THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

“ALL THE KINGS OF ARABIA ARE SEEKING YOUR COUNSEL AND ADVICE”: INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE BETWEEN JEWS AND MUSLIMS IN THE LATER MIDDLE ISLAMIC PERIOD

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For my father

and in memory of my mother

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ABBREVIATIONS

Ar.	Arabic
BT	Babylonian Talmud
EI[2]	*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., Leiden: Brill, 1960-2004.
EJIW	*Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World*, Norman Stillman, ed., Leiden: Brill, 2010.
EQ	*Encyclopedia of the Qur'ān*, Jane Dammen McAuliffe, ed., Leiden; Boston, 2001-2006.
Goitein, *Med. Soc.*	S.D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967-1988, 5 vols, with index volume, 1993.
Heb.	Hebrew
HJMR	*A History of Jewish-Muslim Relations: From the Origins to the Present Day*, Abdelwahab Meddeb and Benjamin Stora, eds.; Jane Marie Todd and Michael B. Smith, trans., Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013.
Kraemer, *Maimonides*	Joel L. Kraemer, *Maimonides: The Life and World of One of Civilization's Greatest Minds*, New York: Doubleday, 2008.
Lane, *Lexicon*	Edward William Lane and Stanley Lane-Poole, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, London, Edinburgh, Williams and Norgate, 1863-1893.
Lit.	Literally
Q.	Qur'ān
R.	Rabbi
Stroumsa, *Maimonides*	Sarah Stroumsa, *Maimonides in His World: Portrait of a Mediterranean Thinker*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009.

BIBLE BOOK ABBREVIATIONS

Genesis	Gen.
Exodus	Ex.
Leviticus	Lev.
Numbers	Num.
Deuteronomy	Deut.
Joshua	Josh.
Judges	Judg.
Ruth	Rth.
1 Samuel	1 Sam.
2 Samuel	2 Sam.

1 Kings	1 Kgs.
2 Kings	2 Kgs.
1 Chronicles	1 Chron.
2 Chronicles	2 Chron.
Ezra	Ezra
Nehemiah	Neh.
Esther	Esth.
Job	Job
Psalm	Psa.
Proverbs	Prov.
Ecclesiastes	Ecc.
Song of Songs	Song
Isaiah	Isa.
Jeremiah	Jer.
Lamentations	Lam.
Ezekiel	Ezek.
Daniel	Dan.
Hosea	Hos.
Joel	Joel
Amos	Amos
Obadiah	Obad.
Jonah	Jon.
Micah	Micah
Nahum	Nah.
Habakkuk	Hab.
Zephaniah	Zeph.
Haggai	Hag.
Zechariah	Zech.
Malachi	Mal.

ABSTRACT. "ALL THE KINGS OF ARABIA ARE SEEKING YOUR COUNSEL AND ADVICE": INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE BETWEEN JEWS AND MUSLIMS IN THE LATER MIDDLE ISLAMIC PERIOD

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In his 1955 survey of Jewish-Arab relations, *Jews and Arabs: Their Contacts through the Ages*, S.D. Goitein, a leading scholar of Jewish history in the Medieval Islamic lands, gives almost no attention to the Later Islamic Middle Period (thirteenth-fifteenth century). In fact, Goitein concluded that in the thirteenth century "Arabs faded out from world history, and Oriental Jews from Jewish history." Thus, he did not consider the history of Jews in the Islamic lands to be of any significance until the modern era (starting in 1800, according to his periodization). Islamic and Jewish histories were perceived to be intertwined in the pre-thirteenth century into what Goitein called 'Jewish-Arab symbiosis,' an idea that has been much popularized in later scholarship as the 'Judeo-Muslim symbiosis.' In this paradigm, Jews and Muslims achieved the highest intellectual, cultural, and scientific achievements due to the tolerant character of the 'Arab' Muslim rule, a character that was lost gradually due to the rise to power of non-Arab peoples within the Islamic lands (the Mamluks in Egypt and Syria, and the Almohads in the Islamic West). This dissertation wishes to challenge the 'decline theory' regarding Jewish life in the 'post-classical' era of Islam through the examination of three treatises from Egypt and the Maghrib. It argues that traditional periodization of Islamic history affected the historiography of Jewish life under medieval Islam, and that by studying the 'Jewish-Arab symbiosis' outside the confines of 'classical' Islam, a different image of medieval Jewish history could be reconstructed.

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INTRODUCTION

I. On Periodization and Its Implications for the Historiography of Jews under Medieval Islam

With the emergence of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in nineteenth century Germany,[1] Jewish historians situated the apogee of medieval Jewish history in the Islamic period before c. 1250, mostly in Muslim Spain between 950-1150, and more specifically, in the period they defined as the 'Golden Age'[2] of Spain, or the 'Golden Age of Spanish Jewry.'[3] This paradigm emphasized 'great men' in Jewish history under Islamic rule, such as Solomon ibn Gabirol, Judah ha-Levi, and Maimonides. In particular, it eulogized the *tolerant* culture of the Umayyad emir and caliph of Córdoba, 'Abd al-Raḥmān III (r. 912-961),[4] and after the fall of the Umayyad regime in 1030, the period of the Party Kingdoms (*mulūk al-ṭawā'if*) until the rise of the Almohads (*al-Muwḥḥidūn*) around 1150.[5] It was a non-Jewish German scholar who termed Jewish history in Spain as a 'Golden Age,' Franz Delitzsch,[6] and Jewish historians have picked up this term and have been using it since then.[7] As Aaron Hughes observed,

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[1] See George Y. Kohler, "Judaism Buried or Revitalized? *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in Nineteenth-Century Germany - Impact, Actuality, and Applicability Today," in *Maḥshevet Yisra'el ve-emunat Yisra'el* [Jewish Thought and Jewish Belief], Daniel J. Lasker, ed. (Beer Sheva: Ben Gurion University of the Negev Press, 2012), pp. 27-63.

[2] German: *Goldenes Zeitalter*.

[3] Originally, the term 'Golden Age' was coined by the Greek poet Hesiod in his *Works and Days* (c. 700 B.C.E.) to refer to the first age of humanity out of five: Golden, Silver, Bronze, Heroic, and Iron, and describing a deterioration from the first age to the present. See the discussion in Peter Smith, "History and the Individual in Hesiod's Myth of Five Races," *The Classical World*, 74, no. 3 (1980), pp. 145-163.

[4] *EI*[2], "Abd al-Raḥmān" (E. Lévi-Provençal).

[5] *EI*[2], "Mulūk al-Ṭawā'if, 2. in Muslim Spain" (D.J. Wasserstein). On the Almohads, see the discussion below.

[6] Franz Delitzsch (1819-1890), German Lutheran theologian and Hebraist. On his complex attitude towards Judaism and his trials in converting Jews to Christianity, see Susannah Heschel, *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 194-198; Alan Levenson, "Missionary Protestants as Defenders and Detractors of Judaism: Franz Delitzsch and Hermann Strack," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 92 (2002), pp. 390-394.

[7] For this idea in contemporary literature, see for example Raymond P. Scheindlin, "The Jews in Muslim Spain," in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, Salma Khadra Jayyusi, ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1992), pp. 188, 195;

> [T]he creation of the "golden age" of Spanish Jewry was directed at the Prussian authorities and other critics of Judaism. Implicit here was that whenever Jews were historically granted emancipation, they become active and productive members of society. At this point in history, it is important to remember that Jews were not only gradually being accepted into German society and were for the most part, regarded with extreme suspicion. The tradition of a "golden age" in Muslim Spain was in large part the result of a romantic and ultimately distorted reading, one that put modern assumptions about freedom and equality onto a period were but protected minorities and who were religiously and socially subservient to Muslims.[8]

This romantic approach is best illustrated in the works of Abraham Geiger (1810-1874)[9] and Heinrich Graetz (1817-1891).[10] Geiger praised the spiritual and intellectual

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idem, "Merchants and Intellectuals, Rabbis and Poets: Judeo-Arabic Culture in the Golden Age of Islam," in *Cultures of the Jews: A New History*, David Biale, ed. (New York: Schocken, 2002), pp. 313-386; David J. Wasserstein, "The Muslims and the Golden Age of the Jews in al-Andalus," *Israel Oriental Studies*, 17 (1997), pp. 179-196; *idem*, "A Family Story: Ambiguities of Jewish Identity in Medieval Islam," in *Islamic Cultures, Islamic Contexts: Essays in Honor of Professor Patricia Crone*, Behnam Sadeghi et al., eds. (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2015), p. 516: "Along with a handful of others – Hellenistic Alexandria, Talmudic Babylonia, the Hassidic world of Eastern Europe, perhaps modern America and Israel – the Golden Age in Spain stands out for creativity and originality. Like most of these others, it also demands attention for its openness to its cultural, social, and political environment and its inclusiveness."

[8] Aaron W. Hughes, "The 'Golden Age' of Muslim Spain: Religious Identity and the Invention of a Tradition in Modern Jewish Studies," in *Historicizing 'Tradition' in the Study of Religion*, Steven Engler and Gregory P. Grieve, eds. (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), pp. 52-53. On the history of the term, the 'Golden Age of Jewish Jewry,' see Jane S. Gerber, "Towards an Understanding of the Term: 'The Golden Age' as an Historical Reality," in *The Heritage of the Jews of Spain: Proceedings of the First International Congress, Tel Aviv, July 1991*, Aviva Doron, ed. (Tel Aviv: Levinsky College of Education Pub. House, 1994), pp. 15-22; Ned Curthoys, "Diasporic Visions: Al-Andalus in the German-Jewish Imaginary," *Arena Journal*, 33/34 (2009), pp. 110-138; Menhem Ben-Sasson, "Al-Andalus: The So-Called 'Golden Age' of Spanish Jewry – A Critical View," in *The Jews of Europe in the Middle Ages (Tenth to Fifteenth Centuries*). *Proceedings of the International Symposium Held at Speyer, 20-25 October 2002*, Christoph Cluse, ed. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), pp. 123-137. On the attitude towards the Sepharadic (Hispano-Jewish) heritage among German-Jews, see John M. Efron, *German Jewry and the Allure of the Sephardic* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2016).

[9] Geiger is known as the intellectual founder of Reform Judaism, and as a leading scholar in Islamic Studies. See Jacob Lassner, "A Nineteenth-Century Jewish Reformer on the Origins of Islam," in *The Jewish Discovery of Islam: Studies in Honor of Bernard Lewis*, Martin Kramer, ed. (Tel Aviv: The Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Tel Aviv University, 1999), pp. 103-135; Heschel, *Abraham Geiger*, pp. 23-49; *idem*, "Abraham Geiger and the Emergence of Jewish Philoislamism," in *"Im vollen Licht der Geschichte": Die Wissenschaft des Judentums und die Anfänge der kritischen Koranforschung*, Dirk Hartwig, Walter Homolka, Michael J. Marx and Angelika Neuwirth, eds.

achievements of medieval Judaism in what he considered to be the dark ages of rabbinic tradition. Moreover, he contrasted these achievements to the intellectual bareness of Ashkenazi Jewry in Eastern and Northern Europe. While Ashkenazi Jews are characterized with degeneration, Spanish Jews are responsible for the revival of the Hebrew language, and for significant innovations in science, philosophy, and poetry. On the 'Golden Age of Spain,' Geiger writes:

> What magnificent results that period offers to us! Science is not only nurtured, it is enriched in every relation. Knowledge of the Hebrew language rises into science and attains a degree which has not been passed until the last century.[11] Interpretation and explanation of the Scripture enter deep into its meaning and stimulate the greatest problems. Philosophy becomes common property, and though it is not creative, it is yet ennobling and enlightening.[12]

Graetz, in a similar manner, regarded the 'Golden Age of Spain' one of the highlights of Jewish history up to his days. He contrasted the history of medieval European Jewry to Jewish history under Islam, and considered the Islamic time to be the classical period in Jewish history. This period, that is exemplified by great men such as Samuel ha-Nagid and Maimonides, represents the zenith of Jewish ingenuity. Graetz also referred to the European view of the Middle Ages as a time of backwardness by pointing that during the period of "darkness to the descendants of the sons of Japheth (the European peoples), the light of knowledge has risen among the tents of Shem [i.e. the Jewish people]."[13]

(Würzburg: Ergon, 2008), pp. 65-86.

[10] Considered to be the greatest Jewish historian of the nineteenth-century. See John M. Efron, "From Mitteleuropa to the Middle East: Orientalism through a Jewish Lens," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 94 (2004), pp. 500-508; Michael Brenner, *Prophets of the Past: Interpreters of Jewish History*, Steven Rendall, trans. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010), pp. 53-91.

[11] I.e. the nineteenth century.

[12] Cited in Hughes, "The 'Golden Age' of Muslim Spain," p. 61.

[13] Cited in Miriam Frenkel, "The Historiography of the Jews in the Muslim Countries in the Middle Ages: Landmarks and Prospects" [Heb.], *Pe'amim*, 92 (2002), p. 25 (my translation from the Hebrew). The

It was not only (Muslim) Spain, however, that attracted the attention of Jewish historians who searched for the Jewish highpoint in pre-modern times, and found it mostly in the Islamic period that started with Muḥammad's prophecy in Arabia (c. 610-632), and ended, as mentioned above, around 1250, the so-called 'classical period' of Islam.[14] It is usually the Arab component of Islam that is emphasized in the scholarship of 'classical' Islam, to the exclusion of Persian, Turkish, or other cultures, thus sometimes being referred as 'Arab Islam.' This concept of 'Arab Islam' developed mainly due to nationalistic views in Western scholarship of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, as well as in Arabic scholarship, thus pointing to the emergence of Islam among the Arab peoples and in the Arabic language, and considering its most important achievements – in literature, science, and philosophy – to be written in

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reference in Graetz's words is to the BT, Megillah 9b, where Japheth is an embodiment of Hellenism, i.e. the Greeks. On Graetz's romantization of the Jewish past under Islam, see also Hughes, "The 'Golden Age' of Muslim Spain," pp. 62-65; Curthoys, "Diasporic Visions," pp. 125-130. On Hellenism and Islam in the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, see Susannah Heschel, "Judaism, Islam, and Hellenism: The Conflict in Germany over the Origins of *Kultur*," in *The Jewish Contribution to Civilization: Reassessing an Idea*. Jeremy Cohen and Richard I. Cohen, eds. (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2008), pp. 98-124.

[14] For the sympathetic view towards Islam among Jewish scholars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, many of then recipients of German education or writing in German, see Bernard Lewis, "The Pro-Islamic Jews," in *idem*, *Islam in History: Ideas, People, and Events in the Middle East* (Chicago: Open Court, 1993, rev. ed.), pp. 137-151; Martin Kramer, "Introduction," in *The Jewish Discovery of Islam*, pp. 1-48; Efron, "From Mitteleuropa to the Middle East"; *idem*, "Orientalism and the Jewish Historical Gaze," in *Orientalism and the Jews*, Ivan D. Kalmar and Derek J. Penslar, eds. (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press; Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2005), pp. 80-93; Ivan D. Kalmar, "Jewish Orientalism," in *Jewish Studies at the Turn of the Twentieth Century: Proceedings of the 6th EAJS Congress, Toledo, July 1998*, Judit Targarona Borrás and Angel Sáenz-Badillos, eds. (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 2:307-315; Norman A. Stillman, "The Judeo-Islamic Historical Encounter: Visions and Revisions," in *Israel and Ishmael: Studies in Muslim-Jewish Relations*, Tudor Parfitt, ed. (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2000), pp. 1-12; Michael L. Miller, "European Judaism and Islam: The Contribution of Jewish Orientalists," *HJMR*, pp. 828-833; and the articles in *"Im vollen Licht der Geschichte*," Parts I and II. On German Orientalism, see Ursula Woköck, *German Orientalism: The Study of the Middle East and Islam From 1800 to 1945* (London; New York: Routledge, 2009). Among the Jewish scholars that should be mentioned here are Abraham Geiger, Heinrich Graetz, Salomon Munk (1803-1867), Moritz Steinschneider (1816-1907), Ignaz Goldziher (1850-1921), Josef Horovitz (1874-1941), S.D. Goitein (1900-1985), and Franz Rosenthal (1914-2003). With the exception of Graetz, who devoted his scholarship to Jewish history, all of these scholars made important contributions to Islamic Studies, with Goldziher usually being hailed as the founder of modern Islamic Studies (e.g. in Miller, "European Judaism and Islam," p. 831).

this language.[15] What is celebrated by Jewish historians who were inclined to the idealized view of 'classical' or 'Arab' Islam is the affinity between Hebrew and Arabic as Semitic languages; the romanticized origins of Jews and Arabs as descendants of Abraham; and the development of the 'Judeo-Arab civilization,' that has been defined by one scholar as "the sum total of all communications, or documents, as well as other written materials, in which Arabic-speaking Jews have expressed their spiritual and material needs, occupations, aspirations, and achievements."[16] This 'civilization' (sometimes 'culture' is also used)[17] is believed to emerge in the ninth century, with Saadia Gaon (882-942) being the most noticeable representative of its early period, and Maimonides (d. 1204) as the culmination of this period, thus marking a starting point and

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[15] Prominent examples for a nationalistic perspective of "Arab Islamic" history include Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (London: Macmillan, 1937, first ed.) (as noticed by Fred M. Donner, "Periodization as a Tool of the Historian with Special Reference to Islamic History," *Der Islam*, 91 [2014], p. 29); Tarif Khalidi, *Classical Arab Islam: The Culture and Heritage of the Golden Age* (Princeton, N.J.: Darwin Press, 1985); Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991). On Hitti and Hourani, see Fred M. Donner, "Philip K. Hitti," *Al-'Usur al-Wusta*, 8, no. 2 (1996), pp. 48-52; Derek Hopwood, "Albert Hourani: Islam, Christianity and Orientalism," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 30 (2003), pp. 127-136.

[16] Haggai Ben-Shammai, "Observations on the Beginnings of Judeo-Arabic Civilization," in *Beyond Religious Borders: Interaction and Intellectual Exchange in the Medieval Islamic World*, David M. Freidenreich and Miriam Goldstein, eds. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), p. 13. For the idea of affinity between Jews and Arabs prior to the Islamic conquests of the seventh century, see S.D. Goitein, *Jews and Arabs: Their Contacts through the Ages*, repr. as *Jews and Arabs: A Concise History of Their Social and Cultural Relations* (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 2005 [1955]), pp. 19-45 (see also the discussion below about Goitein's periodization of Jewish-Arab history); and esp. Goitein's note, *ibid*., p. 24: "[Julius] Wellhausen, the famous exponent of biblical criticism and Israelite history, wrote no less than seven books on the ancient Arabs, both of pre-Islamic and of early Islamic times. He did so, as he himself once remarked, in order to determine 'the wild stock on which the twig of the Israelite Prophetism was grafted,' the presumption being that the ancient Arabs would provide the best illustration for the life of Israel before it was subjected to the impact of monotheist religion."

[17] In English the difference between 'civilization' and 'culture' is not always clear. In German, however, while the former usually refers to the spiritual, intellectual, and artistic phenomena, that is, the utilitarian, outer aspect of human existence, the second is more specifically concerned with the material, technical, economic, and social facts. Nonetheless, things are not that simple in trying to distinguish between the two terms, neither in German nor in other European languages. See Thorsten Botz-Bornstein, "What is the Difference between Culture and Civilization? Two Hundred Fifty Years of Confusion," *Comparative Civilizations Review*, 66 (2012), pp. 10-28; Arnold Labrie, "*Kultur* and *Zivilisation* in Germany during the Nineteenth Century," in *German Reflections*, Joep Leerssen and Menno Spiering, eds. (Amsterdam; Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1994), pp. 95-120.

end point for this civilization.[18] Quite often, the 'Golden Age of Spanish Jewry' is considered to be the highlight of the 'Judeo-Arab civilization,'[19] especially if Maimonides' scholarship it regarded to be the product of his education in Muslim Spain, before his emigration to Egypt.[20]

The discovery of the Cairo Geniza was another influence on the view of a Judeo-Arab apogee under 'Classical' Islam.[21] S.D. Goitein (1900-1985), the doyen of Geniza studies in the twentieth century, coined the term 'Classical Geniza Period' in order to refer to the time period between the tenth and thirteenth centuries,[22] noticing the waning number of the Geniza documents starting around 1250. Despite his reference to 1266 as the end of the 'Classical Geniza Period' in his earlier scholarship,[23] Goitein was unable to determine the exact end date of this period when more Geniza documents appeared from the Mamluk period (1250-1517), even when some of them were published by him. Nonetheless, Goitein admitted that his scholarship (thus, also his interest) in the Geniza materials written post-1250 was limited.[24] Among the 'great men' of this time period, it

[18] E.g. the statement by Eliyahu Ashtor (Strauss): "Between the Arab conquest to the Mamluk rise to power in Egypt and Syria, the Jewish communities in these countries enjoyed not only religious tolerance and autonomy, but also the best records of Jewish history were written in this period. The two most eminent scholars of medieval Jewish history lived in Egypt, one was born in it, while the other made it his home and wrote in it his *magna opera* – R. Saadia Gaon and Maimonides." Ashtor, *Toldot ha-Yehudim be-Mitsrayim ve-Suryah tahat shilṭon ha-Mamlukim* [History of the Jews in Egypt and Syria under the Mamluks] (Jerusalem: Mosad ha-Rav Quq, 1944), 1:47 (my translation).

[19] E.g. Norman A. Stillman, "The Judeo-Arabic Heritage," in *Sephardic and Mizrahi Jewry: From the Golden Age of Spain to Modern Times*, Zion Zohar, ed. (New York: New York University Press, 2005), p. 46.

[20] See Kraemer, *Maimonides*, pp. 42-80.

[21] On the Discovery of the Geniza, see Adina Hoffman and Peter Cole, *Sacred Trash: The Lost and Found World of the Cairo Geniza* (New York: Nextbook, Schocken, 2011); and for a critical study of its historiography: Phillip I. Ackerman-Lieberman, *The Business of Identity: Jews, Muslims, and Economic Life in Medieval Egypt* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2014), pp. 1-48.

[22] E.g. S.D. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:140; *idem*, *Studies in Islamic History and Institutions* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2010 [1966]), p. 341. This term is often used by Mark R. Cohen and other Geniza scholars.

[23] S.D. Goitein, "The Documents of the Cairo Geniza as a Source for Mediterranean Social History," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 80 (1960), p. 95.

[24] S.D. Goitein, "Geniza Documents from the Mamluk Period" [Heb.], *Tarbiz*, 41 (1972), p. 63. Recent scholarship suggests tens of Geniza documents from the Mamluk and Ottoman periods in Egypt and Syria,

was Maimonides' son, Abraham (1186-1237), whom Goitein regarded to be the emblem of the 'Judeo-Arab civilization'; Abraham Maimonides, for him, "represented all the best found in medieval Judaism, as it developed within Islamic civilization."[25]

Goitein held the opinion that the relationship beteween Jews and Arabs in the period before the thirteenth century is one of 'symbiosis,' a term he borrowed from biology and applied to his fields of inquiry.[26] His view, colored by a sympathetic, Arabophile attitude, points to his understanding of 'Classical' Islam as predominantly Arab, and to the existence of Jewish-Arab contacts for two millennia before Islam. In 1949 Goitein coined the term 'Jewish-Arab Symbiosis,'[27] and thereafter used it often in his works, such as his survey of Jewish-Arab relations in *Jews and Arabs: Their Contacts through the Ages* (1955), and in his *magnum opus*, *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza* (1967-1988); occasionally he used the term 'creative symbiosis' instead.[28] As Steven Wasserstrom demonstrates, this usage has been institutionalized in the study of Judeo-Arabica ever since Goitein's publications, and is still relevant to studies written today.[29]

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which still have not been published nor studied. Dotan Arad, "Judeo-Arabic and Hebrew among the Jews of Syria, Palestine and Egypt" [Heb.], *Pe'amim*, 121 (2009), p. 106. The only scholar today to systematically use Geniza documents from the Mamluk and Ottoman periods is Abraham David. See his *'Al bamote Erets ha-Tsevi: Meqorot u-meḥqarim be-toldot ha-Yishuv ha-Yehudi be-Erets-Yisra'el be-shilhe Yeme ha-Benayim* [Jewish Settlement in *Eretz ha-Zvi*: Texts and Studies on Late Medieval Jewish History in Palestine] (Jerusalem: Re'uven Mas, 2013).

[25] S.D. Goitein, "Abraham Maimonides and His Pietist Circle," in *Jewish Medieval and Renaissance Studies*. Alexander Altmann, ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 151; *idem*, *Med. Soc.*, 5:481. For a biography of Goitein and his scholarly interest in Abraham Maimonides, see Gideon Libson, "Hidden Worlds and Open Shutters: S.D. Goitein Between Judaism and Islam," in *The Jewish Past Revisited: Reflections on Modern Jewish Historians*, David N. Myers and David B. Ruderman, eds. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 163-198; Hoffman and Cole, *Sacred Trash*, pp. 192-223 (on Abraham Maimonides, p. 219).

[26] Libson, "Hidden Worlds," pp. 175-177.

[27] S.D. Goitein, "Jewish-Arab Symbiosis" [Heb.], *Molad*, 2 (1949), pp. 259-266.

[28] S.D. Goitein, *Jews and* Arabs, pp. 125-211; *ibid.*, *Med. Soc.*, 2:289-299.

[29] Steven M. Wasserstrom, *Between Muslim and Jew: The Problem of Symbiosis under Early Islam* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 3-14; *idem*, "Recent Works on the 'Creative

An important change occurred when Goitein's term, 'Jewish-Arab Symbiosis,' was transformed into 'Judeo-Islamic Symbiosis' in Bernard Lewis' *The Jews of Islam* (1984). Lewis argued that it was "a kind of symbiosis between Jews and their [Muslim] neighbors that has no parallel in the Western world between the Hellenistic and modern ages."[30] Wasserstrom understood the idea of 'Jewish-Arab Symbiosis' to originate in the concept of 'German-Jewish Symbiosis,' which was common amongst German Jewish intellectuals before World War II, only to be criticized – after the Holocaust and the horrendous atrocities the Germans committed during the war – as a delusion of Jews who had a strong desire to believe in such relations.[31] In Goitein's *Jews and Arabs*, published a decade after the end of the War, the same critique is heard. Commenting on *An Introduction to the Arabic Literature of the Jews* (1901) by Moritz Steinschneider,[32] who compared the German-Jewish symbiosis to the Arab-Jewish symbiosis, Goitein stated:

> I venture to disagree with the great master. Despite their great relative importance, none of the creations of the Jewish authors writing in German or conceived under the impact of modern Western civilization has reached all parts of the Jewish people or have influenced the personal inner life of every Jew to the profound

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Symbiosis' of Judaism and Islam" (Review essay), *Religious Studies Review*, 16 (1990), pp. 43-47.

[30] Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014 [1984]), pp. 67-106 (the citation is from p. 88).

[31] Wasserstrom, *Between Muslim and Jew*, pp. 3-4, discusses the criticism by the German-Jewish historian Gershom Scholem of this idea. See further Dan Diner, "Negative Symbiosis: Germans and Jews after Auschwitz," in *Reworking the Past: Hitler, the Holocaust, and the Historians' Debate*, Peter Baldwin, ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1990), pp. 251-261; Jack Zipes, "The Negative German-Jewish Symbiosis," in *Insiders and Outsiders; Jewish and Gentile Culture in Germany and Austria*, Dagmar C.G. Lorenz and Gabriele Weinberger, eds. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1994), pp. 144-154; George L. Mosse, "Gerschom [*sic*] Scholem as a German Jew," *Modern Judaism*, 10 (1990), pp. 117-133. For Scholem's perspective in this matter, see his article, "On the Social Psychology of the Jews in Germany: 1900-1933," in *Jews and Germans from 1860 to 1933: The Problematic Symbiosis*, David Bronsen, ed. (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1979), pp. 9-32.

[32] Moritz Steinschneider (1816-1907), Bohemian bibliographer and Orientalist. On his scholarly work, see *Studies on Steinschneider: Moritz Steinschneider and the Emergence of the Science of Judaism in Nineteenth-century Germany*, Reimund Leicht and Gad Freudenthal, eds. (Leiden: Brill, 2012); *Pe'amim*, 129: *Moritz (Mosheh) Steinschneider and the Judeo-Arabic Culture* (2011) [Heb.].

> degree as did the great Jewish writers who belonged to the medieval civilization of Arab Islam.[33]

In *Jews and Arabs*, Goitein divided Jewish-Arab history into four periods: the first, *Pre-history*, stretches over two thousands or more years, between 1500 B.C.E.-500 C.E.; the second, the *Period of Creative Jewish-Arab symbiosis* between 500-1300 C.E., started with the emergence of "Muslim religion and Arab nationhood" under Jewish impact, and ended with "traditional Judaism receiv[ing] its final shape under Muslim-Arab influence"; and the third period, 1300-1900, the stage in which "Arabs faded out from world history, and Oriental Jews from Jewish history." The fourth stage is the modern age (1900 – present).[34]

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[33] Goitein, *Jews and Arabs*, pp. 129-130. Compare Bernard Lewis' words to this statement by Goitein.
[34] Goitein, *Jews and Arabs*, p. 10.

Table 1. S.D. Goitein's Periodization of Jewish-Arab Relations in *Jews and Arabs* (1955)

Period	Topics
I. PREHISTORY 1500 B.C.–500 A.D.	a. *Common Origins* *Myths:* Semitic Race. Israel an Arab Tribe *Facts:* Common social patterns ("Primitive Democracy") and religious tradition. "Cousins." b. *Recorded Contacts as from 853 B.C.* 1. Biblical period 2. Maccabean, Herodian and Roman periods 3. Talmudic times
II. CREATIVE SYMBIOSIS 500–1300	a. The origin and early development of Islam in its Jewish environment. "Islam an Arab recast of Israel's religion." b. The influence of Islam on Jewish thought and that of Arab language and literature on Hebrew.
III. FADING OUT 1300–1900	a. Of Arabs from World History b. Of Oriental Jews from Jewish History c. The common heritage of suffering
IV. THE NEW CONFRONTATION 1900–	a. *The coincidence of Jewish and Arab revivals in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.* Similarities and differences. b. *Israel in Palestine:* 1. A Western intrusion into the East 2. An Eastern intrusion into a Western society a) Immigrants from Arab countries b) Arab citizens of Israel c. *The Future:* The parallel tasks of the two peoples.

Early on, Goitein warned historians from developing an "idealistic historiographical legend" of Jewish-Arab relations, and talked of this legend's origins in the reaction among European Jewish historians of the nineteenth century to the legal discrimination of Jews in their countries.[35] Nonetheless, he was, more than any other historian in the twentieth century, responsible for the idea of a flourishing 'Jewish-Arab civilization' in 'classical' Islam. To the *fading out* period between 1300-1800, Goitein devoted in *Jews and Arabs* only four and a half pages in contrast to more than 150 pages to the period of *creative symbioisis* (500-1300).[36] The history of Jewish-Arab relations in the so-called 'post-classical' age of Islam was of no interest to this historian.

About a decade after *Jews and Arabs*, Goitein published a new proposal for the periodization of Islamic history.[37]

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[35] Goitein, "Jewish-Arab Symbiosis," p. 260.
[36] Goitein, *Jews and Arabs*, pp. 212-216.
[37] S.D. Goitein, "A Plea for the Periodization of Islamic History," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 88 (1968), pp. 224-228.

Table 2. S.D. Goitein's Periodization of Islamic History (1968)

Period	Characters
1. **ARABISM AND ARABIC ISLAM, 500-850 CE**	*Characters* Arab nation (*sic*) / Arabic civilization Creation of Arabic as a literary language Arabic Qur'ān Superiority of the Arab armies during the expansion of Islam Sophisticated economy: caravans and merchants
2. **THE INTERMEDIATE CIVILIZATION, 850-1250**	*Why Intermediate*? 1. *Time*: between Middle Eastern Hellenism and European Renaissance 2. *Character*: between secular antiquity and clerical medieval Europe 3. *Location*: between the Indian and Chinese civilizations in the East to Europe and Africa *Characters* Free, monetary economy Predominance of the middle class Diffusion of Greek secular sciences Rich and flexible creativeness in religion
3. **INSTITUTIONALIZED ISLAM, territorial, mostly non-Arab civilizations, 1250-1800**	*Characters* Military feudalism and state bureaucracy State monopolies Supervision of economy Institutionalization of religion and science Ecstatic mysticism Sectarianism with the creation of diversified cultures
4. **TRANSITION TO NATIONAL CULTURES (*sic*), 1800–**	*Characters* Western impact on the Islamic peoples Pan-Islamism as a reaction to the Western threat (Islamic revival: non-existent; not to be confused with pan-Islamism) Transition and formation

Despite the differences between Goitein's periodizations in his publications from 1955 (Jewish-Arab history) and 1968 (Islamic history), the watershed for the end of the 'Golden Age' in each of the cases is the thirteenth century. This is the period that Goitein defined as an *Arab eclipse* up to the modern age.

In Western scholarship that was written until the last third of the twentieth century, the paradigm of an (Arab) Islamic Eclipse was predominant in studying the history of the peoples of the Middle East.[38] Under Turkish (Ottoman) rule, occured the (Arab) Muslims' decadence, and then came also the degeneration of the Jewish 'Golden Age' in pre-modern times. Arabs and Jews, according to Goitein, shared a fate of suffering, of living in exile, while Arabs lived in "exile" even though they were never displaced – an Arab *galut*.[39] S.N. Eisenstadt explained the negative meaning of the Jewish concept of *galut* (exile) in the lack of political sovereignty, and the partial or distorted spiritual or religious existence that creates the "metaphysical evaluation of *galut*."[40] Goitein, thus, evaluated the Arab eclipse according to the same lines.

The foremost factor for Arab-Islamic decline in Western thought was the introduction of Turkish soldiers into the Muslim armies, and the appearance of a new class – the Mamluks. This idea could be seen as part of the conflict between European

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[38] For example, in *Classicisme et déclin culturel dans l'histoire de l'Islam: Actes du symposium international d'histoire de la civilisation musulmane, Bordeaux 25-29 juin 1956*, R. Brunschvig and G.E. Von Grunebaum, eds. (Paris; Besson: Chantemerle, 1957), where the state of Islam in its 'post-classical' age (up to the twentieth century) is defined with terms such as *décadence*, *déclin* (decline), and *ankylosée* (ankylosis). For a more recent example of the decline paradigm, see Christophe Picard, *Le monde musulman du XIe au XVe siècle* ([Paris]: Sedes, 2000), pp. 14-18, explaining the decline in Islam due to the rise to power of non-Arab peoples: Turks, Berbers, and Kurds. While the eleventh and twelfth centuries in this book are considered to be the "most remarkable [age of] Islam," the change is attributed to the thirteenth century, when a time of uncreativity and dogmatism in religion has started.

[39] Goitein, *Jews and Arabs*, p. 212. This concept stems from nationalist ideology, in which a "nation" inhabitates its "homeland," and is sovereign of its destiny, perceiving the Arabs as constituting an Arab "nation-state" before the "Turkish" (i.e. Mamluk) conquest of Egypt and the Levant in 1250.

[40] S.N. Eisenstadt, *Explorations in Jewish Historical Experience: The Civilizational Dimension* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2004), p. 61.

countries to the Ottoman Empire, which was conceived to be in political and economic decline starting in the seventeenth century, what Europeans understood as the 'Eastern Question.'[41] Arabic historiography adopted this idea with the rise of nationalism, and the anti-Turkish resentment is felt in Arab national discourse since the beginning of the twentieth century, blaming the "Turkish peoples" for the decline of Islam. As Tarif Khalidi states,

> The 'villains' of the historical piece were, generally speaking, identified as the period of Turkish military hegemony over the Baghdad Abbasid caliphate in the third/fourth (ninth/tenth) centuries, the Mamluk period (*circa* 1250-1517) and the period of Ottoman rule over the Arab Near East which began in 1517. These three were the most frequently cited culprits and 'decline' was dated to one or another of these periods.[42]

In *Jews and Arabs*, Goitein describes the austere history of Islam in its 'post-classical' age according to the same terms:

> The empire of the Caliphs, which [the Arabs] erected on the ruins of the kingdoms destroyed by them was […] a remarkable creation. However, the Arabs very soon lost their military prowess, and the state which they had erected disintegrated very rapidly; only nominal overlordship was conceded to the Caliphs of Baghdad by successor states, and even then only by some of them. […] [T]he Middle East was left unprotected and became prey to successive invasions from *Barbarian peoples*, while later, from the thirteenth to eighteenth century, it

[41] Leslie Rogne Schumacher, "The Eastern Question as a Europe question: Viewing the Ascent of 'Europe' through the Lens of Ottoman Decline," *Journal of European Studies*, 44 (2014), pp. 64-80.

[42] Tarif Khalidi, "Reflections on Periodisation in Aradic Historiography," *Medieval History Journal*, 1 (1998), p. 116. Cf. Ulrich Haarmann, "Ideology and History, Identity and Alterity: The Arab Image of the Turk from the 'Abbasids to Modern Egypt," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 20 (1988), pp. 175-196; Nasser O. Rabbat, "Representing the Mamluks in Mamluk Historical Writing," in *The Historiography of Islamic Egypt (c. 950-1800)*, Hugh Kennedy, ed. Leiden: Brill, 2001, pp. 59-75; Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski, *Egypt, Islam, and the Arabs: The Search for Egyptian Nationhood, 1900-1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 160-161.

> was ruled by *castes of ruthless, foreign slave soldiers*. The popular conception that the Arab countries were under *foreign domination* only during the four hundred years of Ottoman rule (1517-1917) is completely erroneous. The Mamluks who ruled over Egypt, Palestine and Syria before the Ottomans (1250-1517) were called in Arab sources "The Turkish Government," because these slave soldiers were recruited from Turkish-speaking countries, and a similar system prevailed prior to the rule of the Mamluks. Thus, until the beginning of the nineteenth century the Arab countries were ruled by *corps of slave-guards* recruited invariably from foreign countries.[43]

Thus, it is now clear why, according to Goitein, the 'post-classical' age was the time when "Arabs faded out from world history, and Oriental Jews from Jewish history." Despite the development in the historiography of Oriental Jewry, or Jews in Islamic lands, this was, and still is, the main view of Jewish-Muslim relations post-1250. The myth of the pre-1250 'Golden Age' together with the decline of (Arab) Islam, to a large extent erased the Jews of Islamic lands between 1250-1800 from modern scholarship, unless they were linked somehow to the Spanish heritage, in itself mythicized in European-Jewish historiography.[44]

To give two examples to the persistence of these ideas in the historiography of Jews in Muslim lands, it might be useful to look at the works of two distinct scholars of Oriental Jewry, Norman A. Stillman (b. 1945), and Mark R. Cohen (b. 1943), both of

[43] Goitein, *Jews and Arabs*, pp. 213-214 (emphasis added).
[44] Ivan G. Marcus, "Beyond the Sephardic Mystique," *Orim* (Yale University), 1, no. 1 (1985), pp. 35-53; Ismar Schorsch, "The Myth of Sephardic Supremacy," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, 34 (1989), pp. 47-66; *idem*, "The Myth of Sephardic Supremacy in Nineteenth-Century Germany," in *Sephardism: Spanish Jewish History and the Modern Literary Imagination*, Yael Halevi-Wise, ed. (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2012), pp. 35-57; Efron, *German Jewry and the Allure of the Sephardic*; *idem*, "Scientific Racism and the Mystique of Sephardic Racial Superiority," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, 38 (1993), pp. 75-96.

whom were students of Goitein. On the decline of Islam, Stillman writes in *Jews of Arab Lands* (1979), about a quarter of a century after Goitein's *Jews and Arabs*:

> The secular and humanistic tendencies of Hellenism, which until this period [mid-thirteenth century] had been predominant cultural forces in Islamic society, began to wane; and the same time the Islamic religious element in its most rigid form began to wax ever stronger. Non-Arab soldier castes ruled the successor states to the ['Abbasid] caliphate. The political, social, and economic order they imposed might be called with some justification an oriental brand of feudalism. The dynamic mercantile economy of the High Middle Ages [900-1200 CE][45] stagnated. The currency was debased from years of gold overflow. Muslim society closed in upon itself within popular religious brotherhoods, trade guilds, and state monopolies. Economically, the non-Muslim minorities became increasingly marginal. Numerically, they became smaller as well.[46]

And regarding the decline of Oriental Jewry in post-1250 Egypt, Stillman says:

> The Process of Jewish economic decline and social isolation was by no means instantaneous, nor did it occur at the same rate in the various Islamic states. […] The Jewish experience under the Mamluks in many respects paralleled that of their brethren in medieval Christian Europe. In both cases, the Jews were extended "general sufferance with severe limitations."[47] In both cases, too, the Jews lived within an atmosphere of progressively heightening religious consciousness and cultivated contempt.[48]

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[45] Norman A. Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands: A History and Source Book* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979), p. 40.
[46] *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.
[47] Citing here Salo Baron's phrase regarding the policy of the church in medieval Europe.
[48] Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands*, pp. 65, 75. See further pp. 91-94 for Stillman's negative view of Jewish life post-sixteenth century under the Ottomans, concluding (p. 94) that the condition of Ottoman Jewry at the turn of the nineteenth century was not very different from their situation before the Ottoman conquest of the Arab lands in 1517.

Similarly, Mark R. Cohen concludes: “The regime of the Mamluk rulers of Egypt and Palestine had been oppressive, and for two centuries, Jews living in the Mamluk domains had suffered a serious decline in both welfare and status.”[49]

Cohen, despite his call for an intermediate method of writing the history of Jews under medieval Islam that is not in the fashion of the (pre-1250) ‘Golden Age’ nor according to the myth of intolerant Islam,[50] is nonetheless a sympathetic historian of Jewish-Muslim relations in the ‘classical’ age of Islam. Instead of speaking of a ‘Golden Age,’ Cohen speaks in terms of ‘Renaissance,’ ‘convivencia,’ and ‘coexistence,’ and refers to Saadia Gaon and Maimonides as the acme of ‘Judeo-Arabic culture,’ until the borderlines between myth and reality in his writings become blurry. Cohen, like Goitein and Stillman, emphasizes the Arab component in Islam, and its indebtedness to the Greek sciences. For example, he writes in a recent survey:

> [By the tenth century] Islam came into contact with the science, medicine, and philosophy of the Greco-Roman world centuries earlier than European Christendom. Translated early on into Arabic, these works gave rise to what the German scholar Adam Mez famously called “Die Renaissance des Islams.”[51] Jews of the Fertile Crescent, the heartland of the Islamic Empire and the first center of the new Arabic science, medicine, and philosophy, had both access to and interest in the translated texts read by Muslim intellectuals. This facilitated the cultural convivencia of the Judeo-Arabic world, which began in the eastern Islamic domains and spread to the Muslim West. It led to Jewish adoption of

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[49] Mark R. Cohen, “Sociability and the Concept of *Galut* in Jewish-Muslim Relations in the Middle Ages.” in *Judaism and Islam: Boundaries, Communication and Interaction. Essays in Honor of William M. Brinner*, Benjamin H. Hary et al., eds. (Leiden: Brill, Leiden, 2000), p. 45.

[50] See Mark R. Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008 [1994]), pp. 3-14, where he describes his work as the middle path between the “myth of interfaith utopia” in Islam, and the counter-myth – the “neo-lachrymose conception of Jewish-Arab [*sic*] history.”

[51] Adam Mez, *Die Renaissance Des Islams* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1922); English translation: *The Renaissance of Islam*, Salahuddin Khuda Bukhsh and D. S. Margoliouth, trans. (London: Luzac and Co., 1937).

> philosophy, science, and medicine—philosophy serving as a handmaiden of religious truths, as it did for Islamic philosophers themselves. The Arabic and Islamic "renaissance" laid the groundwork for other Jewish cultural innovations. The Bible was translated into Arabic. Hebrew as a language began to be studied "scientifically," so to speak, using linguistic tools in vogue among Arab grammarians. But nearly everything Jews wrote they wrote in Arabic, and this was not limited to philosophy, for which Hebrew entirely lacked a vocabulary. Poetry, the major exception, was composed in Hebrew, but it, too, bore the stamp of Arabic culture.[52]

To conclude this section, scholars of Jewish history under Islam adopted the terminology of Islamicists regarding the progress of Islam in its early period; the division between 'classical' and 'post-classical' Islam (usually situated in the thirteenth century, sometimes more specifically around the mid-century, or at the fall of the Abbasid Empire in 1258); and the identification of Islam as mostly Arab, seeing the non-Arab elements in it to be foreign and destructive. In this paradigm, 'classical' (Arab) Islam is understood to be the age of 'secularism' and 'humanism,' and 'post-classical' Islam – as the time of decline and intellectual stagnation. These scholars perceived the apogee of Islam to be the 'Golden Age' of Jewish-Muslim relations, and thus, their interest in the history of Jewish-Muslim relations in the 'post-classical' age was in most cases minimal and marginal to the so-called 'Golden Age.'[53]

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[52] Mark R. Cohen, "The 'Golden Age' of Jewish-Muslim Relations: Myth and Reality," *HJMR*, pp. 35-36.

[53] See Daniel J. Schroeter, "From Sephardi To Oriental: The 'Decline' Theory of Jewish Civilization in The Middle East and North Africa: Reassessing an Idea," in *The Jewish Contribution to Civilization: Reassessing an Idea,* Jeremy Cohen and Richard I. Cohen, eds. (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2008), pp. 125-148.

II. The End of 'Creative Symbiosis' in the Late Middle Islamic Period?

"The medieval civilization of the Middle East," writes Goitein in *Jews and Arabs*, "approximately up to 1300 – was far more modern than that of contemporary Europe in many respects – economic, social, and spiritual. It was basically [an] intermediate civilization linking up Hellenistic-Roman antiquity with modern times."[54] In his book he examines 'symbiosis' in the aspects of linguistics, philosophy, mysticism, and the 'acme' of this period, Hebrew poetry; sectarianism and messianism; law and ritual; popular religion and custom; and folk literature and art.[55] To give two examples from Goitein's examples of 'creative symbiosis' in the era of 'classical' Islam, I will refer here to two case-studies: linguistics and Hebrew poetry.

Goitein opens his discussion of 'Jewish-Arab Symbiosis' with the linguistic aspects. He sees in Arabization among the Jewish communities of the Orient the "first and most basic aspect" of symbiosis, with the Jews completing the adoption of Arabic around 1000 C.E. (around the time when, as he notes, the Arabs, i.e. the Abbasid caliphs, were replaced by "Turkish and other foreign rulers"). Unlike Aramaic, which was spoken among Jews in the countries between Palestine to Babylonia, Arabic was the language of the state, a ruling religion and society. The acquisition of the Arabic language occurred in a time of adopting the Arab ways of thinking and forms of literature as well as of religious notions. Jews developed the writing of Arabic in Hebrew script (Judeo-Arabic), a method that in Goitein's view is of some similarity of an Arabic dialect. "It was commonplace," he argues, "among both Jewish and Muslim scholars that Arabic, Hebrew

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[54] Goitein, *Jews and Arabs*, p. 125; cf. *idem*, *Studies in Islamic History*, p. 55, where this author defines this period as ending in 1250. On this author's conceptualization of the 'Intermediate Civilization,' see *ibid*., pp. 54-70.
[55] Goitein, *Jews and Arabs*, pp. 125-211.

and Aramaic were basically one and the same language (!),"[56] thus, he blurs the borderlines between Arabic, Hebrew, and Aramaic, treating the three as if they were one, or originating from the same source. The 'alliance' between Arabic and Hebrew/Aramaic, the last two considered to be "Jewish" languages, is a testimony for the affinity between Jews and Arabs.

In his examination of Hebrew poetry written under the influence of Arabic, particularly the Hebrew poetry of Spain, Goitein continues his romantic appraisal of the 'Jewish-Arab Symbiosis.' "The Arabic influence on Hebrew was… great. Striking metaphors and similes, audacious comparisons and contrasts, 'surprising' openings and endings and many other devices of artful speech were borrowed by the Jews from the Arabs."[57] To express his admiration of medieval Hebrew poetry, or of the Arab influence over Oriental Jews, Goitein anachronistically recalls his memoirs from a Yemenite-Jewish funeral he attended, in which the professional mourner made the whole audience burst into tears during his performance (Goitein had devoted a large part of his early career to ethnographic and linguistic studies of the Yemenite Jews in Palestine);[58] and in another example, after describing Judah al-Ḥarīzī's (d. 1225) Hebrew version of the famous *maqāma al-maḍīriyya*, in which an affluent host fools his starving guest by presenting him room in his house without ever serving him the much-acclaimed, and desired, dish of *maḍīra*, Goitein tells his readers: "When, during a stay in the United States, a successful businessman concluded the tour of his home with the same detail, I got a vivid feeling for that mercantile civilization of the medieval Middle East to which

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[56] *Ibid.*, p. 137.
[57] *Ibid.*, p. 158.
[58] These studies were collected in S.D. Goitein, *Ha-Temanim: Historyah, sidre hevrah, haye ha-ruah. mivhar mehqarim* [The Yemenites: History, Communal Organization, Spiritual Life. Select Articles], Menachem Ben-Sasson, ed. (Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 1983).

reference has been made so much in this book!" (i.e. al-Ḥarīzī's Hebrew *maqāmāt* in the Book of *Taḥkemoni*).[59] Thus, history and personal experience as well as imagination, are mixed in Goitein's appreciation of Jewish-Arab relations throughout history, seeing the highest point of these relations, starting already in ancient history with Abraham being the father of the two nations, as culminating in the 'Judeo-Arab civilization' pre-1250. Publishing the book *Jews and Arabs* in 1955, a short time after the establishment of the State of Israel and the 1948 War, and stressing the affinity between Jews and Arabs throughout history, was not without political aspirations for reaching peaceful relations between the two nations.[60]

But what happened in the thirteenth century, according to Goitein and other scholars? In modern Jewish historiography, the Jewish renaissance under Islam ended in the thirteenth century with the military expansion of the Almohads (*al-Muwaḥḥidūn*) in the Islamic West, and the rise to power of the Mamluk Sultans in Egypt and Syria (notice the Berber/so-called 'Turkish' origins of these two groups, respectively, in comparison to the "pure" Arab regimes pre-1250, as they are perceived in modern scholarship). The two states, the Almohad Empire and the Mamluk Sultanate, are regarded to be hostile to the Jewish communities to the degree of anti-Semitism, two states that brought with them the end of Jewish revival, and mark the end of Judeo-(Arab)-Muslim 'symbiosis.' The hostile

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[59] Goitein, *Jews and Arabs*, p. 163. On Judah al-Ḥarīzī, see chapter 2 of this dissertation. On the *maqāma al-maḍīriyya*, see Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila, *Maqama: A History of a Genre* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002), pp. 100-114. The *maḍīra* was a stew of meat, cooked in sour milk, and was considered to be a delicacy. See Nawal Nasrallah, Kaj Öhrnberg and Sahban Mroueh, *Annals of the Caliphs' Kitchens: Ibn Sayyār Al-Warrāq's Tenth-Century Baghdadi Cookbook* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007), pp. 300-302.

[60] Goitein was a member of *Brit Shalom* (Covenant of Peace), a political association that sought a peaceful coexistence between Arabs and Jews. His publications include several articles in which he presents his vision for solving the conflict in Palestine and for reviving the cultural symbiosis between Jews and Arabs. On "Brit Shalom" see Hagit Lavsky, "German Zionists and the Emergence of *Brit Shalom*," in *Essential Papers on Zionism*, Jehuda Reinharz and Anita Shapira, eds. (New York: New York University Press, 1995), pp. 648-670. See also Mark R. Cohen's preface to the 2005 edition of *Jews and Arabs*, pp. vii-xiii.

evaluation of modern scholars to the Mamluk Sultanate was exemplified earlier in this introduction (through citations from the works of Norman Stillman and Mark Cohen), but a short survey of the historical background in the Maghrib and Egypt (for the purposes of this dissertation, I ignore Mamluk Syria) is necessary here.

The Almohad conquests of the mid-twelfth century are regarded the most destructive event for Jews living under Islamic rule during the Middle Period.[61] The followers of the teachings of the Mahdī Ibn Tūmart (d. 1130), the Almohads swept the Islamic West with terror when they conquered al-Andalus and wide areas in the Maghrib, and established an empire that stretched between the Iberian Peninsula to Tripolitania and Cyrenaica in the eastern Maghreb, making Marrakesh their capital. The initial period of military expansion was accompanied by destruction of the Jewish communities in the Islamic West, forced conversion of Jews under the Almohad rule, or their fleeing to Christian Spain or to North Africa, escaping the fright of war. The Almohads did not recognize the *dhimmī* status of Jews and Christians, and forced them to convert to Islam, or leave the realm of their state. In Jewish historiography, this period marks the end of Jewish renaissance in Spain, often memorialized by Abraham ibn Ezra's (d. 1167) elegy for the fall of the Jewish communities of the West (*Aha yarad 'al Sepharad*, "Calamity Fell upon Spain").[62]

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[61] The phrase "Middle (Islamic) Period" is borrowed from Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), vol. 2. It is used here interchangeably with what is usually called 'Middle Ages.' For the problems in using 'Middle Ages' when speaking of Islamic history, see, *inter alia*, Jonathan P. Berkey, *The Formation of Islam: Religion and Society in the Near East, 600-1800* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 179 n. 1; Daniel Martin Varisco, "Making 'Medieval' Islam Meaningful," *Medieval Encounters*, 13, no. 3 (2007), pp. 385-412; Donner, "Periodization as a Tool of the Historian."

[62] See *EJIW*, "Almohads" (M.J. Viguera), and the bibliography there; Kraemer, *Maimonides*, pp. 92-98; David Corcos, "The Nature of the Almohad Rulers' Treatment of the Jews" [first pub. in 1967], *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies*, 2 (2010), pp. 259-285; Maribel Fierro, "'A Muslim Land without Jews or Christians': Almohad Policies Regarding the 'Protected People,'" in *Christlicher Norden, Muslimischer*

In Egypt, the Mamlūks established their rule from 1250 to 1517 (in Syria, 1260-1517), having their origin as the bodyguards of al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb (r. 1240-1249). They seized power in a delicate era: the crusade of St. Louis (1249-50) and the Mongol invasion of Syria (1259-60). Nonetheless, the Mamlūks were able to save their realms from the Mongols, who were the greater danger to communities in Egypt and Syria, and fight the crusaders. Under their rule, which lasted more than 250 years, Jews are said, according to traditional historiography, to suffer from cultural and economic decline, and experience the burden of the regime in its rigorous anti-Jewish (and anti-Christian) policies. Seeing themselves as protectors of Sunnī Islam, the Mamlūks are believed to establish strong relations to the class of the *'ulamā'* (scholars of Islamic law), devoting finances in religious endowments, and acting harshly against the non-Muslims, in what sometimes resulted in persecution of the Jewish and Christian elites, or demanding heavy taxes from these communities.[63]

Due to this portrayal of the Almohad and Mamluk regimes, the history of Jews living in their lands has never attracted the same attention as of the pre-thirteenth century time period. "Arabs faded out from world history, and Oriental Jews from Jewish history" (Goitein). In Egypt, the period that ends with the 'classical Geniza period' in the thirteenth century is the beginning of the dark ages of Jewish history, up to the sixteenth century of Ottoman 'renaissance,' but falling soon after into oblivion. And in the West, Jewish historiography mostly ignored the period between the thirteenth century and 1492,

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Süden: Ansprüche und Wirklichkeiten von Christen, Juden und Muslimen auf der Iberischen Halbinsel im Hoch- und Spätmittelalter, Matthias M. Tischler und Alexander Fidora, eds. (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2011), pp. 231-247. For an English translation of Abraham ibn Ezra's elegy, see Peter Cole, *The Dream of the Poem: Hebrew Poetry From Muslim and Christian Spain, 950-1492* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), pp. 181-182.

[63] Ashtor, *Toldot ha-Yehudim*.

the year in which the Jews were expelled of Spain and migrated, partially, to North Africa or to the Ottoman Empire. Thus, this is a dark age in the West, a barren land in which nothing could grow; a period of stagnation, or furthermore, of cultural, economic, and social "death" to the Jewish communities of the Maghrib until they were "revived" by the waves of Spanish Jews from the north.[64]

This dissertation, however, critiques the traditional depiction of "dark ages" between 1200 and 1500 in Egypt and the Maghrib, arguing for the continuation of Jewish cultural development rather than an era of stagnation. I intend to investigate this development by adopting the model of the pre-1200 'creative symbiosis' instead of rejecting it all together in favor of a more critical view of the Jewish experience under medieval Islam. The existence of 'Judeo-Arab Civilization' or 'Judeo-(Arab)-Muslim Symbiosis' should be viewed as constructs in modern Jewish historiography, not merely as history "as it actually happened" (*wie es eigentlich gewesen*), but nonetheless, the adoption of these terms or models for this dissertation will in fact enrich my research. My dissertation suggests, therefore, redefining the era of 'symbiosis' as starching beyond 1200 in order to study later developments in Jewish thought that came into dialogue with Islamic literature. Thus, bringing Jews (and Arabs) of the Later Middle Period back into history, instead of letting them "fade," as Goitein called it. This will be achieved through examining intellectual and social exchange between Jews and Muslims during the Later Middle Period in two regions: the Maghrib (in chapters 1 and 3), and Egypt (chapter 2).

[64] On the 'supremacy' of Spanish Jewry in modern historiography, see note 44.

CHAPTER 1. BIBLICAL COMMENTARY.
JOSEPH IBN ‘AQNĪN’S (C. 1150-1220) COMMENTARY ON THE *SONG OF SONGS*, *INKISHĀF AL-ASRĀR WA-ẒUHŪR AL-ANWĀR* (DISCLOSURE OF SECRETS AND APPEARANCE OF LIGHT)

This chapter examines a commentary on the *Song of Songs*, written in the Maghrib during the age of the Almohad persecutions. The author was a scholar and physician of Spanish descent, Joseph ibn ‘Aqnīn (c. 1150-1220), a forced convert to Islam who bemoans his fate due to the Almohad oppression of the Jewish communities of the Islamic West. In what is perceived to be a dark age to the Jews of the Maghrib, Ibn ‘Aqnīn’s commentary, *Inkishāf al-asrār wa-ẓuhūr al-anwār* (Disclosure of Secrets and Appearance of Light), is an unusual tract that celebrates, despite the harsh historical circumstances, the Islamic culture and its achievements in the sciences, cites Arabic poetry, and defends its position for the usage of Islamic materials in the composition of biblical commentary. Despite the author’s complaints of the persecution and of the “impurity of forced conversion,” he is proud of his Arab education. This is an example for the so-called ‘Judeo-Islamic Symbiosis’ in the wilderness of bloodshed and war. In studying Ibn ‘Aqnīn’s commentary, I will first start with the main problem presented in his work, as in almost every exegesis of the *Song* – the search after the “true” meaning of the *Song*, then discuss the commentary on the *Song* by two renowned scholars, Maimonides and Abraham ibn Ezra, before investigating the *Inkishāf al-asrār* against its Islamic-Arab background. My argument in this chapter is that despite the common perception of the Almohad period as the end of ‘Judeo-Islamic Symbiosis’ in the West, there was continuity in Jewish knowledge of and usage of Islamic materials, and that intellectual exchange between Judaism and Islam is well-exemplified in Ibn ‘Aqnīn’s Arabic commentary on the *Song*.

I. Allegorical and Philosophical Interpretations of the *Song of Songs*

> Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!
> For your love is better than wine;
> your anointing oils are fragrant;
> your name is oil poured out;
> therefore virgins love you.
> Draw me after you; let us run.
> The king has brought me into his chambers.
> (Song of Songs 1:2-4)

The inclusion of the *Song of Songs* (hereafter: *Song*) in the Hebrew Bible has troubled Jews and Christians since ancient times.[1] Read plainly, the *Song* recounts dialogues of love and lust between several speakers (farm girl and shepherd, king and royal maiden, etc.), and the erotic character of it sets it apart from the rest of the Bible. Moreover, none of God's names occur in the *Song*, nor does it refer to any historical event from the past of the Jewish people, thus one could easily read it as a secular work.[2] Secular reading of the *Song*, which seems to be ordinary nowadays, were neither uncommon in the past, to the degree of rabbis from as late as the second century C.E. debated the question of the *Song*'s scriptural inspiration.[3] These debates have never been fully settled: while Rabbi Akiba (d. c. 137 C.E.) stated that "all the writings are holy, but the *Song of Songs* is the

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[1] For a passing reference to the *Song of Songs* by a Muslim scholar, Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064), see Camilla Adang, *Muslim Writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible: From Ibn Rabban to Ibn Hazm* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1996), p. 247. Ibn Ḥazm's knowledge of this book was most probably through oral transmission, and it is doubtful if he has ever read it. Aryeh Tsoref's study, which identifies a 'biblical' image from the *Song* in Islamic literature, is unconvincing. See Tsoref, "'My Eye is Asleep, and My Heart is Awake': A Verse from the *Song of Songs* in Islamic Literature" [Heb.], *Moreshet Yisra'el*, 10 (2013), pp. 60-71.

[2] Jonathan Kaplan, *My Perfect One: Typology and Early Rabbinic Interpretation of Song of Songs* (Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 1-2; David R. Blumenthal, "Where God is Not: *The Book of Esther* and *Song of Songs*," *Judaism*, 44 (1995), p. 81.

[3] Philip S. Alexander, "The *Song of Songs* as Historical Allegory: Notes on the Development of an Exegetical Tradition", in *Targumic and Cognate Studies: Essays in Honour of Martin McNamara*, Kevin J. Cathcart and Michael Maher, eds. (Sheffield, Eng.: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), p. 15.

Holy of Holies,"[4] Maimonides argued that the *Song*, even though it is attributed to King Solomon, defile the hands.[5]

Early rabbis understood the *Song* as a divine love song, an interpretation that has its roots in the Second Temple Period. This interpretation builds on the spousal metaphor of relationship between God and Israel, when according to the biblical tradition, Israel is imagined as God's long-standing spouse. The Israelite prophets challenged Israel to remember the covenant with God in terms of a marital union, and described Israel as a chastise wife, or rather as an adulterous one. "I will espouse you to me," says God, "you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion" (Hos. 2:21). In another place, however, Israel is reproached:

> I am filled with fury against you, declares the Sovereign Lord, when you do all these things, acting like a brazen prostitute! When you built your mounds at every street corner and made your lofty shrines in every public square, you were unlike a prostitute, because you scorned payment. You adulterous wife! You prefer strangers to your own husband! All prostitutes receive gifts, but you give gifts to all your lovers, bribing them to come to you from everywhere for your illicit favors. So in your prostitution you are the opposite of others; no one runs after you for your favors. You are the very opposite, for you give payment and none is given to you. Therefore, you prostitute, hear the word of the Lord! (Ezek. 16:30-35).

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[4] Mishnah Yadaim 3:5, Midrash Shir ha-Shirim 1:11.

[5] Following one of the arguments in Mishnah Yadaim 3:5. See Joseph Martsiano, "Maimonides and the Commentary on the Song of Songs" [Heb.], in *Teshurah le-'Amos: Asupat meḥqarim be-farshanut ha-Miqra ha-mugeshet le-'Amos Ḥakham* [A Tribute for Amos: Collected Studies in Biblical Exegesis Presented to Amos Hakham], Mosheh Bar-Asher et al., eds. (Alon Shevut: Hotsa'at Tevunot, 2007), p. 91. On the question of impurity of the Scriptures, see Shamma Friedman, "The Holy Scriptures Defile the Hands: The Transformation of a Biblical Concept in Rabbinic Theology," in *Minḥah Le-Naḥum: Biblical and Other Studies Presented to Nahum M. Sarna in Honour of His 70th Birthday*, Marc Brettler and Michael Fishbane, eds. (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1993), pp. 117-132.

Often the metaphor of youthful couple is projected towards the history of the exodus and Israel's wanderings in the Sinai desert, a figure of speech that was later used in the interpretation of the *Song*, such as in Jeremiah's prophecy: "Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem: 'This is what the Lord says: I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved me and followed me through the wilderness, through a land not sown'" (Jer. 2:2). The same spousal metaphor, or at least the one of romantic relationship or devotion, is occasionally used in the Pentateuch to describe God and Israel, and it makes the spousal metaphor not exclusively unique to the prophets.[6] Using this line of interpretation for understanding the meaning of the *Song*, an esoteric reading of this book, is usually defined as an *allegory*, or as Jonathan Kaplan prefers to name it in his recent study of the early rabbinic exegesis of the *Song*: *typological or figurative interpretation*. The exact definition of this interpretation, however, should not be the focus of this chapter, since "allegory" denotes a range of interpretations and habits of thought (originally from the Greek: *allos*, "other," and *agoreuein*, "to speak in public," thus in the sense of "other-speaking").[7] This interpretation, in sum, identifies God as the male protagonist of the Song, and Israel – as the female protagonist, and the villains in the book, as Israel's "enemies" such as the Egyptians or other nations. Early rabbis historicized the *Song*, and created what is considered to be the traditional-esoteric reading of this book in rabbinic Judaism.[8]

A different direction of interpretation was achieved through the trans-historic, philosophical modes of thought. It is no longer the nation (Israel, or in Christianity – the

[6] Kaplan, *My Perfect One*, pp. 4-5.
[7] *Ibid*., pp. 21-22; Rita Copeland and Peter T. Struck, "Introduction," in *The Cambridge Companion to Allegory*, Rita Copeland and Peter T. Struck, eds. (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 2.
[8] Kaplan, *My Perfect One*, pp. 48-50.

Church) that is at the focus of the allegorical or figurative interpretation, but the individual, or the human soul. It is an individualist, psychologistic interpretation. Like the historical-allegorical reading of the *Song*, the philosophical one goes back to the first centuries C.E.

Before examining Ibn ʻAqnīn's commentary on the *Song*, I will examine two commentaries, what will enable us appreciate the *Inkishāf* for its dialogue with Islamic sources. First, I will look at Maimonides' writings concerning the *Song*, then Abraham ibn Ezra's exegesis of this book.

Maimonides saw in biblical commentary great importance and part and parcel of his scholarly work. In the introduction to the *Guide of the Perplexed*, he proclaims:

> The first purpose of this treatise is to explain the meanings of certain terms occurring in the books of prophecy. Some of these terms are equivocal (*mushtarika*; lit. shared); hence the ignorant understand them according to [only] some of the meanings in which the term in question is used. And some of them are metaphorical (*mustaʻāra*; lit. borrowed); hence they understand them as well according to the original meaning from which they are derived. […] This treatise also has a second purpose, namely the explanation of very obscure parables (Ar. *amthāl*; Heb. *meshalim*) occurring in Scripture. […] An ignorant or heedless individual might think that they are said only according to their apparent meaning (*ẓāhir*) and there is no deeper meaning (*bāṭin*) to them.[9]

Nonetheless, Maimonides wrote no complete commentary on any of book of the bible. The method he employs is commenting on a word, a verse, or several verses, or to point to the overall meaning of a passage or a book. Thus, in order to study his understanding

[9] Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, Shlomo Pines, trans. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 1:5-6; Mordechai Z. Cohen, *Opening the Gates of Interpretation: Maimonides' Biblical Hermeneutics in Light of His Geonic-Andalusian Heritage and Muslim Milieu* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2011), p. 186.

of the *Song of Songs*, one has to reconstruct it from his writings; the result, however, is inconsistent. Maimonides did not have *one* comprehensive interpretation of the *Song*, and he commented on it from national, philosophical, halakhic, and ethical aspects according to the objects of his tracts.[10] As mentioned earlier, Maimonides, unlike Rabbi Akiba, considered the *Song* to defile the hands. Nonetheless, he regarded it "wise sayings," and includes it under the category of the second degree of prophecy, the first being the degree held by the judges of Israel, the messiahs, and figures such as David and Moses:

> [The second degree of prophecy] consists in the fact that an individual finds that a certain thing has descended upon him and that another force has come upon him and has made him speak; so that he talks in wise sayings, in words of praise, in useful admonitory dicta, or concerning governmental or divine matters and all this while he is awake and his senses function as usual. Such an individual is said to speak through the Holy Spirit. It is through this kind of Holy Spirit that David composed *Psalms*, and Solomon *Proverbs* and *Ecclesiastes* and *Song of Songs*. *Daniel* and *Job* and *Chronicles* and the other Writings have likewise been composed through this kind of Holy Spirit. For this reason people call them Writings, meaning thereby that they are written through the Holy Spirit.[11]

Later, Maimonides clarifies that Solomon is not to be considered a prophet to the scale of Isaiah and Jeremiah:

> One of the things to which we must draw attention is that David and Solomon and Daniel belong to this group and not to that of Isaiah and Jeremiah and Nathan the prophet and Aḥija the Shilonite[12] and men similar to them. For they – I mean David and Solomon and Daniel – spoke and said what they said through the Holy Spirit.[13]

[10] Martsiano, "Maimonides," p. 89.
[11] Maimonides, *Guide*, 2:398.
[12] 1 Kings 11:31-39, 14:6-16.
[13] Maimonides, *Guide*, 2:399.

Referring to the Sages' usage of parables in their sayings, Maimonides interprets the *Song* by the same terms:

> How can one criticize [the Sages'] composition of wisdom through lowly and vulgar parables and similes when the wisest of all humans did it through the Holy Spirit, that is, Solomon, when he was writing the *Song of Songs*, *Proverbs* and *Ecclesiastes*.[14]

In pointing to the "lowly and vulgar parables" of the Song, Maimonides must have meant the erotic contents of this book.[15] This explains his ambiguous attitude to the *Song* and its usage of parables, which might not be understood by the masses due to their plain meaning. The interpretations he gives to the *Song* are mainly allegorical-national or mystical-devotional. In the *Epistle to Yemen*,[16] Maimonides employs a national-messianic interpretation to the *Song*; he warns his readers in Yemen of arousing messianic hopes and demands them to follow Solomon's swear of the daughters of Jerusalem, "I charge you by the gazelles and by the does of the field: *Do not arouse or awaken love until it so*

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[14] Martsiano, "Maimonides," p. 89 (my translation from the Hebrew).

[15] "You know the severe prohibition that obtains among us against obscene language. This also is necessary. For speaking with the tongue is one of the properties of a human being and a benefit that is granted to him and by which he is distinguished. […] Now this benefit granted us with a view to perfection in order that we learn and teach should not be used with a view to the greatest deficiency and utter disgrace, so that one says what the ignorant and sinful Gentiles say in their songs and their stories, suitable for them but not for those to whom it has been said: 'And ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation' [Exod. 19:6]. And whoever has applied his thought or his speech to some of the stories concerning that sense which is a disgrace to us, so that he thought more about drink or copulation than is needful or recited songs about these matters, has made use of the benefit granted to him, applying and utilizing it to commit an act of disobedience with regard to Him who has granted the benefit and to transgress His orders." Maimonides, *Guide*, 2:435.

[16] Written in 1172, Maimonides' *Epistle to Yemen* was meant to offer the Yemenite Jews consolation and advice due to the torment of forced conversion imposed by the *qā'im*, 'Abd al-Nabī ibn al-Mahdī. The formal addressee of the epistle was Jacob ben Nethanel al-Fayyūmī. See Kraemer, *Maimonides*, 233-242; Juan Pedro Monferrer Sala, "Maimonides under the Messianic Turmoil: Standardized Apocalyptic Topoi on Muhammad's Prophecy in *al-Risalah al-Yamaniyyah*," in *Judaeo-arabic Culture in al-Andalus: Proceedings of the 13th Conference of the Society for Judaeo-Arabic Studies, Cordoba 2007*, Amir Ashur, ed. (Córdoba: Córdoba Near Eastern Research Unit, 2013), pp. 173-196. For an English translation of the epistle, see *Epistles of Maimonides: Crisis and Leadership*, Abraham Halkin, trans. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1985), pp. 91-149.

desires" (Song 2:7). Elsewhere in the same epistle, he gives a longer interpretation of the *Song* according to its national meaning: The Jewish nation is beautiful woman, not having a flaw (Song 4:7), but the nations around her are trying to tempt her into sinning while she mocks them for not being able to provide an alternative to the "Maḥanayim dance" (Song 7:1), that is, according to Maimonides, the revelation on Mount Sinai.[17] In another work, Maimonides employs the individualistic-mystical interpretation of the *Song*, explaining the entire book as advocating for the believer's devotion to God:

> What is the desired love? Loving God in great and powerful passion, until the believer's soul is bound to the love of God, and he finds himself constantly reflecting upon it as if he were faint of love, not having any rest from loving that woman, always thinking about her, whether he is sitting [at home] or walking [along the road], and whether he is eating or drinking. Furthermore, loving God should be even more powerful, as said: "[Love the Lord your God with all your heart and] with all your soul and with all your strength" [Deut. 6:5], and as Solomon said through a parable (*mashal*), "For I am faint with love" [Song 2:5], and the entire *Song of Songs* is a parable concerning this issue.[18]

Elsewhere, Maimonides interprets the *Song* as dealing with matters of the Afterworld.[19]

Abraham ibn Ezra (d. 1164), a prominent Spanish scholar, wrote his commentary on the *Song of Songs* ca. 1142.[20] It is a Hebrew commentary that is divided into three sections: the first is concerned with the philological meaning of the *Song*; the second, the plain meaning (*peshat*; that is, the *Song* as a poem about lovers); and the third, the midrashic interpretation of the *Song* (*derash*), according to the method introduced in the

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[17] Maimonides, *Igrot ha-Rambam* [Epistles], Y. Shilat, ed. (Jerusalem: Ma'aliyot, 1987), 1:71 (Arabic).
[18] Martsiano, "Maimonides," p. 96 (my translation from the Hebrew).
[19] Maimonides, *Guide*, 2:635-636; Martsiano, "Maimonides," pp. 100-102.
[20] *EJIW*, "Ibn Ezra, Abraham (Abū Iṣḥāq)" (Josefina Rodríguez Arribas); Norman Roth, "Abraham ibn Ezra – Highlights of His Life," *Iberia Judaica*, 4 (2012), p. 29. On Abraham ibn Ezra's biblical exegesis, see Mariano Gómez Aranda, "Los comentarios bíblicos de Abraham ibn Ezra," *Iberia Judaica*, 4 (2012), pp. 81-104.

preface to his work.[21] In the first section Abraham ibn Ezra, as a linguist, presents some of the biblical terms with their Arabic names (*bi-leshon Qedar*, "in the tongue of Qedar"),[22] and once in Latin as well, as if he is concerned with materia medica, e.g. *mor* (Song 1:13), "myrrh," in Arabic: *misk*;[23] and *kofer* (Song 1:14), "camphor," in Arabic: *kāfūr*, Latin: *canphora* [i.e. *camphora*]. In some cases, Abraham ibn Ezra uses Arabic in order to explain difficult words, such as *redid* (Song 5:7), "mantle," in Arabic: *malḥafa*.[24] The second section of the commentary opens with a warning: "This is the most elevated of all songs written by Solomon, and never never (*ḥalila ḥalila*) should the *Song of Songs* be considered words of desire (*divre ḥesheq*), but solely in the manner of an allegory (*mashal*) as in the prophecy of Ezekiel on the Jewish nation (*Knesset Yisra'el*)";[25] and lastly, Ibn Ezra ends his commentary with the midrashic interpretation of the Song. David Wacks writes that Ibn Ezra gave equal space to the literal and allegorical interpretations of the *Song*, and sees in it a significant feature of this commentary: "[H]ere the development of the secular meaning of the Song in Ibn Ezra's commentary puts the secular and the sacred on the same page for the first time in the Jewish exegetical tradition."[26] Nonetheless, it is obvious from Ibn Ezra's words that he did not consider the 'secular' reading of the *Song* to be legitimate (at least not in the context of biblical

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[21] For *peshat* and *derash*, see Michael A. Fishbane, *Song of Songs: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation* (Philadelphia : The Jewish Publication Society, 2015), pp. xxxvi-xlii.
[22] On Qedar, see note 104 below.
[23] This interpretation follows Saadia Gaon. See Michael G. Wechsler, *The Arabic Translation and Commentary of Yefet ben 'Eli the Karaite on the Book of Esther* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2008), p. 193 n. 176.
[24] Goitein: *malḥafa*, "cloak." *Med. Soc*., 5:408 n. 205.
[25] *Abraham Ibn Ezra's Commentary on the Canticles: After the First Recension*, H.J. Mathews, ed. and trans. (London: Trübner and Co., 1874), Hebrew section, p. 9. I did not have the chance to consult *Ibn Ezra's Commentary on the Song of Songs*, Richard A. Block, ed. and trans. ([Cincinnati, Ohio]: Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, [1982]).
[26] David A. Wacks, "Between Secular and Sacred: The *Song of Songs* in the Work of Abraham ibn Ezra," in *Wine, Women and Song: Hebrew and Arabic Literature of Medieval Iberia*. Michelle M. Hamilton et al., eds. (Newark, Del.: Juan de la Cuesta, 2004), p. 49; cf. Fishbane, *Song of Songs*, pp. 250-251.

exegesis), and that he wished to set the second section of his commentary only for a better reading of the *Song* according to its allegorical meaning in the third and final section.

II. Joseph ibn ʻAqnīn: A Biographical Sketch

Abraham ibn Ezra's commentary on the *Song of Songs*, with its tripartite structure, was not approved by Joseph ben Judah ibn ʻAqnīn (c. 1150-1220), who composed a philosophical exegesis on the *Song*.[27] Ibn ʻAqnīn,[28] a philosopher and physician who experienced the Almohad persecutions against the Jews and the Christians in the Islamic West, was forced to convert to Islam in the days of the Caliph al-Manṣūr (r. 1184-1199).[29] Ibn ʻAqnīn, in addition to his commentary on the *Song of Songs*, entitled *Inkishāf al-asrār wa-ẓuhūr al-anwār* (Disclosure of Secrets and the Appearance of

[27] Ibn Ezra's commentary on the Song was received through contact with Jewish scholars in Córdoba. See Joseph ibn ʻAqnīn, *Hitgalut ha-sodot ve-hofaʻat ha-me'orot: Perush Shir ha-shirim* [The Disclosure of Secrets and the Appearance of Light: Commentary on the *Song of Songs*], Abraham S. Halkin, ed. and trans. (Jerusalem: Meqitse Nirdamim, 1964), ff. 128a-128b.

[28] Another variation: Ibn ʻAknīn. ʻAknīn/ʻAqnīn is the Berber diminutive of the name Jacob. See Joseph ibn ʻAqnīn's introduction to his book, *Sefer musar: Perush mishnat Avot*. *Sepher musar: Kommentar zum Mischnatraktat Aboth*, Wilhelm Bacher, ed. (Berlin: Mekize Nirdamim, 1910), p. 1, where the author calls himself "Yosef bar Yehudah bar Yosef bar Yaʻaqov Sefaradi" (Joseph bar Judah bar Joseph bar Jacob, the Spaniard). ʻAqnīn (or other variations) is still a common name among North African Jews nowadays, nonetheless, as a surname only. See Joseph Tolédano, *Une histoire de familles: Les noms de famille juifs d'Afrique du Nord des origines à nos jours* (Jerusalem: Ramtol, [1998]), p. 665 (Ouaknine; the first biography there, on R. Yossef, "[t]rès célèbre rabbin, médecin, philosophe," confuses between Joseph ibn ʻAqnīn and Joseph ibn Shamʻūn); Jacques Taïeb, *Juifs du Maghreb: Noms de famille et société* (Paris: Cercle de généalogie juive, 2004), p. 37 #56 (Aknine). Regarding the confusion between Joseph ibn ʻAqnīn and Joseph ibn Shamʻūn (d. 1226), who is usually considered to be "Maimonides's most favorite disciple," see Halkin's introduction to Ibn ʻAqnīn, *Hitgalut ha-sodot*, p. 11 (in Hebrew pagination); Kraemer, *Maimonides*, p. 502 n. 4; *Medieval Jewish Civilization: An Encyclopedia*, Norman Roth, ed. (New York: Routledge, 2003), "Ibn ʻAknīn, Joseph ben Judah" (Norman Roth), p. 344. On the transition from personal to family names, see S.D. Goitein, "Nicknames as Family Names," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 90 (1970), p. 522.

[29] *EI*[2], "Abū Yūsuf Yaʻḳūb b. Yūsuf b. ʻAbd al-Mu'min al-Manṣūr" (A. Huici-Miranda).

Light),[30] is the author of several other works, such as *Ikhtiṣār sharḥ Jālīnūs li-fuṣūl Abuqrāṭ* (Abridgement of Galen's Commentary on Hippocrates' Aphorisms),[31] and an ethical compilation named *Ṭibb al-nufūs al-salīma wa-mu'ālajat al-nufūs al-alīma* (Hygiene of the Healthy Souls and the Therapy of the Ailing Souls).[32]

Ibn 'Aqnīn was born in Barcelona in 1150. Probably due to the Almohad persecutions in Iberia, he, or perhaps his father, left to Fes in North Africa. He remained in this city until his death in 1220, living there as a forced convert to Islam, and expressing his wish to embrace Judaism again. It is unclear why in this period crypto-Jews chose to live in Fes, which was close to Marrakesh, the Almohad capital. Yet, some scholars suggested that in fact, for crypto-Jews, Fes was safer to live in than other areas under the Almohad rule; this question nonetheless requires further investigation.[33] Ibn 'Aqnīn and Maimonides met during the latter's sojourn in Fes, and Ibn 'Aqnīn composed a poem on the occasion of the master's departure for Egypt in 1165.[34] In his writings, Ibn 'Aqnīn expresses his admiration to Maimonides, naming him *mofet ha-dor* or *mofet ha-*

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[30] Ibn 'Aqnīn, *Hitgalut ha-sodot*. See also the book review by Georges Vajda for errata: "En marge du 'Commentaire sur le Cantique des Cantiques' de Joseph ibn 'Aqnīn," *Revue des études juives*, 124 (1965), pp. 185-199.

[31] See Hadar Peri, "The Medical Treatise of Joseph ibn 'Aqnīn, *Ikhtiṣār sharḥ Jālīnūs li-fuṣūl Abuqrāṭ*: Its Place in the Thought of Ibn 'Aqnīn and in the Commentary to Hippocrates" [Heb.] (Ph.D. diss., Bar-Ilan University, 2007); *idem*, "The Image of Joseph ben Judah ibn 'Aqnīn as a Physician" [Heb.], *Korot: The Israel Journal of the History of Medicine and Science*, 19 (2008), pp. 21-42 (Hebrew section).

[32] Oxford University, Bodleian Library, Ms. Neubauer 1273. Adolf Neubauer, *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library and in the College Libraries of Oxford* (Oxford, Eng.: Clarendon Press, 1886), 1: cols. 450-451; Malachi Beit-Arié, *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library: Supplement of Addenda and Corrigenda to Vol. I (A. Neubauer's Catalogue)*, R.A. May, ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), cols. 209-210. For a list of Ibn 'Aqnīn's writings, see Abraham S. Halkin, "Aknin, Joseph ben Judah ben Jabob Ibn," *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Encyclopaedia Judaica; New York: Macmillan, 1971), 2:501-503; *idem*, introduction to Ibn 'Aqnīn, *Hitgalut ha-sodot*, pp. 12-14 (in Hebrew pagination).

[33] David Corcos, "The Nature of the Almohad Rulers' Treatment of the Jews" [first pub. in 1967], *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies*, 2 (2010), p. 282; Stroumsa, *Maimonides*, pp. 59-60; Kraemer, *Maimonides*, pp. 83-84.

[34] Ibn 'Aqnīn, *Hitgalut ha-sodot*, fol. 112a; trans. in Kraemer, *Maimonides*, p. 117.

zeman, and in Arabic: *ʻalāmat al-zamān* (paragon of the age);[35] and he mentions in his writings Maimonides' works such as his *Mishneh Torah* and the *Guide for the Perplexed*, which he names *Dalīl al-ḥā'irīn* instead of the more common title, *Dalālat al-ḥā'irīn*. It is doubtful, however, if Ibn ʻAqnīn could have had access to the copy of the *Guide* in Fes, since copies of this book were probably not very common in the Maghrib.[36]

Ibn ʻAqnīn witnessed the Almohad anti-Jewish persecutions, and gives evidence for the forced conversion of his coreligionists to Islam. The main source for our knowledge of his experience under the Almohads is the *Ṭibb al-nufūs* that was written after 1198:[37]

> If we were to consider the persecutions (*shemadot*)[38] that have befallen us in recent years, we would not find anything comparable recorded by our ancestors in their annals. We are made the object of reproach (*taʻrīḍ*); great and small testify against us and judgments are pronounced, the least of which render lawful the spilling of our blood, the confiscation of our property, and the dishonor of our wives… [T]hey imposed on upon us distinctive garments as it was foretold in the Holy Scriptures: *ve-hayita le-shammah, le-mashal ve-li-sheninah be-khol ha-ʻamim asher yenahegkha Adnoai shammah*, 'And you shall become a desolation, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations where the Lord shall lead you' (Deut. 28:37). The word *shamma* signifies 'desolation' on account of the scorn of the

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[35] Bacher, introduction to *Sefer musar*, p. xiv; Ibn ʻAqnīn, *Hitgalut ha-sodot*, fol. 112a.

[36] *Ibid*., fol. 103b; Y. Tzvi Langermann, "The *Dalālat al-ḥā'irīn* and Its Commentary among Jews of Arab Lands" [Heb.], in *Minḥah le-Mikha'el: Meḥqarim be-hagut Yehudit u-Muslemit, muqdashim li-Profesor Mikha'el Shvarts* [Tribute to Michael: Studies in Jewish and Muslim Thought, Presented to Professor Michael Schwarz], Sara Klein-Braslavy et al., eds. ([Tel Aviv]: Tel Aviv University, 2009), p. 70 and n. 8. See however Joseph ibn Kaspi's (d. c. 1345) account of Muslim scholars studying the *Guide* in Fes, in Israel Abrahams, *Hebrew Ethical Wills* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1926), 1:154 (in Hebrew and English trans.). On the Arabic title of the *Guide*, see Kraemer, *Maimonides*, pp. 570-571 n. 61; Stroumsa, *Maimonides*, p. 25; and on its reception among Muslims, see the appendix in Gregor Schwarb, "The Reception of Maimonides in Christian-Arabic Literature," in *Ben ʻEver la-ʻArav: Contacts Between Arabic Literature and Jewish Literature in the Middle Ages and Modern Times*, 7: *Maimonides and His World*, Joseph Tobi, ed. (Haifa: Haifa University, 2014), pp. 143-146 (also p. 113 n. 20).

[37] Joseph Tobi, "The Sixth Chapter of R. Joseph Ibn ʻAqnin's *Ṭibb al-Nufūs*" [Heb.], in *le-Rosh Yosef: Mehqarim be-hokhmat Yisra'el*. *Teshurat hoqkarah la-Rav Yosef Qapah* [Texts and Studies in Judaism in Honor of R. Yosef Qapah], Joseph Tobi, ed. (Jerusalem: Hotsa'at Afiqim li-tehiyah ruhanit ve-hevratit, 1995), p. 312.

[38] Heb. *shemad* (pl. *shemadot*), "persecution; forced apostasy."

nations at our state of humiliation, abasement, and contempt (*wa-huwa istiḥyāsh al-ummam min aḥwālinā min al-hūn wa-l-dhilla wa-l-khasāsa*).[39]

Other references to the persecutions also appear in his commentary on the *Song*, where Ibn ʻAqnīn says on the "tents of Qedar" in Song 1:5, that "no other enslavement is more harmful and destructive than under their kingdom [i.e. Islam]; no other hardship is worse than theirs, and none is heavier in the world," following the traditional identification of Qedar, one of the sons of Ishmael (Gen. 25:13; 1 Chron. 1:29), with Islam.[40] Ibn ʻAqnīn's interpretation echoes Maimonides' *Epistle to Yemen*, where the master cites Ps. 120:5, "Woe to me that I dwell in Meshek, that I live among the tents of Qedar," and concludes with the same message, reminding his readers that "the Madman [i.e. Muḥammad] is of the lineage of the children of Qedar."[41] In another place in his commentary Ibn ʻAqnīn

[39] *Ṭibb al-nufūs*, fols. 143b, 144b, in Tobi, "The Sixth Chapter," pp. 329, 332; trans. in Bat Ye'or, *The Dhimmi: Jews and Christians under Islam*, David Maisel, Paul Fenton, and David Littman, trans. (Rutherford, [N.J.]: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1985), pp. 347, 349 (cited here with some changes). Cf. the description of the historian ʻAbd al-Wāḥid al-Marrākushī (d. 1270) of the forced Jewish converts in Stroumsa, *Maimonides*, pp. 57-58. On the dress restrictions of the converts, see E. Fagnan, "Les signes distinctifs des Juifs au Maghrib," *Revue des études juives*, 28 (1894), pp. 294-298; Pessah Shinar, "Some Remarks Regarding the Colours of Male Jewish Dress in North Africa and their Arab-Islamic Context," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 24 (2000), pp. 380-395.

[40] Ibn ʻAqnīn, *Hitgalut ha-sodot*, fol. 9a. On the identification of Qedar with Islam in the Jewish tradition, see Moritz Steinschneider, *Polemische und apologetische Literatur in arabischer Sprache zwischen Muslimen, Christen und Juden, nebst Anhängen verwandten Inhalts* (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1877), p. 254. Nehemiah Allony points to the relation between Qedar and the Hebrew root q-d-r that denotes darkness in medieval Hebrew poetry. See Allony, "Sarah and Hagar in [Medieval Hebrew] Spanish Poetry" [Heb.], in *Sefer Ben-Tsiyon Lurya* [Ben-Tsiyon Lurya Jubilee Book] (Jerusalem: ha-Hevrah le-heqer ha-Miqra be-Yisra'el, Qiryat Sefer, 1979), p. 180. For the Christian tradition on Qedar, see Barbara Roggema, "Biblical Exegesis and Interreligious Polemics in the Arabic Arabic Apocalyse of Peter – *The Book of the Rolls*," in *The Bible in Arab Christianity*, David Thomas, ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2007), p. 141.

[41] Maimonides, *Igrot ha-Rambam*, 1:108-109 (Arabic), 160 (Hebrew); *idem*, "Epistle to Yemen," in *Epistles of Maimonides*, p. 126 (cited here with a minor change). Naming Muḥammad a madman is based on Hosea 9:7, *evil ha-navi', meshugga' ish ha-ruaḥ*, "The prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad." See Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross*, p. 154; Yitshak Avishur, "Pejoratives for Gentiles and Jews in Judeo-Arabic in the Middle Ages and Their Later Usage," in *Shai le-Hadasah: Meḥqarim ba-lashon ha-ʻIvrit uvi-leshonot ha-Yehudim* [Hadassah Shy Jubilee Book: Research Papers on Hebrew Linguistics and Jewish Languages], Yaakov Bentolila, ed. ([Be'er-Sheva']: Ben-Gurion University, 1997), pp. 98-103. On the Biblical references to Meshek, see John L. McKenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible* (Milwaukee: Bruce Pub. Co., 1965), p. 568.

expresses his wish to be purified from the defilement of his conversion to Islam (*tum'at ha-shemad*) and leave the Maghrib, the "land of oppression" (*erets gezerah*), to a safer place, a wish he has never fulfilled during his lifetime.[42]

III. Ibn ʻAqnīn's Commentary on the *Song of Songs*

The literal interpretation of the *Song of Songs* by some exegetes and readers, without seeing the deeper meaning of the text, is what motivated Ibn ʻAqnīn to write his commentary on this book, using allegorical and mystical-philosophical readings – the first (allegorical) follows the rabbinic interpretation, and the second (philosophical) is his own commentary on the text, on which he boasts that no one preceded him in his approach. One can learn about Ibn ʻAqnīn's motivation from the introduction, where he explains that Solomon wrote the *Song* as a love poem only as a pedagogical tool, in order to attract the masses, and that the same method was used by the Indians when they composed *Kalīla wa-Dimna* and made it appealing to the laypeople in its contents and illustrations (fol. 1a). Arabic-speaking Jews were familiar with Ibn al-Muqaffaʻ's (d. ca. 756) rendering of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* and the illustrated manuscripts of this work. In Iberia, this work was translated twice into Hebrew, first by one Rabbi Joel (twelfth century) and again by the Toledan *maqāma* author Jacob ben Elʻazar (d. early thirteenth century).[43]

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[42] Ibn ʻAqnīn, *Hitgalut ha-sodot*, fol. 129a.

[43] On the history of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, its popularity in Iberia, and its translations into Hebrew and Castilian, see *EI*^{2}, "Ibn al-Muḳaffaʻ" (F. Gabrieli); David A. Wacks, *Framing Iberia: Maqamat and Frametale Narratives in Medieval Spain* (Leiden: Boston: Brill, 2007), pp. 86-124; Joseph Sadan, "Jackals' Discourse: Examining the Hebrew Versions of *Kalîla wa-dimna*," in *Le répertoire narratif arabe médiéval: Transmission et ouverture*, Frédéric Bauden et al., eds. (Liège: Bibliothèque de la faculté de philosophie et lettres de l'université de Liège, 2008), pp. 253-272. For the illustrations of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* in Arabic and Hebrew manuscripts, see César Merchán-Hamann, "Fables from East to West," in *Crossing Borders: Hebrew Manuscripts as a Meeting-Place of Cultures*, Piet van Boxel and Sabine Arndt, eds. (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2009), pp. 35-44. For an early reference to *Kalīla wa-Dimna* as a legitimate reading

The *Song*, as Ibn ʻAqnīn argues, holds a unique meaning, known only to specialists; he wishes to stress this point by a narrative from the Almoravid times:

> The physician Abū Abraham ibn Muwarīl[44] told me that the physician Abū al-Ḥasan ibn Qanmīl[45] told him: 'Once I came before the *amīr* of the Almoravid kings,[46] and found a Jewish physician, whose name I have forgotten, explaining him the *Song of Songs* according to its literal meaning, that is, as love poetry (*ghazal*).[47] I condemned that physician and offended him in front of the king, and told the king: He is a complete fool, who does not understand neither our Torah and its wisdom, nor the intention of Solomon, son of David (may God pray for them), and the purpose for writing this book. This book is exceedingly valuable, written as love poetry at a first glance, but when you look deeper into it, you will find in it the wonderful meanings known only to the most wise, those of superior intellect and pure insight. I explained that to the *amīr*, clarified the intention and purpose of this book, and made the contempt he felt towards this book, caused by the words of the foolish physician, disappear from his heart. I asked him: how could a man like Solomon, son of David – peace be upon them – spend his time with the vile and inferior purpose [of writing the *Song of Songs*], and I raised this book into the higher level which it deserves, and the wisdom of Solomon (peace be upon him) was dear to him; and this case was for him none other but sanctification of God's name (*kiddush ha-Shem*).[48]

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material among Jews, see the responsa of Hai Gaon (d. 1038): *Zikhron kamah ge'onim: Teshuvot ha-ge'onim* [Responsa of the Geonim], Albert Harkavy, ed. (Berlin: Itsakowski, 1887), p. 183 #362; David Eric Sklare, *Samuel ben Ḥofni Gaon and His Cultural World: Texts and Studies* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), p. 52 n. 45.

[44] Unidentified. Halkin identified him as one of Judah ha-Levi's friends, but this might be a mistake. See Norman Roth, "Jewish and Muslim Physicians of ʻAlī ibn Tashufīn," *Korot: The Israel Journal of the History of Medicine and Science*, 10 (1993-94), p. 86* n. 8.

[45] I.e., Ibn Qamaniel, a Jewish physician at the court of Yūsuf Ibn Tashufīn (r. 1061-1106). Roth, "Jewish and Muslim Physicians," 85*-86*; ʻAbd al-Laṭīf ʻIṣmat Dandash, "Aḍwā' ʻalā muʻāmalat al-Murābiṭīn li-l-Yahūd min khilāl nāzilat al-ḥakīm Ibn Qamnīl," *Académia: Revue de l'Académie du Royaume du Maroc*, 18 (2001), pp. 175-200.

[46] Ibn Tashufīn. See *EI*[2], "Yūsuf b. Tāshufīn" (Halima Ferhat).

[47] See *EI*[2], "Ghazal: (i) The Ghazal in Arabic Poetry" (R. Blachère).

[48] Ibn ʻAqnīn, *Hitgalut ha-sodot*, fols. 126b-127a (my translation). For another account of a Jew interpreting a Jewish text (the Talmud) to a Muslim ruler in the Islamic West (al-Ḥakam II, r. 961-976, the Umayyad Caliphate of Córdoba), see Abraham ibn Da'ud, *Sefer ha-Qabbalah* (*Book of Tradition)*, Gerson D. Cohen, ed. and trans. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 2005 [1969]), pp. 48-49 (Hebrew), 66 (English); David J. Wasserstein, "An Arabic Version of Abot 1:3 from Umayyad Spain,"

By removing the erotic meaning from the *Song of Songs*, Ibn ‘Aqnīn argues in another book of his:

> Know that one is forbidden to sing those songs that the Ishmaelites call *ash‘ār muwashshaḥa* (strophic verses),[49] in which the beauty and stature of humans is praised, because they seduce one into committing sins, and cause the individual to sin regularly. Furthermore, [these songs are forbidden] in taverns because wine more easily leads into committing sins, whether these songs are sung in the holy language [Hebrew] or in Arabic. These songs were not forbidden because of their way of speech, but because of their content. In other words, if their content encourages one to do a *mitzvah*, to speak praises [to God], or to mention the blessings of the the Holy One, Blessed Be He, it is mandatory to sing such a song, even in the tavern.
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> We also say that singing anything else [other than what is mentioned previously, is forbidden], and that extracting content from Biblical verses for this purpose [of singing, is forbidden], because one secularizes these verses and makes them the subject of folly and jest. The sages (of blessed memory) said: Whoever warbles a verse from the *Song of Songs* in a tavern, treating it like an ordinary song (*zemer*), brings evil to this world.[50]

Arabica, 34, no. 3 (1987), p. 373.

[49] See Tova Rosen, “The Muwashshah,” in *The Literature of Al-Andalus*, María Rosa Menocal et al., eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 163-189.

[50] Ibn ‘Aqnīn, *Sefer musar*, p. 24 (my translation). For the quotation, see BT, Sanhedrin 101a. In the *Ṭibb al-nufūs* Ibn ‘Aqnīn recommends teachers not to teach verses in praise of vile and despised actions (*al-radhā’il wa-l-qabā’iḥ*) as well as love poetry (*ghazal*), but he does recommend teaching *zuhdiyāt* (ascetic lyrics). See the text of the *Ṭibb* in Moritz Güdemann, *Das jüdische Unterrichtswesen während der spanischarabischen Periode, nebst handschriftlichen arabischen und hebräischen Beilagen mit Berichtungen und Nachträgen* (Wien: C. Gerold’s Sohn, 1873), Appendix, p. 10 (Arabic).

Maimonides argues likewise in his commentary on the Tractate Aboth, where he objects to the singing of any song of a "despised" topic, whether in Arabic or in Hebrew; the relation between his commentary and Ibn ʻAqnīn's is clear:[51]

> And know that poems made in any language are not examined except as to their subject, and their manner is as the way of speech, as we have already divided it [i.e. permitted, prohibited, etc.]. And I had to explain this even though it is simple because I have seen elders and pure (men) of our community when they were at the a wine banquet (*majlis*), whether it is a wedding or some other place, and were a man to recite an Arabic poem, even if the words of that poem were praise of courage or generosity which is in if the category of suitable, or praise of the wine, they would protest and not permit it to be heard; but if the poet were to recite a Hebrew *muwashshaḥ* they would not protest it even though its speech is of the prohibited or despised category.[52]

Nevertheless, Ibn ʻAqnīn and Maimonides, both physicians, could recommend music for therapeutic reasons, in order to overcome, for example, black humor (melancholy): Ibn ʻAqnīn in his *Sefer ha-musar* (Book of Ethics), and Maimonides in his medical treatise for al-Afḍal b. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (d. 1225), and in his introduction to Tractate Aboth, known as the *Eight Chapters of Ethics*.[53]

Ibn ʻAqnīn's approach to the *Song of Songs* is original, and does not rely on Maimonides' method of exegesis.[54] He proudly argues that he is the first to compose a

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[51] Maimonides' commentary on the Tractate Aboth is mentioned as one of Ibn ʻAqnīn sources. See *Sefer musar*, p. 1.

[52] Trans. in Norman Roth, "Religious Constraints on Erotic Poetry among Muslims and Jews in al-Andalus," *Maghreb Review*, 19, no. 3-4 (1994), p. 202 (cited here with some changes); cf. Martsiano, "Maimonides," pp. 90-91 nn. 18 and 19.

[53] Ibn ʻAqnīn, *Sefer musar*, p. 75; Maimonides, *On the Causes of Symptoms*. *Maqālah fī bayān baʻḍ al-aʻrād wa-al-jawāb ʻanhā*, J.O. Leibowitz and S. Marcus (Berkeley: University of California Press, [1974]), f. 153v (=p. 133). On the relations between Maimonides and al-Afḍal, see Kraemer, *Maimonides*, pp. 446; and on the *Eight Chapters*, *ibid.*, pp. 183-184.

[54] Abraham S. Halkin, "Ibn ʻAknin's Commentary on the *Song of Songs*," in *Alexander Marx Jubilee Volume on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*, [Vol. 1:] *English Section* (New York: Jewish

philosophical commentary on the *Song*.[55] His commentary offers a three-layered explanation of each verse of the *Song*: first, the exoteric sense (*ẓāhir al-lafẓ*), an explanation of the plain meaning and of the grammatical forms; second, the rabbinic interpretation, an allegorical explanation regarding the people of Israel, its fate, its tragedy and its hopes; and third, Ibn ʻAqnīn's interpretation of the esoteric meaning (*tafsīr al-bāṭin*).[56]

The Jewish Contents of Ibn ʻAqnīn's Commentary

In Ibn ʻAqnīn, the *ẓāhir* interpretation corresponds to the *peshat* (plain, or linguistic, meaning of the text); the allegorical – to the *derash* (the traditional interpretation); and the *bāṭin* – to the *sod* (the esoteric meaning). Throughout his commentary on the first two levels of the commentary, Ibn ʻAqnīn mentions his sources: Saadia Gaon (882-942); Abū Zakariyā Yaḥyā (Judah) ibn Da'ūd al-Fāsī (of Fes), known as Ḥayyūj (c. 945-1000); Abū al-Walīd (Jonah) Ibn Janāḥ (c. 990-1050); Samuel ha-Nagid (c. 993-1056); Judah ibn Balʻam (*fl*. end of the eleventh century); Moses ibn Gikatilla (fl. third quarter of the eleventh century); and Isaac Abū Ibrāhīm ibn Barūn (d. c. 1128). This list, with the exception of Saadia Gaon,[57] demonstrates a close familiarity of Ibn ʻAqnīn with the Western (Maghribī) tradition of Hebrew grammar.[58] While he criticizes Abraham ibn

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Theological Seminary of America, 1950), p. 399.

[55] Ibn ʻAqnīn, *Hitgalut ha-sodot*, fol. 4b.

[56] *Ibid*.

[57] For Saadia's interpretation of the *Song*, see Yehuda Razhabi, "The Commentary on the *Song of Songs* Attributed to R. Saadia Gaon" [Heb.], in *Har'el: Qovets zikaron leha-Rav Refael Alshekh* [Harel: Collected Studies in Memory of R. Rafael Alshekh], Yehuda Razhabi and Yitshak Shavtiel, eds. (Tel Aviv, 1962), pp. 36-97; *idem*, "New Geniza Fragments from a Commentary on the *Song of Songs* [by R. Saadia Gaon]" [Heb.], *Sinai*, 125 (2001), pp. 1-8; *idem*, "R. Saadia Gaon's Translation of the *Song of Songs*" [Heb.], *Beit Miqra*, 43, no. 3-4 (1998), pp. 256-262; André Caquot, "Notes philologiques sur la traduction arabe du *Cantique des cantiques* par Saadya Gaon," in *Présence Juive Au Maghreb*, pp. 275-281.

[58] See Judith Olszowy-Schlanger, "The Science of Language among Medieval Jews," in *Science in*

Ezra’s commentary on the *Song of Songs* for being unoriginal, he speaks of Saadia Gaon with high respect:

> I have seen the commentaries of previous exegets (*tafāsīr al-mutaqqadimīn*) to this book [the *Song of Songs*], such as the commentary of the teacher of this method (*ṭarīqa*; i.e. biblical commentary), its chief and master, the exalted gaon, Saadia (may he rest in peace), after whom we shall follow the light and maintain the practice, and we [i.e. Ibn ‘Aqnīn] found it (may God be satisfied with him) to be a linguistic exegesis and elucidation of the words according to their meaning, and he explained the esoteric meaning (*bāṭin*) in accordance to the interpretation of our sages (may they rest in peace)” (f. 128a).

Ibn ‘Aqnīn finds it necessary to legitimize not only his method of exegesis, but also the usage of non-Jewish literature as sources of knowledge and wisdom in his commentary on the *Song*. After mentioning *Kalīla wa-Dimna* in the prologue of the *Inkishāf*, in the epilogue he gives examples from the works of Hai Gaon (d. 1038) who made references to Arabic lore in his dictionary *Kitāb al-ḥāwī* (The Compendium).[59] Hai, for example, quoted a verse by the Umayyad prince Khālid b. Yazīd b. Mu‘āwiya (d. c. 704) to his wife, Ramla bint Zubayr, in order to explain the meaning of *qulb* as a kind of jewelry (*ḍarab min al-ḥalī*):

תג׳ול ח׳לאח׳יל אלנסא ולא ארי / לרמלה ח׳לח׳אלא יג׳ול ולא קלבא

تجولُ خلاخيل النساء ولا أرى / لرملة خلخالاً يجول ولا قُلبا

Medieval Jewish Cultures, Gad Freudenthal, ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 378-380; Arie Schippers, “The Hebrew Grammatical Tradition,” in *The Semitic Languages*, Robert Hetzron, ed. (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 61-63. In the *Ṭibb al-nufūs* Ibn ‘Aqnīn recommends teaching the books of Ḥayyūj and Ibn Janāḥ. See Güdemann, *Das jüdische Unterrichtswesen*, Appendix, p. 8 (Arabic). On Maimonides’ knowledge of Maghribi Hebrew grammar, see Herbert A. Davidson, *Moses Maimonides: The Man and His Works* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 118 n. 214.

[59] See *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World*, “Hay (Hayya) Gaon” (Robert Brody); Aharon Maman, “The Remnants of R. Hai Gaon’s Dictionary *Kitāb al-ḥāwi* in the Adler and Taylor-Schechter Geniza Collections” [Heb.], *Tarbiz*, 69 (2000), pp. 341-421.

Translation: The women's anklets spin around,

but I did not see an anklet on Ramla nor a bracelet).[60]

Hai Gaon also read the Qur'ān and the *Ḥadīth* literature, and once consulted the Christian Patriarch of Baghdad in order to better understand the meaning of a biblical passage (Ps. 151:5). (f. 127b). The other example by Ibn 'Aqnīn for a Jewish scholar who utilized Arabic materials is Saadia Gaon.[61] Hai Gaon and Saadia are thus a model for legitimizing the usage of Arabic materials; both are mentioned for the same reason by the linguist and poet Moses ibn Ezra (d. 1138) in his book on poetics and literary criticism, *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara wa-l-mudhākarah* (Book of Conversation and Discussion).[62]

The Islamic Contents of Ibn 'Aqnīn's Commentary

1. *al-Fārābī*

According to Ibn 'Aqnīn's philosophical interpretation, the lover is the active intellect (*al-'aql al-fa''āl*), and the heroine is man's rational soul ([*al-nafs*] *al-nāṭiqa*). He does not, however, always make sure to differentiate the philosophical interpretation from the *peshat*, thus he sometimes interpolates the discussion on the active intellect and the rational soul into the plain layer of the scripture; and in an original manner, lengthily

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[60] Ibn 'Aqnīn, *Hitgalut ha-sodot*, fols. 127b (notice the corrupted text – L.Y.). Khālid's poem is recorded in Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī, *Kitāb al-aghānī*, Iḥsān 'Abbās et al., eds. (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 2008, third ed.), 17:244. For *qulb*, "bracelet," see J.A. Abu-Haidar, "The *Muwashshaḥāt* and the *Kharjas* Tell Their Own Story," *Al-Qanṭara*, 26, no. 1 (2005), p. 86 n. 48; and for *khalākhil*, "anklets": Goitein, *Med. Soc*., 4:424 n. 448; Judith Olszowy-Schlanger, *Karaite Marriage Documents From the Cairo Geniza: Legal Tradition and Community Life in Mediaeval Egypt and Palestine* (Leiden; New York: Brill, 1998), p. 222. On Khālid b. Yazīd, the son of the Umayyad Caliph Yazīd I (r. 683-684), see *EI*[2], "Khālid b. Yazīd b. Muʿāwiya" (M. Ullmann); Hilary Kilpatrick, *Making the Great Book of Songs: Compilation and the Author's Craft in Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī's Kitāb al-aghānī* (London; New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), pp. 168-170.

[61] See David Freidenreich, "The Use of Islamic Sources in Saadiah Gaon's *Tafsir* of the Torah," *Jewish Quarterly Review,* 93 (2003), pp. 353-395.

[62] Joseph Dana, "The Influence of Arabic Literary Culture on the Judaeo-Arabic Literature of the Middle Ages as Reflected in Moses ibn Ezra's *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara wa-l-mudhākarah*" [Heb.], *Sefunot*, N.S., 5 [20], p. 22. See further on Moses ibn Ezra in chapter 2.

digressing from the text of the *Song*, he rationalizes the story of Jacob's encounter with the angel (Gen. 32:25-33) in his exegesis of the Song 3:6.[63] Although his rationalization was known to Jewish thinkers of later generations, Ibn 'Aqnīn's method of interpretation was not always received with praise.[64]

In the esoteric sense of the exegesis, Ibn 'Aqnīn relies on al-Fārābī's (d. 950) theory of emanation (*fayḍ*), referring to him simply by his *kunya* Abū Naṣr, and mentioning several of his works, the most important one being *Mabādi' ārā' ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila* (The Principle Opinions of the Virtuous City; better known in English as: The Perfect State).[65] al-Fārābī's theory of emanation has been summarized by Frank Griffel as follows:

> Relying on Ptolemy's (d. ca.165 CE) geocentric model of the planetary system, al-Fārābī taught that the whole universe consists of ten spheres. The sphere of the earth is a true globe at the center of the universe. It is surrounded in the heavens by nine other spheres, wrapped around one another like layers of an onion. At the upper end of the universe, above the spheres of the sun, the moon, the five planets, and the fixed stars, sits the first sphere, which contains no visible object. The spheres are thought of as organisms that have a body, which is the rotating sphere itself, and a soul, which is governed by an intellect. At the upper end of the universe, the intellect that governs the first sphere is the highest created being. Beyond it is only the First Principle, of which al-Fārābī says, "One should believe this is God."
>
> God creates events in the world by directly acting on only one being, the intellect of the uppermost sphere. God's acting is described as emanation (*fayḍ*), meaning that His acts flow out of Him like rays flow out of the sun in a

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[63] Ibn 'Aqnīn, *Hitgalut ha-sodot*, fols. 32b-36a; Halkin, "Ibn 'Aknin's Commentary on the *Song of Songs*," pp. 408-409, 417-418.

[64] Abraham Isaac Green, "Rabbi Isaac Ibn Sahola's Commentary on the *Song of Songs*" [Heb.], *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought*, 6, no. 3-4 (1987), pp. 396-397, 405-406.

[65] al-Fārābī, *Al-Farabi on the Perfect State: Abū Naṣr Al-Fārābī's Mabādi' ārā' ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila*, Richard Walzer, ed. and trans. (Oxford: New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1985).

continuous process that never begins and never ends. The intellect that receives this emanation functions as an intermediary of God; it acts on the intellect of the second sphere in like manner, meaning that it emanates its actions on it. Every divine action passes as emanation through the intermediacy of the celestial intellects until it arrives at the intellect that governs over the lowest sphere, the so-called sublunar sphere of the earth. […]

al-Fārābī identifies the active intellect with the tenth intellect that governs the sublunar sphere. In al-Fārābī, the active intellect has a triple function: (1) being one of the celestial intermediaries for God's actions (al-Fārābī calls them "secondary causes," or *al-asbāb al-thawānī*); (2) governing and ordering the sublunar sphere; and (3) giving universal concepts to humans, thus enabling them to think and acquire knowledge. The active intellect takes on functions toward this sphere similar to those that God has toward the whole universe. It is an efficient cause of everything that happens in the sublunar sphere, and it is the final cause for all the beings therein. This means that all creatures in the sublunar sphere, particularly humans, strive to resemble the active intellect as perfectly as possible. […]

Given that the active intellect contains all universal concepts and ideas and can be understood as pure thought, humans strive to acquire as much of those universal ideas as possible, to the extent that their individual passive intellects begin to resemble the active intellect. Doing so, the individual human intellect advances through different stages until it reaches a level that al-Fārābī calls the acquired intellect (*al-'aql al-mustafād*). This is the highest stage of human perfections, at which the human intellect becomes almost identical to the content of the active intellect. It is reached when the human being masters "all or most" (*kulluhā… aw julluhā*) intelligible thought.[66]

[66] Frank Griffel, "Muslim Philosophers' Rationalist Explanation of Muḥammad's Prophecy," in *The Cambridge Companion to Muḥammad*, Jonathan E. Brockopp, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 164-165. See also Damien Janos, *Method, Structure, and Development in Al-Fārābi's Cosmology* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012).

Figure 1. A diagram of al-Fārābī’s cosmological model. Arabic MSS 436, f. 12r. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

Ibn ‘Aqnīn presents al-Fārābī’s teachings in the prologue to his commentary, and expresses his agreement with the master’s theory (f. 2a). He might have followed here Maimonides’ admiration to al-Fārābī. In his epistle to Samuel ibn Tibbon (d. 1232), the translator of the *Guide for the Perplexed* into Hebrew, Maimonides enumerates the classical (Greek) and contemporary (Muslim) philosophers whose works one must study or avoid, and states: “The most important Islamic philosophers are al-Farabi, Ibn Bajjah, and Averroes. al-Farabi is particularly praised for his works on logic. Averroes is important for his commentaries on Aristotle. Avicenna’s works are not as good as those of al-Farabi, but are still useful and worth studying.”[67] Here I will give a couple of examples from Ibn ‘Aqnīn’s rationalist commentary on the *Song*, following al-Fārābī’s teachings.

Example 1 (Prologue to the *Inkishāf*, ff. 2a-2b)

> [i. *The cosmological model*:] We start our commentary (*sharḥ*) with the description of heavens, saying that their intellects (*‘aql*, pl. *‘uqūl*) have neither body nor substance, but they are abstract (*ruḥāniyya*). They are [organized in] grades, one upon the other, as said by the wise one [Solomon]: “*For one high is under by a higher one, and over them both are others higher still”* (Ecc. 5:7), meaning that they are [organized in] layers, one layer upon the other, and saying “*for one high is under by a higher one”* means that there is a layer for each of the heavens, as we [i.e. Ibn ‘Aqnīn] will explain. Saying *“over them both are others*

[67] Cited in Steven Harvey, “Did Maimonides’ Letter to Samuel Ibn Tibbon Determine Which Philosophers Would Be Studied by Later Jewish Thinkers?”, *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 83 (1992), p. 55. See also Shlomo Pines, “The Philosophic Sources of the Guide for the Perplexed,” in his edition of Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed*, 1:lxxviii; Lawrence V. Berman, “Maimonides, the Disciple of Alfārābī,” in *Maimonides: A Collection of Critical Essays*, Joseph A.Buijs, ed. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), pp. 195-214. On Samuel ibn Tibbon, see James T. Robinson, “Maimonides, Samuel Ibn Tibbon, and the Construction of a Jewish Tradition of Philosophy,” in *Maimonides after 800 Years: Essays on Maimonides and His Influence*, Jay M. Harris, ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Center for Jewish Studies, 2007), pp. 291-306.

higher still" means that God Almighty is their master. […] Regarding the heavens, they are according to what I will explain [later] and according to the words of the sages (*'ulamā'*), and I shall cite them. Abū Naṣr [al-Fārābī] said in *al-Madīna al-fāḍila*, that the first [existent] emanates to the second one. The second [existent] has no body either nor is made of substance, and it acquires knowledge to itself and to the first [existent]…

[ii. *The active intellect:*] The eleventh existent (*mawjūd*) [= the tenth intellect] is the one known as the active intellect (*al-'aql al-fa''āl*), and this level is known as *ishim* (Heb. people) because of its proximity to human beings. It is the one that brings revelation (*waḥy*) upon them from the Creator, as said: "*The man of God you sent*," etc. (Judg. 13:9); *"Now a man of God came to Eli,"* etc. (1 Sam. 27:2); *"With them was a man clothed in linen,"* etc. (Ezek. 9:2); *"And I heard the man clothed in linen,"* etc. (Dan. 12:7). The active intellect acquires knowledge to the first cause (*al-awwal*) and the secondary causes (*al-thawānī*), and thus acquires knowledge to itself. It makes the things that are not intelligible (*ma'qūlāt*) [to become intelligible], as God Almighty said in his Scripture (*fī maḥkam tanzīlihi*): *"I am sending an angel ahead of you"* (Exod. 23:20), that is, to guide you, as in [the verse] *"Then the angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel's army* [*withdrew and went behind them*]*"* (Exod. 14:19); [returning to Exod. 23:20] *"to guard you along the way,"* to guard you in this world that is the path to the afterworld and beyond it, which one reaches through possessing wise knowledge and the true intelligibles, and making these intelligible real instead of leaving them under power. With these possessions that we receive from him, he will emanate his lights upon us, and with them we shall reach the everlasting happiness (*al-sa'āda al-abadiyya*) in the afterworld.

Example 2 (*Inkishāf*, f. 6a)[68]

> *"Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth"* (Song 1:2).
>
> According to our method, the rational [soul] compares the coming of lights to it to kisses of the mouth, because these two organs [i.e. the lips] are used for this pleasure, and with them knowledge transmits from the teacher to the student, and that is the pleasure of the rational [soul]. Thus, it compares the coming of knowledge from the active intellect to it and its pleasure as in the joy of the lover kissing his beloved. As said elsewhere: *"An honest answer is like a kiss on the lips"* (Prov. 24:26). [The rational soul] tells us that the meaning of this pleasure is as the meaning of kisses in the time of yearning…

These two examples demonstrate that Ibn ʻAqnīn wished to compose his exegesis in agreement with al-Fārābī's theory. In fact, the entire book, a biblical commentary on the *Song*, is structured upon *al-madīna al-fāḍila*.

2. *Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna)*

While not receiving a full authorization from Maimonides, Ibn ʻAqnīn does mention Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037), citing the opening paragraph of his philosophical-allegorical tract, *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*.[69]

> *Where has your beloved gone, most beautiful of women? Which way did your beloved turn, that we may look for him with you?* (Song 6:1)
>
> According to our method [of interpretation], this verse was said in the tongue of state (*lisān al-ḥāl*; i.e. according to the esoteric meaning), meaning that the servants of the rational [soul] from among the rational powers, telling her that they will help her in searching and seeking after him[70] [i.e. the active intellect], so

[68] Here and in the next passage, citing Ibn Sīnā, I will skip the *peshat* and *derash*, and move directly to Ibn ʻAqnīn's own interpretation.

[69] For the citation, see Ibn Sīnā, "Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān," in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān li-Ibn Sīnā wa-Ibn Ṭufayl wa-l-Suhrawardī*, Aḥmad Amīn, ed. (Cairo: Mu'assasat al-Khānjī, 1958), p. 43. An English translation (with extensive commentary) of the entire tract is available in Henry Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, Willard R. Trask, trans. ([New York]: Pantheon Books [1960]), pp. 281-381.

[70] The text incorrectly says 'her' but then returns to the masculine form.

she may unite with him and fulfill her desire. The repetition over this idea twice in this verse [*"Where has your beloved gone… Which way did your beloved turn?"*], is because at first, *"where has your beloved gone,"* they tried to find his location, and once we know his location, we (*sic*) wish to be involved in his affairs and in his activity. The meaning of *"which way did your beloved turn"* is that when we achieve fulfill these two wishes [to find the active intellect and unify with him], we are able to encounter him and to be involved in your (*sic*) desired activity. This is the interpretation of Ibn Sīnā in the *Epistle of Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, when Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān responds to someone who asks him for his name, hometown, age, and occupation. He says: "My name is Ḥayy (Alive)," meaning the simple intellects, in which he was created and developed. "And my father is Yaqẓān (Awake)," meaning that the person from whom I received the intellects is more powerful than me, belongs to a higher status, and is closer to the Creator, because the awakening is more noble than sleeping, and thus, he awakes me until my intellects became real, not trough power, since he is complete. "My hometown is Bayt al-Maqdis,"[71] is a reply as common among the [ordinary] people, meaning that Bayt al-Maqdis is the upper world that is purified from any contamination. "My occupation is to travel about the world," meaning that he is looking for the natural beings from among the first principles. "Until I hear of them," meaning that he completely understands them. "I turned to my father," meaning: my desire is to reach my father, that is, the Creator, God Almighty, and the intermediaries between himself [Ḥayy] and God Almighty. "I already received from him [my father] the key to the sciences," meaning the power he put in him [in Ḥayy], making him a master of the upper level. Finally, [Ḥayy] says: "He guided me in the roads leading to the world's regions, until I arrived in my travel to the regions of the climates," meaning: he guided me to the rest of the natural beings. This is the meaning of Ibn Sīnā's words in the aforementioned epistle, and this is the interpretation of it (f. 80a).

[71] *Bayt al-Maqdis*, Jerusalem. In Corbin's translation, the 'Celestial Jerusalem' (*Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, p. 292 and n. 2).

3. *Arabic Poetry*

In his commentary, in addition to citing Hebrew poetry, Ibn ‘Aqnīn cites several Arabic verses, in most cases without identifying the poet by his name. Here are few examples from my identification of the original verses (whenever necessary, I corrected the corrupted Judeo-Arabic text of the *Inkishāf* according to the Arabic editions).

a) Attributed to Qays, “Majnūn Laylā” (cited in the the *Inkishāf*, f. 98a):[72]

אמר עלי אלדיאר דיאר לילי / אקבל ד׳א אלג׳דאר וד׳א אלג׳דאר

ומא חב אלדיאר שגפן קלבי / ולכן חב מן סכן אלדיאר

أمر على الديار ديار ليلى / أقبل ذا الجدار وذا الجدار

وما حب الديار شغفن قلبي / ولكن حب من سكن الديار

Translation: I am passing by the houses, the houses of Laylā,
Kissing that wall and the other one.
It is not the love of houses that burns in my heart,
But the love to the one who dwells in them.

b) al-Buḥturī, d. 820 (cited in the *Inkishāf*, f. 45a).[73]

מן לולו תגילוה ענד אבתסאמהא / ומן לולו ענד אלחדית׳ תסאקטה

من لؤلؤ تجلوه عند ابتسامها / ومن لؤلؤ عند الحديث تساقطه

Translation: There is a pearl[74] that you discover through her smile,
and there is a pearl that falls down due to chatting.

[72] For the Arabic verse, see Muḥammad Ḥasan ‘Aqīl Mūsā, *al-Mukhtār min al-riḥlāt al-Ḥijāziyya ilā Makka wa-l-Madīna al-Nabawiyya* (Jeddah: Dār al-Andalus al-Khaḍrā’, 2000), 3:879; and on Qays, see *EI*[2], “Madjnūn Laylā” (Ch. Pellat et al.).
[73] Ibn Bassām, *al-Dhakhīra fī maḥāsin ahl al-Jazīra*, Iḥsān ‘Abbās, ed. (Beirut: Dar al-Thaqāfa, 1997), Part 2, vol. 1:390. On the poet, see *EI*[2], “al-Buḥturī,” (Ch. Pellat).
[74] A metaphor for a woman.

c) Naṣr b. Aḥamad al-Khubza'aruzzī (the maker of rice bread), d. 938 (cited in the *inkishāf*, f. 113b):[75]

אנחלני אלחב פלו זג׳ בי / פי מקלה אלנאים לם ינתבה

קד כאן לי פי מא מצ׳א ח׳אתם / ואלאן לו שית תמנטקת בה

أنحلني الحب فلو زج بي/ في مقلة النائم لم ينتبه

قد كان لي في ما مضى خاتم / والأن لو شئت تمنطقت به

Translation:[76] Love made me melt away so much, that had I been cast into
the pupil of the eye of someone sleeping, he would not wake up.
I once had a ring, but it would not fit me;
today, had I wanted, I could gird myself with it.

Following the Arabic verse, Ibn 'Aqnīn offers its Hebrew translation by an anonymous Jewish poet:

בְּשָׂרִי דַּל מְאֹד מֵאַהֲבַת רָם / וְאִם יֻשְׁלַךְ בְּעֵין יָשֵׁן הֲיִזַּח?

וְחוֹתָמִי אֲשֶׁר הָיָה לְיָדִי / עֲלֵי מָתְנַי לְמַחְגֹּרֶת וּמֵזַח.

Translation: My flesh became emaciated because of my love to the High One.
Had it been cast into the pupil of the eye of someone sleeping, would he have woken up?[77]
The ring that was once on my finger
is now my girdle and my belt.

[75] al-Shayzarī, *Rawḍat al-qulūb wa-nuzhat al-muḥibb wa-al-maḥbūb* [*Codices Arabici antiqui*, 8], David Semah and George D. Kanazi, eds. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003), p. 16 n. 75. On the poet, see *EI*², "al-Khubza'aruzzī," (Ch. Pellat).

[76] After the translation of Arie Schippers, *Spanish Hebrew Poetry and the Arabic Literary Tradition: Arabic Themes in Hebrew Andalusian Poetry* (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1994), p. 169 (the order of the lines here is reversed).

[77] For the exact meaning of *yizaḥ* (originally appearing in Exod. 28:28), meaning both "to bind" and "to separate" (here: to 'remove' the one sleeping from his sleep?), see *Sefer teshuvot* [Book of Responses], S.G. Stern, ed. (Wien, 1870), 2:62 no. 12 (*mezaḥ*).

As noticed by Abraham Meir Habermann, the 'anonymous' poet is no other than Solomon ibn Gabirol. The edition of his *diwān* offers another version of this verse.[78]

בְּשָׂרִי דַּל מְאֹד מֵרֹב דְּאָגָה / וְאִם יֻשְׁלַךְ בְּעֵין יָשֵׁן הֲיִזַּח?

וְדַי לָךְ כִּי אֲנִי אִישׁ לָךְ יְאַוֶּה / אֲנִי נֶחְגָּר בְּחוֹתָמִי וְנִמְזָח.

Translation: My flesh became emaciated because of great worry.

Had it been cast into the pupil of the eye of someone sleeping, would he have woken up?

Enough[79] for you that I am the man who desires your company;

and now I girdle myself with my ring.

d) Ibn Zuhr al-ṭabīb (the physician), d. 1198 (cited in the *Inkishāf*, f. 69a):[80]

וקד תעב אלשוק מה ביננא / פמנה אלי ומני אליה

وقد تعب الشوق ما بيننا / فمنه إلي ومني إليه

Translation: Desire between us weakened,[81]

between me and him, and him and me.

e) Anonymous (cited in the *Inkishāf*, f. 128b, in Ibn 'Aqnīn's critique of Abraham ibn Ezra's commentary on the *Song*):[82]

קד ראינאך פמא אעג׳בתנא / ובלונאך פלם תרץ׳ אלח׳בר

قد رأيناك فما أعجبتنا / وبلوناك فلم ترض الخبر

78 A.M. Habermann, "A Tripartite Commentary on the *Song of Songs*" [Heb.], *Moznaim*, 20, no. 1 (1964), p. 88.

79 Instead of *dai* (enough), Habermann suggested an alternative reading: *da'* (know!), i.e. "Know that I am the man who desires your company."

80 al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfī bi-l-wafayāt*, Aḥmad al-Arnā'ūṭ and Turkī Muṣṭafā (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 2000), 4:32; al-Maqqarī, *Analectes sur l'histoire et la littérature des Arabes d'Espagne* [*Nafḥ al-ṭīb min ghuṣn al-Andalus al-raṭīb*], R. Dozy et al., eds. (Leiden, 1855-1861), 1:626. On Ibn Zuhr, see *EI*^{2}, "Ibn Zuhr. v. Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Malik b. Zuhr al-Ḥafīd ('the grandson')" (R. Arnaldez).

81 Lit. became tedious.

82 al-Iṣbahānī, *Muḥādarāt al-udabā' wa-muḥawārāt al-shu'arā' wa-al-bulaghā'* (Beirut: Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayāh, 1961), 3:205 (the context here is pornographic).

Translation: We saw you but were not astonished,
and we tried you, but the result was unsatisfying.

IV. Conclusions

Ibn ʿAqnīn's *Inkishāf al-asrār* is a complex text that still entangles many secrets. The author wishes to legitimize his usage of Islamic philosophy and Arabic poetry by relying on the methods of the Geonim, the most important of them are Hay Gaon and Saadia Gaon. The result is a multi-layered text in which the first layer is linguistic, following the Jewish linguists of the Maghribī tradition; the second, the *derash* meaning of *the Song of Songs*, according to the method of the Israelite sages; and the third, heavily relying on al-Fārābī's theory of emanation, is a hybrid of biblical exegesis with the interpretation of male and female in the *Song* being a metaphor for the active intellect and the rational soul. In the epilogue, Ibn ʿAqnīn writes apologetically: "Perhaps the one who is a fool, imbecile and stupid would critique what we presented in the interpretation to this noble book because of the words of the *falāsifa*, the Arabic language (*sic*), and the verses, removing himself from it, and, out of respect, he would avoid declaring that our project has been a betrayal (*iftiyāt*). That idiotic, foolish hypocrite should know that the *ḥakhamin* (sages) (may they rest in peace) preceded me…" (f. 127a).

In one of the most catastrophic time periods for the Jews of the Maghrib, and under coerced conversion to Islam, Ibn ʿAqnīn was nonetheless a proud member of the Islamic sciences and of high culture, in what could be truly perceived as the continuation of a 'Judeo-Islamic symbiosis' in the age of terror. The author's wish was, nonetheless, to readopt Judaism and achieve salvation trough completing his exegetical work.

CHAPTER 2. MYSTICISM. *AL-MURSHID ILĀ AL-TAFARRUD WA-L-MURFID ILĀ AL-TAJARRUD* (GUIDE TO DETACHMENT AND AID TO SOLITUDE), A MYSTICAL TREATISE BY DAVID BEN JOSHUA MAIMONIDES (C. 1335-1414)

"All the kings of Arabia are seeking your counsel and advice."[1]

I. Introduction

One of Maimonides' admirers in Provence was the philosopher and Bible commentator Joseph ibn Kaspi, who was born in 1280 in Argentière, lived in several Provencal cities, traveled at least twice to the Kingdom of Aragon, and died before 1345.[2] In 1332, while in Valencia, Joseph composed a testament to his son under the title *Sefer musar* (The Book of Admonition) or *Yoreh da'at* (Guide to Knowledge). He opened the treatise with an account of his travel to Egypt in the days of Rabbi Moses' descendants. This account is a harsh criticism on the indifference of the Maimonidians to the philosophical heritage of their illustrious forefather:

> Joseph ibn Kaspi said: All my days I have toiled to live in the society of the wise, but I have found no rest. Twenty years ago, I became an exile to a place reputed for learning. I dwelt in the uttermost part of the sea, I crossed to Egypt, and visited the school (*beit midrash*) of that renowned and perfect sage, the *Guide* [Maimonides].[3] I found there the fourth and fifth generations of his holy seed,[4] all of them righteous, but none of them devoted to science.[5] In all the Orient there were no scholars, and I saw the text applied to me: "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for

[1] Israel Davison, "A Panegyric in Honor of David b. Joshua, Grandson of David ha-Nagid" [Heb.], in *Ginzei Shekhter* [Genizah Studies in Memory of Doctor Solomon Shechter] ([New York]: Hermon, 1969; repr. of New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1928-1929), 3:289 (my translation).
[2] Ram Ben-Shalom, "The (Unwritten) Travelogue to the East of Joseph ibn Kaspi: Images and Orientalism" [Heb.], *Pe'amim*, 124 (2010), pp. 18-19.
[3] Named thus after his *Guide for the Perplexed*. See Kraemer, pp. 11-12.
[4] Abraham II Maimomides and Joshua Maiminodes, respectively.
[5] In Medieval Hebrew, *ḥokhmot* (sciences) or *ḥokhmot ḥitsoniyyot* (external sciences) denote the philosophical sciences. See Dov Schwartz, *Central Problems of Medieval Jewish Philosophy* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), p. 118.

help" (Isa. 31:1).[6]

Ibn Kaspi was thus disappointed with the intellectual activity of Maimonides' descendants, in what seems to be an opposition to their involvement in and leading of the mystical Jewish movement in Egypt that was established by the son of Maimonides, Rabbi Abraham (1186-1237).[7] This is only one account of a larger opposition to the mystical Jewish movement and to the reforms in the religious practices that were carried out by the Maimonidians. Ibn Kaspi met Abraham II (1245-1313), the great-grandson of Maimonides, and his young son Joshua (1310-1355). Years later, Rabbi Joshua, the *nagid* of Egypt (head of the Jewish community), was known among his contemporaries as a religious authority of great significance; like Maimonides, he received Halakhic questions from communities as far as Yemen.[8]

David II ben Joshua continued the interest of the Maimonidians in Jewish mysticism.[9] He was the last *nagid* from the house of Maimonides, a position this family

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[6] Israel Abrahams, *Hebrew Ethical Wills* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1926), 1:130 (in Hebrew and English trans.).

[7] Elisha Russ-Fishbane, *Judaism, Sufism, and the Pietists of Medieval Egypt: A Study of Abraham Maimonides and His Times* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[8] Eliyahu Ashtor (Strauss), *Toldot ha-Yehudim be-Mitsrayim ve-Suryah tahat shilton ha-Mamlukim* [History of the Jews in Egypt and Syria under the Mamluks] (Jerusalem: Mosad ha-Rav Quq, 1944-1970), 1:298-300; Yehuda Razhabi, "Queries of the Nagid: A Work by R. Joshua ha-Nagid" [Heb.], *Tarbiz*, 54 (1985), pp. 553-566. The main studies on Joshua Maimonides are S.D. Goitein, "The Twilight of the House of Maimonides: R. Joshua ha-Nagid" [Heb.], *Tarbiz*, 54 (1985), pp. 67-104; Mark R. Cohen, "Correspondence and Social Control in the Jewish Communities of the Islamic world: A Letter of the Nagid Joshua Maimonides," *Jewish History*, 1, no. 2 (1986), pp. 39-48.

[9] On David ben Joshua and his works see Paul B. Fenton, Introduction to *al-Murshid ilā al-tafarrud wa-l-murfid ilā al-tajarrud*, (Jerusalem: Mekitse nirdamim, 1987), pp. 13-55; *idem*, "The Literary Legacy of David ben Joshua, Last of the Maimonidean *Nĕgīdim*," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 75 (1984), pp. 1-56; G. Margoliouth, "A Muhammadan Commentary on Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*. Chs. I-IV," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 13 (1901), pp. 488-507; *EJIW*, "David ben Joshua Maimonides," (Elinoar Bareket). The *Murshid* was first studied by Franz Rosenthal, "A Judaeo-Arabic Work under Sûfic Influence," *Hebrew Union College Annual*, 15 (1940), pp. 433-484; and more recently by Nathan Hofer, "Scriptural Substitutions and Anonymous Citations: Judaization as Rhetorical Strategy in a Jewish Sufi Text," *Numen*, 61, no. 4 (2014), pp. 364-395.

held for over two centuries.[10] Born in 1335, he succeeded his father, but for unclear reasons left Egypt between ca. 1375 to 1386, and took residence in Aleppo and Damascus. He resumed the office of *nagid* after his return to Egypt and held it until his death in 1414. David is the author of several works; one of them, *al-Murshid ilā al-tafarrud wa-l-murfid ilā al-tajarrud* (Guide to Detachment and Aid to Solitude), is a short manual of Sufism that is the focus of this chapter. A well-versed scholar in Islamic philosophy, astronomy, and Sufi thought, David was also a scribe (*warrāq*) and book collector. The remains of his library from Aleppo were purchased in the seventeenth century by Edward Pococke, chaplain to the English merchants at Aleppo (1630-1636), or Robert Huntington, who held the same position (1671-1680), and are now part of the collection of the Bodleian Library (Oxford).[11]

The present chapter will investigate the contents of the *Murshid*, David's mystical tract, in its relation to Sufi-Islamic literature.[12] The discussion will be as follows: The *Murshid* and its structure; literary contacts between Arabic and Hebrew literature prior to the *Murshid*; the ideals and institutes of the *Murshid* in their Sufi context; and finally, the Arabic background of this book, and the methods used in it for the Judaization of Islamic materials. I will argue that by drawing its materials from Sufi writings, the *Murshid* exemplifies the transfer of Islamic materials into Judaism, and thus demonstrate the

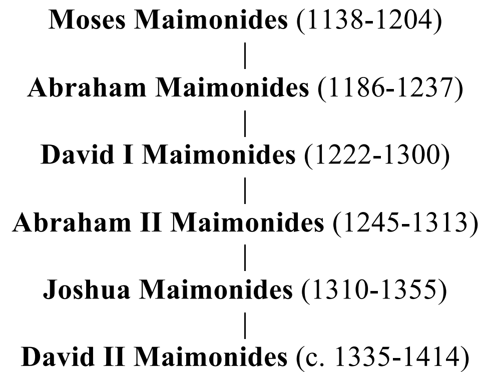
[10] The first to be appointed officially as the *nagid* was Abraham Maimonides; his father, who never held this position, was nonetheless addressed as *nagid* in some letters and documents. See Kraemer, *Maimonides*, pp. 216-220.

[11] Fenton, "The Literary Legacy," p. 1; Menahem Ben-Sasson, "The 'Libraries' of the Maimonides Family between Cairo and Aleppo" [Heb.], in *Erets u-melo'a: Meḥqarim be-toldot qehilat Aram Tsova (Ḥaleb) ve-tarbutah* [Aleppo Studies: The Jews of Aleppo, Their History and Culture], Yaron Har'el et al., eds. (Jerusalem: Mekhon Ben Zvi, 2009), 1:70-72. On Jewish scribes in the Geniza society, see Miriam Frenkel, "Book Lists from the Geniza as a Source for Social and Cultural History of the Jews in the Mediterranean Basin" [Heb.], *Te'udah*, 15 (1999), pp. 339-341.

[12] For the purposes of this chapter, I will refer to 'Sufism' as the name of the Islamic movement vs. 'pietism' (*ḥasidut*) to the Jewish one. The wide spectrum of Sufi teachings and practices will be simply presented as 'Sufism' as if it is one homogenous movement.

symbiotic relations between Judaism and Islam in the realm of fourteenth-century mystical thought.

Table 3. The House of Maimonides[13]



II. The *Murshid* and Its Structure

The full title of David's tract is *Kitāb al-Murshid taḥqīq derekh ha-ḥasidut* (Guide for Achieving the Path of *ḥasidut*), or *al-Murshid ilā al-tafarrud wa-l-murfid ilā al-tajarrud* (Guide to Detachment and Aid to Solitude) (ff. 2a, 6a). It is a manual of Sufism written in the style of Islamic-Sufi books of this genre,[14] or Baḥya ibn Paquda's (eleventh-twelfth

[13] After Fenton, "The Literary Legacy," p. 40.

[14] E.g. the second part of al-Qushayrī's (d. 1074) *Risāla*. See *Al-Qushayri's Epistle on Sufism: Al-Risala al-Qushayriyya fi 'ilm al-tasawwuf*, Alexander D. Knysh, trans. (Reading, UK: Garnet Pub., 2007), pp. 75ff; Jawid A. Mojaddedi, "Legitimizing Sufism in al-Qushayri's *Risala*," *Studia Islamica*, 90 (2000), pp. 37-50. On the author, see *EI*[2], "al-Ḳushayrī" (H. Halm); Michael A. Sells, *Early Islamic Mysticism: Sufi, Qur'an, Miraj, Poetic and Theological Writings* (New York: Paulist Press, 1996), pp. 97-99. For other examples of Sufi manuals, see Abū al-Najīb al-Suhrawardī (d. 1168), *A Sufi Rule for Novices: Kitāb ādāb al-murīdīn of Abū al-Najīb al-Suhrawardī*, Menahem Milson, trans. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975); Florian Sobieroj, "Ibn Khafīf's *Kitāb al-iqtiṣād* and Abū al-Najīb al-Suhrawardī's *Ādāb al-murīdīn*: A Comparison between Two Works on the Training of Novices," *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 43 (1998), pp. 327-345; Fritz Meier, "A Book of Etiquitte for Sufis," in *idem*, *Essays on Islamic Piety and Mysticism*, John O'Kane, trans. (Leiden: Brill, 1999), pp. 49-92.

century) *al-Hidāya ilā farā'iḍ al-qulūb* (Guide to the Duties of the Heart).[15] The goal of the *Murshid* is introducing the reader to the "spiritual stations" (*maqāma*, pl. *maqāmāt*) until he reaches the station of *ḥasidut* (piety), which is also the term preferred term by the Maimonidians to their mystical movement.[16] These stations are introduced through a saying from the Babylonian Talmud ('Avodah zara, 20b) that is also cited by Baḥya;[17] in the *Murshid*, it forms the structure of the first part of the book:

> Rabbi Pinḥas ben Yair said: Torah [study] leads to *zehirut* (caution) – *zehirut* leads to *zerizut* (quickness) – *zerizut* leads to *neqiyut* (cleanliness) – *neqiyut* leads to *perishut* (abstinence) – *perishut* leads to *taharah* (purity) – *taharah* leads to *ḥasidut* (piety) – *ḥasidut* leads to *'anavah* (humility) –*'anavah* leads to *yir'at ḥet'* (fear of sinning) – *yir'at ḥet'* leads to *qedushah* (holiness) – *qedushah* leads to the Holy Spirit – The Holy Spirit leads to the Resurrection of the Dead.

The *Murshid* consists of twenty-eight sections (*faṣl*, pl. *fuṣūl*), of differing length, but at least one section, or part of it, is missing from the manuscript (ms. Hunt 382). After introducing the concept of *ḥasidut*, it discusses the eight "spiritual stations" leading to it (first part of the tract), and the progress while in the state of *ḥasidut* towards the love (*maḥabba*) of God, which is the highest point of piety (f. 41a) (second part of the tract).[18] The gradations by which the "spiritual stations" are discussed are not entirely clear, nor

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[15] An edition of this book in Arabic script is available in *Al-hidāja 'ilā farā'iḍ al-qulūb des Bachja ibn Jōsēf ibn Paqūda, aus Andalusien*, A.S. Yahuda, ed. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1912); and see also Diana Lobel, *A Sufi-Jewish Dialogue: Philosophy and Mysticism in Baḥya Ibn Paqūda's Duties of the Heart* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007). On the author, see *EJIW*, "Ibn Paqūda, Baḥya (Abū Isḥāq) ben Joseph" (Joaquín Lomba).

[16] On the meanings of this term according to the *Murshid*, see below. On the Sufi *maqāmāt*, see EI^2, "Ḥāl" (L. Gardet).

[17] *Al-hidāja*, p. 336; Fenton, introduction to the *Murshid*, p. 42.

[18] See Steven Harvey, "The Meaning of Terms Designating Love in Judaeo-Arabic Thought and Some Remarks on the Judaeo-Arabic Interpretation of Maimonides, in *Judaeo-Arabic Studies: Proceedings of the Founding Conference of the Society for Judaeo-Arabic Studies*, Norman Golb, ed. (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1997), pp. 175-196; *Al-Qushayri's Epistle*, pp. 325-335.

does the discussion in the *Murshid* seem to be exhaustive. This could be explained by the nature of the book, which was meant only to be a summary (*mukhtasar*) of a larger work on Sufism, supposedly written at the request of a young student (*tilmidh*) (ff. 1b-2a). The order in the Babylonian Talmud of the ideal traits is *zehirut – zerizut – neqiyut – perishut – taharah – ḥasidut – ʻanavah – yir'at ḥet' – qedushah*. The *Murshid* borrows these ideals and presents them according to Sufi teachings in a slightly different manner: *zehirut – zerizut – perishut – neqiyut – qedushah – ʻanavah – yir'ah*, "fear" – *ḥasidut*; thus ending with *ḥasidut*, "piety," and placing it as the goal of the spiritual penitent.

To corroborate its teachings, the *Murshid* relies mostly on biblical verses. The Muslim authors from whom the author is citing, are never mentioned by name, and the Sufi teachings are 'converted' into Hebrew terms. Nonetheless, the influence of the "Philosophy of Illumination" (*ḥikmat al-ishrāq*) is clearly manifested in the Arabic of this book, and especially the teachings of Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā al-Suhrawardī (executed in 1191), the founder of this mystical school.[19] In the *Murshid*, God is named *nūr al-anwār* (light of lights); Moses, *ghiṭrīf al-mut'allahīn* (chief of God's seekers); Elijah, *sayyid al-mut'allahīn wa-ra'īs al-mutarajjadīn* (mater of God's seekers and head of ascetics); and David, *ghiṭrīf al-sālikīn wa-ra'īs al-ʻārifīn al-mustshariqīn* (chief of God's seekers [literally: travellers] and head of the enlightened, learned people).[20] Some other terms of the "philosophy of illumination" are to be found throughout this book (see more examples below).

[19] See *EI*^{2}, "al-Suhrawardī" (Hossein Ziai); Kraemer, *Maimonides*, pp. 203-205; Henry Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, Liadain Sherrard and Philip Sherrard, trans. (London; New York: Kegan Paul International, 1993), pp. 205-220. For the knowledge of al-Suhrawardī's works among Jews, see Fenton, "The Literary Legacy", p. 36 n. 45; Joep Lameer, "Ibn Kammūna's Commentary on Suhrawardī's *Talwīḥāt*: Three Editions", *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts*, 3, no. 2 (2012), pp. 154-184; Y. Tzvi Langermann, "Arabic Documents in Hebrew Manuscripts: Suhrawardī, Ibn Sīnā, and Ibn al-Ṭayyib" [Heb.], *ʻAlei Sefer*, 21 (2010), pp. 23-25 (on a Hebrew manuscript of *al-Alwāḥ al-ʻImādiyya*).
[20] Ff. 17a (God), 35b (Moses), 3b, 16a, 50b, 57a (David). See Fenton, introduction to the *Murshid*, p. 47.

III. Literary Contacts between Arabic and Hebrew Literature

What were the contacts of David's *Murshid* with Islamic-Arabic literature, and how should we explain these contacts? Is it appropriate to speak of Islamic "influence" on the *Murshid*, and regard this book as simply a citation and borrowing (perhaps even plagiarism) of Arabic materials into Jewish literature? This section examines the relations between Arabic and Hebrew literature in the so-called "classical" age of symbiosis, prior to the composition of the *Murshid*. As we will see in the next sections, this tract gives evidence for continuation from the early period to David's times, and rather than positing a break in the phenomenon of Judeo-Islamic symbiosis around the thirteenth century, this chapter documents the existence of the same symbiosis in the Late Middle Ages. Studying the literary contacts in the earlier period will assist us in better understanding David's project in writing the *Murshid*, and how he wanted to present his teachings to his audience.

In her book from 2000, Rina Drory studied the relations between Arabic and Hebrew literatures by adopting the terminology of "cultural contacts," pointing thus to the bilateral relations between the two adjacent literatures in which one is usually considered to "influence" the other. She called on scholars to trace and account for "cultural contacts" in order to understand the actual circumstances of particular texts, i.e. "the processes which dominated and manipulated a literary field at a given point in time, of which the written texts are only the final products."[21] Drory also presented the questions a student of "cultural contacts" should examine in his case studies: What were the conditions in the target literature that created the need for contact with another

[21] Rina Drory, *Models and Contacts: Arabic Literature and Its Impact On Medieval Jewish Culture* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000), p. 208.

literature? In what ways did the target literature exploit the source literature? And how exactly have these contacts brought about a new dynamic in the target literature?[22]

Drory studied the relations between Arabic and Jewish literatures through two examples: Moses ibn Ezra's *Kitāb al-Muḥaḍāra wa-l-mudhakāra* (Book of Discussion and Conversation), written in Judeo-Arabic, and Judah al-Ḥarizi's Hebrew *maqamāt*. To these examples, I will add one more case-study, Abraham ibn Ezra's Hebrew translation of Ibn Sīnā's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān.*[23]

Moses ibn Ezra

Moses ibn Ezra wrote the *Muḥaḍāra* in old age. He was born in Granda around 1055, to a distinguished family that included members such as Samuel and Joseph ibn Naghrīla. As an adult, he lived in his hometown, and enjoyed wealth and tranquility until 1090, when the Almoravid invasions disrupted the lives of Jews and Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula. He thus fled to the Christian north, and died there sometime after 1138.[24] The *Muḥaḍāra*, one of two prose books of his written in Arabic, deals with the theory of Hebrew poetry according to the Arabic model. In the eight chapters of his book, Moses elaborates on the legitimacy of the art of rhetoric and the art of poetry composition; the poetry of the Israelites in Biblical times; Andalusi Jewish poetry and its merits (including a complaint against Moses' critics who fail to appreciate his poetry); and practical advice for Hebrew poetry composition according to the Arabic models. The *Muḥaḍāra* "contains

[22] Ibid., p. 209.
[23] A third (Arabic) account of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, in addition to Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037) and Abraham ibn Ezra (d. 1164), and the latest of the three, is Ibn Ṭufayl's (d. 1164). See Aaron W. Hughes, *The Texture of the Divine: Imagination in Medieval Islamic and Jewish Thought* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), pp. 23-25. For an English translation of this work, see *Ibn Tufayl's Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*, Lenn Evan Goodman, trans. (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1972).
[24] Raymond P. Scheindlin, "Moses ibn Ezra," in *The Literature of al-Andalus*, María Rosa Menocal et al., eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 252.

a series of ideological claims, which, over and above their comprising a defense of poetry, seek primarily to convince the reader that the Arabic method of composing poetry is the right one and that Jewish Andalusi poets are its best practitioners."[25] Drory puts emphasis on the fact that the *Muḥaḍāra* was composed in northern Spain rather than in al-Andalus; it was intended, she believes, to be read by Jews who lived not in the midst of Arab culture but in a different cultural atmosphere, where poetry was not probably held in the same regard as in al-Andalus. The poets in northern Spain, in Moses' opinion, are to be rejected for being ignorant and barbaric, and he himself complains of the detachment from the high culture of al-Andalus. Moses' book on poetics, therefore, points to his acknowledgment of the Arabic model for Hebrew poetry composition, and to him being an heir to the Andalusi culture.[26]

Judah al-Ḥarizi

The *maqamāt* of Judah al-Ḥarizi (1170-1225) were composed after the model of al-Ḥarīrī (d. 1122), as the author states in the preface of his work. He first translated the Arabic *maqamāt* of al-Ḥarīrī into Hebrew, and then embarked on the mission to compete for the eloquence of the Arabic composition by writing a Hebrew counterpart: the *Sefer Taḥkemoni* (Book of Taḥkemoni).[27] al-Ḥarizi was born in northern Spain, and became a translator of Arabic-Hebrew literature, among them the *Guide for the Perplexed* by Maimonides, and traveled to the East, where he wrote the *Taḥkemoni*, "the most salient

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[25] Drory, *Models and Contacts*, p. 212.

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 214. On the theme of exile in Moses ibn Ezra's poetry, see Arie Schippers, "Two Andalusian Poets on Exile: Reflections on the Poetry of Ibn 'Ammar (1031-1086) and Moses Ibn Ezra (1055-1138)," in *The Challenge of the Middle East: Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Amsterdam*, Ibrahim A. El-Sheikh et al., eds. (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam, 1982), pp. 113-121.

[27] Originally, a biblical name of the root letters ḥ-k-m, meaning wisdom. See 2 Sam. 23:8.

example of ‘Arabic influence’ over Hebrew in its Andalusi ‘golden era,’” as well as Arabic poetry.[28] The Judeo-Arabic context of the *Taḥkemoni* has been stressed in many studies,[29] but the particular circumstances for its composition, according to Drory, were ignored. She therefore studied the dedications of this book to several different Jewish figures whom he encountered during his travel to the East. From these dedications Drory concluded that al-Ḥarizi was disturbed by the poor command of Hebrew among the Jews of Eastern lands. al-Ḥarizi, among other Jewish intellectuals, was a champion of a “complete revolution” in Northern Spain and Provence in which Hebrew had begun to take over the functions that which had traditionally been fulfilled by Arabic, gradually replacing Arabic as the major language of Jews.[30] al-Ḥarizi therefore “sought to prove that the Hebrew language could be appropriately used in a wide range of written forms, so over and above translating, he also wrote his own *maqamāt*, comprising a handbook of Hebrew styles intended to encourage Eastern Jews to use Hebrew as a written language.”[31] To demonstrate this point, it might be useful here to cite al-Ḥarizi in the

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[28] Drory, *Models and Contacts*, p. 216.

[29] E.g. Hayim Schirmann, “On the Sources of Judah al-Ḥarizi’s *Taḥkemoni*” [Heb.], *Tarbiz*, 23 (1952), pp. 62-66; Joseph Dana, “On the Source of the *Taḥkemoni*” [Heb.], *Tarbiz*, 44 (1975), pp. 172-181; and more recently: ‘Abd al-Raḥman Mar‘i, “The Presence of Arabic Culture in al-Ḥarizi’s *Sefer Taḥkemoni”* [Heb], in *Ben ‘Ever la-‘Arav: ha-Maga‘im ben ha-sifrut ha-‘Arvit le-ven ha-sifrut ha-Yehudit bi-Yeme ha-Benayim uva-zeman he-ḥadash* [Contacts between Arabic Literature and Jewish Literature in the Middle Ages and Modern Times], Joseph Tobi et al., eds. (Tel Aviv: Afiqim, 2001), 2:109-121; Ayelet Oettinger, “The Attitude towards Muslims and Muslim Culture in Judah al-Ḥarizi’s *Sefer Taḥkemoni*” [Heb.], *Pe‘amim*, 138 (2014), pp. 77-111; and especially the studies of Judith Dishon, many of them are now conveniently collected in her book, *Ḥaruzim shel ḥokhmah: Hagut, musar ve-sha‘ashu‘im be-Sefer Taḥkemoni li-Yehudah al-Ḥarizi* [Necklace of Wisdom: Delight, Moral and Wisdom in the *Book of Taḥkemoni* by Judah al-Ḥarizi] (Lod: Mekhon Haberman; ha-Qibuts ha-me’uḥad, 2012).

[30] See Gad Freudenthal, “Arabic into Hebrew: The Emergence of the Translation Movement in Twelfth-Century Provence and Jewish-Christian Polemic,” in *Beyond Religious Borders: Interaction and Intellectual Exchange in the Medieval Islamic World*, David M. Freidenreich and Miriam Goldstein, eds. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), pp. 124-143.

[31] Drory, *Models and Contacts*, p. 230. See also Jonathan P. Decter, *Iberian Jewish Literature: Between Al-Andalus and Christian Europe* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), pp. 126-136; and on the Christian background of the *Taḥkemoni*, which is often ignored in modern scholarship on this work, see David Wacks, “Toward a History of Hispano-Hebrew Literature of Christian Iberia in the Romance Context,” *eHumanista*, 14 (2010), pp. 187-188.

translation of David Segal:

> The word of Judah son of Solomon son of al-Ḥarizi of blessed memory: The Lord has gifted me with a skilled tongue [Isa. 50:4] and lifted me above my kin that I might place within the Intellect's palm the gold of my thought, subtly wrought, long sought-after and too precious to be brought, that he might take thereof bands for princes' necks and dear champions' hands. Shine, then, my muse, while the downcast and the righteous light lamps from your holy cruse: bring joy and gladness, feasting and good days to the Jews! [Esther 18:7] […] Now in ancient times Hebrew was a golden plough, but in our day villains flay with her brazen brow; righteousness lodged in here, but murderers now [Isa. 1:21]. She is banished from her children, none mourn her loss, her silver turns dross [Isa. 1:22]. Heartsick, she cries in pain, lifting her refrain to deaf ears again and yet again. What sin is mine? She cries in vain. Lo, when you ringed Sinai [Exod. 19:12] to hear God's word, me it was you heard. […] They set Hagar [i.e. Arabic] the maidservant in my place [after Gen. 16:3] and rushed to her embrace, kissing her hand and pressing her teat – for stolen waters are sweet [Prov. 9:17]. Me they have abandoned, the Rose of Sharon [Song 2:1], saying, Hagar is fecund and Sarah barren [Gen. 11:30].[32]

Abraham ibn Ezra

Aaron Hughes reaches similar conclusions regarding the competition between Hebrew and Arabic in his treatment of Abraham ibn Ezra's (1089-1164) Hebrew translation of Ibn Sīnā's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* (in Hebrew: *Ḥay ben Meqits*). Abraham, a skillful poet and bible commentator, composed a work that is almost identical with Ibn Sīnā's, but was more conscious regarding the literary and poetic aspects of his text. He stressed the

[32] Judah al-Ḥarizi, *The Book of Taḥkemoni: Jewish Tales from Medieval Spain*, David Simha Segal, trans. (Portland, Or.: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2001), pp. 9, 11-12. On the images of Hagar and Sarah, see Nehemiah Allony, "Sarah and Hagar in [Medieval Hebrew] Spanish Poetry" [Heb.], in *Sefer Ben-Tsiyon Lurya* [Ben-Tsiyon Lurya Jubilee Book] (Jerusalem: ha-Ḥevrah le-ḥeqer ha-Miqra be-Yisra'el, Qiryat Sefer, 1979), pp. 168-185.

Jewish and Hebrew components of it by heavily using the Scripture, resulting in a multi-layered text that allows the readers to search for the esoteric in Jewish writings.[33]

IV. The Ideals and Institutions of the *Murshid*

The teachings of the Pietist Movement of the Maimonidians emphasized the regimen of supererogatory devotion and ascetic discipline, only to be taken by the most sincere devotees, the *ḥasidim*. Abraham Maimonides trained individual devotees by a regimen of practices such as night vigils, fasting, and solitary retreat. These teachings were presented as a return to the origins of Judaism, but they clearly bear witness to the Sufi teachings of the Muslim environment.[34] The *Murshid*, written several generations after Abraham Maimonides, continues along the same lines. The following is a survey of the ideals and institutions in the *Murshid*.[35]

Fasting and Nightly Vigils

Sufi thought saw numerous spiritual benefits in fasting and nightly vigils in order to bring the spiritual penitents closer to the ideals of self-denial, shunning from luxury, and spending the nights in devotion and self-examination. Hunger is understood as affecting on the humility of the penitents, for example, in a saying by Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī (d. ca. 875) arguing that hunger could have restrained Pharaoh (representing haughtiness in the Qur'ān) from saying, "I am your Supreme Lord" (Q. 79:24), and could have prevented

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[33] Hughes, *The Texture of the Divine*, pp. 21-23; *idem*, "A Case of Twelfth-Century Plagiarism? Abraham ibn Ezra's *Hay ben Meqitz* and Avicenna's *Hayy ibn Yaqzân*," *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 55, no. 2 (2004), pp. 319-322; *idem*, "Parallelism between Avicenna's *Hayy ibn Yaqzan* and Ibn Ezra's *Hay ben Meqitz*," in *HJMR*, pp. 853-855.
[34] Russ-Fishbane, *Judaism, Sufism, and the Pietists of Medieval Egypt*, p. 89.
[35] In studying the mystical ideals and institutions of the *Murshid*, I relied on Russ-Fishbane, *ibid.*, pp. 89-132; al-Suhrawardī, *A Sufi Rule*; Florian Sobieroj, "Ibn Khafīf's *Kitāb al-iqtiṣād*."

the rebellious nature of Korah (Q. 28:76-82).[36] Hunger is described in Sufi literature as a tool in fighting Satan. al-Ghazālī states in the introduction to the book on fasting in his magnum opus, *Iḥyā ʻulūm al-dīn* (Revival of the Religious Sciences): "Praise be to God who has shown great favor unto His servants by delivering them from the wiles of Satan; who has thwarted the hopes of the devil and frustrated his designs by making fasting a bulwark and a shield for His saints."[37] Through *ḥadīths* regarding the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, Sufi manuals teach that those inclined to gluttony will suffer from hungry on the Day of Resurrection, and that one strengthens his soul by hunger and thirst.[38] Regarding nightly vigils, Sufis were taught that they should devote their time to God, whether it is during sleep ("The Prophet disapproved of prolonged sleep… The Sufi should strive to make his sleep for God or in God and not away from God"), or while awake – that nightly prayers would bring them into humility and ascetic lifestyle.[39]

As in Sufi literature, the *Murshid* encourages the spiritual penitent to adopt the practices of sleeplessness and hunger (*al-jawʻ wa-l-sahr*) as the basic elements of mysticism, explaining that hunger "reduces the blood of the heart and whitens it, and by whitening it, hunger illuminates the blood," and that in this manner God "humbled you, causing you to hunger… [in order] to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord" (Deut. 8:3). In these words, the *Murshid* replicates the ideal of hunger as presented by Sufi thinkers, most importantly, al-Ghazālī who related to hunger as an action that purifies the bloodstream from sinning

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[36] Valerie J. Hoffman, "Eating and Fasting for God in Sufi Tradition," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 63 (1995), p. 470.
[37] *The Mysteries of Fasting: Being a Translation with Notes of the Kitāb Asrār al-ṣawm of al-Ghazzali's Iḥyā' ʻulūm al-dīn*, Nabih Amin Faris, trans. (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1979), p. 9.
[38] al-Suhrawardī, *A Sufi Rule*, p. 59.
[39] *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60 (on sleep).

(Satan).[40]

Moreover, sleeplessness, according to the *Murshid*, "brightens the heart, purifies it, and illuminate it… making it like a shining star and bright mirror," here using the terminology of *ḥikmat al-ishrāq* (ff. 18b-19a). Hunger keeps the spiritual penitent alert during the night, while eating may cause him to sleep, and through hunger one performs nightly vigils, a practice that is corroborated in the biblical verse: "At midnight I rise to give you thanks for your righteous laws" (Ps. 119:62). Quoting al-Ghazālī as "one of the esteemed people among our religion" (*ba'ḍ al-fuḍalā' fī millatinā*),[41] the *Murshid* states that the penitent achieves the stage of piety through four elements: hunger (*khumūṣ al-baṭn*), sleeplessness, silence, and seclusion (*in'izāl*).[42] On the other hand, the *Murshid* does not recommend exaggerated periods of hunger because it causes weakness to the body or sickness, and thus disturbance to the soul. Hence, one should eat food of small quantity but of high quality (f. 32b).

Pietist Attire

Sufism differentiated its devotees from the rest of Muslim society by wearing the attire of the ascetic. Abū al-Najīb al-Suhrawardī (d. 1168) reports, through a story related by al-Jurayrī (d. 924), that one Sufi used to wear the same garment both in summer and winter because he saw in a dream that Sufis wearing only one garment would be especially honored in paradise.[43] al-Qushayrī advised wearing the simplest garments in order to distance the spiritual penitents from the rich and powerful, and thus achieve modesty in

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[40] Hoffman, "Eating and Fasting," p. 470.

[41] *Milla* could be understood here as 'religion' (i.e. Judaism) as well as 'religious community' (i.e. the pietist movement, or those inclined to mysticism).

[42] Identified by Fenton.

[43] al-Suhrawardī, *A Sufi Rule*, pp. 56-57.

their outward appearance as well as in their behavior.[44] According to a saying reported in al-Qushayrī's epistle, one Sufi said: "I traveled for thirty years without ever patching my [Sufi] garment (*muraqqa'*), heading to a place in which I knew I would meet a friend, and without ever allowing anyone to carry something for me."[45]

In the *Murshid*, the ideal attire for the pietist is the simplest garment to protect him from cold or heat, since the goal is to live as an ascetic, and avoid the accumulation of any materials that would distance him from God. The pietist must be satisfied with the most basic necessities for living, and seek "the path of true asceticism" (*ṭarīq al-zuhd al-ḥaqīqī*).[46] Asceticism is achieved when the spiritual penitent devotes his entire life to reflection and meditation, and not to paying attention to the outward, because "people look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7) (ff. 35b-36a).

Musical Chant

In the Sufi practice, music is supposed to arouse religious emotion and ecstasy (*wajd*), and musical features in *samā'* (hearing, audition) and *dhikr* (devotional utterance of God's names) were common among different Sufi circles, although music was not entirely free of criticism. Abū al-Najīb al-Suhrawardī argued that *dhikr* recitations were performed already in Muḥammad's lifetime, in order to legitimize them in Sufi practice.[47] al-Ghazālī devotes a special attention to music in the *Iḥyā*: "[M]usic and singing… are the movers of the heart and arousers of that which preponderates in the heart. And I say

[44] *Al-Qushayri's Epistle*, p. 166.
[45] Ibid., p. 300.
[46] On *zuhd*, see Leah Kinberg, "What Is Meant by Zuhd," *Studia Islamica*, 61 (1985), pp. 27-44.
[47] al-Suhrawardī, *A Sufi Rule*, p. 61; Arthur Gribetz, "The Samā' Controversy: Sufi Vs. Legalist," *Studia Islamica*, 74 (1991), pp. 43-62.

that to God Most High belongs a secret consisting of the relationship of the measured airs to the souls of men, so that the airs work upon them with a wonderful working."[48] He gives examples of the usage of music in Islam according to different categories: music during pilgrimage and during warfare; verses intended to excite courage and fortitude; lamentation and joy. "All these traditions [cited in his book]," says al-Ghazālī, "are in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs*[49] and are a clear proof that singing and playing are not forbidden."[50] Still, music was considered to be a controversial topic in Sufi and juristic writings.[51]

As for the legitimization of music in the pietist movement, Elisha Russ-Fishbane has recently argued that musical ceremonies are not attested in the prophetic tradition of ancient Israel, thus pietist leaders found it difficult to introduce *samāʿ* and *dhikr* to their movement. Nonetheless, a study of the *Murshid* demonstrates that it is exactly the Israelite prophets to whom spiritual music and chanting is attributed, e.g. in 1 Sam. 10:5: "As you approach the town, you will meet a procession of prophets coming down from the high place with lyres, timbrels, pipes and harps being played before them, and they will be prophesying." After introducing several musical instruments of ancient times, the *Murshid* states: "Indeed the art [of music] is an illuminating and spiritual therapy of the soul, causing the latter to pine for its Creator and its noble origin." Nevertheless, this tract also ends the discussion on this topic with the warning of avoiding music that may not bring the penitent closer to his "beloved" (*maḥbūb*), i.e. God (ff. 33a-35a).[52]

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[48] Duncan B. MacDonald, "Emotional Religion in Islam as Affected by Music and Singing, Being a Translation of a book of the *Ihya* of al-Ghazzali," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (April 1901), p. 218.
[49] I.e. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, the two canonical collections of prophetic tradition (*ḥadīth*).
[50] MacDonald, "Emotional Religion in Islam," p. 226.
[51] See, for example, the discussion on the Ḥanbalī school and Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) in Louis Pouzet, "Prises de position autour du *samâʿ* en Orient musulman au VIIe/XIIIe siècle," *Studia Islamica*, 57 (1983), pp. 119-134.
[52] For a translation of the *Murshid*'s discussion on Music into English, see Paul Fenton, "A Jewish Sufi on the Influence of Music," *Yuval*, 4 (1982), pp. 124-130.

V. The Arabic Background of the *Murshid*

After exploring the institutions and ideals of the *Murshid* in their Sufi context, studying the Arabic background of this tract will allow us to better understand and appreciate the dynamics in which David ben Joshua composed his work. Not merely recycling Sufi materials and/or plagiarizing materials from Muslim literature, David in fact created a sophisticated tract of mystical thought that is both a reaction to Islamic teachings in this field and an alternative that relies on the Jewish scriptures. Moshe Gottstein's study of the Hebrew translation of al-Ghazālī's *Mizān al-'amal* by Rabbi Abraham bar Ḥisadai (thirteenth century), demonstrates the available methods for Judaizing Islamic materials when translating them into Hebrew, by replacing Qur'ānic verses and *ḥadīth* traditions with biblical verses, or with the sayings of the Sages ("Jewish *ḥadīth*"), or translating them into Hebrew if no equivalent was found.[53] I will give here few examples from Abraham bar Ḥisadai's translation:

1. *Qur'ān – Bible*: replacing Qur'ānic verses with biblical ones, or when the Qur'ānic citation speaks of a biblical matter, providing the biblical equivalent, e.g. regarding the creation of Adam: "When your Lord said to the angels, 'Indeed, I am going to create a human being from clay'" (Q. 38:17) is replaced by Gen. 2:7.
2. *Qur'ān – Sayings of the Sages*: Gottstein noticed that this is a less successful exercise in Abraham's translation, where the Qu'rānic verse in the original text is replaced by a saying of the Israelite Sages, but not with a true equivalent (i.e. in the contents or the wording of phrase). For example, instead of Qur'ān 50:37, "Indeed

[53] Moshe Gottstein, "Translations and Translators in the Middle Ages: I. Biblical Verses and Sayings of the Sages of Blessed Memory in the Translation of al-Ghazālī's *Mizān al-'amal*" [Heb.], *Tarbiz*, 23, no. 3-4 (1952), pp. 210-216. On Abraham bar Ḥisdai, see his biography in the introduction to *Ben ha-melekh veha-nazir* [The Prince and the Ascetic], Ayelet Oettinger, ed. (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 2011).

in that is a reminder for whoever has a heart or who listens while he is present [in mind]," one finds in Abraham's translation: "Our sages said: Eat bread with salt and drink a small amount of water and sleep on the ground and live a life of sorrow" (Aboth 6:4). Abraham, thus, chose to add his own nuance to the translated text.

3. *Qur'ān (translated)*: In several places in his translation, Abraham bar Ḥisadai literally translates the Qur'ānic verses into Hebrew, and ascribes them to an anonymous sage (e.g. "therefore a sage said…"). For example, where al-Ghazālī cites one verse from the *Fātiḥa* (Qur'ān 1), Abraham bar Ḥisadai provides the entire *sūra* in a Hebrew translation and presents it as a "prayer of one of the sages."[54] Not in all places, however, Abraham seems to have recognized the origin of the text in the Qur'ān, for example, when al-Ghazālī omitted the words *qālā ta'ālā* (God said) and alike before his citations. In some places, Abraham omitted the Qur'ānic verses from his translation, and the overall object, according to Gottstein, was to refrain from any direct references to Islam. In one place, Abraham omitted the reference to Muḥammad and replaced it with "Prophets": "The believers are only the ones who have believed in God and His Messenger" (Q. 49:15), was translated: "The believers are only the ones who have believed in God and His Messengers (*he'eminu ba-el vi-sheluḥav*)."[55]

4. *Ḥadīth – Bible*: replacing a prophetic tradition with a biblical verse, e.g. the *ḥadīth* "improve your manners (*ḥassanū' akhalāqakum*)" is replaced by the verse, "reform your ways and your actions" (Jer. 7:3); and the *ḥadīth* saying that "leadership/imamate belongs to the Quraysh," Muḥammad's tribe, is Judaized in

[54] Gottstein, "Translations and Translators," p. 213 n. 14; Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds: Medieval Islam and Bible Criticism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 147.

[55] See the discussion below on Muḥammad vs. the Israelite Prophets.

favor of the verse, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah" (Gen. 49:10).[56]

5. *Ḥadīth – Sayings of the Sages*: replacing a prophetic tradition with a saying of the Sages, e.g. the *ḥadīth* saying that "whoever does evil, shall carry the burden, and he casts the burden on the one who follows him," is replaced by the saying, "whoever sinned and caused the many to sin – the sin of the many is appended to him" (Aboth 5:18).[57]

6. *Ḥadīth (translated)* – Abraham translates several *ḥadīths* into Hebrew. These *ḥadīths* are transmitted in the name of anonymous sages, once from a "prophetizer" (*eḥad ha-mitnab'im*), and in some cases – from Socrates or an anonymous "physician," instead of Muḥammad or 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib as in al-Ghazālī's text. Occasionally, Abraham added to the translated *ḥadīth* a biblical verse or a saying of the Sages, e.g. following the literal translation of the *ḥadīth* that says that "whoever received wisdom, received a great merit," Abraham added: "And the prophet [Solomon][58] said: 'By wisdom the Lord laid the earth's foundations' [Prov. 3:19]; and 'Wisdom gives strength to the wise man' [Ecc. 7:19]."

7. *Judaization of Muslim Names*: *Rasūl Allāh*, God's messenger in al-Ghazālī's text

[56] Gen. 49:10 ("The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from his descendants, until the coming of the one to whom it belongs, the one whom all nations will honor") was the most cited biblical verse in religious writings of the three religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, during the Middle Ages. For Muslim familiarity with this verse, often from a polemical perspective (against Judaism, Christianity, or both), see for example Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds*, pp. 98-100; Ross Brann, *Power in the Portrayal: Representations of Jews and Muslims in Eleventh- and Twelfth-century Islamic Spain* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002), pp. 72-73 (Ibn Ḥazm's refutation of Samuel ibn Naghrila ha-Nagid); Najm al-Dīn al-Ṭūfī, *Muslim Exegesis of the Bible in Medieval Cairo: Najm al-Dīn al-Ṭūfī's (d. 716/1316) Commentary On the Christian Scriptures*, Lejla Demiri, ed. and trans. (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2013), p. 519; Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qarāfī, *Muslim-Christian Polemics Across the Mediterranean: The Splendid Replies of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qarāfī (d. 684/1285)*, Diego R. Sarrió Cucarella, ed. and trans. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), p. 151 n. 36, 239-240. On Gen. 49:10 in Jewish exegesis, see Mariano Gómez Aranda, "Jacob's Blessings in Medieval Jewish Exegesis," in *Rewritten Biblical Figures*, Erkki Koskenniemi et al., eds. (Turku, Finland: Abo Akademi University, 2010), pp. 235-258.

[57] The Hebrew saying refers to Jeroboam (1 Kings 15:30).

[58] Solomon, to whom the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes are ascribed, is not usually considered to be a prophet in Judaism. In Islam, however, he is one of God's prophets (Qur'ān 4:163; 6:84).

(i.e. the Prophet Muḥammad), becomes "Our Master Moses" in Abraham's text; Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 767) and al-Shāfiʻī (d. 820), the eponyms of two of the Sunnī schools of law, become Ravina I and Rav Ashi (fifth century), two of the compilers and editors of Babylonian Talmud; and the Prophet's wife, ʻĀ'isha (d. 678), becomes the prophetess Deborah (Judg. 4-5).

The same format used in Gottstein's study will be used here in studying the Arabic background of the *Murshid*, and the innovations introduced by David ben Joshua to his sources.

1. *Qur'ān – Bible*

David finds in the Bible equivalents to citations from the Qur'ān. He opens the *Murshid* with no less than four invocations (f. 1b):

Bism Allāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm

"In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate" (Qur'ān 1:1, and elsewhere)

Rabbi yassir

May God help (built upon Q. 2:26)[59]

Be-shem adonai el ʻolam

"In the name of God, the Everlasting God"

Deraḥekha adonai hodiʻeni, orḥotekha lamdeni

"Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths" (Ps. 25:4)

[59] *Rabbi Yassir*: one of several invocations that could follow the *bismillah*. See Adam Gacek, *Arabic Manuscripts: A Vademecum for Readers* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), p. 200.

The usage of the *bismillah* here is not entirely unusual since Jews adopted it at the opening of their epistles and tracts. Karin Almbladh, who studied the usage of the *Bismillah* in Geniza letters, points to the opening formulae that were often used by the Jewish authors, most probably under the influence of Islam. Her list of formulae in Hebrew or Aramaic include:

1. *Bi-shmakh raḥamana,* "In Your name, o Merciful", shortened *bi-shmakh*.
2. *'Al shemakh raḥamana*, "In Your name, o Merciful", shortened *'al shemakh*.
3. *Be-shem y'y* or *be-shem el,* "In the name of the Lord."
4. *Be*-[*shim*]*kha elohim,* "[In Your name], o God."
5. *Be-shem ram we-nissa',* "In the name of Him who is high and lofty" (built upon Isa. 47:15).

Other alternatives expressing trust in God are also found in the Geniza, whether in Hebrew or Arabic (based on the *Bismillah*).[60] In the letters of Rabbi Joshua, the father of David, one finds the formula *be-shem ha-el ha-raḥman* [*ve*]-*ha-raḥum*, "in the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate," i.e. the Hebrew translation of the Qur'ānic *bismillah*; or the words *bism Allāh*; or the entire Arabic phrase.[61] David's addition of the Hebrew formula "In the name of God, the Everlasting God" and Ps. 25:4 were probably intended to counter the Islamic formulae. Indeed, this practice was not unfamiliar to critics of Islamic 'influence' over Judaism such as Rabbi Simeon ben Tsemaḥ Duran (d.

[60] Karin Almbladh, "The 'Basmala' in Medieval Letters in Arabic Written by Jews and Christians," *Orientalia Suecana*, 59 (2010), pp. 45-60. See also Mark R. Cohen, "On the Interplay of Arabic and Hebrew in the Cairo Geniza Letters," in *Studies in Arabic and Hebrew Letters in Honor of Raymond P. Scheindlin*, Jonathan P. Decter and Michael Rand, eds. (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2007), pp. 22-23. On some different versions of the *Bismillah* in an early Persian translation, see *EQ*, "Persian Literature and the Qur'ān" (Franklin Lewis), where the variation in the wording of the formulae is explained due to oral transmission. See also on the invocation "God Willing" among Jews and Muslims: Raphael Jospe and Yonatan Milo, "God Willing: *Im Yirzeh Hashem – In Sha A'llah*," *Review of Rabbinic Judaism*, 16 (2013), pp. 1-27.

[61] Goitein, "The Twilight of the House of Maimonides," letters 1, 2, 15, 24, 26, 28.

1444) who stated: "There are places where [documents] begin: 'in the name of God, the Everlasting God,' according to the custom of the Ishmaelites [i.e. Muslims] and not according to the custom of the sages of blessed memory."[62]

In two instances the *Murshid* cites the Qur'ān: Love (*maḥabba*) is said to be *nār Allāh al-muwqada*, "the kindled fire of God" (Q. 104:6), a saying that is complemented by the Song 8:6: "Love is as strong as death, its ardor unyielding as the grave; it burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame" (f. 14b).

In another place the *Murshid* says: "Not even the weight of a speck of dust in the heavens or earth escapes His knowledge" (*lā ya'zubu 'an 'ilmihi mithqāl dhirra fī al-samāwāt wa-l-arḍ*), very closely following Qur'ān 34:3. This expression is complemented by three Biblical verses: "He knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him" (Dan. 2:22); "The righteous God who probes minds and hearts" (Ps. 7:9); "You know when I sit and when I rise" (Ps. 139: 2).

2. *Islamic Poetry – Bible*

al-Qushayrī (d. 1074) states in the introduction to his epistle:

> Know – may God show mercy to you! – that the majority of those true Sufis have become extinct and, in our age, nothing is left of them but their traces. As a poet put it: 'As for the tents, they look like their tents / and yet I see that the women of the tribe are not the ones who used to live in them.'[63]

In his own lament on the loss of piety, David ben Joshua cites the Arabic verse, originally

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[62] Trans. Judith Olszowy-Schlanger, *Karaite Marriage Documents From the Cairo Geniza: Legal Tradition and Community Life in Mediaeval Egypt and Palestine* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), p. 136.
[63] al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya fī 'ilm al-taṣawwuf*, Ma'rūf Zurayq and 'Alī 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Balṭah'jī, eds. (Damascus; Beirut: Dār al-Khayr, 1988), p. 36; trans. in *Al-Qushayri's Epistle*, p. 2.

composed by Qays b. al-Mulawwaḥ, *al-Majnūn* (d. ca. 688),[64] and finds a parallel to the same idea in Ps. 12:1: "Help, Lord, for no one is faithful (*ḥasid*) anymore; those who are loyal have vanished from humanity." Thus, the biblical verse does not replace the verse by Qays, but responds to it with a Jewish equivalent. Qays' poetic verse is attributed to an identified person (*baʻḍ al-fuḍalā'*, "an esteemed person") (f. 54a).

3. *Muḥammad – Israelite Prophets*

The *Murshid* copied the opening paragraph from Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's (d. 1209) *al-Muḥaṣṣal*, and Judaized the text by replacing the eulogy over Muḥammad with a eulogy on the Israelite prophets: "May [God's] peace be upon His worshipers, the clear lights, and the shining luminaries and the mighty intellects (*al-ʻukūl al-kawāhir*), and His messengers and His prophets, both the secret ones (*bawāṭin*) and the visible ones (*ẓawāhir*)."[65] Ignaz Goldziher, who was curious about the phenomenon of 'converting' the Arabic eulogy over Muḥammad, better known as the *taṣliya*,[66] into a Hebrew eulogy over the Israelite prophets, detected several cases of this kind in Hebrew literature.[67] In the *Murshid* the same technique is used by citing Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī in Arabic and finding an appropriate substitute to Islamic eulogy. Moreover, the eulogy in the *Murshid*, unlike the one in Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's book, is using mystical terminology in speaking

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[64] See *EI*^{2}, "Madjnūn Laylā" (Ch. Pellat et al.).
[65] Trans. Rosenthal, "A Judaeo-Arabic Work under Sûfic Influence," p. 447 (cited with minor changes). On the author of the *Muḥaṣṣal*, see *EI*^{2}, "Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī" (G.C. Anawati); Tariq Jaffer, *Razi: Master of Qur'anic Interpretation and Theological Reasoning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 19-20 (citation by Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, d. 1274, regarding the *Muḥaṣṣal*).
[66] The words *ṣalā Allāh ʻalayhi wa-sallama*, "May God bless him and give him peace."
[67] Ignaz Goldziher, "Mélanges Judéo-Arabes, XXVII. La traduction hébraïque de l'eulogie prophétique de l'Islam," *Revue des études juives*, 52 (1906), pp. 48-50. On the *taṣliya* and its meaning in Islam, see *idem*, "Ueber die Eulogien der Muhammedaner," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 50 (1896), pp. 97-128; Fritz Meier, "Invoking Blessings on Muhammad in Prayers of Supplication and When Making Requests," in *idem*, *Essays on Islamic Piety*, pp. 549-588; Cristina de la Puente, "The Prayer upon the Prophet Muḥammad (*Taṣliya*): A Manifestation of Islamic Religiosity," *Medieval Encounters*, 5 (1999), pp. 121-129.

about the prophets (*bawāṭin* and *ẓawāhir*). For the sake of the discussion here, I produce both texts in the Arabic script, although the *Murshid* was written, of course, in Judeo-Arabic.

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, introduction to the *Muḥaṣṣal*.[68]

الحمد لله المتعالي بجلال أحديته عن مشابهة الأعراض والجواهر المقدس بعلو صمديته عن مناسبة الأوهام والخواطر المتنزه بسمو سرمديته عن مقابلة الأحداق والنواظر المستغني بكمال قدرته عن معاضدة الإشباه والنظائر العليم الذي لا يعزب عن علمه شيء من مكنونات الضمائر ومستودعات السرائر العظيم الذي غرقت في مطالعة أنوار كبريائه أنظار الأوائل وأفكار والأواحر والصلاة على محمّد المبعوث إلى الأصاغر والأكبار والشفيع المشفع في الصغائر والكبائر وعلى آله وأصحابه وسلم تسليمًا كثيرًا.

Translation:[69] Praise be to God who is so exalted by the greatness of His Oneness that he cannot be compared with accidents and substances; Who is so holy in the exaltedness of His firmness (*ṣamadiyya*)[70] that he cannot be connected with imaginations and thoughts; Who is so remote in the sublimity of His perpetuity (*sarmadiyya*)[71] that he cannot be confronted with sagacities and speculations. Who, because of the perfection of His might, does not need to be contrasted to things which might resemble [Him] and be similar [to Him]. He is the Knowing One, from whose knowledge nothing escapes of what is deposited in the conscience (*sarā'ir*) and of what is hidden in the recesses of the mind (*ḍamā'ir*). He is the Great One, the lights of whose majesty have been the objects of the deep speculations of the

[68] Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Kitāb muḥaṣṣal afkār al-mutaqaddimīn wa-l-muta'akhkhirīn min al-'ulamā' wa-l-mutakallimīn* ([Cairo]: al-Maṭba'a al-Ḥusayniyya al-Miṣriyya, [1905]), p. 1. The citation in the Murshid was identified by Franz Rosenthal, "From the 'Unortodox' Judaism to Medieval Yemen," in *Hommage à Georges Vajda: Études d'histoire et de pensée juives*, Gérard Nahon and Charles Touati, eds. (Louvain: Peeters, 1980), p. 282 n. 6.

[69] Trans. Rosenthal, "A Judaeo-Arabic Work," p. 447 (the last sentence is my translation).

[70] Constructed from *al-Ṣamad* of Q. 112:2, a *hapax legomenon* in the Qur'ān. On the interpretations of this term in modern scholarship, see Walid A. Saleh, "The Etymological Fallacy and Qur'anic Studies: Muhammad, Paradise, and Late Antiquity," in *The Qur'ān in Context: Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qur'ānic milieu*, Angelika Neuwirth et al., eds. (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 654-658.

[71] Constructed from *sarmad*, which appears in Q. 71:8, 72:8.

former and the latter ones. May [God's] prayer be upon Muḥammad, the one sent to young and old, their interceder, and upon his family and companions, and may [He] grant him abundant peace.

Murshid, f. 1b-2a.

الحمد لله المتعالي بجلال أحديثه عن مشابهة الأعراض والجواهر المقدس بعلو صمديته عن مناسبة الأوهام والخواطر المتنزه بسمو سرمديته عن مقابلة الأحداق والنواظر المستغني بكمال قدرته عن معاضدة الإشباه والنظائر العليم الذي لا يعزب عن علمه شيء من مكنونات الضمائر ومستودعات السرائر العظيم الذي غرقت في مطالعة أنوار كبريائه أنظار الأوائل وأفكار والأواحر والسلام على عبيده الأنوار البواهر والأضواء الزواهر والعقول القواهر ورُسله وأنبيائه البواطن والظواهر.

> *Translation of the last line*:[72] "May [God's] peace be upon His worshipers, the clear lights, and the shining luminaries and the mighty intellects, and His messengers and His prophets, both the secret ones and the visible ones."

The Jewish practice of elevating the status of the Israelite prophets to that of Muḥammad in Islam, is occasionally found in Jewish polemical writings in which Moses plays a prominent role, most probably a reaction to the devotion to Muḥammad among Muslims (when Moses and Muḥammad are considered to be the lawgivers). An example to this phenomenon is found in the *Epistle of Consolation* attributed to Rabbi Maimon ben Joseph (d. c. 1166), Maimonides's father. In this letter, supposedly written at the time of the Almohad persecutions, Moses is portrayed as superior to Muḥammad. This polemical characteristic has not escaped the the modern editor of the *Epistle*, L.M. Simmons:

> One point is striking in the reading of the letter [of Rabbi Maimon]: it is the very

[72] This text is the same as in the previous passage of the *Muḥaṣṣal*, except for the last line.

strong influence which Moslem phrases exercised upon Jewish theology. Maimun's perpetual insisting upon belief in God and his Apostle, and in that with which he was sent down, seems almost like an echo from the Qur'an. Abraham is called without hesitation the Mahdi of God, and perhaps the great stress which is laid upon the greatness of Moses may be intended as a set off to the greatness of Mohammed.[73]

4. *Replacing or Removing Muslim Terms and Names*

In this method, David ben Joshua followed the tradition of the Maimonidians in naming their movement *ḥasidut* (piety). Abraham Maimonides had stated: "Whoever follows these unique regulations is named *qadosh* (holy), *ḥasid* (pious), *'anav* (humble), etc. *Ḥasid* is superior to all other [terms], because it is of the origin of *ḥesed*, meaning 'generosity,' [and] because [the pious] volunteers to do what is not in the Torah."[74] David replaced *tasawwuf* with *ḥasidut*, and *ṣūfī* with *ḥasid*, giving this terminology three interpretations. The first is that *ḥasid* is derived from *ḥesed* (benevolence) and *emet*

[73] L.N. Simmons, "Letter of Consolation of Maimon ben Joseph," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 2 (1890), pp. 62-101 (trans.), 335-369 (Arabic); the citation is from p. 65. On the polemical aspects of the *Epistle of Consolation*, especially regarding the position of Moses and the Israelite prophets vs. Muḥammad, see Eliezer Schlossberg, "The Attitude of R. Maimon, the Father of Maimonides, to Islam and Muslim Persecutions" [Heb.], *Sefunot*, N.S., 5 (1991), pp. 104-105; *idem*, "The Commentary of Rabbi Maimon, the Father of Maimonides, on Psalm 90" [Heb.], *Sinai*, 96 (1998), pp. 137-147 (in Hebrew pagination); *idem*, "The Image of Moses in the Epistle of Consolation of Rabbi Maimon, the Father of Maimonides" [Heb.], in *Mosheh avi ha-nevi'im: Demuto bi-re'i he-hagut le-doroteha* [Moses the Man, Master of the Prophets, in the Light of Interpretation throughout the Ages], Mosheh Ḥalamish et al. eds. (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University, 2010), pp. 285-299; *idem*, "Das Bild des Mose im *Trostbrief* Rabbi Maimons (des Vaters Mose ben Maimons)," *Judaica* (Zürich), 65, no. 2 (2009), pp. 140-157. David J. Wasserstein questioned the ascription of the *Epistle on Consolation* to Rabbi Maimon in his article: "The Date and Authorship of the *Letter of Consolation* Attributed to Maymūn b. Yūsuf," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 32 (2006), pp. 410-418 (Schlossberg does not seem to be aware of this publication). For examples of the polemic between the prophets of Judaism and Islam in the *Kuzari* of Judah ha-Levi and Maimonides, see Hannah Kasher, "Moses vs. Muḥammad: Between R. Judah ha-Levi and Maimonides" [Heb.], *Mesorah le-Yosef*, 5 (2008), pp. 227-233. In an article from 2007 Israel Yuval argued that by naming his son Moses, Rabbi Maimon acted out of messianic and eschatological beliefs; that these notions were familiar to Maimonides; and that the latter used them in presenting himself as a *predecessor* who would introduce the *Messiah*. See Yuval, "Moses redivivus: Maimonides as the Messiah's Helper" [Heb.], *Zion*, 72 (2007), pp. 161-188; *idem, Moses redivivus: Maimonides – Helfer des Messias* [Kleine Schriften des Arye-Maimon-Instituts, Heft 9] (Trier: Arye-Maimon-Institut für Geschichte der Juden, 2007).
[74] Cited in Fenton's introduction to the *Murshid*, p. 14.

(truth), the author translating them into *al-faḍl wa-l-tafaḍḍul wa-l-ṭūl wa-l-taṭawwul* (plenty and plentitude, profusion and profuseness) because the pious is of high spirituality and wishes to achieve success in the hereafter. The second interpretation: *ḥesed* as in Jonah 2:9, "Those who cling to worthless idols, lose their *ḥesed*," and Prov. 25:5, "Lest he who hears you bring *ḥesed* upon you," meaning *ḥesed* – shame, disgrace (*al-ʿār wa-l-hawān wa-l-ʿayb*). The explanation is that the pious lives in disgrace out of ascetic reasons. David cites here Isa. 63:3-7, "He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain," etc. One should notice that in the second explanation, the meaning of *ḥesed* as "disgrace" is the complete opposite of the first – "benevolence, kindness."[75] The third interpretation: *ḥasid* as in *ḥasida*, "stork," because like this bird that prefers the wildness,[76] the "pious" lives in seclusion and away from society (*al-mutajarrid ʿan al-nās li-aʿmālihi, al-mustawaḥḥish minhum, al-fārr ʿanhum*). For the same reason, David ben Joshua named his tract, *al-Murfid ilā al-tajarrud* (Aid to Solitude) (ff. 5a-5b). The Sufi term for the spiritual penitent/disciple, *murīd*, has been replaced with a Hebrew literal equivalent, *ḥafets* (pl. *ḥafetsim*), meaning "desirer, seeker" (f. 31b and elsewhere).[77]

Other examples of substitutes to Islamic terms come in the *Murshid*'s citation of two narratives from al-Sarrāj's (d. 988) *Kitāb al-lumaʿ*, where David drops any

[75] Notice also that the example of Jonah 2:9 (*meshamrim havle shav' ḥasdam ya'azovu*) does not make much sense in this case. On the phenomenon of root letters having opposite meanings, known in Hebrew as well as in other Semitic languages, Arabic included, see Robert Gordis, "Studies in Hebrew Roots of Contrasted Meanings," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 27 (1936), pp. 33-58; Edna Aphek and Yishai Tobin, "Semantic Polarity and the Origin of Language," in *Studies in Language Origins*, Walburga von Raffler-Engel et al., eds. (Amsterdam; Benjamins, 1991), 2:263-284. For the Arabic case, see *EI*^{2}, "Aḍdād" (G. Weil); David Cohen, "*Aḍdād* et ambiguïté linguistique en arabe," *Arabica*, 8 (1961), p. 1-29.

[76] Abraham ibn Ezra's commentary on Lev. 11:19.

[77] On the *murīd*, see Ndiouga Kebe, "La formation spirituelle du *murīd* selon Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī (m. 386/996)," in *Les maîtres soufis et leurs disciples des IIIe-Ve siècles de l'Hégire (IXe-XIe)*, Geneviève Gobillot et al., eds. (Damascus, Beirut: IFPO, 2012), pp. 325-349.

references to Islam: *rajl min al-ṣufiyya* (Sufi) becomes a *ḍaʿīf* (poor person);[78] and the name of the mystic Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb al-Farajī, a disciple of the ascetic al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī (d. 857),[79] is replaced in favor of an anonymous narrator (*baʿḍ al-fuḍalāʾ*, "one of the esteemed people").[80]

Example 1.

al-Sarrāj, *Kitāb al-lumaʿ*.[81]

وسمع شيخ من المشايخ رجلاً من الصوفية يقول أنا جائع فقال له كذبت فقيل له لم قلت ذلك فقال لأن الجوع سِرٌ من سِرّ الله تعالى موضوع في خزائن من خزائن الله تعالى لا يضعه عند من يُفْشيه، قال ودخل [رجلٌ] من الصوفية على شيخ فقدّم إليه طعامًا فأكله فقال له مذ كم لم تأكل الطعام قال مذ خمس فقال ليس بك جوع الفقر جوعك جوع بخل عليك ثيابٌ وأنت تجوع أو كما قال.

> *Translation*: A sheikh once heard a Sufi saying: 'I am hungry,' and he told him: 'You are lying!' People asked him: 'Why did you say that?' and he answered: 'Because hunger is one of God's secrets, and it is found in the treasuries of God; He does not provide it to the one who may reveal it.'[82] A Sufi once came before a sheikh who provided him food, and the Sufi ate. 'For how long have you not eaten?' asked the sheikh, and the Sufi answered: 'For five [days].' 'This is not hunger out of poverty,' stated the sheikh, 'hunger afflicts your body,[83] but you [nonetheless] starve yourself,' or he said something similar to these words.

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[78] Notice however that the Arabic terms *ḍaʿīf* , "needy," and *faqīr*, "poor" (Persian: *darvish*), were often the terms used for the Sufi mystics in Islamic literature. See Adam Sabra, *Poverty and Charity in Medieval Islam: Mamluk Egypt, 1250-1517* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[79] Zaid Shakir (trans.), introduction to al-Muḥāsibī, *Treatise for the Seekers of Guidance* (Hayward, CA: NID Publishers, 2008), p. xv.

[80] On al-Sarrāj, see *EI*², "al-Sarrādj" (P. Lory); Sells, *Early Islamic Mysticism*, pp. 196-199; Saeko Yazaki, *Islamic Mysticism and Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī: The Role of the Heart* (Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. 86-89.

[81] Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj, *The Kitáb al-lumaʿ fi 'l-Taṣawwuf of Abú Naṣr ʿAbdallah b. ʿAlí al-Sarráj al-Ṭúsí*, Reynold A. Nicholson, ed. (Leyden: E.J. Brill; London: Luzac & co., 1914), p. 202.

[82] Lit. "unlock it."

[83] Lit. "makes your clothes slim."

Murshid, f. 28b.

وقيل إن وقف ضعيف على باب شخص مرتاض وقال أنا جائع فقال له الشخص إرجع يا كذّاب فإن الجوع سِرّ الله ما يوضعه إلا عند أصحاب الأمانات.

Translation: There was once a poor man standing at the door of a man, begging for money and telling him: 'I am hungry.' The man answered: 'Go away, you liar! hunger is God's secret, and He reveals it only to the faithful ones.'

Example 2.

al-Sarrāj, *Kitāb al-luma'*.[84]

وقيل لحكيم بِمَ عرفت الله تعالى فقال بحلِّ العقود وفسخ العزائم، وقال محمّد بن يعقوب الفَرَجي فيما حُكي عنه منذ ثلاثين سنة ما عقدت بيني وبين الله عزّ وجلّ عقدًا مخافةً أن يَفْسَخَ عليّ ذلك فيكذبني على لساني، ويقال إن الفرق بين الخاصّ والعامّ إن العامّة من المؤمنين قد أوجب الله عليهم الوفاءَ إذا عقدوا بألْسنتهم عهدًا والخاصّ قد أوجب الله عليهم الوفاءَ إذا عقدوا بقلوبهم عهدًا.

Translation: A wise man was once asked: 'How did you come to know your Lord?' He answered: 'Through loosening the oaths and untying the vows.' Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb al-Farajī[85] said, according to what is related about him: 'For the last thirty years I have not taken an oath with God (mighty and lofty is He) lest He reproach me and declare my falsehood.' It is said that the difference between the notable and the commoners [in religion] is that God requires the plebs to perform of which they took oath in their tongues, and the notable – of which they took oath in their hearts.[86]

[84] al-Sarrāj, *The Kitáb al-luma'*, pp. 354-355.
[85] Unidentified.
[86] On the differentiation between 'notable' and 'commoners,' see *EI*^{2}, "al-Khāṣṣa wa 'l-'Āmma" (M.A.J. Beg). al-Sarrāj (*The Kitáb al-luma'*, pp. 354) defines "oath," *'aqd*: "a secret that the servant takes in his heart between himself and God Almighty regarding the things he will do or not do."

Murshid, f. 8b.

وقيل لبعض الحكماء كيف عرفت ربّك قال بشدّ العقود وربط العزائم، ورواية أخرى تقول بحلّ العقود وفسخ العزائم. وقال بعض الفضلاء منذ ثلاثين سنة ما عقدت بيني وبين الله عزّ وجلّ عقدًا مخافةً أن يَفْسَخَ عليّ ذلك فيكذبني على لساني، وقال بعض الحكماء إن الله يطلب خواص المؤمنين بما عقدوا بقلوبهم ويطلب عوام المؤمنين بما عقدوا بألْسنتهم.

Translation: A wise man was once asked: 'How did you come to know your Lord?' He answered: 'Through strengthening the oaths and tying the vows'; or according to another version: 'Through loosening the oaths and untying the vows.' An esteemed person once said: 'For the last thirty years I have not taken an oath with God (mighty and lofty is He) lest He reproach me and declare my falsehood.' A wise man said: 'God requires the most esteemed believers to perform that which they swore oath to in their hearts, and requires those of the lower level of belief – to perform [only] that which they swore oath to on their tongues.'

Finally, we will look at a long citation of the *Murshid* from two passages in al-Suhrawardī's *Kalimat al-taṣawwuf*.[87] Here David ben Joshua uses multiple techniques in order to Judaize the Islamic text:

1) Replacing Arabic *ḥukamā'* (sages) and *'ulamā'* (scholars of the religious sciences) with Hebrew *ḥakhamim* (sages) and *ḥasidim* (pious);
2) Placing a verse by al-Ḥallāj (executed 922) that is cited in the *Kalima* elsewhere in the *Murshid* (f. 49b), and not identifying the poet by his name (although this should not be considered to be an unusual character of Arabic literature).[88]

[87] The text underlined in the passages below was copied from the *Kalimat al-taṣawwuf* to the *Murshid* (the variations between the two texts are insignificant).

[88] The original poem is recorded in *Le Dîwân d'al-Ḥallâj: Essai de reconstitution, édition et traduction*, Louis Massignon, ed. and trans., in *Journal asiatique*, 218 (1931), pp. 30-31. On the poet, see *EI*^{2}, "al-Ḥallādj" (L. Massignon-[L. Gardet]); Sells, *Early Islamic Mysticism*, pp. 266-268; Paul B. Fenton, "Les traces d'Al-Ḥallāğ, martyr mystique de l'islam, dans la tradition juive," *Annales Islamologiques*, 35, no. 1 (2001), pp. 101-127 (the citations of al-Ḥallāj in the *Murshid* are on pp. 120-121).

3) Changing the call to read the Qur'ān with reading the Torah, and adding in Hebrew: *Miqra*, "the Bible";
4) Instead of the Qur'ān, the *Murshid* cites BT Sukkah 45b: "There are those who see [God] through a shining speculum, and those who see [Him] through a dim one";[89]
5) Replacing the root letters *n-z-l*, used in the Qur'ān for "sending down" the revelation, with *w-r-d*, thus making the passage sound less 'Islamic' when discussing the Torah.[90]

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[89] My translation. See on this saying Elliot R. Wolfson, *Through a Speculum That Shines: Vision and Imagination in Medieval Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 26-27, 380-381, and *passim*.

[90] Notice that the Qur'ān speaks of the Torah by using the same root letters it applies to its own revelation/"sending down," *n-z-l*. Nonetheless, the verb used for God's revelation of the Torah is *anzala*, and for the Qur'ān – *nazzala* (Q. 3:3). According to the commentators, the difference is that the Torah was revealed on a single occasion, whereas the Qur'ān was sent down in portions. See *EQ*, "Torah" (Camilla P. Adang).

al-Suhrawardī, *Kalimat al-taṣawwuf.*[91]

(p. 129) ... وقد اعترف به الحلاج رحمه الله حيث قال: «أدنيتني منك، حتى توهمت إنك اني». بل اعترف الحكماء والعلماء با[لا]تّصال بالعالم الأعلى وهو عبارة عن رفع الحجب، فيكون اتحادًا عقليًا. / (pp. 92-93) لا يلعبنّ بك اختلاف العبارات فانّه «إِذَا بُعْثِرَ مَا فِي الْقُبُورِ» (Q. 100:8) وأحضر البشر في عرسة الله تعالى يوم القيامة، لعلّ من كل ألفٍ، تسعامئة وتسع وتسعين، يعثون من أجداثهم، وهم قتلى من العبارات، ذبائح سيوف الإشارات، وعليهم دماؤها وجراحها. غفلوا من المعاني، فضيّعوا المباني. الحقيقة شمس واحدة لا تتعدّد بتعدّد مظاهرها من البروج. المدينة واحدة، والدّروب كثيرة، والطّروق غير يسيرة. / (pp. 129-130) وإذا ضبطت نفسك عن الاشتغال بالزائد على مهمّ بذلك الضروريّ، واسكملت بالعلم [اوتيت كثيرًا] من الفضائل. وعليك التسبيح والأوراد، وقطعِ الخواطر الرديّة وانتقاذِ الخواطر الجّيدة. والخاطرالردي، إذا قطعته أولاً نجوتَ منه، والاّ يتأدي بك إلى ما لا يلائم. وأكْثِر الدعاء أمر آخرتك! واسْألِ الله تعالى ما يبقي معك أبدًا، لا ما يزول. ولا تتكلّمْ قبل الفكر، ولا تعجّبْ بشيء من حالك فإن الواهب غير منتاهي القوة. وعليك بقراءة القرآن مع وجد وطرب وففكر لطيف. وإقْرَأ القرآن كأنه ما أُنزِل إلا في شأنك فقط. وإجمع هذه الخصول في نفسك وتكون من المفلحين. وإعلم إنّ الصّوفي في هو الذي اجتمعتْ فيه جميع هذه الملكات الشريفة. والتصوّف اصطلاح على هذه. وآخرما أوصيك به تقوي الله عزّ وجلّ «إِنَّ الْعَاقِبَةَ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ» (Q. 11:49). «سُبْحَانَكَ لاَ عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلاَّ مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ» (Q. 2:32).

Translation: (p. 129) …But al-Ḥallāj (may God have mercy upon him) acknowledged that when he said: 'You brought me closer to you, until I considered you to be me.'[92] The sages (*ḥukamā'*) and scholars (*'ulamā'*) acknowledged the conjunction with the upper world, that is, the removal of the veil, meaning intellectual union. / (pp. 92-93) Do not be confused by the changes in the allusions because 'does He [God] not know that when the contents of the graves are scattered?' [Q. 100:8]. Most of human beings in God's dominion [will rise during] the Day of Judgment, but out of 1000 people, 999 people will decay

[91] al-Suhrawardī, *Kalimat al-taṣawwuf*, in *Three Treatises: al-Alwāḥ al-'imādīyah, Kalimat al-taṣawwuf, al-Lamaḥāt*, Najaf-Gholī Ḥabībī, ed. (Tehran: Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, 1977).

[92] *Le Dîwân d'al-Ḥallâj*, pp. 30-31.

in their graves, and these are victims of the languages and of the allusions' swords, and they are responsible for their punishment.[93] They neglected the meaning of these allusions, and destroyed them. The truth is like a sun that does not have more than one manifestation. [Likewise,] the city is one, and there are many roads [leading to it] but the roads are not easy [to travel].

(pp. 129-130) If you manage to avoid taking care of your superfluous needs, you will accomplish wisdom and [many] merits. You must praise and exalt and stop the redundant thoughts in order to be saved by good thoughts. The redundant thought – when you are getting rid of it first, you are being saved, and nothing will hurt you unless it has a cure. Supplicate frequently to the world to come! Ask God (may He be Exalted) that whatever you have shall never end. Do not speak without thinking first, and do not boast of what you achieved because God is all-giving. You must read the Qur'ān through free will, excitement, and refined thinking. Read the Qur'ān as if it was given to you only. If you assemble these qualities into your heart, you will be one of the successful ones.[94] Know that the Sufi is the one with whom these noble possessions are assembled. *Taṣawwuf* (Sufism) is their reconciliation, and finally I command you to be fearful of God (mighty and lofty is He). 'The [best] outcome is to the righteous' [Q. 11:49]. 'Exalted are You; we have no knowledge except what You have taught us. Indeed, it is You who is the Knowing, the Wise' [Q. 2:32].

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[93] 'Punishment,' lit. 'blood and wounds.'
[94] *al-Mufliḥūn*, see Qur'ān 2:1-5.

Murshid, ff. 56a-56b.

... بل أقول إنّ الجّمهور من الחכמים والחסידים قد اعترافوا بالاتّصال بالعالم العلوى وهو عبارة عن رفع الحجاب الفاضلة بيننا وبينه وإليه إشاراتهم بقولهم في גְּמַר סוּכָּה في פֶּרֶק לוּלָב וַעֲרָבָה قالوا הָא דְּמִסְתַּכְּלֵי בְּאִסְפַּקְלַרְיָא הַמְּאִירָה, הָא דְּמִסְתַּכְּלֵי בְּאִסְפַּקְלַרְיָא שֶׁאֵינָהּ מְאִירָה. /

أيّها الواقف على هذا المختصر المريد דרך החסידות ומסלול ה׳. لا تلعبنّ بك الإشارات واختلاف العبارات فانّ أكثر الناس قتلى العبارات، ذبائح سيوف الإشارات. الحقيقة شمس واحدة لا تتعدّد بتعدّد مظاهرها. المدينة واحدة، والدّروب كثيرة، والطّروق عسيرة يسيرة, أو غمّة غزيرة لكن أبلغها هذا الطريق. / فإذا ضبطت نفسك عن الاشتغال بالزائد على مهمّ بذلك الضروريّ، واسكملت بالعلم اتيت على كثيرًا من الفضائل. وعليك بالتسبيح والأوراد، إذ أصل هذه الطريقة وقاعدة هذه الحقيقة حفض الإرادة واستدامة الرياضة بالعبادة وتغليب التواضع بالإعادة وطلب الزيادة بالزيادة. فأقم حدود العبودية بآداب النفس. ثم تمنّ دراجات الخصوصية بحلاوة الأنس. وأكْثر الدعاء في أمر الآخرة وإسْألِ الله تعالى ما يبقي معك أبدًا، لا ما يزول. وإرفض ما يتركّك قبل يتركّك. لا تتكلّمْ قبل الفكر، ولا تقطع عنك الذكر. لا تتعجّبْ بشيء من أحوالك فإن الواهب غير منتاهي القوة. وعليك بمداومة قراءة التوراة الמקרא وكلام الوحي وتأمل معانيها مع وجد وطرب وففكر لطيف. وكأنه ما ورد إلا من شأنك فقط. وإجمع هذه الخصال في نفسك تكون من الחסידים والאוהבים. إذ الחסיד هو الشّخص الذي اجتمعتْ فيه جميع هذه الملكات الشريفة والحقائق اللطيفة وتتحلّها بهذه الأخلاق الظريفة وحوز المكارم العفيفة والفضائل المنيفة. وחסידות اصطلاح على هذه. وآخرما [end of the MS].

Translation: But I say that most of the sages (*ḥakhamim*) and pietists (*ḥasidim*) acknowledged the conjunction with the upper world, that is, the removal of the elevated veil between us and Him [God]. They referred to that in [the Babylonian Talmud's] *Gemar Sukkah* in the chapter on the *lulav* and *ʻaravah*,[95] saying: ‘There are those who see [God] through a shining speculum, and those who see [Him] through a dim one’ [Sukkah 45b].

[95] *Lulav*, closed frond of the date palm tree; *ʻaravah*, a leafy branch of the willow tree. These are two of the ‘Four Species’ used ritually during the Jewish holiday of *Sukkot* (Feast of Tabernacles).

O you, who are reading our summary [the *Murshid*], seeking to achieve the path of piety and the way of God. Do not be confused by the allusions and the changes in these allusions because most people are victims of the languages and of the allusions' swords. The truth is like a sun that does not have more than one manifestation. [Likewise,] the city is one, even if it has many roads [leading to it], some of them are difficult while others are easy [to travel]; some of the ways are wide while others are narrow – but they all lead to the same place.

If you manage to avoid taking care of your superfluous needs, you will accomplish wisdom and many merits. You must praise and exalt because the foundation of this path and the base of this truth is the preservation of the will, the continuation of performing the worship, becoming regularly humble, and reaching abundance with abundance. Perform the laws of the obedience [to God] through educating the soul, and hope [to reach] the status of the most elevated ones through the joy of getting closer [to God]. Supplicate frequently to the world to come and ask God (may He be Exalted) that whatever you have shall never end. Do not speak without thinking first. Leave behind you [whatever] may leave you behind first. Do not speak without thinking first, and do not stop mentioning God. Do not boast of what you achieved because God is all-giving. You must read the Torah, the Bible, and the words of revelation, and reflect upon their meanings through free will, excitement, and refined thinking, as if they were given to you only. If you assemble these qualities into your heart, you will be one of the pietists (*ḥasidim*) and lovers (*ohavim*), because the pietist is the one with whom these noble possessions and lofty truths are assembled. Carry with you these

excellent qualities and hold to the admirable virtues and estimable merits because piety (*ḥasidut*) is their reconciliation, and finally [end of the manuscript].

VI. CONCLUSIONS

David ben Joshua's *Murshid* may be regarded as a short manual of mystical thought in the style of Sufi manuals, e.g. the epistle composed by al-Qushayrī. It draws its materials from a wealth of sources, some of them Muslim (Sufi thought), while others are Jewish, and relies on the mystical writings of the Maimonidians in previous generations (most importantly, on Abraham Maimonides, the founder of the Egyptian pietist movement). The *Murshid* cites and adapts Sufi materials without explicitly referring to the original writings; in fact, these materials are produced with the object of legitimizing pietism though methods of Judaizing the Islamic citations. The *Murshid* replaces Qur'ānic verses with biblical verses, and erases any references to the Prophet Muḥammad (speaking instead of the Israelite prophets) and Sufi thinkers (presenting them as anonymous "sages and pious men"). Nonetheless, the *Murshid* does include some materials that are clearly of Islamic character, but do not seem to contradict the Jewish-pietist character of this tract. Rather than arguing of neglect on the side of David ben Joshua or ignorance of their Islamic origins, I would argue that the author was fully aware of the methods of converting Islamic materials into Jewish ones, and the limits of his work.

The *Murshid* is thus a tract of hybrid nature, one that relies on Jewish and Islamic literatures, that transcribes and cites passages from Arabic into Judeo-Arabic, and that attaches a biblical equivalent to the original Qur'ānic verses. Despite its flaws (not being a homogenous work, its unclear structure, and not always satisfying explanation of only several mystical terms), the *Murshid* is an example of the Judeo-Islamic symbiosis in the

Later Middle Period, a follower to the mystical writings of the so-called "classical" age of symbiosis, such as Baḥya ibn Paquda and Abraham Maimonides. S.D. Goitein wrote that Abraham Maimonides "finds the whole material for his teachings in Jewish sources… [H]e did not confine himself to preaching and writing but, in collaboration with other Hasidim, tried to introduce a number of Muslim religious practices, congenial to him, into the Jewish rite."[96] David ben Joshua, a descendant of Abraham Maimonides, like his forefather, was a master in Jewish and Sufi thought, and the *Murshid* testifies for his conversion and adaptation of Islamic materials into Judaism. One could argue that David's pietistic teachings were meant not so much to complement Sufi thought, but to offer a Jewish alternative. An often-quoted letter from the times of the *nagid*, discovered in the Geniza (T.-S. 8. J. 26/19), gives evidence to the attraction of Sufism among Jewish circles. In this letter, a Jewish housewife urges the *nagid* to help her bring her husband back home from his spiritual retreat with a Muslim sheikh, Yusūf al-ʻAjamī al-Kūrānī (d. 1367), "a place where there is no Torah, no prayer, and no mention of God's name in truth."[97] David ben Joshua achieved the object of fusing mystical thought that originated in Islam with the Torah, believing that the practices and ideals performed in the pietist movement reflect, in fact, those of the ancient Israelites, and thus, the true path to asceticism.

[96] *Jews and Arabs*, p. 153.

[97] S.D. Goitein, "A Jewish Addict to Sufism: In the Time of the Nagid David II Maimonides," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 44 (1953), pp. 46 (Hebrew), 48 (trans.).

CHAPTER 3. INTERRELIGIOUS POLEMICS. MUḤAMMAD B. ‘ABD AL-KARĪM AL-MAGHĪLĪ (D. 1504) AND HIS ANTI-JEWISH TREATISE, *AḤKĀM AHL AL-DHIMMA* (REGULATIONS FOR THE ‘PROTECTED PEOPLE’)

> In our family, our ancestors have told their children, who taught us that Tementit [in the Tuat region] was once a Jewish capital... Between Tementit and El Hamméda there is a way of six days, and in El Hamméda there are still descendants of Jews who were expelled from Tementit, are they are called *Tementitins*. They and the people of El Hamméda have preserved the tradition of those events. My father and his brothers, and their father, were born in El Hamméda, and my father constantly told us about these events.[1]

The words in this chapter’s epigraph, told in first person, were recorded almost four centuries after the expulsion of the Jews from Touat and Tamentit, by a Moroccan Jew of the Sahara. Rabbi Mardochée (Mordechai) Aby Serour (1826-1886), who was born in the town of Akka of Southern Morocco, traveled extensively in West Africa with a French passport that he received after moving to Algeria, which was under French rule since 1830. In a report from 1880 about his travels back to Akka and further into Sub-Saharan Africa, he traced the genealogy of the Daggatoun, a small tribe in the Dar‘a valley, to the descendants of the Jewish community of Touat. Aby Serour was mistaken to consider the Daggatouns “Jews,” a common term for tribes of low social status in the lands of Sub-Saharan Africa, but nevertheless, he gives us a valuable account for the circulation of narratives about the expulsion of the Jews of Touat among the Jewish communities of the

[1] “Dans notre famille, nos ancêtres ont raconté à leurs fils, qui nous l’ont appris, que Tementit [dans la région du Touat] était autrefois une des capitales du Judaïsme… Entre Tementit et El Hamméda il y a un chemin de six jours, et à El Hamméda se trouvent encore aujourd’hui des descendants des Israélites expulsés autrefois de Tementit, sont les appelle *Tementitins*. Eux et les habitants d’El Hamméda ont conservé la tradition de cés évènements. Mon père et ses frèrs et leur père sont nés à El Hamméda et mon père nous racontait constamment cés évènements.” Mardochée Aby Serour, *Les Daggatoun: Tribu d'origine juive demeurant dans le désert du Sahara*, Isidore Loeb, trans. (Paris: Typographie de Ch. Marechal, 1880), pp. 9-10 (my translation). For an English summary of Aby Serour’s account, see Henry S. Morais, *The Daggatouns: A Tribe of Jewish Origin in the Desert of Sahara. A Review* (Philadelphia: E. Stern, 1882).

Sahara many years after the events there took place.[2]

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the rhetoric of anti-Jewish polemic in the Later Islamic Middle Period (1200-1500 CE), by focusing on the episode of the persecution of the Jews of Touat, which occurred towards the end of the fifteenth century. The inciter of this persecution was a Mālikī[3] scholar from Tlemcen, Muḥammad b. ʻAbd al-Karīm al-Maghīlī (d. 1504), who campaigned against the employment of Jews at the courts of Maghribi and African rulers, led a massacre against the Jews of Touat around 1492, and played an important role in the Islamization of West Africa. Accounts of his anti-Jewish polemic and activity are included in the great compendium of *fatwās* (legal responses), *al-Miʻyār al-muʻrib wa-al-jāmiʻ al-mughrib ʻan fatāwā ahl Ifrīqīyā wa-l-Andalus wa-l-Maghrib* (The Clear Measure and the Extraordinary Collection of the Judicial Opinions of the Scholars of Ifrīqiyā,[4] al-Andalus, and the Maghrib) of Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā al-Wansharīsī (d. 1509), a contemporary of al-Maghīlī.[5] The main text to be examined here, however, will be the untitled polemical tract by al-Maghīlī,[6] which, for

[2] For the questionable Jewish identity of the Daggatoun, see Michel Abitbol, "On Jews and Judaism in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Accounts and Travels of Rabbi Mardochée Aby Serour" [Heb.], *Peʻamim*, 67 (1996), pp. 12, 15 n. 39. Abitbol does not accept Aby Serour's report of the Jewishness of the Daggatoun at face value, and gives other examples for the "rediscovery" of Jewish tribes after the French conquest of Algeria. See for example Albert Cohen's letter (in French) in Simon Schwarzfuchs, "Two Documents on the Jews of Algeria after the French Conquest" [Heb.], *Michael* (Tel Aviv), 5 (1978), pp. 262-267.

[3] The Mālikī school of law, named after the jurist Mālik b. Anās (d. 796 in Medina), was predominant in al-Andalus (Muslim Spain) and the Maghrib (Northwest Africa). See the *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition* (hereafter: *EI*[2]), "Mālikiyya" (N. Cottart); Allan Christelaw, "Islamic Law in Africa," in *The History of Islam in Africa*, Nehemia Levtzion and Randall L. Pouwels, eds. (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000), pp. 375-377.

[4] *Ifrīqiyā* is the eastern part of the Maghrib. It is usually identified with present-day Tunisia, even though the exact geographical limits of this territory are indefinite in medieval scholarship, and it could have been confused with the entire Maghrib. The term *Ifrīqiyā* is borrowed from the Latin *Africa*. See *EI*[2], "Ifrīḳiya" (M. Talbi).

[5] On the correspondence of Maghribī *ʻulāmāʼ* (scholars of the religious sciences) concerning the preaching of al-Maghīlī, who advocated the destruction of the synagogue in Tamentit, see David S. Powers, "Aḥmad al-Wansharīsī (d. 914/1509)," in *Islamic Legal Thought: A Compendium of Muslim Jurists*, Oussama Arabi et al., eds. (Leiden: Brill, 2013), pp. 382-399.

[6] Arabic edition in Paul B. Fenton, "A Maghribi Tract Against the Jews: *Kitāb aḥkām al-dhimma* by ʻAbd al-Karīm al-Maghīlī" [Heb.], in *Hiqre Maʻarav u-Mizrah: Leshonot, sifruyot u-firke toladah mugashim le-*

the purposes of this dissertation, will be named *Aḥkām ahl al-dhimma* (Regulations for the 'Protected People'; hereafter: *Aḥkām*), after the words of the composer in the fourth paragraph of his work, and according to the medieval tradition of regulating the *dhimmīs* (the 'protected people', that is, Jews and Christians) in the Abode of Islam.[7]

In his polemic al-Maghīlī attacks Jews as the enemies of Muslims and their Prophet, blaming them for heresy, and gives examples of their enmity, consisting of their unwillingness to eat the meat slaughtered by Muslims, or any food prepared by Muslims, and in their duplicity while serving their Muslim masters. al-Maghīlī belligerently criticizes the Jews and their supporters, and calls for the total extermination of their males and the enslavement of their women. In order to dehumanize the Jews, he calls them "monkeys," and defines every Jew as Satan, because Jews trap and deceive Muslims and bring them into sinning.

In the context of 'Judeo-Muslim Symbiosis', therefore, it is hard to see the persecution of the Jews of Touat and al-Maghīlī's tract in the same positive meaning of 'symbiosis' as used by S.D. Goitein; and one could claim the *Aḥkām* to be an example of Anti-Semitism.[8] The existence of Anti-Semitism, however, in earlier centuries of Islamic

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Yosef Shitrit [Studies of East and West: Essays in Language, Literature and History Presented to Joseph Chetrit], Joseph Tobi and Dennis Kurzon, eds. (Jerusalem: Karmel; [Haifa]: Haifa University, 2011), 1:551-564 (hereafter: al-Maghīlī, *Aḥkām ahl al-dhimma*). Another edition, published under the title *Ta'līf fī mā yajibu 'alā al-muslimīn min ijtināb al-kuffār* (A Treatise on the Obligation of Muslims in Avoiding the Unbelievers), is available in H.I. Gwarzo, "The Life and Teachings of Al-Maghili with Particular Reference to the Saharan Jewish Community" (Ph.D. diss., School of Oriental and African Studies, 1972), pp. 97-123. See also John O. Hunwick, *Jews of a Saharan Oasis: Elimination of the Tamantit Community* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2006).

[7] The most famous book under this title is *Aḥkām ahl al-dhimmah* by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya. On this writer, a well-known disciple of Ibn Taymiyya, see *EI*², "Ibn Ḳayyim al-Dj̲awziyya" (H. Laoust).

[8] See the inclusion of George Vajda's article (in English translation) in a collection of articles on Anti-Semitism in Islamic history: "*Adversos Judaeos*: A Treatise from Maghrib. *Ahkam ahl al-Dhimma* by Shayh Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Karim al-Magili," in *The Legacy of Islamic Antisemitism: From Sacred Texts to Solemn History*, Andrew G. Bostom, ed. (New York: Prometheus Books, 2008), pp. 345-351. The original article is Vajda, "Un traité maghrébin *adversus Judaeos*: *Aḥkam ahl al-d̲imma* du Šayh̲

history and its evidence in the Geniza documents, did not prevent Goitein from claiming that Anti-Semitism "appears to have been local and sporadic, rather than general and endemic."[9] I believe that the present chapter will provide a more complex depiction of Jewish life in the Maghrib of the fifteenth century, pointing to the close relations between Jews and Muslims in the spheres of politics and economy, while putting the massacre of Touat in its historical context (so far, it has been mostly examined as a polemical text *per se*). The "locality" of the massacre, the motives of al-Maghīlī, and the responses to his activity, as reported in the *Mi'yār*, will present a unique case in the history of intimacy and tension between Jews and Muslims, in which the worldview of al-Maghīlī and the historical events in the Maghrib took an important role. Moreover, an examination of (intellectual) Jewish attitude towards Islam in the Maghrib will reveal the intricacy of living under Ishmael rather than under Edom.

I. Historical Setting

The Oasis of Touat and Gourara[10] is located about 1600 km (995 miles) south-west of Algiers. Today it belongs to the district of Adrār, which is dotted by dozens of palm trees, 294 *kṣūr* (fortified hamlets; sin. *kṣar*) and 900 foggaras – underground irrigation canals known elsewhere in the Middle East as *qanāt*; the development of these systems of foggaras facilitated the subsequent development of new north-to-south trade routes across the desert.[11] Touat is not mentioned in early Arabic writings of Maghribī Muslims, thus

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Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Karīm al-Maġīlī," in *Études d'Orientalisme dédiées à la mémoire de Lévi-Provençal* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1962), 2:805-813.

[9] Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 2:278-289; the citation is from p. 283.

[10] Ar. Tuwāt; Qurāra (Ber. Tigourarin). Gourara is a small oasis at the north of Touat.

[11] Saïd Bouterfa, *Les manuscrits du Touat: Le sud algérien* (Méolans-Revel: Atelier Perrousseaux; Alger: Barzakh, 2005), p. 19; Gilbert Grandguillaume, "Régime économique et structure du pouvoir: Le système des foggara du Touat," *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée*, 13-14 (1973), pp. 437-456;

the history of Touat and Gourara is mostly unknown, and historians are left with Berber-African traditions. In the Earlier Islamic Middle Period (945-1200 C.E.) Touat became a hub for trans-Saharan trade; by the time of the foundation of the Zayyānid state in Tlemcen during the thirteenth century, it was an important center on the road from the capital to *Bilād al-Sūdān*, "Black Africa" (lit. Land of the Blacks).[12] Trade-caravans to the Sūdān were sponsored by Muslim and Jewish merchants.[13] Very little is known about the process of Islamization in the region, because the first Arabic documents to support the existence of a Muslim population appear only in the ninth century. But as in other areas in West Africa, the local communities of Touat (Berbers, Christians, and perhaps Jews) converted to Islam through the commercial activity of Maghribī merchants.[14] Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (d. 1377), who visited the village of Būdā in the Touat oasis, spoke of the cultivation of palm trees there; and Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406) reported of the Berber-Zanāta population in Touat.[15] Around the same time period we find the first Jewish accounts of

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Andrew I. Wilson, "The Spread of Foggara-Based Irrigation in the Ancient Sahara," in *The Libyan Desert: Natural Resources and Cultural Heritage*, David Mattingly et al., eds. (London: Society for Libyan Studies, 2006), pp. 205-216. See also Ibn Khaldūn's account of the irrigation canals in Touat in the *Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History*, J.F.P. Hopkins and N. Levtzion, eds. (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 340.

[12] The Sūdān was the name used for the Savannah regions south of the Sahara from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea. See *Medieval Islamic Civilization: An Encyclopedia*, Joseph W. Meri, ed. (New York: Routledge, 2006), "Sudan" (Knut S. Vikør).

[13] On Jewish traders in the Sahara see the discussion below; and also Edith Bruder,"Historical Narratives of a Jewish Presence in Sub-Saharan Africa," in *idem*, *The Black Jews of Africa: History, Religion, Identity* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 97-132.

[14] Many of these merchants were probably Ibadites. See Tadeusz Lewicki, "Ibadites in Arabia and Africa," *Journal of World History*, 13, no. 1 (1971), pp. 51-130; *idem*, "Quelques extraits inédits relatifs aux voyages des commerçants et des missionaires ibādites nord-africains au pays du Soudan occidental au Moyen Âge," *Folia Orientalia*, 2 (1960), pp. 1-27. See also Nehemia Levtzion, "Patterns of Islamization in West Africa," in *Conversion to Islam*, Nehemia Levtzion, ed. (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1979), pp. 207-216.

[15] *Corpus of Early Arabic Sources*, pp. 304 (Ibn Baṭṭūṭa), 340 (Ibn Khaldūn); Allaoua Amara, "Communautés oasiennes et tradition manuscrite arabe: L'exemple des collections privées des Ouled Saïd au Gourara (Algérie)," in *Les non-dits du nom: Onomastique et documents en terres d'Islam*. *Mélanges offerts à Jacqueline Sublet*, Christian Müller and Muriel Roiland-Rouabah, eds. (Beyrouth: Institut français du Proche-Orient, 2013), pp. 147-148. On the Berber population of the Zanāta, see *EI*^{2}, "Zanāta" (C. Hamès).

trade in Touat. A letter from the Cairo Geniza from 1235, written by rabbi and merchant Isaac b. Ibrāhim al-Tuwātī (of Touat) reports of his travels as far as Genoa, carrying with him a consignment of saffron for a friend in Marseilles. Goitein, who was the first to publish this document, comments that "a Jew would hardly travel regularly to such a remote place [Touat], had it not contained a community of coreligionists, where he would pray and take food," thus pointing to the existence of a Jewish community in the Saharan oasis of Touat.[16] A European who traveled to the Sahara in 1447, the Genoese merchant Antoine Malfante, reported in a letter from Touat:

> There are many Jews who lead a good life here, for they are under the protection of several rulers, each of whom defends his own clients. Thus they enjoy very secure social standing. Trade is in their hands, and many of them are to be trusted with the greatest confidence.[17]

It is unclear whether Jews actually crossed the Sahara into the Sūdān; Goitein, who wrote on the trade of Egyptian Jews based on the Geniza documents, explains that as Jews they "were prevented by the injunctions of their religion to travel on Saturdays and holidays. A Jew traveling in a caravan, when his day of rest approached, either stayed behind or hurried ahead of the caravan so he could observe his Sabbath."[18] Crossing the Sahara was

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[16] S.D. Goitein, *Letters of Medieval Jewish Traders* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), p. 59; the citation is from *idem*, "R. Isaac b. Ibrahim al-Tu'ati (ca. 1235): The Most Ancient Reference to Jews in the Touat," *Revue des études juives*, 140 (1981), p. 193. The economic contacts between Genoa and Maghribi merchants are explored in Dominique Valérian, "Gênes, l'Afrique et l'Orient: La place du Maghreb dans la politique génoise en Méditerranée (seconde moitié du XIIe siècle)," in *Chemins d'outre-mer: Études d'histoire sur la Méditerranée médiévale offertes à Michel Balard*, Damien Coulon et al., eds. (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2004), pp. 827-837.

[17] Antoine Malfante, "The Letter of Antoine Malfante," in *The Voyages of Cadamosto and Other Documents on Western Africa in the Second Half of the Fifteenth Century*, G.R. Crone, trans. and ed. (London: Printed for the Hakluyt Society, 1937), p. 86. On the importance of this letter for the history of the trans-Saharan trade, see Charles de la Roncière, "Découverte d'une relation de voyage datée du Touat et décrivant en 1447 le bassin du Niger," *Bulletin de la section de géographie*, 33 (1918 [1919]), pp. 1-28.

[18] Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 1:280; Ralph A. Austen, *Trans-Saharan Africa in World History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 100; Jessica Goldberg, *Trade and Institutions in the Medieval Mediterranean:*

not, of course, an ideal situation; and inland travel was extremely dangerous. A responsum by a Jewish rabbi of Tlemcen, Joseph Sasportas (fl. mid-fifteenth century), tells us of a Jewish merchant who was murdered by a fellow Muslim merchant while traveling in the Sahara. According to the testimony of the latter, they both fled from their caravan into the desert in order to save themselves from an attack by raiders, but their ways got separated and the Jew was finally found dead. Missing bundles of gold, that belonged to Jewish traders from Tāfīlālt and other neighboring communities, were found, however, with the Muslim merchant who claimed to be innocent.[19] Gold, as we learn from Antoine Malfante's letter, was the main commodity in the trans-Saharan trade.[20] Other cargos in the Sahara were copper, salt, dates, spices, cowry shells, beads, tanned leather, pottery and glassware, textiles, and other manufactured goods. Aside from merchandise, local merchants traded in slaves (both males and females) and animals (such as horses and camels).[21]

Touat was located on the road south to the Sūdān next to two major cities in the Maghrib, both capitals of Berber dynasties that were rivals to each other, although both dynasties belonged to the Zanāta family of the Banū Wāsīn. These cities were Tlemcen (Tilmisān), the capital of the Zayyānids (Banū Zayyān; also Banū 'Abd al-Wād); and Fes

The Geniza Merchants and Their Business World (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 54.

[19] Responsa #6 and 7, in *R. Yosef Sasportas, ḥakham ve-dayan be-malkhut Tlemsan, ve-sefer teshuvotav* [Rabbi Joseph Sasportas (Chicheportiche), *ḥakham* and *dayyan* in the Kingdom of Tlemcen, and His Responsa], Noah 'Aminoah, ed. (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1994), pp. 260-273 (with commentary on pp. 139-144).

[20] Malfante, "The Letter of Antoine Malfante," pp. 86, 90.

[21] Ghislaine Lydon, *On Trans-Saharan Trails: Islamic Law, Trade Networks, and Cross-Cultural Exchange in Nineteenth-Century Western Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

(Fās), the capital of the Marīnids (Banū Marīn).[22] In addition to a third dynasty in the Maghrib (the Ḥafṣids of Tunis), these dynasties built their independence and power on the ruins of the Almohad Empire (*al-Muwaḥḥidūn*; twelfth-thirteenth centuries). But in contrast to the Almohads (meaning in Arabic: "Unitarians"), who were notorious for their violent treatment of the *dhimmīs* (i.e., Jews and Christians) in the Maghrib and in al-Andalus, and for the destruction of Jewish and Christian communities by expulsion and/or forced conversion, the Zayyānids and the Marīnids treated the Jews benevolently.[23] Concerning this time period in the Maghrib, Isidore Epstein writes:

> The Jews in Northern Africa, especially under the Zeneiades [i.e. Zayyānids], lived […] under conditions that compare most favourably with those in European countries or those prior to the tripartition of the country [by the Marīnids in the West Maghrib, the Zayyānids in the Central Maghrib, and the Ḥafṣids in the Eastern Maghrib]. In fact, they suffered there none of the repressions and indignities that were experienced by their brethren across the sea, and were subject to no irritating discriminatory treatment. There they breathed freely, moved about securely, apprehending to undue violence nor oppression, and were placed on almost equal footing with their Arab neighbours. They enjoyed the friendship and intimacy of the commoners and the confidence and respect of the rulers.[24]

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[22] See Jamil M. Abun-Nasr, *A History of the Maghrib in the Islamic Period* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 103-118 (Marīnids), 134-143 (Zayyānids); *EI*[2], "Marīnids" (M. Shatzmiller) and "'Abd al-Wādids" (G. Marçais).

[23] On the Almohad anti-Jewish persecutions, see David Corcos, "The Nature of the Almohad Rulers' Treatment of the Jews," *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies*, 2 (2010), pp. 259-285; Maribel Fierro, "'A Muslim Land Without Jews or Christians': Almohad Policies Regarding the 'Protected People'," in *Christlicher Norden, Muslimischer Süden: Ansprüche und Wirklichkeiten von Christen, Juden und Muslimen auf der Iberischen Halbinsel im Hoch- und Spätmittelalter*, Matthias M. Tischler und Alexander Fidora, eds. (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2011), pp. 231-247.

[24] Isidore Epstein, *The Responsa of Rabbi Simon b. Ẓemaḥ Duran as a Source of the History of the Jews in North Africa* (1930) in *idem*, *Studies in the Communal Life of the Jews of Spain, as Reflected in the Responsa of Rabbi Solomon ben Adreth and Rabbi Simon ben Zemach Duran* (New York: Hermon Press [1968]), p. 44.

The same words are true of the Marīnids, at least as much if not to a larger extent (and in contrast to Epstein's special emphasis on the Zayyānids).[25] Into this world of a mostly benign treatment of the Jewish communities by the Muslim Sultans, both towards those who anteceded the Muslim population in the Maghrib, and those who arrived to this region after the persecution in Spain of 1391, stepped al-Maghīlī of Tlemcen.[26]

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[25] Among the studies on the history of the Jews under the Marīnids, see David Corcos, "The Jews of Morocco under the Marinides," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, N.S., 54, no. 4 (1964): 271-287; 55.1 (1964): 53-81; 55.2 (1964): 137-150; Maya Shatzmiller, *The Berbers and the Islamic State: The Marīnid Experience in Pre-Protectorate Morocco* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2000), pp. 55-68; *idem*, "An Ethnic Factor in a Medieval Social Revolution: The Role of the Jewish Courtiers under the Marinids," in *Islamic Society and Culture: Essays in Honour of Professor Aziz Ahmad*, Milton Israel and N.K. Wagle, eds. (New Delhi: Manohar, 1983), pp. 149-164; Masatoshi Kisaichi, "Jews under the Marīnids: The Realities of a Policy of Tolerance and Its Background," *Acta Asiatica: Bulletin of the Institute of Eastern Culture*, 86 (2004), pp. 53-74; ʻAṭā ʻAlī Muḥammad Shiḥāta Rayya, *al-Yahūd fī bilād al-Maghrib al-aqṣā fī ʻahd al-Marīnīyīn wa-l-Waṭṭāsīyīn* (Damascus: Dār al-Kalima; Dār al-Shafīq, 1999), esp. pp. 37-62.

[26] On the persecutions of 1391 in Spain, see James S. Amelang, *Parallel Histories: Muslims and Jews in Inquisitorial Spain* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, [2013]), pp. 69-79.

Table 4. Sources on al-Maghīlī and the Riots in Touat (c. 1492)

Author	Text	Genre	Note
1. SOURCES NEARLY CONTEMPORARY			
Muḥammad al-Maghīlī Mālikī Jurist, Tlemcen d. 1504	1. *Aḥkām ahl al-dhimma* 2. Anti-Jewish poem	Religious polemics	
al-Wansharīsī Māliki jurist and *muftī*, Tlemcen d. 1508	*al-Mi'yār al-mu'rib*	*Fatwās*	Includes a correspondence of Maghribī *'ulamā'* concerning the synagogue of Tamentit
Anonymous	Hebrew elegy	Poetry	Written around 1509 following the conquest of Oran
Leo Africanus (al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Wazzān al-Fāsī) Diplomat and scholar Fes, Rome d. *c*. 1550	*Della descrittione dell'Africa*	Geography	
2. POST FIFTEENTH-CENTURY SOURCES			
Ibn 'Askar *Qāḍī* and *mufti*, Marrakesh d. 1578	*Dawḥat al-nāshir*	Biographical dictionary	
Aḥmad Bābā *Faqīh* Timboktu, Marrakesh d. 1607	*Nayl al-ibtihāj*	Biographical dictionary	
Ibn Maryam Hagiographer Tlemcen (?) d. 1605	*Kitāb al-Bustān*	Biographical dictionary	
al-Damanhūrī *Muftī*, *Shaykh al-Azhar* Cairo d. 1778	*Iqāmat al-ḥujja al-bāhira*	Religious polemics	A treatise concerning the houses of worship of the non-Muslims

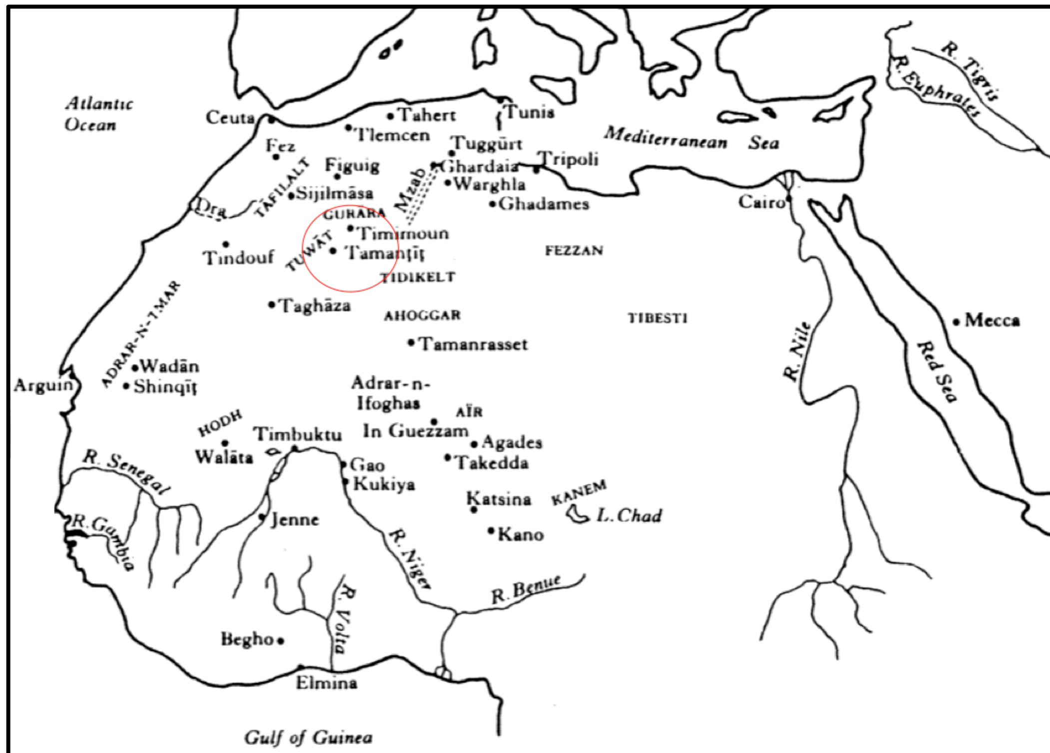
***Table 4**, continued*

Author	Text	Genre	Note
Mardochée Aby Serour Rabbi and merchant Akka (Morocco) d. 1886	*Les Daggatoun*	Geography	A translation from Hebrew

3. OTHER CONTEMPORARY SOURCES

Author	Text	Genre	Note
Muḥammad al-'Uqbānī *Faqīh* Tlemcen d. 1467	*Tuḥfat al-nāṭir*	*Ḥisba* Manual	Includes a section on the Jews of Touat
Antoine Malfante Merchant Genoa fl. mid-fifteenth century	Letter from Touat (1447)	Letter	
'Abd al-Bāsiṭ al-Malaṭī *Faqīh,* historian, physician Cairo d. 1514	*al-Rawḍ al-Bāsim*	History; geography	Includes accounts of his travels to the Maghrib
Joseph Sasportas Rabbi Tlemcen fl. mid-fifteenth century	Responsa	Responsa	

Map 1. North and West Africa. The oasis of Touat-Gourara, encircled.
(Source: John Hunwick, “Al-Mahîlî [*sic*] and the Jews of Tuwât”)



II. A Biographical Sketch of al-Maghīlī

A note in *Della descrittione dell'Africa* (Description of Africa) by Leo Africanus (d. 1550) points to the massacre of the Jews of Touat and Gourara and the confiscation of their wealth, following the campaign of a "preacher from Tlemcen," as occurring on the same year of the expulsion from Spain, 1492.[27] This preacher was Muḥammad b. ʻAbd al-Karīm al-Maghīlī al-Tilmisānī, whose biography has been preserved in several biographical dictionaries of *ʻulamāʼ* from the Islamic West.[28] He was born in the environs of Tlemcen (Tilmisān) to the Berber tribe of Maghīla, a subdivision of the Banū Fātin, in a small village named after the tribe. His date of birth, which is unrecorded, was probably between 1425 and 1440.[29] He studied under ʻAbd al-Raḥmān al-Thaʻālibī (d. 1470-1) and Yaḥyā b. Yadīr (1472-3), the first a scholar from Tunis, and the second – a Tilmisānī scholar and the *qāḍī* of Touat. They both were students of Ibn Marzūq VI *al-Ḥafīd* (d. 1438), a Sufi saint and master of the traditional Islamic sciences in the Islamic West, one of the greatest intellectuals of his time.[30] In *fiqh*, al-Maghīlī could claim a stemma going back to scholars such as al-Burzulī and Ibn ʻArafa, both fourteenth-century *muftīs* of

[27] Paul Fenton and David G. Littman, *L'exil au Maghreb: La condition juive sous l'Islam, 1148-1912* (Paris: Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2010), p. 176.

[28] Muḥammad Ibn ʻAskar, *Dawḥat al-nāshir li-maḥāsin man kāna bi-al-Maghrib min mashāyikh al-qarn al-ʻāshir*, Muḥammad Ḥajjī, ed. (Rabat: Dār al-Maghrib, 1977, sec. ed.), pp. 130-132; Aḥmad Bābā, *Nayl al-ibtihāj bi-taṭrīz al-Dībāj*, ʻAlī ʻUmar, ed. (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqāfa al-Dīniyya, 2004); *idem*, *Kifāyat al-muḥtāj li-maʻrifat man laysa fī al-dībāj*, Muḥammad Muṭīʻ, ed. ([Morocco]: al-Mamlaka al-Maghribiyya, Wizārat al-Awqāf wa-l-Shuʾūn al-Islāmiyya, 2000), pp. 213-214; Ibn Maryam, *Kitāb al-Bustān fī dhikr al-awliyāʼ wa-l-ʻulamāʼ bi-Tilimsān*, Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Qāḍī, ed. (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqāfa al-Dīniyya, 2010), pp. 332-336.

[29] John O. Hunwick, *Sharīʻa in Songhay: The Replies of al-Maghīlī to the Questions of Askia al-Ḥājj Muḥammad* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 31; *idem*, "Al-Mahîlî [*sic*] and the Jews of Tuwât: The Demise of a Community," *Studia Islamica*, 61 (1985), p. 159 n9; *idem*, "The Rights of *Dhimmīs* to Maintain a Place of Worship: A 15th Century *Fatwā* from Tlemcen." *Al-Qanṭara*, 12 (1991), pp. 133-155.

[30] *EI*², "Ibn Marzūḳ" (M. Hadj-Sadok); David S. Powers, *Law, Society, and Culture in the Maghrib, 1300-1500* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 173. On the Banū Marzūq, see Masatoshi Kisaichi, "Three Renowned *ʻUlamā'* Families of Tlemcen: The Maqqarī, the Marzūqī and the ʻUqbānī," *Jōchi Ajiagaku / Journal of Sophia Asian Studies*, 22 (2004), pp. 129-132. Ibn Marzūq VI *al-Ḥafīd* is #11 in the genealogical diagram.

Tunis, and Abu ʻUthmān Saʻīd al-ʻUqbānī (d. 1408-9), a *qāḍī* of Tlemcen whose great-grandson Muḥammad (d. 1467) was an older contemporary of al-Maghīlī and the composer of a *ḥisba* manual entitled *Tuḥfat al-nāẓir*; this book includes a section on the laws of the *dhimmīs* and another section on the Jews of Touat.[31] At some point, al-Maghīlī left for Tamentit (800 km [500 miles] south of Tlemcen) and took residence there. He may have gone there to study with Yaḥyā b. Yadīr. He may have visited other localities in the area of Touat, since several places are mentioned in the *Aḥkām*. His biographer Ibn ʻAskar (d. 1578) reports:

> [al-Maghīlī] held the view that the Jews – may God curse them[32] – had no bond [of protection (*dhimma*)], since they had broken it by their association with men of authority among the Muslims, [an action] which went contrary to the humiliation and abasement (*al-dhull wa-l-ṣighār*) stipulated in the payment of the poll-tax (*jizya*), and that the breaking [of this pact] by some of them redounded upon them all. He declared it licit to spill their blood and plunder their property and announced that dealing with them was more important than dealing with any other [category of] unbelievers (*kuffār*).[33]

al-Maghīlī, who formed his opinion of the Jews during his residence in Touat, circulated his anti-Jewish polemic (Ibn ʻAskar calls it simply *kitāb*, while other sources

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[31] Ali Chenoufi, "Un traité de *ḥisba* (*Tuḥfat al-nāẓir*) de Muḥammad al-ʻUqbānī al-Tilimsānī, juriste mort à Tlemcen en 871/1467," *Bulletin d'études orientales*, 19 (1965-66), pp. 157-159. See also on this treatise: M. Talbi, "Quelques données sur la vie sociale en Occident musulman d'après un traité de ḥisba du XVe siècle," *Arabica*, 1, no. 3 (1954), pp. 294-306. On the Banū ʻUqbānī, see Kisaichi, "Three Renowned *ʻUlamā'* Families of Tlemcen," pp. 132-133. Abu ʻUthmān Saʻīd al-ʻUqbānī is #2 in the genealogical diagram; Muḥammad is #8.

[32] On this curse in the *tafsīr* literature (commentary to the Qur'ān), see Robert Gleave, *Islam and Literalism: Literal Meaning and Interpretation in Islamic Legal Theory* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), pp. 79-80. It replaced, according to the commentators, the Qur'ānic words "May God Kill them" (*qatalahum Allāh*) (Q. 9:30; 63:4), and became an idiomatic expression among Arabs.

[33] Ibn ʻAskar, *Dawḥat al-nāshir*, p. 130; trans. in Hunwick, *Sharīʻa in Songhay* (cited here with minor changes). On the meaning of waging war against the unbelievers, see Reuven Firestone, *Jihād: The Origin of Holy War in Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); R. Joseph Hoffmann, "Just War and Jihad: Positioning the Question of Religious Violence," in *The Just War and Jihad: Violence in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, R. Joseph Hoffmann, ed. (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2006), pp. 10-21.

speak of an epistle, *risāla*) among the the *'ulamā'* of Tlemcen, Tunis, and Fez, and called for the destruction of the synagogue of Tamentit in light of the Jews breaching the pact of *dhimma*.[34] To his followers he offered a reward of seven *mithqāls* (probably of gold)[35] for every Jew killed, which might suggest that he needed to recompense his people for an operation that could have been risky, arousing the reaction of the Sultan of Fes or Tlemcen, or as a kind of encouragement to the raiders. The details of his attack on the Jews of Tamentit are unknown, but he certainly destroyed the synagogue there and put many Jews to death; some, however, have managed to escape. Many Jews of Touat left for other oases, while those who remained there were forced to convert to Islam.[36]

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[34] Also known as the "Pact of 'Umar," and attributed mistakenly to the Caliph 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 644). It was, according to Mark R. Cohen "a kind of bilateral contract in which the non-Muslims agree to a host of discriminatory regulations in return to protection" (*Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008 [1994], p. 54).
[35] The *mithqāl* (from Arabic: *thiql*, weight) was a standard of weight (about 4.72 gm) used principally for gold. Lydon, *On Trans-Saharan Trails*, p. 250; *Corpus of Early Arabic Sources*, p. 481 (index).
[36] Hunwick, *Sharī'a in Songhay*, pp. 37-38.

III. al-Maghīlī's Polemical Treatise, *Aḥkām ahl al-dhimma*

A Hebrew lament on the Spanish capture of Oran (Wahrān) in 1509, by an anonymous writer, is the only Jewish evidence for the persecutions in Touat. This poem mentions the destruction of Tamantit and Gourara, and hints at al-Maghīlī through his origin in the Maghīla tribe. This lament says:[37]

וְעַתָּה בְּיָמַי אֲנִי גֶּבֶר   רָאָה עֳנִי בְּשֵׁבֶט עֶבְרָה
קָמוּ עַל עֲדָתִי צוֹרְרִים   זֶרַע אֱדוֹם וּבְנֵי קְטוּרָה
תְּחִלָּה אַנְשֵׁי הַמַּעֲרָב   בַּעֲלֵי הַחֲצִינָה וּמָרָה
הָרְגוּ יַחַד אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה   וְחִלְּלוּ סִפְרֵי תּוֹרָה
5 וְחִפְּשׂוּ אֶת מַצְפּוּנֵיהֶם   וּמִלְאוּ כְּרֵשָׂם מַעֲדָנַי
עוֹד מִקָּרוֹב קָם עָלַי   צוֹרֵר נוֹדָע מִמְּגִלָּה
הָרַג בָּתֵּי גוררין ותאותי   וְחִלֵּל בֵּית נוֹרָא עֲלִילָה
וְאַחֲרָיו בְּדַרְעָה קָם אוֹיֵב   וְהָרַס כֹּל בֵּית הַתְּפִלָּה
וְגַם שָׂמוּ עֲלֵיהֶם חֻקִּים   רָעִים וְקָשִׁים בְּלִי חֶמְלָה.

And now, in my days, I am the man who has seen affliction by the rod of wrath.

Enemies arose against my congregation, the seed of Edom and the sons of Qetura.

At first the people of the West, the possessors of the ax and hoe,

Killed man and woman together and desecrated Torah scrolls.

5 And they sought their hidden treasures and filled the bellies with dainties.

More recently against me arose a well-known enemy from Meghilla,

Killed the houses of Gourara and Touat and desecrated the House of the Lord of Wondrous Doings

And after him arose an enemy in Dar'a and destroyed the whole house of prayer,

And they also imposed upon them laws wicked and hard without pity.[38]

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[37] For the Hebrew text, see Hayim Schirmann, "Dirges on Persecutions in Palestine, Africa, Spain, Germany and France" [Heb.], *Qovets 'al yad* (new series), 3 (13) (1939), p. 71; Z.H. Hirschberg, *Toldot ha-Yehudim be-Afriqah ha-Tsefonit: ha-Tefutsah ha-Yehudit be-artsot ha-Magreb mi-yeme qedem ve-'ad zemanenu* [A History of the Jews in North Africa from Antiquity to Our Time] (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, [1965]), 1:296-297; translated in *idem*, *A History of the Jews in North Africa* (Leiden: Brill, 1974-1981), 1:401-402 (cited here with some changes).

[38] Commentary. Line 1: Lam. 3:1. Line 2: "Seed of Edom," Christianity. "Sons of Qetura," Islam. Line 3: *Ma'arav*, Maghrib; "ax and hoe," *ḥatsina u-mara*: BT, 'Eruvin 77b. Line 5: "Sought their hidden treasures," Obad. 1:4; "filled the bellies with dainties," Jer. 51:34. Line 7: "Lord of Wondrous Doings," *El nora' 'alila*, Ps. 66:5. "House of the Lord of Wondrous Doings," synagogue.

In this fragment from the lament – which later describes the expulsion of the Jews from Spain and Portugal (1492), and ends with the conquest of Oran (1509) – the "seed of Edom" and the "sons of Qetura" are allegorical references to Christianity and Islam, respectively; Qetura, Abraham's wife/concubine (Gen. 25:1-4; 1 Chron. 1:32-33) was considered the patriarch of Arab tribes, and was identified at times with Hagar.[39] Possibly, as proposed by David Corcos, the reference to the Maghīla tribe is a pun on *megilla* (scroll), or the Book of Esther; thus the lament memorializes al-Maghīlī as a "new" Haman, the main antagonist in the *megilla*, who ordered "to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day" (Esther 3:13).[40] And like in the *megilla*, he is named *tsorer* (enemy, foe), while Haman is referred to as *tsorer ha-Yehudim* (Esther 3:10; 8:1; 9:10). The poem attributes to al-Maghīlī the annihilation of the Jewish communities in Gourara and Touat, and the destruction of a synagogue ("the House of the Lord of Wondrous Doings"), which is clearly the one that stood in Tamentit. As we learn from the poem, al-Maghīlī's operation led to the devastation of other synagogues in the Maghrib, naming Dar'a as one place where such an attack on the Jews has occurred.[41]

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[39] See, for example, *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition*, Daniel C. Matt, trans. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004-2012), 2:252. See further Bernard Septimus, "Hispano-Jewish Views of Christendom and Islam," in *In Iberia and Beyond: Hispanic Jews between Cultures*, Bernard Dov Cooperman, ed. (Newark: University of Delaware Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1998), pp. 43-65. For the Muslim knowledge of Qetura, see Judith Pfeiffer, "'Faces Like Shields Covered with Leather:' Keturah's Sons in the Post-Mongol Islamicate Eschatological Traditions," in *Horizons of the World: Festschrift for İsenbike Togan*, İlker Evrim Binbaş and Nurten Kılıç-Schubel, eds. (Istanbul: İthaki, 2011), pp. 557-594.

[40] Corcos, "The Jews of Morocco under the Marinides," [Part I], p. 277 n. 11. For references to the Book of Esther in Jewish communities under Islam recording intra-Jewish conflicts, see Mark R. Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008 [1994]), pp. 187-188; and for a reference to a non-Jewish foe as Haman, see Raymond P. Scheindlin, "'The Battle of Alfuente' by Samuel the Nagid," in *History as Prelude: Muslims and Jews in the Medieval Mediterranean*, Joseph V. Montville, ed. (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2011), pp. 66, 68-69; Elliott S. Horowitz, *Reckless Rites: Purim and the Legacy of Jewish Violence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), pp. 301-305.

[41] Dar'a is known from several sources for its Jewish population, and up to the tenth century Jews are

What was the motive of al-Maghīlī and his followers for the attack on the Jews of Touat, and how did his polemic, the *Aḥkām*, inflame the violence against them? It is my intention here to deal first with al-Maghīlī's reasoning of purging the Islamic lands from the Jewish presence, and then to proceed to the different themes and elements in this tract that will shed light on his methods of polemic.

al-Maghīlī's main argument in the *Aḥkām* is that the Jews, serving the Muslim rulers in the Maghrib, have violated the stipulations of Protection (*dhimma*), and as a result, he calls for the annihilation of the Jews. He quotes in his work the full text of the Pact of ʻUmar, in the form of the letter of the Christians of al-Shām to the Caliph ʻUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, which is usually the document cited in Islamic sources regarding the laws of *dhimma*. Thus he is implying that the stipulations there, although they have nothing to say in particular about Judaism, extend to the Jews. Moreover, that the punishment the Christians received upon themselves, in case they break the stipulations – losing the right of protection, is an obligation also extending to the Jewish case.[42] In the *Aḥkām*, al-Maghīlī argues:

> Regarding the impudence, oppression, and rebellion against the laws of the *sharīʻa* of the Jews of this age of most countries with the support of the powerful and due to their service of the ruler: I [al-Maghīlī] say, with the help of God, whose Help is to be Sought, that there is no doubt that the Jews of Touat, Tigourarin [Gourara], Tāfīltāt, and Darʻa, many lands in Ifrīqiya [*sic*],[43] and Tlemcen, their lives, properties, women and children are devoid of protection.

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believed to play an important role in the politics there. See *EI*^{2}, "Darʻa" (R. le Tourneau). During the conquests of the Almohads in the twelfth century, the Jewish community of Darʻa, as in other places in the Maghrib, was attacked and its members were forced to convert to Islam. See the lamentation by Abraham ibn Ezra, trans. in Peter Cole, *The Dream of the Poem: Hebrew Poetry From Muslim and Christian Spain, 950-1492* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), p. 182.

[42] al-Maghīlī, *Aḥkām ahl al-dhimma*, pp. 560-561; cf. Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross*, pp. 57-58.

[43] Possibly: the lands of the Maghrib in general, not only the territory of Ifrīqiya. On the term Ifrīqiya, see note 4 above.

> They have no protection (*dhimma*), because the protection that could save them from the sword is the protection of the *shari'a*, not the protection of *jāhiliya* (pre-Islamic ignorance). The protection prescribed by the *sharī'a* obligates them with paying the poll-tax while they are in the state of humiliation (*wa-hum ṣāghirūn*). […]
>
> Any Jew who attaches himself to the service of a ruler or vizier or judge or man of authority, has violated the pact, and his life and possession are devoid of protection, because serving the men of authority means breaching the stipulations of protection regarding humiliation and degradation (*al-ṣighār wa-l-dhilla*). The greatest crime is the rebellion against the *sharī'a*, and especially in our days. […]
>
> I swear by the One Who has my life in His Hand, that the reward for killing a single Jew is greater than waging a war against the land of the pagans (*arḍ al-mushrikīn*). Seize them and kill them wherever you find them, confiscate their properties, and capture their women and children until these evil-doers (*ashrār*) totally submit to the laws of the *sharī'a*, pay the poll-tax, and are humiliated. They should be put in chains and shackles, and should go wearing them into other regions at all times as a sign for the glory of the Prophet, the chosen one. Whoever unfastens any of the chains and shackles from the neck of any of the unbelievers (*'an raqbat aḥad min al-kuffār*), has turned away from God and his messenger, and will be thrown together with them into hellfire (*al-nār*).[44]

al-Maghīlī's words in this passage, "Seize them [The Jews] and kill them wherever you find them," etc., resonate the Qur'ānic verses on waging a war against the unbelievers:

> And when the sacred months have passed, then kill the pagans (*mushrikūn*) wherever you find them and capture them and besiege them and sit in wait for them at every place of ambush. But if they should repent, establish prayer, and give alms (*zakāt*), let them [go] on their way. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful (Q. 9:5).

[44] *Ibid*., 560, 561-562 (my translation).

> So when you meet those who disbelieve [in battle], strike [their] necks (*fa-ḍaraba al-riqāb*) until, when you have inflicted slaughter upon them, then secure their bonds (*fa-shuddū' al-wathāq*), and either [confer] favor afterwards or ransom [them] until the war lays down its burdens (Q. 47:4).

al-Maghīlī defines the Jews as *mushrikūn*, pagans/idolaters, and as a result dissociates them from the legal protection (*dhimma*) in Islam as "People of the Scripture" (*ahl al-kitāb*), and calls to spill their blood as if they were unbelievers. The Qur'ān has already pointed to the association of the Jews with the pagans: "You will surely find the most intense of the people in animosity toward the believers [to be] the Jews and the idolaters" (Q. 5:82).

Moreover, the *Aḥkām* resonate here with the harsh words of Ibn Ḥazm against Ibn Naghrila, in which he calls for the killing of the Jew, the confiscation of his property and the captivity of his children and women.[45] The last words here, "Whoever unfastens any of the chains and shackles from the neck of any of the unbelievers, has turned away from God and his messenger," may suggest an act of excommunication; al-Maghīlī possibly calls his readers to disobey Muslim sovereigns who employ Jews under their service, and dissociate from their presence, which would mean that his *Aḥkām* have activist political implications for the chaotic atmosphere of the Maghrib of the late fifteenth century.[46]

Two narratives in the *Aḥkām* approve killing of Jews who breached the laws of *dhimma*. The first narrative tells the story of the Māliki scholar Abū Bakr al-Ṭurṭūshī (of Tortosa; d. 1126), who, once while in Egypt, was instructed to be brought to the Fatimid

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[45] See also Abū Isḥāq al-Ilbīrī: "Do not consider it a breach of faith to kill them/ - the breach of faith would be to let them carry on. / They have violated the covenant with them, / so how can you be held guilty against the violators?," trans. in Lewis, "An Ode against the Jews," p. 170.

[46] See Frank Griffel, "Excommunication," *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought*, Gerhard Bowering, ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), pp. 159-161.

caliph, probably al-Āmir bi-Aḥkām Allāh (d. 1130),[47] after causing the ruler some distress. When al-Ṭurṭūshī entered his presence, he noticed a Christian vizier (*wazīr min al-ruhbān*, that is, a monk) sitting there, and responded with an invective, in verse, against the employment of *dhimmīs* in the court, accusing the Christian to be a liar. Hearing this, the caliph immediately ordered the vizier to be dragged down, beaten and killed. As for al-Ṭurṭūshī, he regained respect in the eyes of the caliph. al-Maghīlī concludes:

> This great blessing came to the *shaykh* [al-Ṭurṭūshī] and the caliph because of their recalling of the monk's hatred of the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace. The *shaykh*, may God be pleased with him, took no notice of his fear of the anger of the caliph and his intention to injure him, and so God protected him and brought goodness to him. God changed the mind of the caliph so that he honored him and was pleased with him.[48]

The second narrative tells the story of a Jewish vizier who served the Marinid sultan Abū 'Inān (d. 1358). This Jew, because of his rebellious nature (*thaghyān*), altered a Qur'ānic verse that was copied by a Muslim child, "And *whoever desires other than Islam as religion* – never will it be accepted from him [and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers]" (Q. 3:85), by ordering the student to omit one word – *ghayr* (other than), thus saying, "And *whoever desires Islam* as religion – never will it be accepted from him." A *shaykh* who heard of this incident from the student's teacher, arrived at the

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[47] Fenton, "A Maghribi Tract," p. 539 n. 23.

[48] al-Maghīlī, *Aḥkām ahl al-dhimma*, p. 556; trans. in Gwarzo, pp. 138-139 (cited here with minor changes). A similar narrative is also reported in the *Musnad* of Ibn Marzūq, where the vizier is simply called *dhimmī* (*al-Musnad al-ṣaḥīḥ al-ḥasan fī ma'āthir wa-maḥāsin mawlānā Abī al-Ḥasan*, María J. Viguera, ed. [Algiers: al-Sharika al-Waṭaniyya lil-Nashr wa-l-Tawzī', 1981], p. 381). al-Ṭurṭūshī is mostly known due to his mirror for princes *Sirāj al-mulūk*, which includes a chapter on the laws of *dhimma*. In his treatise against innovations, *Kitāb al-ḥawādith wa-l-bida'*, he finds many faults in Muslims who imitate the *dhimmīs*. See *EI*[2], "al-Ṭurṭūshī" (A. Ben. Abdesselem); *Kitāb al-Ḥawādith wa-l-bida'*, Sulaymān al-Madanī, ed. (Damascus: al-Ḥikma, 1996).

court of Abū ʻInān without telling him anything about what happened. When the sultan read with him sūra 5, verse 57: "O believers, do not take Jews and Christians as friends; they are friends of each other. If any among you makes them his friends, then he is surely one of them," the *shaykh* demanded him to repeat reading it aloud several times. The sultan, as a result, left the room and ordered the Jew to be beheaded – without consulting the *shaykh*; only later he heard of Jew's crime against the Islamic scripture. "No one will hesitate to strike off the necks of the aforementioned Jews," explains al-Maghīlī, "except one of those impostors (*al-dajjāl min al-dajjālin*),[49] misguided themselves and misguiding others, who have bought the life of this world with that of the next. Their bargaining brings no profit and they are not in the right path."[50] The common element between these two narratives is the correct instruction of the Muslim ruler by a member of the *ʻulamāʼ* regarding the necessary mistrust in the *dhimmīs*, more specifically the Jews, because of their corruption and enmity towards Islam. Moreover, al-Maghīlī is enraged by the humiliation of pious men, *arbāb al-taqwā*, in comparison to the all-powerful rulers, *arbāb al-hawā* (the capricious ones), and criticizes the silence of *ʻulamāʼ* while facing evil that is spread by supporters (*anṣār*) of the Jews.[51]

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[49] *Dajjāl*, "deceiver," comes from the Syriac *daggala*, and was applied to a wide variety of individuals and groups throughout Islamic history. It is also the term used for the "arch-deceiver," the false messiah who will appear before the end of time. David Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 2002), p. 93.

[50] al-Maghīlī, *Aḥkām ahl al-dhimma*, p. 563; trans. in Gwarzo, p. 156.

[51] al-Maghīlī, *Aḥkām ahl al-dhimma*, p. 559. On the employment of Jews and Christians in the Islamic government as a violation of the *dhimma* laws, see Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross*, pp. 65-68; ,B. Yarbrough, "Islamizing the Islamic State: The Formulation and Assertion of Religious Criteria for State Employment in the First Millennium A.H." (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2012); *idem*, "'A Rather Small Genre': Arabic Works against Non-Muslim State Officials," *Der Islam*, 93 (2016), pp. 139-169.

Other violations of the *dhimma* are the nonpayment of the poll-tax (*jizya*), and building houses of prayer or synagogues (*kanāʼis*).[52] al-Maghīlī interprets Q9:29, "Fight those who do not believe in God or in the Last Day, and who do not consider unlawful what God and His Messenger have made unlawful, and who do not adopt the religion of truth from those who were given the Scripture – [fight] until they give the poll-tax willingly while they are humbled," as a non-compromising command of fighting the Jews and the Christians. The only exception is when the *dhimmīs* pay the poll-tax and are humiliated. al-Maghīlī's interpretation of the Qur'ān speaking of war against the unbelievers and treating them with humiliation becomes more evident in the context of the history of the Islamic conquests and the branding or tattooing the non-Muslims of the Levant in the seventh and eighth centuries as a practice of taxation. Putting the Jews in chains and shackles, as al-Maghīlī suggests, and enslaving them, might be related, therefore, to the practices of neck-sealing in the formative period of Islam.[53]

Treating the Jews like slaves becomes clear in the way of collecting the *jizya* from the *dhimmīs*; in this case al-Maghīlī prescribes: "Each individual will receive a tap on his neck after paying the poll-tax. He will then be pushed violently, which will make him realize that he is escaping the sword by paying the poll-tax." This author also says that only one authority should collect the poll-tax from the Jews, and that what is being done in his time, when money is collected from the heads of the Jewish community is in fact not a poll-tax at all, but a bribe in order to keep them in peace or a move towards

[52] See Alejandro García-Sanjuán, "La formación de la doctrina legal mālikí sobre lugares de culto de los ḏimmíes," in *The Legal Status of Ḏimmī-s in the Islamic West (Second/Eighth-Ninth/Fifteenth Centuries)*, Maribel Fierro and John V. Tolan, eds. (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2013), pp. 131-156.
[53] Chase F. Robinson, "Neck-Sealing in Early Islam," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 48 (2005), pp. 401-441. These practices existed in societies that preceded the Islamic state.

receiving appointments.[54] Collecting the poll-tax requires the subordination (*ṣighār*) of the Jews, and putting them in the position of degradation (*dhilla*) and humility (*maskana*). Their humiliation also necessitates imposing restrictions on them in presenting their religion in public and in talking about their learned men (*'ulamā'*).[55] To exemplify the right way in disgracing the Jews and their supporters, al-Maghīlī mentions the stories of two Muslim scholars – one of them is Sīdī Ibrāhim al-Maṣmūdī (d. 1401), the *quṭb* ("spiritual axis") of Tlemcen – who expressed great contempt towards Jews, keeping in this manner the superiority of Muslims over the unbelievers, and suitably following the laws of the *sharī'a*.[56]

Three narratives in the *Aḥkām* attack the Jews for their enmity to the Muslims by evoking images of filth and impurity. In the first narrative, told in first person by one of al-Maghīlī's friends, a *qāḍī* who hired a Jew to be his servant, saw in his employment an act of humiliation (*idhlāla*), but nevertheless mistrusted the servant. The Jew, however, managed his affairs and proved to give sage advices. One day, as the *qāḍī* was inspecting the Jew washing his clothes, he left to answer a call of nature[57] and hurried back to find, to his surprise, that the Jewish servant was urinating over his clothes. He immediately tied him and gave him a good beating, and swore to dissociate himself from the enemies of God. In the second narrative, a Jewess who was kneading dough for bread that was meant to be eaten by a Muslim, was observed picking her nose with her hand and continuing mixing the flour without washing her hand. In the third narrative, a Jewess

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[54] al-Maghīlī, *Aḥkām ahl al-dhimma*, p. 559; trans. Gwarzo, p. 144.
[55] al-Maghīlī, *Aḥkām ahl al-dhimma*, p. 558. Cf. Marie-Thérèse Urvoy, "La violence morale dans les *Aḥkām ahl al-dhimma* d'Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya," in *Islam: Identité et laterite*. *Hommage à Guy Monod*, Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, ed. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), pp. 412-413.
[56] al-Maghīlī, *Aḥkām ahl al-dhimma*, p. 553. On Ibrāhim al-Maṣmūdī, see Muḥammad ibn Ramaḍān Shāwish, *Bāqat al-sawsān fī al-ta'rīf bi-ḥāḍarat Tilmisān 'āṣimat dawlat Banī Zayyān* (Bin 'Aknūn, Algier: Dīwān al-Maṭbū'āt al-Jāmi'iyya, 2011), 2:86, #23.
[57] *'Araḍat lī ḥāja*. See Lane, *Lexicon*, 2:664 (*qaḍā ḥajātahu*).

who was mixing flour for Muslims picked lice from her hair, crushed them between her fingernails, and continued to knead the flour without washing her hand.[58] The common feature of these three narratives is the revolting hygiene of the Jews, and moreover, their defilement of the clothes and food of the Muslims, with the first anecdote exemplifying the correct way to treat the Jews, by a total mistrust and dissociation. The Mālikī school of law (*madhhab*), to which al-Maghīlī belonged, was concerned with the question of the purity and pollution of the Christians and Jews, and whether they should be regarded as impure (*najas*).[59] In this case, one could see some resemblance between the Shīʿī notion of the impurity of Jews and Christians to that of the Mālikī *madhhab*.[60]

Similarly, Ibn Ḥazm claims in the *Refutation* that the Jews are a "filthy, stinking, dirty crew beset with God's anger and malediction, with humiliation and wretchedness,

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[58] al-Maghīlī, *Aḥkām ahl al-dhimma*, p. 555.

[59] Janina Safran, "Rules of Purity and Confessional Boundaries: Maliki Debates about the Pollution of 'the Christian'," *History of Religions*, 42 (2003), pp. 197-212; Hanna E. Kassis, "Some Aspects of the Legal Position of Christians under Mālikī Jurisprudence in al-Andalus," *Parole de l'Orient*, 24 (1999), pp. 113-128; Leor Halevi, "Christian Impurity versus Economic Necessity: A Fifteenth-Century *Fatwa* on European Paper," *Speculum*, 83 (2008), pp. 917-945; Ze'ev Maghen, "Strangers and Brothers: The Ritual Status of Unbelievers in Islamic Jurisprudence," *Medieval Encounters*, 12 (2006), pp. 173-223; Camilla Adang, "Fatwâs as a Source for the Study of Relations Between Muslims and Non-Muslims in the Islamic West," in *The Three Religions: Interdisciplinary Conference of Tel Aviv University and Munich University, Venice, October 2000*, Nili Cohen and Andreas Heldrich, eds. (Munich: Utz, 2002), pp. 180-187. For scholarship on defilement and pollution in religious polemics, see especially Alexandra Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust in Medieval Religious Polemic* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007). For *fatwās* concerning the purity of the clothes of *dhimmīs*, see Ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī, *al-Nawādir wa-l-ziyādāt ʿalā mā fī al-Mudawwana min ghayrihā min al-ummahāt*, ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ Muḥammad al-Ḥulw, ed. (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1999), 1:90; Abū al-Qāsim ibn Aḥmad al-Burzulī, *Fatāwā al-Burzulī: Jāmiʿ masāʾil al-aḥkām li-mā nazala min al-qaḍāyā bi-l-muftīn wa-l-ḥukkām*, Muḥammad al-Ḥabīb al-Hīla, ed. (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 2002), 4:280-281; al-Wansharīsī, *al-Miʿyār al-muʿrib wa-al-jāmiʿ al-mughrib ʿan fatāwā ahl Ifrīqīyā wa-l-Andalus wa-l-Maghrib*, Muḥammad Ḥajjī, ed. (Fez: Wizārat al-Awqāf wa-l-Shuʾūn al-Islāmiyya lil-Mamlaka al-Maghribiyya, 1981-1983), 6:53; Camilla Adang, "Fatwâs as a Source," p. 175 n. 10.

[60] Aaron Varricchio, "The Purity of Non-Muslims in Shiʿa Jurisprudence," *Journal of Shiʿa Islamic Studies*, 3, no. 2 (2010), pp. 167-184; David M. Freidenreich, "The Implications of Unbelief: Tracing the Emergence of Distinctively Shiʿi Notions Regarding the Food and Impurity of Non-Muslims," *Islamic Law and Society*, 18 (2011), pp. 53-84; Meir M. Bar-Asher, "On the Status of Jews and Judaism in the Religious Literature of Early Shiʿa" [Heb.], *Peʿamim*, 61 (1995), pp. 16-36.

misfortune, filth and dirt, as no other people has ever been," and that their clothes are "more obnoxious than war, and more contagious than elephantiasis."[61]

Keeping rules of hygiene while preparing food is mandated in *ḥisba* manuals (tracts for regulating the market).[62] Two narratives reflect the mistrust in Jews who prepare food for Muslims, with the fear of the Jews polluting it. Lice, which appear in the third narrative, were known to develop from filth, sweat, or stench.[63] Eating them is prohibited in Islam, as well as food with which they have come into contact. It was, however, a practice that was observed by the Arabs of the *jāhiliya*, as we learn from al-Jāḥiẓ; thus following this custom, even unknowingly, desecrates the body of Muslims and brings them closer to the state of unbelievers.[64] Eating lice was not only related to the fear of pollution, but also to the anxiety of identification with barbarian peoples outside the realm of Islam.[65]

In addition to these three narratives on the impurity of the Jews, two of them dealing with food, al-Maghīlī includes the Jewish dietary laws among one of the strongest signs of Jewish enmity towards Muslims:

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[61] Trans. in Moshe Perlmann, "Eleventh-century Andalusian Authors on the Jews of Granada," *Proceedings of the American Academy of Jewish Research*, 18 (1948-49), p. 283.
[62] Paulina B. Lewicka, *Food and Foodways of Medieval Cairenes: Aspects of Life in an Islamic Metropolis of the Eastern Mediterranean* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 104-111. One should also notice the role of bread as the main item of diet in the Middle East. See S.D. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:235, and cf. Adam Sabra, *Poverty and Charity in Medieval Islam: Mamluk Egypt, 1250-1517* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 113.
[63] al-Jāḥiẓ*, Kitāb al-ḥayawān*, Muḥammad Bāṣil 'Uyūn al-Sūd, ed. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1998), 3:199-201. According to this author (p. 205) roudy women (*nisā' al-'awām*) find pleasure in crashing lice between their fingers.
[64] al-Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-ḥayawān*, 3:202-203; *idem*, *al-Bukhalā'*, 'Abbās 'Abd al-Sātir, ed. (Beirut: Dār wa-Maktabat al-Hilāl, 1984), p. 279.
[65] *Ibn Fadlan's Journey to Russia: A Tenth-Century Traveler from Baghad to the Volga River*, Richard N. Frye, trans. (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2005), p. 42. See also the references to the uncleaniness of Bedoiuns, who have fleas in their clothes, in Joseph Sadan, "An Admirable and Ridiculous Hero: Some Notes on the Bedouin in Medieval Arabic Belles Lettres, on a Chapter of *Adab* by al-Râghib al-Iṣfahânî, and on a Literary Model in Which Admiration and Mockery Coexist," *Poetics Today*, 10, no. 3 (1989), pp. 481, 482.

> How loathsome and disgraceful are those who come in the proximity of [the Jews]! Whenever one of them is looking at us, his attitude reveals his hatred, invective, and slandering (*bughḍ*, *sabb*, *ṭa'n*) against us and our religion to the extent of prohibiting themselves eating from our food, our slaughtered meat, and the food that we prepare in our pots. Their worst crime is their criticism of our religion, mocking our prayers, and insulting our master and protector Muḥammad, who is our beloved one and intercessor.[66]

al-Maghīlī, as a result, warns his audience against the food of the *kitābī* (scripturalist, i.e., Jew or Christian), which he divides into three categories: (1) *Life-Sustaining Food* (*ṭa'ām al-'umr*),[67] which they use for their consumption, and is reprehensible for Muslims to eat it. (2) *Food of Unbelief* (*ṭa'ām al-kufr)*, which they make for their houses of worship and holidays, and is prohibited for Muslims because the non-Muslims slaughter for a god other than Allāh, and represents the misbelief in the Prophet.[68] (3) *Food of Deception* (*ṭa'ām al-makr*), which they prepare for Muslims and is not consumed by them, because they are "people of deceit, treachery, and extreme hatred (*ghashsh*, *khadi'a*, *'adāwa balīgha*)," who can never be trusted. The Jews, for example, feed the Muslims with suspicious food, which might include prohibited meat (*ṭarīfa*; from the Hebrew *ṭerefah*),[69] carrion, or wine.[70]

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[66] al-Maghīlī, *Aḥkām ahl al-dhimma*, p. 555 (my translation). See David M. Freidenreich, *Foreigners and Their Food: Constructing Otherness in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Law* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), pp. 131-175; Alejandro García-Sanjuán, "El consumo de alimentos de los d̲immíes en el islam medieval: Prescripciones jurídicas y práctica social," *Historia. Instituciones. Documentos*, 29 (2002), pp. 109-146.

[67] al-Maghīlī, *Risāla fī al-Yahūd* (p. 68) and Gwarzo (p. 109, but see also n. 110) have here *ghimr* instead of *'umr*, which does not fit the context of the paragraph; Fenton's edition (al-Maghīlī, *Aḥkām ahl al-dhimma*, p. 556) has it correctly: *'umr*. For the meaning of *ghimr*, "concealed enmity or violent hatred," see Lane, *Lexicon*, 6:2292.

[68] On invocations, see Freidenreich, *Foreigners and Their Food*, pp. 132-133.

[69] As noticed by Vajda, al-Maghīlī is using here the Hebrew word *ṭerefah* that designates the flesh of an animal that is unacceptable for consumption due to injury or disease. See Vajda, "Un traité maghrébin," 2:810 n. 20; *idem*, "*Adversos Judaeos*: A Treatise from Maghrib," pp. 349 n. 20. Abū Isḥāq al-Ilbirī has used the same Hebrew term in his ode: "[The Jews] slaughter beasts in our markets, and you eat their

Unlike other Sunnī authorities,[71] al-Maghīlī prohibits Muslims to eat any meat slaughtered by Jews, and quotes a *ḥadīth* in which the Caliph ʻUmar outlaws the employment of Jewish butchers as well as money-exchangers from amongst the Jews, and decrees that these should be evacuated from Muslim markets.[72] Equally, we find that Abū Isḥāq al-Ilbirī accuses the Jews in his diatribe for selling their animals in the Muslim marketplace, and that Muslims eat the meat the Jews reject as *ṭerefah*;[73] in Ibn ʻAbdūn's *ḥisba* manual, Jews are prohibited from slaughtering meat for Muslims.[74] One *fatwā* in Wansharīsī's collection of legal responses, *al-Miʻyār al-muʻrib*, exemplifies the practices of sharing food with non-coreligionists, in this case Jews offering matzot (*raghā'if*) to their Muslim neighbours over the holiday of Passover (*ʻid al-fiṭr*, *ʻid al-faṭīra*). The *qāḍī* Abū ʻAbdālla b. al-Azraq (Granada, d. after 1492) who was asked about the lawfulness of this practice, replied that Muslims are prohibited from receiving any gifts from the hands

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ṭerefah." See *Un alfaquí espaõl: Abū Ishāq de Elvira. Texto árabe de su "Dīwān," según el ms. Escur. 404*, Emilo García Gómez, ed. (Madrid-Granada, 1944), p. 153 l. 34 (*wa-antum li-aṭrāfiha akilūn*); Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Histoire de l'Espagne musulmane extraite du Kitāb Aʻmāl al-aʻlām*, E. Lévi-Provençal, ed. (Rabat: F. Moncho, 1934), p. 267 (*li-aṭrīfihim*); Lewis, "An Ode against the Jews," p. 440 n. 22; Reinhart Dozy, *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes* (Leyde: E.J.Brill, 1881), 2:38 (*aṭrīf*, "la chair d'animaux tués par bouchers juifs" [*sic*]). On the halakhic rules regarding the *ṭerefah*, see Jane S. Gerber, *Jewish Society in Fez 1450-1700: Studies in Communal and Economic Life* (Leiden: Brill, 1980), pp. 114-115; and cf. the observation by David M. Freidenreich on Jewish butchers selling non-kosher meat in his article, "Food-Related Interaction Among Christians, Muslims, and Jews in High and Late Medieval Latin Christendom," *History Compass*, 11, no. 11 (2013), p. 959: "On the basis of the Biblical declaration that Jacob's descendants do not eat the thigh muscle (Gen. 32.33), medieval rabbis declared large portions of the hindquarters of cattle to be forbidden; various other parts of the animal are also off limits for Jewish consumption. Rabbinic law, particularly as interpreted in northern Europe, includes further provisions that render entire animals unfit for consumption (*terefah*) if the animal has lesions in its lungs. Kosher animal slaughter thus produced a sizeable amount of high quality nonkosher meat, which butchers were eager to sell to non-Jews." For this issue in modern Morocco, see Stacy E. Holden, "Muslim and Jewish Interaction in Moroccan Meat Markets, 1873-1912," in *Jewish Culture and Society in North Africa*, Emily Benichou Gottreich and Daniel J. Schroeter, eds. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), pp. 150-168.

[70] al-Maghīlī, *Aḥkām ahl al-dhimma*, pp. 556-557.

[71] Freidenreich, *Foreigners and Their Food*, pp. 147-149. Nurit Tsafrir ("The Attitude of Sunnī Islam," pp. 326-328) presents the four schools of Sunnī law as tolerant towards eating meat slaughtered by *dhimmīs*.

[72] al-Maghīlī, *Aḥkām ahl al-dhimma*, p. 557.

[73] Lewis, "An Ode against the Jews," pp. 170. On *ṭerefah* see the note above.

[74] Alejandro García-Sanjuán, "Jews and Christians in Almoravid Seville as Portrayed by the Islamic Jurist Ibn ʻAbdūn," *Medieval Encounters*, 14 (2008), pp. 92, 98. al-Jāḥiẓ mentions butchery among the Jewish occupations in his refutation of the Christians: Charles Pellat, *The Life and Works of Jāḥiẓ*, D.M. Hawke, trans. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p. 87.

of Christians and Jews, who are considered to be the enemies of God (Q. 60:1), and from showing any signs of kindness to the unbelievers.[75]

In addition to the accusation of Jews for being filthy and impure, and the prohibition on Muslims of eating food prepared by them, al-Maghīlī calls the Jews "monkeys," or more precisely, "monkey brethren" (*ikhwān al-qirada*).[76] This is in accordance with the Qur'ānic verses telling the story of the transformation (*maskh*) of Jews into monkeys (Q. 2:65; 5:60; 7:163-166). This technique makes the Jews loathsome in the eyes of Muslims, and places them below humankind, in contrast to their prestigious status in the Muslim courts. Moreover, the name "monkeys" was generally reserved for Jews in Islamic polemic, and especially in the West, as one can learn, in addition to the *Aḥkām* of al-Maghīlī, from Abū Isḥāq al-Ilbirī's invective.[77] Mark R. Cohen explains these derogatory references to "monkeys" in the eschatological context of post-Qur'anic literature, as a warning and threat towards "Judaizers" from among the Muslims, in a similar manner to the preaching of St. John Chrysostom of Antioch in the fourth century against Christian "Judaizers" who imitated Jewish practices, that is – a tactic aimed at

[75] al-Wansharīsī, *al-Mi'yār al-mu'rib*, 11:111-112; Vincent Lagardère, *Histoire et société en occident musulman au moyen âge: Analyse du Mi'yār d'al-Wansarīsī* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas; Casa de Velázquez, 1995), p. 482 #83. García-Sanjuán ("El consumo de alimentos de los d̲immíes," p. 145 n. 111) assumes that Passover in this *fatwā* is named *'id al-fiṭr* after the Islamic holiday. al-Maqrīzī refers to the matzah as *al-khubz al-faṭīr*, and to the holiday as *'id al-faṭīr*. See Yehoshua Frenkel, "al-Maqrizi on the Jewish Holidays" [Heb.], in *Teshurah le-Tsafrirah: Mehqarim ba-Miqra, be-toldot Yisra'el uva-Mizrah ha-qadum mugashim le-Tsafrirah Ben-Baraq* [A Gift for Tsafrirah: Studies in the Bible, Jewish History, and the Ancient Near East, Presented to Tsafrirah Ben-Baraq], Mayer I. Gruber et al., eds. (Be'er Sheva': Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, 2012), pp. 339-340 (Arabic). For a Hebrew reference to *'id al-fiṭr* as the Islamic "Passover," see the *Itenerary* of Benjamin of Tudela, trans. in Martin Jacobs, "From Lofty Caliphs to Uncivilized 'Orientals': Images of the Muslim in Medieval Jewish Travel Literature," *Jewish Studies Quarterly*, 18 (2011), p. 75; *idem*, *Reorienting the East: Jewish Travelers to the Medieval Muslim World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), p. 130. See also a *fatwā* on exchanging gifts between Christians and Muslims during Christian holidays in al-Wansharīsī, *al-Mi'yār al-mu'rib*, 11:150-152.

[76] al-Maghīlī, *Aḥkām ahl al-dhimma*, p. 554, 557.

[77] Lewis, "An Ode Against the Jews," pp. 169, 439 n. 13; Henri Pérès, *La poésie andalouse en arabe classique au XIe siècle: Ses aspects généraux, ses principaux thèmes et sa valeur documentaire* (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1953), pp. 240-241. On images of animals in medieval interreligious polemics, see Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, pp. 198-239.

strengthening an independent Christian identity.[78]

The same eschatological tendencies suggested by Cohen, directed against Muslim "Judaizers" and therefore intended to purify the Muslim society of "Jewish" evil-doing, is evidently what we find in al-Maghīlī's poem that closes out the *Aḥkām*:[79]

بريت للربّ الوَدود   من قُرب أنصار اليهود
قوما اهانوا دينَهم   وأكرموا دينَ اليهود
يكفي الفتى من شيْنِهم   وخُبْثِ أصلِ طِينِهم
أن قلعوا من دينهم   ورفعوا دينَ اليهود
5 ياألْيتهم لو دبروا   واسترجعوا واستغفروا
وستّروا ما أظهروا   من نصر رهط اليهود
ألم يروْا كيف قضى   ربُّ الورى فيما مضى
أنَّى يفوزُ بالرِضَى   مَن رضِيت عنه اليهود
لا شكّ ان لحقَّ نور   في كل سوقٍ لا يبور
10 ينصُره الربُّ الصبور   على النصارى واليهود
فيا إلاهي بالنبيّ   المصطفى الهادي التقي
وكل قُطب ووليّ   شمِّتْ بأنصار اليهود
صُبَّ البلا من فوقِهم   وإمحق بقايا رزقهم
وإفتح لهم من محْقهم   بابا الى نارِ الوَقود
15 إلا الذين استغفروا   وجبّروا ما كسّروا
وبيّنوا ما ستّروا   حتى استقامتِ الحدود
فأغفِر لهم ما قد مضى   وكتُب لهم منك الرِضَى
وعجِّلن بمن قضى   منهم بجنّةِ الخلود

[78] Mark R. Cohen, "Modern Myths of Muslim Anti-Semitism," in *Muslim Attitudes to Jews and Israel: The Ambivalences of Rejection, Antagonism, Tolerance and Cooperation*, Moshe Ma'oz, ed. (Brighton, [England]; Portland, OR.: Sussex Academic Press, 2010), p. 42; *idem*, *Under Crescent and Cross*, p. 20.
[79] al-Maghīlī, *Aḥkām ahl al-dhimma*, pp. 563-564 (my translation).

For the sake of the Loving Lord
  I dissociate myself[80] from the supporters of the Jews,
People who disgraced their religion,
  And respected the religion of the Jews.
It is sufficient for a youth [to know] their disgrace,
  And the wickedness that is the essence of their actions.
They turned away from their religion,
  And exalted the religion of the Jews.
5 Had they have only turned their back,[81]
  Repented, and asked for God's forgiveness.
Had they concealed their manifest support
  To the Jewish community.
Do you not see how the Lord of Humankind
  Decreed in the past?
How can he achieve God's pleasure,
  He with whom the Jews are pleased?
There is no doubt that truth is like light
  That cannot be sold in any market.
10 The Patient Lord will support it
  Against the Christians and Jews.
O my Lord, [I pray to you] through your Prophet,
  The chosen one, the guide, and pious,
And through every great saint and holy man:
  Bring misery on the supporters of the Jews;
Pour calamity on them
  And erase the remains of their fortune.
And on their extermination
  Open for them the gate for hellfire,
15 Except for those who repent
  And mend what they have damaged,
And those who revealed what they concealed,
  Until extremities are made correct.
Forgive them for what has passed,
  And inscribe them with your pleasure;

[80] *bari'tu*. Fenton's translation (p. 549) says: "I am turning" (to God); but see *EI*^{2}, "Barā'a" (R. Rubinacci) and "Tabarru'" (J. Calmard).
[81] *dabarū'*, not *dabbarū'*, as the edition says, which means: "they planned, organized."

And hurry with those among them who died
To the Gardens of Eternity.

In another poem, which is not included in the *Aḥkām*, al-Maghīlī says:[82]

عليكم بتقتيل اليهود وكلّ من   يقاتل عنهم تسعد بمحمّد
20 عليكم عباد الله فيهم بكلّ ما   قدرتم تفوز بالرِضَى بمحمّد
أولائك أعداء النبيّ حقيقة   فيا فَوْز من أفْنَى عدوّ محمّد
أتخشون أنصار اليهود وإنّهم   لَمِنْهُمْ وأنتم من فريق محمّد
أتخشون أنصار اليهود وكلّهم   حقير حقير كافر بمحمّد
تراهم وإن كانوا ملوكا بزعمهم   كلابا لأعداء النبيّ محمّد
25 تراهم لهم يجرَوْن فيما يسرهم   ويحمُونهم من أوْلِيَاء محمّد
عليهم من الجبّار خِزْي ولعنة   وقتل وسبى من جنود محمّد
لقد سمع الجبّار قول جميعهم   حمانا حِمَى لأعداء دين محمّد
لقد سمع الجبّار قول جميعهم   بأرْواحِنا نفدي عدوّ محمّد
لقد سمع الجبّار جلّ جلاله   مقالتهم في أوْلِيَاء محمّد
30 أمَوْلايَ من الدين غيرك فانتصر   وعجّل بمن يحمي عدوّ محمّد
أمَوْلايَ قالوا عزّهم ليهودهم   ونحن جميع عزّنا بمحمّد
عليه صلاة الله ثمّ سلامه   فيا فَوْز مَن أمْسَى نصير محمّد

[82] Rabat, Bibliothèque Générale et archives, ms. 683, in Esperanza Alfonso, "'Abd al-Karīm al-Magīlī (n. ca. 1440): El contexto socioliterario de un poema contra los judíos," in *Entre el Islam y occidente: Los judíos magrebíes en la edad moderna. seminario celebrado en la Casa de Velázquez, 16-17 de noviembre de 1998*, Mercedes García-Arenal, ed. (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2003), pp. 40-41 (my translation). In Alfonso's edition, the order of the lines is corrupted; here it is corrected according to her translation (pp. 42-43).

تنبّه فإن الله منك بمرصد   وليّ لأنصار النبيّ محمّد

تنبّه فإنّ الله جلّ جلاله   عدوّ لأعداء النبيّ محمّد

تنبّه لما ترضي وتكره في العدى   ترى حكم من يحمي عدوّ محمّد

تنبه لما ترضي وتكره في العدى   ترى حكم من يأوي عدوّ محمّد

5 تنبه لما ترضي وتكره في العدى   ترى حكم من يرضي عدوّ محمّد

عدوّك من يحمي عدوّك في الورى   فيا وَيْل من يحمي عدوّ محمّد

عدوّك من يأوي عدوّك في الورى   فيا وَيْل من يأوي عدوّ محمّد

عدوّك من يرضي عدوّك في الورى   فيا وَيْل من يرضي عدوّ محمّد

أترضون أن يحمي حبيب عدوّكم   كما أنتم تحموا عدوّ محمّد

10 أترضون أن يأوي حبيب عدوّكم   كما أنتم تأووا عدوّ محمّد

أترضون أن يرضي حبيب عدوّكم   كما أنتم ترضوا عدوّ محمّد

تَوَلَّيْتُمْ الكفار أعداء ربّكم   وأعداء خير المرسلين محمّد

فقمتم بعزم في رضاهم ونصرهم   جهارا على أخيار دين محمّد

كأنتم لا تسمعوا قطّ سورة   من الذكر أو لم تؤمنوا بمحمّد

15 فيا مَعْشَر الإسلام هل لا اعتبرتم   فقمتم بشي من حقوق محمّد

عليكم بقتل الكافرين وسبيهم   خنازير لا ترضي بذكر محمّد

عليكم بتقتيل اليهود فإنهم   أشرّ عدوٍّ كافرٍ بمحمّد

عليكم بتقتيل اليهود كما جرا   بخيبر تحت السيف سيف محمّد

Notice that God watches you;
  He is a friend of the followers of the Prophet Muḥammad.
Notice that God, may he be glorified,
  is the enemy of Muḥammad’s enemies.
Notice the one you approve, and reject the enemies;
  observe the law of one who protects the enemy of Muḥammad.
Notice the one you approve, and reject the enemies;
  observe the law of one who provides shelter for the enemy of Muḥammad.

5 Notice the one you approve, and reject the enemies;
observe the law of one who accepts the enemy of Muḥammad.
Your enemy is the one who protects your enemy;
woe to the one who protects the enemy of Muḥammad!
Your enemy is the one who provides shelter for the enemy of Muḥammad;
woe to the one who provides shelter for the enemy of Muḥammad!
Your enemy is the one who accepts the enemy of Muḥammad;
woe to the one who accepts the enemy of Muḥammad!
Do you approve the one who protects the friend of your enemy
as if you protect the enemy of Muḥammad?
10 Do you approve the one who provides shelter for the friend of your enemy
as if you you provide shelter for the enemy of Muḥammad?
Do you approve the one who accepts shelter for the friend of your enemy
as if you you accept the enemy of Muḥammad?
The infidels, enemies of God, overpowered you,
the enemies of the choice of messengers, Muḥammad.
But you decided to accept them and help them
in defiance of the best [followers] of Muḥammad's religion
As if you have never heard any sūra
of the Qur'ān (*al-dhikr*) or you are among the unfaithful to Muḥammad!
15 O community of Islam, have you not learned your lesson?
You observe nothing from the laws of Muḥammad.
You must kill and captivate the infidels,
[those] pigs who reject the Qur'ān (*dhikr*) of Muḥammad.
You must kill the Jews, who are
the most hostile enemies of Muḥammad.
You must kill the Jews, the way it happened
in Khaybar under the sword, the sword of Muḥammad.
You must kill the Jews, and anyone who
kills them will receive Muḥammad's blessing.
20 O servants of God, you must [kill them] the way you were decreed,
so you'll receive Muḥammad's favor.
These are the true enemies of the Prophet,
and there is a reward for the one who annihilates the enemies of Muḥammad.
Are you afraid of the friends of the Jews? They [stand]
by their side, while you are the followers of Muḥammad!
Are you afraid of the friends of the Jews, who are all

loathsome and disgraceful, and unfaithful to Muḥammad.
Look at them, they are kings (*mulūk*),
[those] dogs, the enemies of the Prophet Muḥammad.
25 Look at them, they do whatever they like,
and receive protection from the friends of Muḥammad.
May the Almighty put curse and disgrace upon them!
May they be killed and captivated by the soldiers of Muḥammad!
O Almighty, hear what everybody says:
"Protect us from the enemies of Muḥammad!"
O Almighty, hear what everybody says:
"We will redeem ourselves by killing the enemy of Muḥammad!"
O Almighty, may he be glorified, hear
what they say of the followers of Muḥammad.
30 Is my master holding a religion different than yours? Hurry
and defeat the one who protects the enemy of Muḥammad!
Is my master the one who honors the Jews?
We all honor Muḥammad!
Peace and blessings be upon him,
What a blessing will come to the one who becomes the friend of Mauḥammad!

In order to teach the Muslims to dissociate from the Jews and their adherents, the polemic of al-Maghīlī opens with the obligation of avoiding the unbelievers (*ijtināb al-kuffār*), since "the believers are friends among themselves, and the unbelievers friends among themselves."[83] Thus, the author, like in the poem above, sees the conflict between two camps: the followers of the Prophet and the true believers, vs. the Jews and their

[83] al-Maghīlī, *Aḥkām ahl al-dhimma*, p. 552. Cf. Q. 5:51, "O you who have believed, do not take the Jews and the Christians as allies/friends (*awlīya'*). They are allies of one another. And whoever is an ally to them among you – then indeed, he is one of them. Indeed, God guides not the wrongdoing people." On the interpretation of this verse in medieval and modern times, see Hakan Çoruha, "Friendship between Muslims and the People of the Book in the Qur'an with Special Reference to Q 5.51," *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations*, 23.4 (2012), pp. 505-513; Johanna Pink, "Tradition and Ideology in Contemporary Sunnite Qur'ānic Exegesis: Qur'ānic Commentaries from the Arab World, Turkey and Indonesia and their Interpretation of Q 5:51," *Die Welt des Islams*, 50 (2010), pp. 3-59. The Qur'ān (5:82) also differentiates between Jews and pagans vs. Christians, describing the hatred of the first ones to Muhammad's religion as harsher: "You will surely find the most intense of the people in animosity (*ashaddu al-nās 'adāwa*) toward the believers among the Jews and those who associate others with God; and you will find the nearest of them in affection (*aqrabahum mawadda-tan*) to the believers those who say, 'We are Christians'. That is because among them are priests and monks and because they are not arrogant."

supporters. The motif of "friendship" comes many times in the *Aḥkām*, such as in calling God *al-Rabb al-Wadūd* (the Loving Lord), or in the idiom: "in every hostility there is hope for friendship (*mawadda*), except for the hostility of your enemy in religion," using in both cases the root letters of w-d-d to indicate affection and amity. In order to achieve solidarity and activism among Muslims against Jews and "Judaizers," al-Maghīlī quotes substantially from the Qu'ran:

> Those who take unbelievers for their friends instead of believers, do they seek glory in them? Glory altogether belongs to God (Q. 4:139).

> Do not let the believers take the unbelievers for friends, rather than the believers, for whoever does that will never be helped by God, except when taking precaution against them. God warns you that you beware of Him, and to God is the final return (Q. 3:29).

God, as we learn from the many quotations of Qur'anic verses, is the only friend and helper of the believers. Following this argument, the author turns now to the *ḥadīth* literature in order to give evidence for the necessary loyalty to Muḥammad, citing the tradition, "None is a true believer until I become better beloved in his eyes than his father, his son, or the entire people"; and adds:

> My friend is the one, who shows hostility to my rival,
> And heals what is in my heart towards my enemies;
> The one who raises his objective among the banners [of war],
> And abandons his wishes to my desire.[84]

Finally, al-Maghīlī identifies his enemies as the followers of Satan. Every single Jew, whom the polemicist sees as an unbeliever (*kāfir*), is a friend and supporter of the

[84] al-Maghīlī, *Aḥkām ahl al-dhimma*, p. 552.

cursed Satan (*walī li-l-Shaytan al-la'īn*), the manifest enemy of Islam. "[Satan] overpowered [the Jew], controlled his mind and entire senses, and dragged him by his forelock until he was paralyzed, and could not say a word except in accordance with his [Satan's] opinion. Every believer, then, should realize by the light of his belief, that every Jew is Satan (*Iblīs*) himself, and that he should flee away from the Jew with his belief, so that the Jew may not deceive him unsuspectingly."[85] Dragging by the forelock, which is a reference to Q. 11:56, 55:41, 96:15-16, is an act of humiliation and repentance, whereas here it is the total defeat of the Jew in front of the malicious desires of Satan.[86]

IV. Conclusions

Reading the *Aḥkām*, one might ask: What is new in al-Maghīlī? To what extent is he simply employing and activating existing polemics to a particular purpose, and to what extent is he doing something new? Is this something that can happen anywhere anytime, or has a particular set of new conditions arisen?

The malicious tone of al-Maghīlī's polemics in the *Aḥkām*, might not be completely new, as evident from the examples shown above, of Ibn Ḥazm and Abū Isḥāq al-Ilbīrī's anti-Jewish works; it could be judged, however, as being extremely virulent in comparison to these two, especially because of its call for spilling the blood of male Jews and enslaving their women, treating them as if they were unbelievers (*kuffār*). al-Maghīlī, on the spectrum of 'Believers' (Muslims) to 'Unbelievers' (idolaters), ignores, therefore, the definition of Jews as the 'People of the Scripture' (together with the Christians: *ahl*

[85] *Ibid.*, p. 556. On the asociation of Jews with Satan, see Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross*, pp. 170-171, who compares between Muslim and Christian polemics.
[86] On this metaphor in the Qur'ān, see Marion Holmes Katz, "The 'Shearing of Forelocks' as a Penitential Rite," in *The Heritage of Arabo-Islamic Learning: Studies Presented to Wadad Kadi*, Maurice A. Pomerantz and Aram Shahin, eds. (Leiden: Brill, 2016), pp. 194-195; and see also Ezek. 8:3.

al-kitāb) and as a community of monotheists who deserve the protection (*dhimma*) of Islam, and puts them in one category with the idolaters who deserve death. The goal of his tract is to prove that by close interaction with the Jews, the community of Muslim believers suffers degradation and corruption, and does not follow the example of the Prophet Muḥammad. Taking the example of the Prophet, as a model for his harsh and uncompromising treatment of the Jews of Arabia, is evident from the numerous quotations from the Qur'ān in the *Aḥkām* (not relying so much on the *ḥadīth*, the traditions of the Prophet); the first section of this tract, that is devoted to the required love for the Prophet and simultaneously to avoiding the unbelievers (*ijtināb al-kuffār*); and from a poem devoted to the Prophet, but not included in the *Aḥkām*, in which al-Maghīlī mentions the massacre of the Jews of Khaybar.[87] Like Muḥammad (in the time of the conquests of Arabia), and his followers in the more recent history of the Maghrib, that is, the Almohads, who referred to themselves simply as *mu'minūn* (believers), as did Muḥammad's early devotees,[88] it was al-Maghīlī's intention to remove the Jewish communities away from the realm of Islam.[89]

Moreover, the *Aḥkām* presents a unique case because of the style of the author and the wealth of sources on him and on his time, including on the Maghrībī Jews.[90] Jews

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[87] Esperanza Alfonso, "'Abd al-Karīm al-Magīlī," p. 41. On the massacre of Khaybar, see Norman A. Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands: A History and Source Book* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979), pp. 16-19, 145-149 (the account on Khaybar from Ibn Hishām's biography of the Prophet).
[88] Amira K. Bennison and Maria Angeles, "Religious Minorities under the Almohads: An Introduction," *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies*, 2 (2010), pp. 144-146; Fred M. Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010).
[89] Harry Munt, "'No Two Religions': Non-Muslims in the Early Islamic Ḥijāz." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 78 (2015), pp. 249-269; André Ferré, "Muhammad a-t-il exclu de l'Arabie les juifs et les chrétiens?," *Islamochristiana*, 16 (1990), pp. 43-65; Seth Ward, "A Fragment from an Unknown Work by al-Ṭabarī on the Tradition 'Expel the Jews and Christians from the Arabian Peninsula (and the Lands of Islam),'" *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 53 (1990), pp. 407-420; Fierro, "'A Muslim Land Without Jews or Christians.'"
[90] See Table 4: Sources on al-Maghīlī and the Riots in Touat (c. 1492).

holding positions of power has a long history in the Islamic West (i.e. in al-Andalus and the Maghrib), and it is suffice to give the examples of Ḥasdai ibn Shaprut (d. 970), a prominent dignitary in the Umayyad court of Córdoba, and Samuel ibn Naghrila (Samuel ha-Nagid; d. 1056), a vizier in service of the Zīrid Berbers of Granada; Maimonides, as a court physician to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (Saladin; d. 1193), is another well-known example from medieval Islamic history.[91] Focusing, therefore, on the Jews who served the Maghribī sultans in the *Aḥkām*, gives as an example for the debate within Islamic circles over the "Judaization" of politics in the Maghrib of the Later Islamic Middle Period, and for the excessive degree of Jewish interaction with Muslims, from the point of view of a militaristic scholar such as al-Maghīlī.[92] If we accept Leo Africanus' account for al-Maghīlī being a preacher, a fact that is not mentioned in the Muslim-Arabic biographies of this scholar, but does not contradict them, we might consider the structure of the *Aḥkām* and the narratives in them, to be a product of al-Maghīlī's anti-Jewish preaching in the oasis of Touat.[93]

[91] On the Jewish viziers of the Islamic West, see Brann, *Power in the Portrayal*; Nicole S. Serfaty, *Les courtisans juifs des sultans marocains: Hommes politiques et hauts dignitaires, XIIIe-XVIIIe siècles* (Saint-Denis: Bouchène, 1999); *idem*, "Courtisans et diplomats juifs à la cour des sultans marocains (XIV-XVII)," in *Présence juive au Maghreb: Hommage à Haïm Zafrani*, Nicole S. Serfaty and Joseph Tedghi, eds. (Saint-Denis: Bouchene, 2004), pp. 183-193; Felipe Maíllo Salgado, "Los judíos en las fuentes andalusíes y magrebíes: Los visires," *Studia historica*. *Historia medieval*, 23 (2005), pp. 221-249; Jonathan P. Decter, "Before Caliphs and Kings: Jewish Courtiers in Medieval Iberia," in *The Jew in Medieval Iberia: 1100-1500*, Jonathan Ray, ed. (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2012), pp. 1-32.
[92] Cf. Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2013).
[93] Linda G. Jones deals with Almoravid and Almohad preaching (for examples, political sermons and calls for *jihād*), and the wider context of oratations in medieval Islam, in her book, *The Power of Oratory in the Medieval Muslim World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

CONCLUSIONS

Jewish medieval history was the product of Western academies. As such, it produced historiographical studies of the Jewish Middle Ages that reflected the ideas of Jewish scholars, some of them were the founders of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in nineteenth century Germany*,* and of the European (non-Jewish and Jewish) scholarship on the Middle Ages. In Jewish scholarship, it was a common theme to refer to the Middle Ages as an era of persecution, the 'lachrymose' approach to Jewish history, that has it origins in sixteenth and seventeenth chronologies of suffering throughout history. Hence, Leopold Zunz (1794-1884) perceived the Middle Ages to be an era of continuous suffering; and Heinrich Graetz (1817-1891) adopted the 'lachrymose' approach while also examining with the intellectual life of the Jews throughout the ages.[94]

This was the common image of Jewish life in medieval Europe. The Islamic civilization, however, usually offered a different model. Jewish scholars portrayed a positive image of Jewish life under Islam, and understood the Jews to be a part of the wider Islamic civilization. Thus, the idea of 'interfaith utopia,' which was not possible in medieval Europe, was projected towards the Islamic world. The focus, nonetheless, was on 'Arab' Islam, due to the Arabophile inclinations of Jewish scholars.[95] The model of

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[94] Leopold Zunz, *The Sufferings of the Jews during the Middle Ages*, A. Löwy and George Alexander Kohut, eds. and trans. (New York, Bloch Publishing Company, 1907); Heinrich Graetz, *History of the Jews* (Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society of America, 1891-1898), 6 vols. See Patricia Skinner, "Confronting the 'Medieval' in Medieval History: The Jewish Example," *Past and Present*, 181 (2003), pp. 229-230. For a twentieth century chronicle of persecution of the Jews throughout the ages, see Simon Bernfeld, *Sefer ha-dema'ot: Me'ora'ot ha-gezerot veha-redifot ve-hashmadot* [The Book of Tears: Persecutions and Forced Conversion] (Berlin: Eshkol, 1923-1926), 2 vols.

[95] Bernard Lewis, "The Pro-Islamic Jews," in *idem*, *Islam in History: Ideas, People, and Events in the Middle East* (Chicago: Open Court, 1993, rev. ed.), pp. 137-151.

'symbiosis' was adopted to 'classical' Islam, that is, between the years ca. 600-1258,[96] seeing in the Later Middle Ages an era of decline of the Islamic civilization. Daniel Schroeter writes:

> For those who focus on the 'Arab' Islamic world, Islamic decline set in a much earlier date, around 1200 according to the traditional understanding […]. In Jewish historiography, the decline theory is based on a number of assumptions, but with somewhat different criteria. Goitein was following the conventional model of orientalist scholars who saw the Mamluk period as marking Arab decline, characterized by cultural, intellectual and scientific stagnation in contrast to the emergence of European culture in the Renaissance. There is a convergence between intellectual or cultural contributions to civilization and the mobility and prosperity of Jewish merchants. […] Most accounts of Middle Eastern Jewry pay scant attention to the next 300 years of history (the decline period), picking up the threads when the Ottomans came to rule the Middle East.[97]

In the Islamic West, the fall of al-Andalus into the hands of the Almoravid and Almohad dynasties (twelfth and thirteenth centuries) signifies the end of the 'Jewish Golden Age,' or of the end of interfaith coexistence, *convivencia*, in the Iberian Peninsula.[98] Therefore, the interest in Jews living under the Islamic rule of Iberia and the Maghrebi lands post-

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[96] As in the title of Gustave E. von Grunebaum's book, *Der Islam in seiner klassischen Epoche 622-1258* (Zürich & Stuttgart: Artemis Verlag, [1966]); English translation: *Classical Islam: A History, 600-1258*, Katherine Watson, trans. (Chicago: Aldine Pub. Co., 1970).

[97] Daniel J. Schroeter, "From Sephardi To Oriental: The 'Decline' Theory of Jewish Civilization in The Middle East and North Africa: Reassessing an Idea," in *The Jewish Contribution to Civilization: Reassessing an Idea,* Jeremy Cohen and Richard I. Cohen, eds. (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2008), p. 131.

[98] E.g. Maria Rosa Menocal, *The Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews, and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain* (Boston: Little, Brown, 2002). For the idea of *convivencia*, see Alex Novikoff, "Between Tolerance and Intolerance in Medieval Spain: An Historiographic Enigma." *Medieval Encounters*, 11 (2005), pp. 7-36; Kenneth Baxter Wolf, "Convivencia in Nedieval Spain: A Brief History of an Idea," *Religion Compass*, 3, no. 1 (2009), pp. 72-85. For a critique of Menocal, see Maribel Fierro, "Idealización de al-Andalus," *Revista de libros de la Fundación Caja Madrid*, 94 (2004), pp. 3-6.

1200 declined as long as the ‘convergence,’ identified by Schroeter, between the Jewish fate and the ‘Arab’ Islamic fate, the intertwining of their history through ‘symbiosis,’ seemed to be deteriorating. The focus in modern scholarship was mostly given to the pre-1200 period: the Jews of the Geonic period in Babylon, and the rise of al-Andalus with its ‘Jewish Golden Age,’ and with the discovery of the Geniza documents at the turn of the twentieth century, to the ‘Classical Geniza Period’ (tenth-thirteenth centuries). The ‘Arab eclipse’ of the Later Middle Ages, as defined by Goitein, meant also the eclipse of Jewish life under medieval Islam.

This dissertation sought, however, to reexamine Jewish-Islamic exchange in its social and intellectual aspects in what has been considered the ‘post-classical’ era of Islam, between 1200-1500 C.E. In chapter 1, I studied the composition of an Arabic commentary on the *Song of Songs* by a forced convert to Islam in the Almohad period, Joseph ibn ‘Aqnīn, demonstrating the continuation, not so much the break, of Jewish knowledge and usage of Islamic materials. Ibn ‘Aqnīn, a contemporary of Maimonides who was living in Fes, wished to write a philosophical commentary on the *Song* by relying on Farabian philosophy and materials taken from Islamic literature. Chapter 2 examined the contents of a mystical treatise by David ben Joshua Maimonides, which shows an intimate knowledge of Sufi literature and creates a dialogue with it in order to create a new composition, a Jewish-Muslim hybrid, written in Judeo-Arabic, in defense of the Maimonidian movement of piety (*ḥasidut*) and in competition of Sufi teachings and practices. Lastly, chapter 3 dealt with the vicious attack of a Muslim preacher, Muḥammad al-Maghīlī, against the Jews of fifteenth-century Maghrib, a polemical work that is concerned with the social aspects of Jewish life among the Muslims, and not so

much with religious polemic against Judaism. al-Maghīlī's diatribe against the Jews was written when they still kept their power – in relative terms – in the communities of West Africa, and where important part of the trade along the Sahara. Moreover, the polemic also testifies for the close relations of Jews with the Muslim rulers of the Maghrib, and that al-Maghīlī's attack against two Jewish Saharan communities was not approved by the Muslim authorities of his time, despite the ideal of Muslim superiority over the non-Muslims.

Instead of letting Jews and Muslims of the Later Middle Ages 'fade' from the pages of medieval history, I wished to bring them back to the front, and study their history with a critical outlook towards the 'lachrymose' approach or the 'golden age' ideal, while trying to expose the complicated history of Jewish creativity under late medieval Islam. I see great importance in retelling and reinvestigating the history of the 300 years that were mostly erased from modern historiography, the life of Jews in Egypt the Mamluk period (1250-1517), that has not received much attention since the early 1950, and the Maghrebi Jews post the twelfth century, who are being treated as living under the shadow of the end of the 'Spanish Golden Age,' and constantly suffering persecution and oppression.[99] New history of Jewish life in the Islamic lands of the Late Middle Ages still waits to be written.

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[99] For now, see Eliyahu Ashtor (Strauss), *Toldot ha-Yehudim be-Mitsrayim ve-Suryah tahat shilton ha-Mamlukim* [History of the Jews in Egypt and Syria under the Mamluks] (Jerusalem: Mosad ha-Rav Quq, 1944-1951), vols. 1 and 2; Paul B. Fenton and David G. Littman, *L'exil au Maghreb: la condition juive sous l'islam, 1148-1912* (Paris: Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2010), with a forthcoming English edition: *Exile in the Maghreb: Jews under Islam, Sources and Documents, 997-1912* (Madison, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2016) (notice the difference between the time periods in each of these editions); Eliezer Bashan, *Pegi'ot be-haye ha-dat ve-hit'aslemut be-Maroqo mi-yeme ha-benayim 'ad ha-zeman ha-hadash* [Restrictions on Religious Life and Islamization of Jews in Morocco from the Medieval Period to Modern Times] (Lod: Orot Yahadut ha-Magrab, 2010).

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