigo, see below.

[73] *Akhbār majmūʿa*, p. 12; al-Maqqarī, vol. 1, p. 166. Al-Maqqarī adds that where there were no Jews, the Muslims had to leave more of their own troops behind.

[74] Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam does not offer any detail on the fall of Córdoba, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, pp. 206–207. On Jews in his text, see the section below. The *Fatḥ al-Andalus* mentions Jews only in connection to the legend of Solomon's Table, which was taken by the Muslims from the Visigoths at Toledo, pp. 35–36. It does incorporate the topos about a breach in the wall at Córdoba, pp. 20–21. In general, the Arabic accounts of the war of conquest in 711–13 are often contradictory. The *Fatḥ al-Andalus* describes the fall of Córdoba on the same page to have been both ʿ*anwatan* or *ṣulḥan*. See Sánchez-Albornoz, "Some remarks," 156–157. For another example, the routes of the invading armies are difficult to determine due to conflicting reports. See Simón, "Itineraries of the Muslim conquest."

[75] See Kennedy, *Muslim Spain and Portugal*, pp. 8–9; and Manzano Moreno, "La conquista del 711."

[76] See Manzano Moreno, "The settlement and origins of the Syrian *jund*s in al-Andalus."

which were ʿ*anwa* in order to take control of the latter.[77] This effort was thwarted by the original conquest elites, referred to in the *Akhbār majmūʿa* as the "people of conquest" (*ahl al-fatḥ*).[78] The fact that the narratives are used in texts that support ideological, administrative, and to a lesser degree, legal aims, suggests that they be read with caution.

Furthermore, the *Akhbār majmūʿa* and *Fatḥ al-Andalus* are documents from the mid-fourth/tenth century, the high point of the Umayyad caliphate of Spain, whose purpose is to justify Umayyad sovereignty, in part, by establishing the uniqueness of the founder of the dynasty, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān I (regn. 138-172/755-788).[79] From the perspective of Andalusī Umayyad ideology, these narratives establish the dynasty's hegemony over Jews as part of a larger ideological imperative toward establishing territorial claims, both in terms of identifying borders and establishing meaningful landmarks,[80] and also by establishing internal hegemony.[81] In the fourth/tenth century, al-Andalus was riven by factionalism, so part of the purpose of the texts is to demonstrate that the early Umayyads were successful in uniting the many groups living in their domain and bringing together competing factions. By portraying ʿAbd al-Raḥmān I and also the beginnings of Muslim dominion in Spain in this manner, these qualities are projected forward as characterizations of the Umayyad caliphs who were contemporaneous to the redaction of the texts, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III (regn. 300–350/912–961) and al-Ḥakam II (regn. 350–366/961–976). These are texts of political cant.

Since the Arabic sources were shaped by the complex layering of traditions from early Andalusī Muslim history and by the ideological imperatives of the authors and their times,[82] Jews in the conquest narratives represent a minor component of the internal claim to Umayyad dominion, but they also signify Muslim difference from Christians, reflecting both

[77] *Akhbār majmūʿa*, p. 23. Cf. Chalmeta, *Invasión e islamización*, pp. 259–268, and Kennedy, *Muslim Spain and Portugal*, p. 20. Also, during the amirate of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān I, the ʿAbbāsids made an effort to take control of al-Andalus; *ibid.*, pp. 34–35.

[78] *Akhbār majmūʿa*, pp. 23–24.

[79] Safran, *Second Umayyad Caliphate*, esp. pp. 119–140.

[80] *Ibid.*, p. 150 ff.

[81] *Ibid.*, pp. 141–183. On ʿAbd al-Raḥmān I, see Kennedy, *Muslim Spain and Portugal*, pp. 30–38.

[82] For examples of topoi in the literary shaping of Andalusī historical narrative, see Manzano Moreno, "Oriental 'Topoi' in Andalusian historical sources." A conquest topos identified by Noth sustains the idea that the conquests were centrally-directed by the caliphs, thus magnifying the authority and high position of the caliphate. Similar topoi are employed in Andalusī conquest narratives in support of Umayyad ideology, both in the East in general and in Spain specifically. See Safran, *Second Umayyad Caliphate*, pp. 119–140. On the conquest of Spain using theme and form criticism, see Münzel, *Feinde, Nachbarn, Bündnispartner*, pp. 75–88.

fourth/tenth-century adversarial relationships to the Christian principalities in the north of the peninsula and to a certain extent the caliphate's Christian subjects. Since the mention of Jews is so infrequent in any strata of these sources, it is difficult to identify with any finality that Jews have a global function in the narratives. Like the Tabūk reports, these reports may be evidence for the existence of Jewish communities in those towns named in the conquest narratives at any time connected to the struggle over local political power as mediated through stories of the conquest, including the time of the texts' redaction.

In another set of reports, some Arabic sources say that the Christian inhabitants of Toledo fled ahead of the Muslim advance, and thus in 92/711 the conquerors concluded a treaty with those who remained, the Jews. Like the reports on cities in the *Akhbār majmūʿa*, this *ṣulḥ* narrative describes Jews garrisoning the city along with Muslims after the conquest,[83] even though other Arabic sources differ on whether Toledo capitulated by means of a *ṣulḥ* agreement or was taken by force.[84] The likely source of this report is Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Rāzī (d. 344/955), who along with his father Muḥammad b. Mūsā (d. 277/890), worked to systematize scattered historical reports of the Spanish Arabic literary tradition of the day.[85] The garrisoning of the royal and ecclesiastical capital of the Visigothic kingdom by Jews after its conquest signifies the overthrow and invalidation of Christian political dominion which was so often expressed through anti-Jewish polemic and legislation. Similar to the rehabilitation of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem in the first/seventh century, this symbolic overturning of Christian dominion is an example of how Muslim tradition could be informed by Christian theology.

Extending the narrative trajectory of the narratives of cooperation with the conquerors that is found in Arabic sources, the Christian Latin historical tradition transformed the Jews into betrayers. The betrayal of Toledo is first reported by Lucas of Tuy (d. 1249 CE), who states that the Jews opened the gates of the city to the Muslim besiegers while Christians were celebrating Palm Sunday.[86] On the other hand, his contemporary Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, Archbishop of Toledo (d. 1247 CE), does not make this claim.[87] Rodrigo follows Arabic sources, such

[83] Al-Rāzī, pp. 354–355; Ibn ʿIdhārī, vol. 2, p. 12; Ibn al-Athīr, vol. 4, p. 446; al-Maqqarī, vol. 1, p. 167.

[84] For example, the *Fatḥ al-Andalus* reports that the Christians fortified themselves in the cathedral and were then defeated (an *ʿanwa* narrative), p. 23. See al-Rāzī, *Moro Rasis*, p. 354.

[85] On them, see Chalmeta, *Invasión e islamización*, pp. 44–46.

[86] *Chronicum mundi*, book 3, chapter 63, p. 222. See Ashtor, *Jews of Moslem Spain*, p. 18, n. 5.

[87] See *Historia de rebus Hispaniae sive historia Gothica*, book 3, chapter 17, pp.

as the *Akhbār majmūʿa* and al-Rāzī, by reporting that Jews participated in the garrisoning of cities. And, even though he used Lucas' chronicle as a source, he does not repeat the betrayal narrative. Although these two contemporaneous writers shared narrative trajectories about Jews, they differed on this important element of conquest history.[88] Both viewed past rulers' policies toward Jews as a barometer of their worthiness to rule. According to Lucy Pick, both Rodrigo and Lucas portrayed Jews to be "actively hostile to Christians" and offer historical judgment that "those who support Jews" are bad while "those who suppress them" are good.[89] The subtle difference between these two chroniclers' treatment of the conquest of Toledo can be explained by Rodrigo's pragmatic concerns as archbishop of that city, since he administered an episcopal see in which many Jews lived and he worked in support of the kingdom of Castile in which some Jews had influence and power.[90] Although a different set of concerns governed the way Jews were portrayed in Christian Latin historiography, they continued to function as ideological props. Lucas' report is repeated in most later Hispanic writing.[91] In both the Arabic and Latin reports on Toledo, Jews are used to establish Muslim and Christian hegemonic claims and to comment on contemporaneous issues.

It is indeed plausible that second/eighth-century Jews viewed the new rulers of Spain favorably and even aided the conquest, especially when we take into account the harsh policies enacted against the Jews under the Visigoths.[92] However, such a conclusion depends upon understanding late first/seventh-century Visigothic enactments as legislation with

98–99 (causes for the fall of Spain), chapter 23, p. 110 (Jews along with Arabs garrison Córdoba), chapter 23, p. 110–112 (Granada and Toledo).

[88]The earlier *Chronica Naierensis* (middle of the twelfth century) does not inculpate the Jews for the fall of Toledo, p. 97. On Lucas' treatment of Jews in the context of a universal history, see Cabrero, "El *Chronicon Mundi* de Lucas de Tuy," *passim*. On Rodrigo's universal history, see West, "The destiny of nations." On Rodrigo and the Jews, see Pick, *Conflict and coexistence*, *passim*.

[89]*Ibid.*, p. 177. This distinction was especially important in these authors' treatment of Visigothic kings. Thus, the success or failure of the Visigothic kingdom was predicated on its kings' Jewish policies.

[90]*Ibid.*, in general and esp. pp. 127-82.

[91]For example, Juan Gil de Zamora (d. 1318) follows Rodrigo and al-Rāzī in his accounts of the fall of Córdoba (*de Preconies Hispaniae*, pp. 90–91, and 94 for Beja) and the fall of Toledo (*ibid.*, pp. 88–89), but repeats Lucas in a geographic entry on Toledo (*ibid.*, p. 218). On the fall of Córdoba and Toledo, see the Spanish translation of Martin and Costas, p. 81; on Jewish betrayal of Toledo, *ibid.*, p. 138. By the late eighth/fourteenth-century, the narrative is canonized in the *Crónica Sarracina* of Pedro de Corral. See Fogelquist, "Pedro de Corral's Reconfiguration," p. 70. For a review of the treatment of Jews in this work and in the Spanish literary tradition in general, see Cramer, *Los grupos políticos*, pp. 151–169.

[92]See Katz, *Jews in the Visigothic and Frankish kingdoms*, pp. 31–38; Collins, *Early medieval Spain*, pp. 128–143; González-Salerno, "Catholic anti-Judaism," and Bradbury, "Jews of Spain."

pragmatic long-term objectives (and therefore descriptive for modern historians) or as prescriptive scholastic formulations of Christian anti-Judaism.[93] And it must be asked, would such a unified response on the part of Jews be a reasonable course of action? As early as 1841, James Finn suggested that such a strategy toward the Muslim conquerors would have had limited results for "had this maneuver been executed at one place, it would have been foreseen in the remaining cities."[94] Finn's argument is especially persuasive when we take into account that Arabic conquest narratives from the Middle East offer only a very few instances of Jews in league with Muslims, each of which is subject to suspicion in regard to its historical reliability.

If we look to the East in search of an origin for the notion of Jews as betrayers, it may be found in Jewish responses to the Persian conquests of the Levant that preceded the Muslim conquests in the early seventh century CE. A number of reports, in eastern Christian texts of the seventh and eighth centuries, describe Jews both as participants in the street violence of the Byzantine circus parties in the early seventh century and as collaborators with the Persian occupation of Mesopotamia, Syria, and Palestine in 613-629 CE.[95] For example, the *Doctrina Jacobi nuper baptizati* (dated to the early 640s CE) describes Jewish violence against Christians in Ptolemais (Acre) at the time of the Persian campaign[96] and the Armenian Sebeos describes a general Jewish uprising in conjunction with the Persian invasion.[97] Most important is the report of Strategius the Monk, who describes the massacre of captive Christians by Jews at the Pool of Mamilla outside the walls of Jerusalem.[98]

Whether or not it is true that Jews collaborated with the Persians, the larger discourse about Jews in Byzantine and other eastern Christian texts offers a way to think about the problem. Many scholars warn that literary reshaping in eastern Christian texts can be as ubiquitous, and therefore as problematic, as the difficulty in early Muslim historiography. For example, report of the murder in 608 CE of Patriarch Anastasius of

[93]This complicated problem yields no easy answer. The debate can be exemplified by opposing views of Bernard S. Bachrach and Norman Roth. See Bachrach, *Early medieval Jewish policy*, pp. 3–43; and Roth, *Jews, Visigoths and Muslims*, pp. 7–40. Cf. Bachrach, "Reassessment of Visigothic Jewish policy."

[94]Finn, *Sephardim*, p. 135.

[95]The sources are reviewed by Cameron in "The Jews in seventh-century Palestine" and "Blaming the Jews." Attitudes toward Jews in Greek sources that mention Islam are noted by Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 53–115.

[96]See the edition and Greek translation by Vincent Déroche, p. 180.

[97]Sebeos, pp. 68–69.

[98]Discussed by Wilken in *The land called holy*, pp. 206–207, with a summary of Strategius' *Capture of Jerusalem*, pp. 218–224. The report is also found in various forms in The Chronicle of Theophanes and Eutychius' *Naẓm al-Jawāhir* (or *Annales*). On the massacre, see Horowitz, *Reckless rites*, pp. 228–230.

Antioch by the Jews, which is found in a number of sources, resulted from the conflation of a report on the murder of the patriarch (probably by soldiers) during an episode of urban unrest with a general anti-Judaic discourse that characterizes Jews as rebellious.[99] In another example, it is telling that the aforementioned topos of the betrayal of a besieged city is used, though without Jewish agency, to describe the Persian conquest of Alexandria in 619 CE in the *vita* of John of the Almsgiver.[100] The city fell when a traitor guided the Persians to an unused canal, through which they entered the city and defeated its defenders. The topos serves to explain the loss of the city, though without Jews as a narrative element. When these reports are examined, the pervasive presence of Christian theological objectives and contexts—using well-known, identifiable topoi—suggests doubt about the historical reliability of reports about Jews.

It is indeed plausible that Jews viewed the Sassanians as liberators on account of the increasingly anti-Jewish policies of empire and church in Byzantium. However, modern interpreters disagree on the value of these reports, either accepting them as reliable or—mirroring the historiographical problems of Islamic historical narrative—reading them as described by Averil Cameron as "deeply biased and distorted accounts" that portray "imaginary Jews of prejudice."[101] Like the problem of interpreting Visigothic anti-Jewish law and Jewish response, historical Jews are hard to find in the Persian invasion of Syria-Palestine in the early seventh century, lost between the descriptive and prescriptive narrative trajectories of the reports.[102]

Whether the Jews in actuality were or were not Persian collaborators was immaterial to the Byzantine response, which in large measure blamed the Jews.[103] Most dramatically, Heraclius decreed the forced conversion of the Jews in the aftermath of the imperial restoration in 632 CE, although it is difficult to determine how widely the decree was implemented or if it was limited to particular localities.[104] More impor-

[99]Demonstrated convincingly by Olster in *Politics of usurpation*, pp. 101–115, esp. 102–105.

[100]Leontios of Neapolis, *Vie de Jean de Chypre* 52 (Festugière, pp. 515–516) and the anonymous *vita* of John (Festugière, 328, 336–37); cited in Kaegi, *Heraclius*, p. 91. See also Butler, *Arab conquest of Egypt*, pp. 76–77.

[101]Cameron in "The Jews in seventh-century Palestine," pp. 79 and 91, respectively. Cameron makes the case more forcefully in "Blaming the Jews."

[102]See the perceptive historiographical analysis of Horowitz, *Reckless rites*, pp. 213–248, originally published as "The vengeance of the Jews was stronger than their avarice."

[103]See Cameron, *op. cit.*; Kaegi, *Heraclius*, pp. 79–80, esp. nn. 80 and 81; and Starr, "Byzantine Jewry on the eve of the Arab conquest."

[104]On this, see Dagron and Déroche, "Juifs et Chrétiens dans l'Orient," pp. 28–32. Cf. Kaegi, *Heraclius*, pp. 216–217.

tant is the greatly increased anti-Jewish discourse in Byzantine Greek writing after the Muslim conquest of the Middle East. David Olster maintains that in the first/seventh century eastern Christians were unable to articulate with specificity the character of the Muslim enemy that conquered a vast segment of the empire, so the language of blame and the imagining of future victory over the enemies of church and state was directed against Jews. This discursive strategy is a continuation of ancient Christian anti-Judaism of the *Contra Judaeos* variety but also introduces a new message that describes Jews as the architects of the seventh-century imperial dilemma. Similarly, in the eighth century, Jews were portrayed by Iconophiles as the authors of Iconoclasm and other controversies that plagued the empire.[105]

If indeed Jews in the East had openly collaborated with the Persians, the subsequent Byzantine anti-Jewish policy that followed the Persian occupation would have led them to think twice before aiding the Muslim Arab invaders only a few short years later. What's more, the eastern Christian writers do not generally accuse the Jews directly of collaborating with the Muslims.[106] Clearly, if Jews had collaborated with the Muslims these Greek anti-Jewish writers would have seized on the opportunity to use it in their arguments. The Greek writers give pause to critical acceptance of al-Balādhurī's narratives of the fall of cities in the East. The expected corroborators do not corroborate.

That the intensified anti-Jewish discourse was transmitted to the West is not an unreasonable premise given the relative ease of interconnectivity in the Mediterranean and the proximity to Spain of Byzantine Greek society in Africa, Sicily, and southern Italy, even in this period.[107] The Byzantines had been able to maintain a presence on the Iberian peninsula until 621 CE, and even afterwards connections to Byzantium persisted. A number of reports suggest that news from the East could have shaped Visigothic perspectives on Jews. Maximus the Confessor, who fled the Persian conquest of Jerusalem in 614 CE, resided for some time in North Africa and then Rome. In a letter written after the Mus-

[105]This is a primary argument of Olster, *Roman defeat*, although Cameron disagrees, "Blaming the Jews," p. 75, and "Byzantines and Jews." On many of these Christian texts, see also Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 78–91.

[106]Sebeos is an exception, who tells of "the rebellious Jews who had for a time received the assistance of the Hagarenes." See Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 528.

[107]In spite of the economic and demographic contraction of Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages, Horden and Purcell offer compelling arguments for the continuation of Mediterranean connectivity after the decline of the Roman Empire. See *The corrupting sea*, esp. pp. 153–172. See also McCormick, *Origins of the European economy*, who has identified more than 700 travellers in the years 300–900. More specifically, see Cahen, "Commercial relations between the Near East and western Europe," and McCormick, "Byzantium and the West."

lim conquests to Peter, the governor of Numidia, he states that Jews had a part in the "evils which today afflict the world."[108]

More important is a report in the Merovingian Frankish Chronicle of Fredegar (ca. 660 CE) that offers a legendary report on Heraclius that, "being well-read he practiced astrology, by which art he discovered, God helping him, that his empire would be laid waste by circumcised races. So he sent to the Frankish King Dagobert to request of him to have all the Jews of his kingdom baptized." (*Cum esset litteris nimius aeruditus, astralogus effecetur; per quod cernens a circumcisis gentibus divino noto emperium esse vastandum, legationem ad Dagobertum regem Francorum dirigens, petens ut omnes Iudeos regni sui ad fidem catolecam baptizandum preciperit.*)[109] The emperor ordered the same to be done in the Byzantine Empire since "he had no idea from what place this scourge would come upon his empire." (*Ignorabat unde haec calametas contra emperium surgerit.*)[110] In this text the conflation of Jews and Muslims (here as Arabs) was a reasonable literary surmise. Only later in the eighth century, Jews and Arabs were explicitly uncoupled from this conflation in the Carolingian *Gesta Dagoberti I.* "It was not the Jews, but the Hagarenes, that is the Saracens, who were the circumcised peoples that had been shown to Heraclius." (*. . . sed Eraclo non de Iudaeis, sed de Agarrenis, id est Sarracenis, circumcisis gentibus fuerat demonstratum.*)[111] The relatively rapid transmission of narrative from East to West in this period is further confirmed by the replication in Fredegar and other Western sources of legendary material from the Syriac *Alexander Legend*, which is demonstrated to have originated in Mesopotamia in the late 620s CE.[112]

The usefulness of conflating Jews and Muslims is found in the speech of the Visigothic King Egica in 694 CE at the Seventeenth Council of Toledo. At that time Muslim force had projected itself into the western Mediterranean, although political control had not yet been firmly established in the eastern Maghrib. Egica proposed harsh treatment

[108] Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 528. The letter, dated to the years 634–640, is a single reference to the Arabs in Maximus' voluminous writing. See *ibid.*, pp. 76–78, where Hoyland observes that for Maximus, the "Arabs are simply extras in the eschatological drama with the Jews occupying the leading role." See also Laga, "Judaism and Jews in Maximus Confessor's works."

[109] Fredegarius, *Chronicle*, book 4, chapter 65 (vol. 2, p. 153), translated by Wallace-Hadrill in Fredegarius, *The fourth book of the Chronicle of Fredegar*, pp. 53–54. On this and the influence in the West of Heraclius' forced conversion of the Jews, see Dagron and Deroche, "Juifs et Chrétiens dans l'Orient," pp. 32–38. See also Dagron, "Commentaire," pp. 260–268.

[110] *Ibid.*

[111] *Gesta Dagoberti*, 24 (p. 409).

[112] Van Bladel, "The legend of Alexander," pp. 190–194.

for Jews because "some are said to have rebelled against their Christian princes in certain regions of the world" (*... cum in aliquibus mundi partibus alios dicuntur contra suos chistianis principes resultasse*), and "... because we have recently and undoubtedly discovered from clear confessions that those Hebrews from the regions beyond the sea call on the other Hebrews to act together against the Christian people" (*... quia nuper manifestis confessionibus indubie invenimus, hos in transmarinis partibus Haebreos alios consuluisse, ut unanimiter contra genus christianum agerent.*)[113] The accusation supported the council's enactment for the enslavement of the kingdom's Jews.

These echoes of eastern accounts of Jewish collaboration or Jewish blame indicate that linking the Jews with the Muslim conquests was known in the West even before 92/711. Later, when conquest narratives were being constructed and then written down in the later second/eighth and third/ninth centuries, accusing the Jews of collaboration could prove to be useful.

With Jewish treason as an element of the early medieval Mediterranean cultural climate, the prospect is opened up for the integration into the Spanish historical tradition of a repeated literary pattern that describes Jewish betrayal.[114] This topos could serve the interests of a number of different Iberian constituencies.

In terms of Spanish Jewish memory of the fourth/tenth century and beyond, when Jewish communities had become well-established in al-Andalus, such reports could have been generated to provide historical precedent and thereby justify legal conditions for Jewish elites and communities in the localities mentioned. That is, they could have been formulated as backward projections that would offer justification for the presence or prominence of Jews in later Spanish Muslim society. They prescribe coexistence, rationalize Jewish autonomy, and could be used to support Jewish landholding. Such a suggestion presumes that Jewish cultural production in the form of stories about the conquests could find its way into Muslim texts.

Along these lines, it has been shown by Chase Robinson that conquest narratives which describe Muslim relations with non-Muslims can be the result of a kind of mediated process in which both Muslims and conquered peoples construct stories about the past in support of their agendas in later centuries.[115] This notion of "co-production" could ex-

[113]Toledo XVII, *Tomus*, in *Leges Visigothorum*, p. 484. Cf. *ibid.*, canon 8. The Latin and English text is in Linder, *Jews in the legal sources*, pp. 529–538. This translation adapted from Linder.

[114]Note that Toch identifies a hagiographic account of the siege of Arles in 508 as the source in the West for the theme of Jewish treason. See "Mehr Licht," pp. 474–478.

[115]Robinson, *Empire and elites*, pp. 15–20.

plain how Jewish elites developed historicized narratives to uphold their privileges and claims, some of which were congruent with or useful in Muslim memory, and that Muslim authorities used these narratives as precedent for the administration of localities. Later, they would be integrated into the Arabic literary historical tradition. On the other hand, evidence for the existence of Jewish elites in second/eighth and third/ninth-century Spain is absent. In fact, local elites with whom the Muslim conquerors dealt were Christian,[116] and it is their participation in co-production that is likely to have produced this topos.

There are several grounds for consideration of a co-produced Christian-Muslim historicization of Jews in the Muslim conquest of Spain. In the first place, since the conquest of the Maghrib and Spain occurred later than the conquests of the Middle East, both Muslims and Christians in the West (as well as Jews) would have been exposed to reports of the earlier conquests as they emanated from the east over the decades of the first/seventh century. Correspondingly, they would also have heard or some possibly even read what eastern Christians were saying about future Christian victory and its enemies. By the beginning of the second/eighth century such ideas could have come into wide circulation, so that later they could provide Spanish Christians part of their response to the trauma of the Muslim conquest by explaining that the fall of their dominion was due to collaboration or betrayal by the Jews. Spanish Christians could also use these narratives to support their own claims as *dhimmī*s. That is, they would get the benefits of *ṣulḥ* without the shame of capitulation, maintaining their honor in defeat. And later, when Muslims began to collect and collate historical reports of the conquest, these narratives were incorporated into Arabic texts as features of the Muslim past of al-Andalus. From a Muslim perspective, Jews either are of little consequence in the narratives or may be incidentally useful for sorting out legal conditions as they apply to non-Muslims in a later context. However, for Christians, these stories could have value.

If reports in the Muslim narratives of Spain are of historical value, then one would expect the earliest source on the conquest to describe Jews accordingly—as supporters and beneficiaries of the Muslim conquest. However, the third/ninth-century Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam does not relate these stories found in later texts. Whether the reception of a Muslim-Christian co-produced topos describing Jews as collaborators in the conquest developed later than the third/ninth century cannot be determined, but the very lateness of the attestations suggests a later genesis

[116]See Chalmeta, *Invasión e islamización*, pp. 213–231 and Manzano Moreno, *Conquistadores, emires y califas*, pp. 42–49. See also Collins, *Arab conquest of Spain*, pp. 39–41, on the treaty of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Mūsā with the local potentate Theodemir; and *ibid.*, pp. 188–200 on administration.

for the narratives. Through some kind of mediated cultural interchange from Christian communal memory to Muslim text, or (less likely) of Jewish communal claims, these narratives entered into the Arabic historical tradition. One must conclude that these accounts are more likely topoi than historically reliable reports with real Jewish subjects.[117] The history of Jews in the Muslim conquest of Spain is indeterminable.

5. Conflating categories of identity: Jews and the conquest of North Africa in Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam's *Futūḥ Miṣr wa-akhbāruhā*

The earliest and most important source for the Muslim conquest of North Africa and Spain is the aforementioned Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam's *Futūḥ Miṣr wa-akhbāruhā*.[118] The orderliness of events and the portrayal of the conquest as a well-organized, centrally-directed campaign—well known topoi that express caliphal authority and systematic administration—betrays Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam's perspective on the past. And, unlike the Middle East and Spain, there are no contemporary Christian sources to corroborate or challenge his narrative. References to Jews in the text must be evaluated in light of Brunschvig's observation and the methodological problems described above.

First, it must be noted that Jews are mentioned very few times in the entire text. The five instances where the word *al-yahūd* occurs are all in quotations from *aḥādīth* in which Jews are referred to only parenthetically or symbolically.[119] This is telling, for it suggests that for Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam and his reporters Jews are of more value as ideological props than as historical actors. Their importance, either in regard to representation of the past or to third/ninth-century legal problems, is mostly negligible.

A problem in Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam and other early sources that impinges upon this discussion is a lack of clarity in terminology used to

[117] See Collins, *Arab conquest of Spain*, who does not take up the topic of Jews and the conquest.

[118] See Makkī, "Egypt and the origins of Arabic Spanish historiography."

[119] These are: 3 (l. 14), 114 (l. 20), 160 (l. 7), 282 (l. 12), and 295 (l. 11). There are eight instances of mention of the *banū Isrāʾīl* ("Children of Israel"): a Muslim theological and legendary categorization: 19 (l. 13), 22 (l. 1), 23 (l. 3ff.), 25 (l. 5, 9, 12ff.), 26 (l. 3), 31 (l. 4f., 10), and 229 (l. 1). Of these, seven are part of Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam's treatment of ancient pre-Islamic history. Other parts of the narrative can be dismissed as wholly ahistorical by virtue of its fantastic character. For example, the exploits of ʿUqba b. Nāfiʿ, conqueror and founder of Qayrawān, reproduce stories that are found in the legendary literature on Alexander the Great.

describe the different peoples of Egypt and the Maghrib. Abdallah Laroui has called attention to the fact that distinctions between *Rūm, Afranj, Afāriqa, Barbar*, and *ʿajam* in early texts are not always clear,[120] and Michael Brett has pointed out that these terms in reference to the Maghrib have literary and functional correspondences to *Rūm, Qibṭ, ʿajam,* and others in Egypt,[121] thus making them problematic as sound historical identifications. It must also be noted that the meaning of these terms has changed through time, so that the meaning of *Afāriqa* at the time of the conquests is likely not the same as that of the time of Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam's sources, nor of Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam himself. The situation is further complicated when one takes into account other schema with which Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam imposes organization on the historical record and on a vision of Muslim society. Superimposed upon these ethnic or national categories is the category of religion, which is more important to a jurist like Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, and which often confuses the nomenclature. An additional register of discourse, the hierarchical arrangement of peoples according to whether or not they had submitted to Muslim rule or protection, obscures clarity.[122]

When it comes to North African Jews, not mentioned per se by Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, we must interrogate the term *dhimmī* to see whether it refers to Jews alone, to other groups, or to Jews and others together. There is mention in the first years of the second/eighth century that after defeating the Berber chief the Kāhina, Ḥasan b. al-Nuʿmān imposed the *kharāj* in Cyrenaica on the *ʿajam* ("foreigners," here taken to mean Byzantine Greeks) "and such of the Berber who were, like the *ʿajam*, Christian" (*wa-waḍaʿa al-kharāj ʿalā ʿajam Ifrīqiya wa-ʿalā man aqāma maʿahum ʿalā al-Naṣrāniyya min al-Barbar*).[123] In this case the inhabitants are either *ʿajam* or Berber, but the important category is religion.

Later in the narrative, the *Rūm* ("Romans," that is Byzantine Greeks) reconquered Anṭābulus (the Pentapolis) in Cyrenaica after its governor, Ibrāhīm al-Naṣrānī, fled "leaving the people of Anṭābulus and its *dhimmī*s in the hands of the *Rūm*" (*wa-khallā ahl Anṭābulus wa-ahl dhimmatihā fī aydī al-Rūm*).[124] The Greeks then wrought havoc for forty days against the city and the *dhimmī*s. H.Z. Hirschberg uses this

[120]These correspond to "Romans" (that is, Byzantine Greeks), "Franks" (Europeans), "Africans" (inhabitants of Ifrīqiyā in North Africa), "Berbers," and "non-Arabs" (or "barbarians"). Laroui, *The history of the Maghrib*, p. 84.

[121] *Qibṭ* are Copts. Brett, "The Arab conquest," p. 510.

[122] *Ibid.*, p. 512.

[123]Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, p. 201 (Gateau trans., p. 81). See Brett, "The Arab conquest," p. 510.

[124]Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, pp. 201–202 (Gateau trans., p. 81).

passage, along with a few others, to help establish a global definition of *dhimmī,* which for all instances of this word in all historical periods refers to Jews. Such a definition may be accurate for later centuries when Christianity in North Africa died out completely,[125] but those who might be described as *dhimmī* in earlier centuries were surely not exclusively Jews. In fact, it is clear in Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam that those who accepted Muslim overlordship are designated variously in the text as *Rūm, Afranj, Afāriqa, Barbar*, and *ʿajam.* One could maintain that after the Byzantines retook the Pentapolis, Greek anti-Jewish inclinations could have led to violence against the cities' purported betrayers to the Muslims, but this does not constitute a compelling reason to presume that in this case the word *dhimmī* refers only to Jews. Berbers were hardly on amicable terms with the Byzantines, and in previous years the Kāhina's scorched earth policy ravaged the settled areas of the coast, which no doubt led to suffering by Greeks, indigenous Christians, and Jews alike. If the Kāhina was Jewish or some kind of Judaizer, then Hirschberg's reading has added support, but since her identity cannot be established conclusively and in fact is not likely to have been Jewish, the matter remains unresolved.[126] Such a reading works for Hirschberg, because in his historical vision the quality of Jewish identity is monolithic and correspondingly yields uniform responses from antagonists. That the Byzantines (or others) might be more interested in Berbers *qua* Berbers and not as Jews or Judaizers is for him not a historical possibility.

The most important aspect of the conquest of Cyrenaica in Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam is that it fits into a repeated pattern that also characterizes reports of the Muslim conquests of Nubia and the Fezzan. In this topos the inhabitants of these regions willingly submit to Muslim rule and pay their tribute (described later as taxes) accordingly. Subsequently they rebel and as a consequence, an annual payment of slaves is imposed. The topos addresses a contradiction between historical circumstances of the conquest, whereby these peoples were by treaty required to submit slaves as tribute, and later Muslim law, which prohibits the enslavement

[125] Although in North Africa Donatist Christianity was in decline before the arrival of Muslims, it lingered for some time. See Talbi, "Le Christianisme maghrébin." Cf. Frend, "The Christian period in Mediterranean Africa," esp. pp. 478–489. Latin inscriptions are attested to the fifth/eleventh century in Qayrawān, and papal letters of Leo IX (1049–54) and Gregory VII (1073–85) refer to North African Christians. The Christianity of the *Afāriqa* became extinct only in the sixth/twelfth century. See Brett, "The Arab conquest," p. 546. Al-Idrīsī reports that Latin (*al-Latīnī al-Afrīqī*) was spoken in the Jerid, pp. 104–105; trans., p. 122.

[126] On the Kāhina, see Hirschberg, *A history of the Jews in North Africa*, pp. 88–96; and Roth, "The Kahina." See also Hirschberg, "Problem of the Judaizing Berbers." Talbi convincingly disposed of the Jewish identity of the Kāhina in "Un nouveau fragment." Cf. *idem*, "al-Kāhina."

of protected peoples (and Muslims). Like the bifurcation of the churches in Ḥimṣ, Damascus, and Córdoba or the existence of the synagogue at Hebron, the rebellions function as narrative devices that explain how such an anomaly could have come into being. As Brett points out, these exactions could be interpreted to be "justifiable punishment for rebellion."[127]

In Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam's conquest of Cyrenaica, literary reshaping trumps historical reliability. That Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam's reporters or the author himself considered *dhimmī*s to be Jews only is an unsustainable argument.

In another passage, Berbers rebelled against Muslim rule in the Nafzāwa region in 126/744 and "captured" (*wa-sabaw*) *ahl dhimmatihā*, meaning the people of the region who were under protection.[128] Again, we are presented with a perplexing passage. Literarily and legally, rebellion may be a topos used to explain later conditions. Historically, *dhimma* in the Nafzāwa was surely not restricted to Jews. In addition, when these Berbers are properly identified as Ṣufriyya Khārijīs, and that they are reported to have been previously Judaized, the matter becomes more complicated. Both the Berbers' former relationship to Judaism and Khārijī tendencies toward toleration of non-Muslims may be at play here.[129] An echo or a version of this episode may be found in the fourth/tenth-century Ibn Ḥawqal, who reports that the poll tax (*jawāl*) had been imposed upon the Jews of Qābis (Qabes) and subsequently Berbers attacked and expropriated (*istabāḥū*) the wealth of the merchants and the city's *ahl al-dhimma.*[130] Although the report may signify what the absence of security might mean to a city that had been abandoned by Muslim rule (and to its merchants and *dhimmī*s), in the end the report remains obscure.

Not only does this earliest source on the conquests provide no information on Jews in Spain in 92/711, it obscures the presence of Jews in the Maghrib.

[127]Brett, "The Arab conquest," pp. 506–507.

[128]Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, p. 223 (Gateau trans., p. 139).

[129]On the Berbers and Khārijī Islam in this period, see Savage, *A gateway to hell, a gateway to paradise.*

[130]Ibn Ḥawqal, p. 70, cited by Hirschberg, *History of the Jews in North Africa*, p. 97. Note that the antagonists are identified here as the bedouin and not the Berbers.

6. Conclusion

An egregious example of extending a narrative that is based upon a tendentious starting point in the Muslim conquests comes from a remark connected with the founding of Qayrawān. Both Ashtor and Hirschberg report that the caliph ʿAbd al-Malik (regn. 65–86/685–705) instructed his brother and governor of Egypt, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, "to send a thousand Jewish or Coptic families" to Qayrawān in North Africa, ostensibly to help populate the newly-founded city and generate economic activity.[131] From this, both historians developed extended accounts of Jewish migration from both East and West in order to construct a historicized narrative of origins for the thriving Qayrawān Jewish community that is well-known in the fourth/tenth century and later. It is instructive that Ashtor provides no source for this report, and Hirschberg, contrary to his usual scrupulousness, relies on a secondary source.[132] To his credit, Hirschberg does cite what he calls a "late tradition" from the eleventh-century geographer al-Bakrī that describes 10,000 Copts with their families who were sent to Qayrawān to build ships.[133] However, in this source there is no mention of Jews. Ashtor and Hirschberg are grabbing at straws.[134]

Historians have extended the notion of Jewish immigration to Qayrawān in order to support the claim that significant Jewish immigration from east to west occurred in the early Middle Ages. Once accepted as fact, it has been further extrapolated that this immigration accounts for the seeming discrepancy between what may have been a small Jewish population in Visigothic Spain and a seemingly more robust demographic for Islamic Spain. In fact, there is no evidence for what has become a well-accepted notion of significant Jewish migration from east to west in the early Middle Ages.[135] Even without the problems of source material characterized by heavy literary shaping, extrapolation has been built on a bad argument, which itself is based upon false information. The urge

[131]Ashtor, *Jews of Moslem Spain*, p. 31; and Hirschberg, *History of the Jews in North Africa*, p. 144. repeated by Chouraqui, *Juifs d'Afrique du Nord*, p. 57, *ibid.*, *Between East and West*, p. 38.

[132]Cazès, *Essai*, pp. 44–46, as cited by Hirschberg.

[133]The order was executed by ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Marwān, governor of Egypt, under order from his brother, the caliph ʿAbd al-Malik. See al-Bakrī, *Masālik*, p. 38 (p. 84 in de Slane's translation, *Description de l'Afrique Septentrionale*).

[134]See Ben-Sasson, *Emergence of the local Jewish community*, pp. 34–35, who dismisses the story as legend.

[135]Wasserstein, "The Muslims and the Golden Age," p. 181.

to add color and shading to the blank space of this thinly-documented era is strong.

The foregoing analysis demonstrates that reports about Jews in the Muslim Arabic sources have literary-historical functions in specific contexts in ideologically laden texts. Features of sacred history, imperial ideology, governmental administration, Muslim law, and religious and ethnic identity shape the narratives to the extent that historical information about Jews is effaced. The fact that individual Jews are rarely ever mentioned (in both Christian or Muslim texts) as betrayers, murderers, or in other key roles gives emphasis to the conclusion. Jews as topoi are available to us, but historical Jews are obscured from view.

More work needs to done with this material since the few textual snippets discussed here are difficult to contextualize and do not amount to much. Yet, these short notices have become the basis for a master historical narrative for this era of Jewish history that shares several characteristics: that Jews worked together with Muslims in the conquests; and correspondingly, that the conquest was good for the Jews; that Jews flourished under Islam; and that rapid Islamization occurred. In part, these features describe "golden age" notions associated with an idealized medieval multiculturalism associated with later Islamic Spain, which of late is increasingly coming under critical scrutiny. More generally, it suggests that classical Islam of later medieval centuries was largely a congenial environment for Jews. In fact the logic of this historiography is inverted. The master historical narrative is premised upon the observation that Jews later flourished under Islam, so consequently the conquests of earlier centuries must have been good for the Jews. It is a small intellectual leap to then use the few narratives at hand to postulate that Jews worked together with Muslims in and after the conquests.

Furthermore, implicit in such a historical construction is a monolithic notion of what is Islam and what constitutes Muslim political dominion, thereby obliterating difference of time and place from Islamic history. The implication is that the congenial environment for Jews emerged instantly and without historical development immediately following the conquests. The master historical narrative in question is best understood as backward projections from later medieval times when modern historians have observed Jews enjoying relative security in Islamic society. Once assembled into a seemingly coherent whole, such a narrative is both plausible and provides the foundation for ubiquitous statements and unquestioned repetition of purported facts.

If for first/seventh and second/eighth century Jews long-term conditions resulting from the establishment of Muslim dominion across wide swaths of the Mediterranean and Middle East were to be positive, there

was no way they could have known this at the time of the conquests.

Historians of the Jews cannot be overly faulted for adopting an uncritical approach to these materials when the consensus of historians of Islam, both Muslim and non-Muslim, have also followed a similar reading of the sources. That the sources appear plausible is an intrinsic feature of their literary shaping—it permits them to work in the contexts of law and tradition. Nonetheless, it is interesting that an uncritical acceptance of Muslim historical sources and the accompanying Muslim ideological representation of the past offer interpretive functions in recent Jewish historiography in at least three registers. From a historiographical perspective that challenges Euro-centric and colonial-era approaches to the past, the retrieval of a lost first/seventh-century Jewish history is consonant with the recovery of other absent histories from their former conditions of under-representation and absence. From a Sephardi or Mizraḥi Jewish point of view, such historical accounts can be viewed as elements of a narrative of origin. From a Zionist perspective, demonstration of the ancient and continued presence of Jews in Palestine (and by extension, in the Middle East and North Africa) is part of the search for authenticity which ideologically supports the renewed national Jewish presence in the Land of Israel and the region. In contextualizations such as these, what seems to be at stake is the meaning of Jewish history in the present, rather than careful historical consideration of the past.

In conclusion, relatively little is known from Muslim conquest narratives about Jewish history in this period. The best that early Muslim historical writing can offer its careful observer is a combination of later perceptions of conquest history shaped by the emergence of law and empire with meager bits from earlier periods. Jewish history can be extracted properly from these texts only when the character of early Muslim historical writing is taken into account and the function of Jews in the text is correspondingly determined.

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