

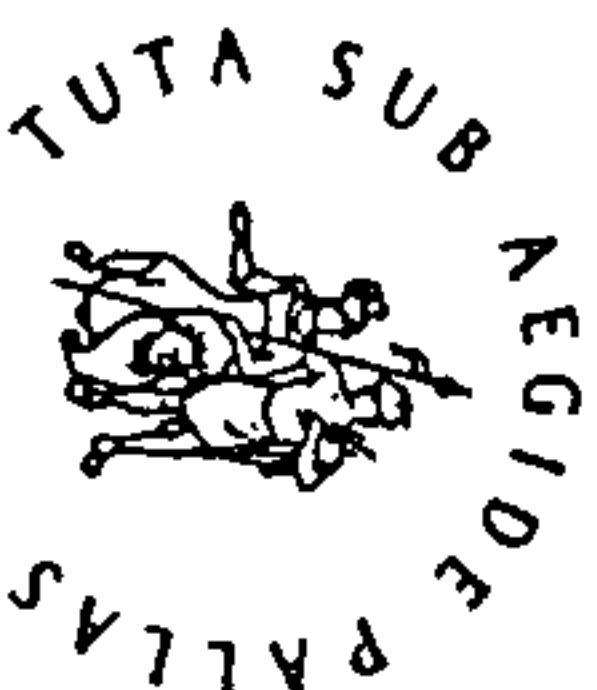
HANDBUCH DER ORIENTALISTIK
HANDBOOK OF ORIENTAL STUDIES

ERSTE ABTEILUNG
DER NAHE UND MITTLERE OSTEN
THE NEAR AND MIDDLE EAST

HERAUSGEGEBEN VON

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ZWÖLFTER BAND
THE LEGACY OF MUSLIM SPAIN



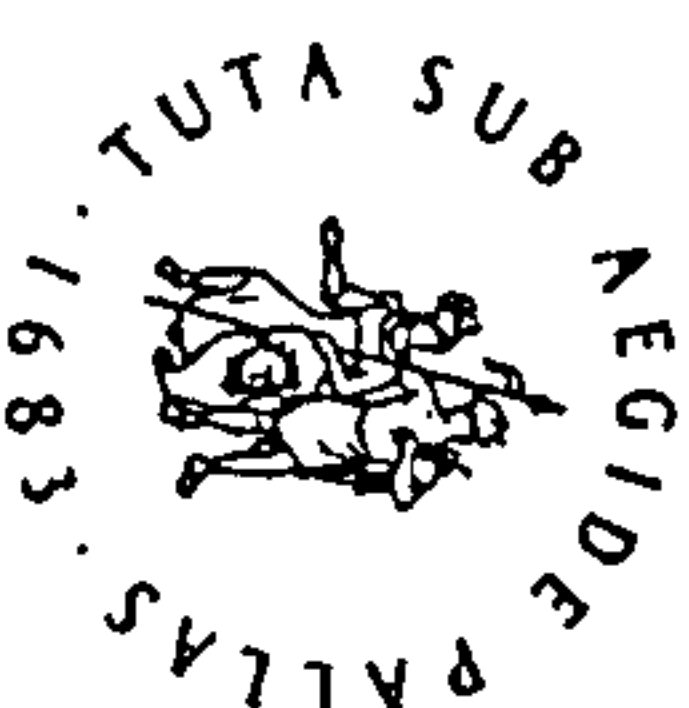
THE LEGACY OF MUSLIM SPAIN

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THE JEWS IN MUSLIM SPAIN

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I. *The Jews as dhimmis*

The Jewish community of Muslim Spain from the time of 'Abd al-Rahmān III (reigned 300/912-350/961) until the Almohads (after 535/1140) had a distinctive character among medieval Jewish communities. No other Jewish community produced as many Jews who achieved positions of status and even power in the non-Jewish world; and no other Jewish community produced such an extensive literary culture reflecting the deep impact of an intellectual life shared with non-Jews.

Some of the factors making up the uniqueness of al-Andalus were present in other Jewish communities in the Muslim world, but nowhere were they present in such concentration. Individual Jews in Iraq, Egypt and elsewhere had risen to power and wealth before the 4th/10th century, and would continue to do so long after the eclipse of al-Andalus. Jewish literature in the Muslim East had begun to reflect the influence of larger intellectual trends before the 4th/10th century, and would be permanently affected by what Jews learned from Muslims in the course of their long subjugation to Islam. But both conditions flowered most brilliantly in Muslim Spain between the mid-4th/10th and mid-6th/12th centuries. Nowhere in Christendom, certainly, did the conditions for the creation of such a community exist before the Renaissance.

The earlier history of the Jews in Spain did not prefigure this development in the slightest. Jews had inhabited Spain since Roman times, but they left no records that would enable us to describe these communities with any clarity. In the Visigothic period, from the reign of Sisibut (612-21), and especially under Egica (687-702), the Jews were repeatedly subjected to repressive legislation and forced conversion. The anti-Jewish legislation was not consistently enforced, for the same regulations had to be renewed repeatedly in successive reigns; but underlying this legislation was an attitude towards Judaism ingrained in Christianity since Augustine: Judaism was entitled to exist only so that Jews might bear witness, by their subjugation, to the truth of Christianity. Christianity had originally been preached by a Jew to other Jews; having rejected Jesus' mission, the Jews could expect no better than this degree of toleration. While Christianity respected the Jews' lives in principle, it also counted humbling them a virtue; thus, the repressive legislation had a theological sanction.

The principles governing the treatment of Jews under Islam were quite different. Muhammad had at first hoped to convert the Jews, but, although embittered by their rejection of his mission, he respected them as bearers of a revealed scripture. Thus he ordained that they be tolerated upon payment of the poll tax, along with Christians, also bearers of a sacred scripture. The members of these protected religions were called *dhimmis*; Islamic law came to regulate both their duties towards Islam and also the rights that they could demand, provided they abided by the rules governing their special status.

Theology and practice do not always correspond, and there were some exceptions, but until the 7th/13th century the Jews living under Islam fared better on the whole than those living under Christendom. For the Spanish Jews of the Visigothic kingdom in the century before the Muslim conquest of Spain, the prospect of living under the rule of Islam must have seemed very desirable; to the extent that they were aware of the advances of the Muslim armies, they can only have cheered that advance. The persistent reports that the Jews of Spain turned their cities over to the Muslim invaders do not stand up to close scrutiny, as has repeatedly been demonstrated; but the notion that they did so, which appears almost as a literary motif in medieval historiography, could very well reflect the Jews' political attitudes, if not their actions.¹

While sources for the early history and culture of Islamic Spain are fairly abundant, the history and culture of the Jews of Iberia from the time of the Muslim conquest until the 4th/10th century remain in near total obscurity. Only a few questions of religious law directed by Iberian rabbis to the rabbinic authorities of Iraq have survived.

II. *Jews in public life*

The Jewish community of al-Andalus bursts into view during the early period of the Andalusī Caliphate, established by 'Abd al-Rahmān III; but our picture of Jewish life, even in the two centuries of its glory, is not as rounded as we would like, for our sources are mainly literary ones emanating from the highest levels of Jewish society. The Cairo *geniza* has preserved documents that are helpful in reconstructing the economic and social life of the Mediterranean world in this period, and some of these documents pertain to Muslim Spain, either directly or by inference.² But we have nothing like the abundant communal records, Inquisition records and rabbinic responsa that permit a more rounded and lively reconstruction of Jewish life in Christian Spain from the 7th/13th to the end of the 9th/15th centuries. It would be misleading to try to extrapolate an image of the community as a whole, under Muslim rule, from what we know about a number of individual Jews, interesting and important as these individuals may have been.

The first of the individual Andalusí Jews who comes into view in the age of 'Abd al-Rahmān III already embodies many of the distinctive qualities of this culture. Hasday b. Shaprūt was a Jewish physician in the Caliph's court, who at various times held important diplomatic and financial responsibilities, as recorded in both Muslim and Jewish sources. It is instructive to compare Hasday's career with that of his younger contemporary Ya'qūb b. Killis, a courtier in the service of the Fātimid caliph al-Mu'izz. Ibn Killis was a Jew who had converted to Islam; while he maintained his personal connections with Jews, he made a point of dissociating himself from Judaism. Hasday's case was quite different: not only was he openly Jewish, but he was also a central figure in the Jewish community itself. We do not know whether the Hebrew title associated with his name, *nasi* ("prince"), denotes some official communal office, but we do observe him making use of his public position to look after the interests of the Jewish community—and not only the interests of the Jews of al-Andalus. Perhaps the most remarkable example is his letter, written in Hebrew, to Helena, the wife of the Byzantine emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, asking her to protect the Jews of Byzantium from persecution. Of paramount importance for later Judaism was Hasday's patronage of Hebrew letters and Jewish cultural institutions, as we shall see below in section III. In the totality of his activities he represents the type of the Andalusí Jewish courtier-rabbi, a type that would become more prominent in the *īd'ifa* period.

Ismā'īl b. Naghrīla (382-3/993-446-7/1055 or 447-8/1056), known in Hebrew as Samuel the Nagid, is the most spectacular example of this type. As a courtier of Habbūs, the Zīrid ruler of Granada, Ibn Naghrīla helped to secure the succession of the prince Bādīs, and thereafter played a central role in the Zīrid state until his death. Among his other activities, he accompanied the Granadan troops on their annual military campaigns, perhaps even as a general; his Hebrew poems and their Arabic superscriptions describe the battles, providing details of *īd'ifa* politics not known from other sources. Like Hasday, Ibn Naghrīla was also a central figure in the Jewish community. He bore the Hebrew title *Nagid* ("prince"), though again we do not know exactly what is the communal significance of the title. He not only supported Hebrew poetry and Talmudic scholarship, but was himself one of the most accomplished men of his time in both fields. His brilliant career made him a model held up to sons by ambitious Jewish fathers long after the end of the *īd'ifa* period.

If Ibn Naghrīla was, as said, the most spectacular of the courtier-rabbis, there were nevertheless others. We know of a certain Abraham, also in the Zīrid court of Granada; of an anonymous Jewish courtier in Almería; of Ishāq b. Hasday, in the Hūdīd court of Saragossa; of Abū Fadl b. Hasday, also among the Hūdīds; and of Abraham b. Mūhājir among the 'Abbādīds of Seville. Many of these dignitaries bore the title vizier, though to be sure this

was not nearly as exclusive a title as formerly, being distributed quite freely in the *īd'ifa* period. Other Jewish grandees, like the poet Moses b. Ezra, bore the title *sāhib al-shurta*, or chief of police. Some of these, particularly Abū Fadl b. Hasday, may have converted to Islam, but the apostates are less surprising than those who remained Jewish and active in Jewish communal affairs.

The Muslim rulers of Spain in the Umayyad, 'Āmirid and *īd'ifa* periods had a strong incentive to rely on Jews in diplomacy, finance and public administration, because the Jews could not aspire to ultimate political power, and therefore posed less of a risk to the established order than Muslims, who might themselves aspire to rule. Furthermore, unlike the Christians, their co-religionists in the neighbouring countries did not have states and armies that could pose a real threat to the Muslim states. The Jews might long and pray for the restoration of their ancestral state in Palestine, but, weak and scattered as they were, they could do nothing about its restoration, and there was no human power to which they could appeal to extricate them from Muslim sovereignty. Thus, while Christians and Jews were equally *dhimmis*, Christians were a potential fifth column while Jews were not. Finally, the Jews were ordinarily dependent on the government to protect them from the crowd and from religious extremists. There was thus a natural alliance between the Jews and the court. Jews were in a similar position, *mutatis mutandis*, during and after the *reconquista*, when Iberian Christian rulers often found it safer to employ Jews, who were not real contenders for power, than fellow Christians.

How was it possible for Jews to hold such positions when Islamic law prohibited *dhimmis* from exercising power over Muslims? Part of the answer may lie in the complaint, found in several sources, about religious laxity on the part of *īd'ifa* rulers. But this accusation is mostly heard in the period of the *reconquista*, when it served as a theological explanation for the downfall of Muslim Spain. It is important to remember that the population included members of many ethnic groups, and that, despite Islamic regulations against mixing between Muslims and non-Muslims, intracomunal social contacts were unavoidable, and even became quite natural. Further, the *īd'ifa* kingdoms were numerous and small, so that only a few talented and properly educated individuals were available for court services in each state. Finally, a good number of Jews who sought high posts must have converted to Islam. The names of the most prominent Jews have been preserved mostly in Jewish sources, which, quite naturally, were not interested in recording the names of apostates.

The position of the courtier-rabbi was far from secure. To be sure, the tenuousness of a courtier's career was proverbial, but the position of the Jewish courtier was even less secure than that of the average courtier, because his Jewishness could always become a political issue. This may be

observed in the case of Ibn Naghri'a, when the vizier of Zuhayr of Almeria exploited the presence of a Jewish vizier in Bādīs' court in his propaganda against the Zirids of Granada. Of course Zuhayr's vizier would have used any material to hand in such a campaign; but Ibn Naghri'a's Judaism was a ready-made issue. Furthermore, while there were benefits to the Jewish community in the prominence of such court Jews, there were also dangers. The fall of Jehoseph, Ibn Naghri'a's son and successor, in 459/1066 was a disaster for the community as a whole. Incited partly by a poem by Abū Ishāq al-Ibīrī, a *faqih* of Granada, the mob rioted against the Jews, killing thousands in the only such pogrom recorded in the history of Muslim Spain.³

III. *Judaeo-Arabic culture in al-Andalus*

One of the most remarkable developments within Andalusī Jewry was its syncretic literary culture that brought together Arabic and Hebrew ideas and literary forms. The Jewish courtier-rabbis, men like Ibn Shaprūt and Ibn Naghri'a, played a major role in fostering this literature.

The Jewish courtiers would not have been able to achieve their public positions if they had not been prepared for them by an Arabic education similar to that enjoyed by their Muslim peers. It was both impossible for a non-Muslim to receive formal training in Islamic religious studies and undesirable from a Jewish point of view; but the Arabic humanities—*adab* and the sciences—were available to anyone who knew Arabic and could afford to study. Language was no problem, for the Jews spoke the same vernacular Arabic and Romance as did the majority of Christians and Muslims, and members of the élite could afford to provide their sons with teachers. The same intellectual openness to such studies had to come from both sides, for rabbinic Judaism shared with orthodox Islam a strong religious prejudice against the study of "Greek wisdom". But the tolerant atmosphere prevailing within the Muslim intellectual class rubbed off on the Jewish élite as well, making them both tolerant of and eager for such studies; in this period we even hear of Jews and Muslims studying together under the same teacher. Thus, beginning in the 4th/10th century, we hear of individual Jews like Hasday who had, besides a traditional Jewish education in Bible and Talmud, the Arabic education of an *adīb* or a *faḥṣāṣīf*. The polymath soon became an honoured figure in Andalusī Jewry.

Hasday's Jewish circle joined the larger society by living as Arabised a life as possible, within the limits imposed on the one hand by Islamic exclusiveness and on the other by Jewish loyalty. At the same time they imported the style of the larger society into the Jewish community and created new Jewish institutions modelled on Arabic ones. The latter tendency resulted in the creation of a kind of Jewish *adab*, with Hebrew as its language.

The Jews of al-Andalus adopted the classicising concept of '*arabiyya*, but gave it a Jewish twist: they made Biblical Hebrew the Jewish equivalent for

Classical Arabic and accorded their language a new status as a cultural monument above and beyond its traditional status as "the holy tongue" (*leshon haqodesh*). In the process they rejected both the Hebrew of rabbinic literature and that of synagogue poetry, products of a millennium of the language's development, in order to revive the language of the Hebrew Bible. Grammarians laboured at analysing Biblical Hebrew in the light of techniques and concepts learned from Arabic grammarians and lexicographers; secretaries adopted Arabic epistolary style for formal correspondence in Hebrew; and secular poetry in Hebrew made its first appearance since biblical times.

A great breakthrough in the writing of Hebrew secular poetry was achieved by Dunash ben Labrat, who entered the service of Hasday after having been a disciple of the famous rabbi Saadiah ben Joseph in Baghdad. Already, in the East, Dunash had devised a way to imitate the prosody of classical Arabic poetry ('*arūḍ*) in Hebrew; his innovation displaced such forms as had already been devised for secular Hebrew poetry by contemporaries such as Menahem ben Saruq, another protégé of Hasday.

The creation of secular poetry in Hebrew was thus not just a literary but a social development, part and parcel of the tendency of the Andalusī Jewish aristocracy to adopt Arabic social institutions. At the same time, by using Hebrew rather than Arabic as the linguistic medium, the group was able to turn this Arabic institution into an expression of its own communal cohesiveness and ethnic pride. This pride in the Iberian Jewish community's literary achievement is strongly echoed in Moses b. Ezra's book about poetry, *Kitāb al-muhādāra wa 'l-mudhākara*, and in Judah al-Ḥarizi's Hebrew *maqāmār*.

Poetry came to be as important to the social life of the Jewish aristocracy in al-Andalus as it was to the Muslims. The leading Jewish figures composed *qasīdas* and *muwašṣṣahāt* in Hebrew, improvised occasional verses, took pleasure in poetic competition and employed poets to compose *madīḥ*, *marḥiyya* and *hijā'* and official correspondence in rhymed prose. A tiny class of professional secretaries and poets arose to provide for their needs, but many of the leaders of the community were themselves gifted poets, and nearly anyone with any pretensions to an education tried his hand. Four large Hebrew *divāns* and thousands of other poems have come down to us from the period before the Almohads, attesting to the tremendous prestige of Hebrew poetry within this social class. Moses b. Ezra, the author of one of the great *divāns*, also wrote two books in Arabic on the theory of Hebrew poetry, only one of which has been published.⁴

The first of the great poets was Ibn Naghri'a himself. He recorded the main political and military events of his career, together with his personal reflections on these events, in three large volumes of poetry. Significantly, these collections were assembled by his own young sons at his orders; for he saw this assignment as part of their education and initiation into the manners of a Jewish grandee. The inclusion of secular poetry in the conception of

Jewish education was itself a notable innovation within Judaism, having arisen in direct imitation of an Arabic institution.

Not everyone in the Jewish community was pleased with these Arabising developments, and Ibn Naghrija was criticised by pietists for writing secular love poetry. But even some of the main exponents of the culture evinced a degree of ambivalence towards poetry. Moses b. Ezra's book on poetry reflects some second thoughts on the propriety of secular Hebrew poetry, and may have been partly intended as a defence of the whole enterprise. Judah Halevi, the last of the poets who left large *diwāns*, purportedly vowed to stop writing poetry altogether. In old age he left al-Andalus in order to make the pilgrimage to Palestine, denouncing the courtly culture in which he himself had been a brilliant participant.⁵

From all that has been said above about Jewish culture in al-Andalus it is clear that the Jews' knowledge of Arabic was a key factor. This was not unique to the Jews of al-Andalus. As in the rest of the Muslim world, the Jews spoke the same Arabic as did their neighbours, and they were perfectly content to write Arabic as well, even when dealing with communal or religious subjects. Accordingly, there is still extant a great Jewish literature in Arabic deriving from every part of the Muslim world. To be sure, the Arabic of this literature is not the classical language of Arabic belles-lettres. The Jews had little incentive to accept the Arabic idea of 'arabiyya, with its implied claim of cultural superiority; they created their own version of that idea, using Hebrew. When they wrote Arabic they did not generally use the classical language, but wrote more or less as they spoke. Better educated writers writing in a more formal vein would tone up their style and approximate to classical grammar; but ordinary Jewish written Arabic is a valuable record of Middle Arabic.

This Middle Arabic spoken and written by the Jews was not a specifically Jewish language that distinguished them from their Muslim neighbours; it differed only in employing Hebrew rather than Arabic script. This was probably done to simplify communication within the community, as Hebrew literacy was far more widespread among the Jews than Arabic literacy. The same phenomenon occurred in many other Jewish communities, both those in which the language spoken by the Jews eventually developed into a different language from that of the host culture (Yiddish and Judezmo) and those in which they did not (medieval Judaeo-Arabic, Judaeo-Persian). As in other communities, they employed many Hebrew loan words when writing on religious themes, though we find them sometimes replacing Hebrew religious terms with Islamic ones, like *qādī* for *dāyyān*, *sharī'a* for *mišva*, and even *Qur'ān* for *Tora*.

The Jews in Arabic-speaking territories had no compunction about using Arabic, even when writing on religious subjects. In the Middle Ages, Arabic-speaking rabbis wrote their responsa on religious law, their books on Jewish

theology, and certainly all books dealing with pure philosophical and scientific subjects, in Arabic. In Muslim Spain, only secular and religious poetry or ornate prose were written in Hebrew. The situation in Arabic-speaking lands was thus quite different from that in the Christian territories of Europe, where all writing pertaining to internal communal affairs or religious matters was in Hebrew, and where Jews almost never knew Latin and had no access to high culture.

IV. Breakdown under the Almohads

The Almoravid invasions had caused some disruption of the Jewish Golden Age, but the Almohad invasions effectively ended it. In line with their fanatical variety of orthodoxy, the Almohads simply outlawed religions other than Islam in their domains; nearly three-and-a-half centuries before Ferdinand and Isabella, it was they who first imposed on the Jews the choice of conversion or death, thereby creating the first large group of crypto-Jews. This degree of intolerance may have been an isolated episode in the history of the Jews under Islam, but it had a permanent effect on the Jewish community.

Some actually did convert. One famous convert of the period was Ibrahim b. Sahl al-Ishbili (d. ca. 657/1259), a courtier under the Almohads, and an important Arabic poet. But large numbers fled to the Christian territories in the North, their attitudes to Christianity and Islam now reversed in favour of Christianity. Judah Halevi had left just before the invasion, apparently motivated not by political prescience but by personal religious convictions. At the same time, Abraham b. Ezra, a grammarian, philosopher, scientist and Bible commentator, left to embark on a life of wandering. He carried Andalusī Jewish learning and literary taste to Christian Europe, so that we soon find French rabbis who know nothing of Arabic culture attempting to write synagogue poetry using the 'arid system. More importantly, Abraham b. Ezra reached England in his wanderings, where his mathematical works were eventually translated into Latin.

Other exiles settled in Provence where they too played a role in mediating the peculiar Andalusī Jewish intellectual life and style to a new community innocent of Arabic. When still a boy, Maimonides was taken by his father, a Jewish judge in Córdoba, to Morocco; here this distinguished family may have pretended to profess Islam until they were able to leave for Palestine, and then Egypt. Once arrived in Fātimid Egypt, Maimonides embarked on a career as physician and rabbi. He wrote on medical topics in Arabic. He also wrote important religious works in Arabic, including his *Dalālat al-hā'irīn* ("Guide to the Perplexed"), which was destined to become the classic work in Jewish philosophy ever after. In Hebrew he wrote the work that he regarded as his true masterpiece, the *Mishne tora*. This compendium of Jewish law shows, in its organisational principles and theoretical statements, the

extensive influence of Islamic philosophy, and even its elegant rabbinic style echoes the Arabic language of the author's milieu. It has continued to occupy a central position in Jewish law. Decades after Maimonides' flight from the Almoravid West, when living in prosperity and honour as a physician in the Ayyūbid court and head of the Jewish community of Egypt (*ra'is al-yahūd*), he would write in his *Epistle to Yemen* that no power had ever been more hostile to Judaism than Islam. Yet his pride in his Andalusī heritage is observable throughout his writings. In the variety of his public activities, in his combination of religious orthodoxy and philosophical-scientific orientation, in everything but his disdain for poetry, he remained the very model of the Andalusī rabbi.

V. *Judaeo-Arabic culture during the reconquista*

From the mid-6th/12th to the mid-7th/13th century the Andalusī Jewish elite was to some extent able to replicate its style of life in Christian Spain. As the Christian conquests reached deeper into Muslim territory, Muslims themselves had control of the country wrested from them, but Jews who had been attached to Muslim courts were simply kept in place, and Jewish refugees in the North were welcome there as courtiers. Not only were they experienced in government administration and diplomacy, but, as before, they were not contenders for ultimate power and were thus more trustworthy than Christians. They were well-informed about the territories which the Christian kings were bent on conquering, and had good reason to be hostile to the Almoravids. Their knowledge of the Arabic language was indispensable for dealing with the masses of Arabic-speakers who now came under Christian control, and for negotiations with Muslim rulers. As in other Christian lands, the Jews were outside the feudal system; they were completely dependent on the ruler to guarantee their rights and to protect them against the masses and the Church. Thus the Christian rulers found the Jewish elite both useful and reliable. Before long the Jewish courtier class had reconstituted itself, partly out of the same families that had provided the old. In Castile, Toledo immediately became a major centre of Jewish culture. There Joseph Ferrizuel, known as "Cidellus" ("the little Cid") served Alfonso VI, as, later, would a whole series of Jewish courtiers; one of the most distinguished of these was Isaac ben Zadok, known as Don Cag de la Maleha, under Alfonso X. Similarly, in Aragon, Sheshet Benveniste served in the court of Alfonso II and Pedro II. The Jewish communities were allowed considerable autonomy, and, as before, the officially recognised heads of the community were drawn from the courtier class.

In a broader sense, the Jewish courtiers were desirable as the bearers and mediators of the culture of prestige among the far less sophisticated knights and clerics of the Christian kingdoms. Arabic retained its status well into the

13th century, and in the meantime its tradition was maintained in Christian Spain by Jews. The Jews thus found themselves in the anomalous position of being the respected bearers of Arabic culture, when the actual creators of that culture were under subjugation. In this role the Jews were active participants in the wave of translation into Latin of philosophical and scientific writings through which Arabic science at this time first began to reach Latin Christendom. Some of the translators were apostates like Petrus Alfonsi (b. 453-4/1062); others, like Abraham bar Hiyya, remained Jewish. A doubtful case is Avendauth, who may be identical with the Jewish historian and philosopher Abraham b. Dā'ūd. In most cases the Jewish translator, who knew Arabic, worked together with a Christian scholar, who knew Latin.

Hebrew literature fell silent for the space of about a generation; then, towards the end of the century, new poets and literary figures emerge. Nor did the influence of Arabic literature on Hebrew suddenly stop. Just at this time of relocation in Christian lands, Hebrew literary prose appeared, in the form of narratives in rhymed prose with short poems inserted, a pattern derived from the Arabic *maqāma*. To be sure, the first example of this kind of writing in Hebrew had appeared just before the Almoravid cataclysm, at about the time the Arabic *maqāmār* of al-Ḥarīrī reached al-Andalus, where they were destined to become enormously popular. But the Hebrew narrative, which seems to have gotten its start in the *maqāma*, bloomed in Christian Spain as if Hebrew writers were still an integral part of Arabic literary life.⁶

Yet for all their rhetorical similarity to the *maqāmār* of the Arab East, most of the Hebrew fictions in rhymed prose are different in ways that seem to link them to the nascent Romance literatures. One of the outstanding works is *The Book of Delight* by Joseph b. Zabara of Barcelona, a lengthy continuous narrative that displays features linking it to both cultures. Particularly in its treatment of character, this work and other Hebrew narratives of the period recall the romance more than they do the *maqāma*. To be sure, the *maqāmār* of the Arabic writers of al-Andalus have not yet been sufficiently studied to permit a final judgment on this question, but at the present stage of research, and with the important exception of Judah al-Ḥarīzī, we may generalise that, though the Hebrew narrative prose of the period seems, in its form, to look back to the symbiosis with the Arabic-speaking world, in theme it looks forward to a potential new symbiosis with Christendom. Certainly such a shift seemed possible at the end of the 12th century.

In any case, the Almoravid persecution had cut Andalusī Jewish culture off at the root. The Jews of Iberia would retain their link with Arabic for another century, but the signs of change were apparent almost as soon as the new Hebrew literature emerged in the triumphant Christian kingdoms. One such sign is the abrupt cessation of Judaeo-Arabic literature in Spain, as, from the mid-12th century on, Hebrew predominated as the language of Jewish books there.

Catalonia had never been deeply Arabised to begin with, and had close links with southern France. Here the Andalusis soon lost their connection with Arabic and came under the influence of intellectual and cultural trends that had gotten their start north of the Pyrenees. By the 13th century the Jewish culture of Catalonia, and of all Aragon (the former was absorbed by the latter in 531-2/1137) had almost completely lost its Arabic cast. While philosophy and science were still being studied (now from Hebrew rather than Arabic texts), and while Arabic-style secular poetry continued to be written (by such poets as Meshullam Dapiera), the emphasis was now on the Talmud, which was studied according to Northern European methods, and Kabbala. At the same time individual Jews continued to serve the Aragonese government as Arabic interpreters.

Castilian Jewry retained its ties with Arabic and Arabic culture longer. Toledo had been a major centre of Arabic civilisation prior to its reconquest in 477/1085, and Arabic continued to be spoken there long after it was forgotten in Aragon. Jews in Castile continued to bear Arabic traditions: Meir Abulafia, a famous Toledan rabbi, wrote Hebrew secular poetry in Arabic forms, introducing his poems with Arabic superscriptions; he even translated a short poem by al-Mu'tamid b. 'Abbād into Hebrew. Abraham b. al-Fakhkhār, a Jewish grandee, wrote Arabic poetry considered good enough to have been transmitted by Muslim sources. One Arabic couplet by him is addressed to Alfonso X El Sabio. Judah al-Harizi translated the *maqāmāt* of al-Hariri into Hebrew, along with a number of Judeo-Arabic works, then wrote his own collection of Hebrew *maqāmāt*. Here he reverted to the narrative type of the pure Arabic *maqāma*, showing little interest in the type of narrative cultivated by Jews of eastern Iberia, and even by his townsman Jacob ben Eliazar. Al-Harizi left Spain and travelled, via Provence, to the Muslim East, where he was probably more comfortable culturally.⁷

Under Alfonso X El Sabio Jewish activity in the field of translation took a new direction, for the king encouraged the growth of Castilian, and under his patronage many works were translated into the vernacular.⁸ Hebrew literature also flourished. Todros Abulafia, a Jewish man of letters who was close to Alfonso's court Jews, left a large *divān*, including a Hebrew couplet addressed to the King. His Hebrew poetry is mostly in forms derived from Arabic, but he experimented, also, with verse forms derived from Romance.

As the *reconquista* progressed into the mid-7th/13th century, the Christian rulers found themselves less in need of Jewish administrators and courtiers. With the development of local culture, Arabic declined in prestige, and, as Christians acquired the linguistic skills, administrative experience and scientific training, the Jews gradually lost their role as indispensable administrators and mediators of Arabic culture. At the same time, the anti-Jewish pressure from the masses and the Church mounted; by the end of the century Spain was far less hospitable to Jews than it had been at the beginning.

Jewish fortunes rose and fell until 793-4/1391, when pogroms and mass conversions heralded the collapse of the Jewish community. But individual members of the Jewish élite continued to uphold the Arabic scholarly tradition and the Hebrew literary culture that was so closely tied to it. Even in the 15th century we hear of Jews translating Arabic texts into Latin or Hebrew, and secular Hebrew poetry cast in Arabic meters and rhyme schemes was written in Spain right down to the expulsion of 897/1492.

Meanwhile, in what was left of Muslim Spain, the Jewish community had been reduced by the Almohads to insignificance, never to recover. Jews returned to Granada after the establishment of the Nasrid dynasty, but we have hardly any information about them, and after the anti-Jewish riots and forced conversions that raged throughout Christian Spain in 793-4/1391, many *convertos* also made their way there, so as to be able to return to Judaism. The last Hebrew poet of Spain was a Granadan Jew, Saadiah b. Danan, who was among the Jewish exiles of 897/1492.

After the edict of expulsion took effect on August 1, 1492, Jewish life in Spain for all practical purposes came to an end; many Jews chose to remain in Spain as Marranos, or crypto-Jews, but in their culture the effect of the Judeo-Arabic symbiosis was attenuated. On the other hand, those who left Spain carried with them the aristocratic heritage of Jewish letters and philosophy that had its roots in Arab al-Andalus.

¹ While under Muslim rule, the Jews must have been glad to claim that they had assisted in the Muslim conquest; in the *reconquista* it was the Christians who charged the Jews with having done so. Similar claims and charges arose in connection with other areas of the Muslim conquests. The entire motif appears to be an invention arising out of medieval polemics. See Norman Roth, "The Jews and the Muslim Conquest of Spain", *Jewish Social Studies*, 37, 1976, pp. 145-48; David Wasserstein, *The Rise and Fall of the Party-Kings: Politics and Society in Islamic Spain, 1002-1086*, Cambridge (Mass.)-London, 1985, p. 194, n. 7.

² The *geniza* is a huge cache of manuscripts and manuscript fragments, dating from as early as the 10th century and coming down to modern times, which was found in a Cairo synagogue in the 19th century. For a detailed and authoritative description and evaluation, see S. D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, I, Berkeley, 1967, pp. 1-28.

³ According to 'Abd Allāh b. Bādis, the ruler of Granada at the time of the Almoravid conquest, the entire Jewish population of Granada was killed. See his memoirs in E. Lévi-Provengal, "Les 'mémoires' de 'Abd Allāh, dernier roi zind de Granada", *Al-Andalus*, 3, 1935, p. 273; trans. *ibid.*, pp. 300-01.

⁴ Besides the *Kitāb al-muhādāra wa 'l-muḥākāra*, mentioned above, he also wrote the *Maqālat al-hadiqa fi ma'nā 'l-majāz wa 'l-haqīqa*, which is still in manuscript.

⁵ See Raymond P. Scheindlin, "Rabbi Moshe Ibn Ezra on the Legitimacy of Poetry", *Medievalia et Humanistica*, N. S. 7, 1976, pp. 101-15; Ross Brann, *The Compunctious Poet: Cultural Ambiguity and Hebrew Poetry*, Baltimore-London, 1991, especially pp. 84-118.

⁶ For a few examples, see "Asher in the Harem", "The Misogynist" and "The Sorcerer", trans. Raymond P. Scheindlin, in *Rabbinic Fantasy*, ed. David Stern and Mark Mirsky, Philadelphia, 1990, pp. 253-311.

⁷ His *maqāmāt* were translated by V. E. Reichert, *The Talkemoni*, Jerusalem, 1965-73, 2 vols.

⁸ For a survey of the translators and their activities, see Norman Roth, "Jewish Collaborators in Alfonso's Scientific Work", in *Emperor of Culture: Alfonso X The Learned of Castile and His Thirteenth-Century Renaissance*, ed. Robert I. Burns, S. J., Philadelphia, 1990, pp. 59-71.

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THE POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY
OF THE MORISCOS

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INTRODUCTION

The history of al-Andalus, of Islam in Spain, stretches over nine centuries, from 927/11 to 1611. The final "Morisco" period, lasting for a little over or a little under a century (depending on how precisely we define it), may at first appear to be one of unmitigated decadence as compared with what went before. Certainly it produced no manifestations of high culture, whether in the arts or in literature or in philosophy; one could hardly expect masterpieces from a people subject to persecution. What is more, the Morisco community was brought to a sudden end by the mass expulsion of 1609-11; there are no remnants left anywhere in the Iberian Peninsula. Yet it would be wrong not to pay close attention to this final period, for if we examine with care the record of what happened to the diverse Muslim communities of the regions of Spain, we cannot but admire a people so stubbornly determined to preserve its identity, its culture, to resist the ideological onslaught mounted against it by the most powerful state in the world at that time. What makes a proper understanding of the final stages of Islam's presence in Spain desirable is, however, more than a matter of curious details in the field of cultural history. The quite sudden process whereby Spain's well-established Muslims were rejected and extruded as part of the larger process of the formation of Spain as a unitary nation-state will never be forgotten. Stories of families of Hispano-Arab descent who preserve with pride the keys to their houses in Spain may belong to the realm of myth, but the myth is a powerful living reality. Inevitably the reaction of the whole Islamic world to the nation-states of Europe will always be coloured by what went on in 1609. We need to know what that was.

"Morisco" is a term in wide use among modern historians. To cite the definition given by E. Lévi-Provençal in the first edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (s.v.), it is "the name given in Spain to the Muslims who remained in the country after the capture of Granada by the Catholic [Monarchs] Ferdinand and Isabella, on January 2, 1492, and the dethronement of the last of the Nasrid dynasty." That wording omits one vital aspect of the meaning of the term. Although it is couched in encoded language, it may be useful to look at how the *Dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy* sets about defining *Morisco*: "applied to Moors who stayed on and were baptised after Spain was re-stored" (my translation from the 1956 edition; s.v.). This mentions the es-