

Crossing the Borders of Modernity: Towards a Context for Al-Gharnati (Leo Africanus)

*Trasapando las fronteras de la Modernidad:
Aproximación al contexto de Al-Gharnati (Leo Africanus)*

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Resumen

Yuhanna al-Asad al-Gharnati (generalmente conocido como Ioannes Leo Africanus) fue el autor de una narrativa de viaje autobiográfica publicada en 1550 por Giovanni Battista Ramusio bajo el título *La descrittione dell’Africa*. El libro dio forma a la imagen europea del islam y de África. Fue también una fuente para los historiadores de los judíos. El artículo argumenta que la atención al contexto histórico y las tradiciones culturales hispánicas pueden ayudar a comprender varios aspectos de su vida y obra—inclusive sus relaciones con mecenas y colegas—; la recepción de su obra; sus inquietudes intelectuales, literarias y filológicas; algunos temas concretos de su texto; y finalmente el proyecto de transmisión literaria y cultural.

Palabras Clave: Modernidad; narrativa de viajes; Leo Africanus.

Abstract

Yuhanna al-Asad al-Gharnati (generally known as Ioannes Leo Africanus) was the author of an autobiographical travel narrative, published in 1550 by Giovanni Battista Ramusio under the title *La descrittione dell’Africa*. The work gave shape to the European image of Islam and Africa. It was also a source for Jewish historians. The article argues that the attention to the historical context and Hispanic cultural traditions could help to understand various aspects of his life and work—including his relationship to patrons and colleagues—; the reception of his work; his intellectual, literary and philological perspectives; some specific points of his text and, finally, the cultural and literary transmission project.

Key Words: Modernity; travelogue; Leo Africanus.

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Yuhanna al-Asad al-Gharnati, (mostly referred to as Ioannes Leo Africanus,) was the author of an autobiographical travel narrative published in 1550 by Giovanni Battista Ramusio as *La descrizione dell’Africa*. The book shaped European perceptions of Islam and Africa. It was also a source for writers on the history of the Jews¹.

After the publication of his work, Leo Africanus would be cited in early modern Europe as a source or authority, whether the subject was the nature of the ostrich or the chameleon (as in Sir Thomas Browne) or the character of Mauritania (as in Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*). His personal circumstances, birth in Granada (1480's?), and early life in Fez, were believed to lend a kind of auctoritas to the texts he produced after his conversion to Christianity in 1518. The history of reading Africanus in England or France has been of interest. Shakespearean scholars (since at least the 1920's) have been discussing the relation between his work and the ambiguities of Othello «the Moor» for example². Africanists periodically discuss his text as a primary (often unique) source³. Whether early modernists should read the Granadine's work is, therefore, not in question.

Numerous congresses and books have led to a renaissance of Al Gharnati studies. Particularly sustained are the works of Dietrich Rauchenberger and Natalie Zemon Davis⁴. Despite this plethora of writings, not all are the same: some breakthroughs are apparent. Louis Massignon's⁵ realization, in 1906, that there is an ambiguity or tension in the *Descrittione* between the (Christian) European frame and the (Islamic) Arabic core would be one example. This basic question still haunts writers on Leo Africanus. The other exception is the epoch-making discovery, around 1931-3, by Angela Codazzi of the ms. V.5.953 at the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Rome. The way was then opened for research which would enable scholars to identify the precise degree of distortion introduced by editorial or translators' manipulations. In al-Gharnati studies, attention to Jews in the Renaissance, such as Elijah «the Bohur» or Jacob Mantinus is not unsupported by the evidence. Africanus—who mentions Jews with unusual frequency in his writings—was at times believed to have been a convert from Judaism. Innovative work on his contacts [the Bohur, Mantino and others] exists. Similarly linked could be the traditional but unresolved question formulated by Wantoch as: «Spanien das Land ohne Renaissance»⁶. This brings us to the area of the Iberian background of Yuhanna al-Asad al-Gharnati.

His family was Iberian. In the 1490's, they moved to one of the most densely Iberian communities of exiles in North Africa-Fez. The evidence shows al-Gharnati's contacts with Iberian personalities such as Pedro de Cabrera y Bobadilla, responsible for his

1. Kaysersling, 1861; Grätz, 1894.

2. Bartels, 1990; Jones, 1963; Whitney, 1922. See also Hennessey, 2004.

3. Lewicki, 2008; J. Fisher, 1978; Robinson, 1931: 224.

4. Rauchenberger, 1999; Zemon Davis, 2006.

5. Massignon, 1906.

6. The area is evidently very large and therefore attention to its development or history is useful: Wantoch, 1927. Briesemeister 2000.

apprehension and transfer to Rome. In Rome, his first godfather, on his conversion to Christianity, was Bernardino López de Carvajal, the Spanish Cardinal who [like Egidio da Viterbo and the Prince of Carpi] showed interest in Syriac years before Widmanstat and decades before Trent. According to Zemon Davis, an underlying Spanish shows through Leo's Italian. His contacts with the Iberian Jacob Mantino have been known for over a century. More engagement with the history and thought of the religious communities of al-Gharnati's Iberia might, therefore, be one of the ways forward in al-Gharnati studies.

— I —

Don Pedro Fernández de Cabrera y Bobadilla seized al-Gharnati possibly in June 1518⁷. The sources are not consensual as to the Mediterranean location; perhaps near Djerba or perhaps near Rhodes or near Crete. The evidence suggests that their contacts were prolonged as the ship did not immediately sail for Italy. This was the first contact with the kind of people who would go to make up his context in the ensuing, creative years. Much of Gharnati's future would depend on Cabrera's views of him and perhaps his own behaviour towards Christians was influenced by this «encounter». It was Cabrera's decision to hand him over to the Pope. Cabrera's brother, the bishop of Salamanca was involved. Ramusio, Widmanstadt and others refer to this seizure as if it marked the subsequent events of Africanus's life. It thus follows that some inquiries about the Cabrereras might help in the reconstruction of al-Gharnati's context. What were the Cabrereras' attitudes to other religions, conversion, the seizure of persons or properties⁸?

Pedro Fernández de Bobadilla is described as «dominico y corsario» by Carrete⁹ but as a «Johanniter» by Dietrich Rauchenberger. He was one of a large family of at least eight siblings, the children of Lope Velázquez de Cabrera and Leonor de Luna according to Pinel y Monroy and Carrete but of Andres according to Davis. Lope was the brother of Andres de Cabrera and of Alonso de Cabrera and Fernando de Cabrera. The corsaire's uncle, Alonso de Cabrera, who in 1468 was *corregidor* of Segovia, was also, according to some testimonies before the Inquisition, a judaizer. According to these witnesses, he had told Abraham Seneor, the «Rabbi Mayor,» that they were both «of one blood» and he would show himself favourable to the Jews. In 1491, Abraham Nahmias declared that, in 1474, Alonso de Cabrera had told him he awaited the Messiah¹⁰. In 1491 a witness declares that Alonso did not eat bacon and that in 1482 he would give the host to his dog and that he wore a clean shirt on Saturdays. In 1487, according to Inquisition testimonies, he was with a Rabbi praying. Lope Velázquez, his father, was

7. Zemon Davis, 2006: 55: Pedro Fernández de Bobadilla, cab[allero de] S[an]t[ia]g[o], monje OSDom, después general de las Galeras del papa León X, 1518, y luego de las del emperador Carlos V, Bretaña 1521.

8. Carrete Parrondo, 1989, especially the genealogy on p. 158.

9. Carrete Parrondo, 1989.

10. Carrete Parrondo, 1989: 152-153.

maestrescuela of the Catholic Monarchs and for a time was involved in the Casa de la Moneda of Cuenca¹¹.

The links to (Pedro's uncle-) Andres de Cabrera of the *Rabbi Mayor* of Spain, Abraham Senneor, are well evinced, but they become particularly important around 1474, when there arises the question of the allegiance of the Segovian Alcazar. Senneor's links to the Marquess of Moya, the Bobadilla-Pedro's aunt- are clear from a number of documents. One of these shows him as matchmaker in the union of the Cabrerias and the judeoconverso family of the Arias Davila, perhaps a particularly telling record of the delicate and intimate quality of their connection¹².

— II —

The case of these conversos is not the only factor of porosity in Iberian cultures although they undoubtedly attract more attention. In medieval and early modern Spain and North Africa, it could be argued, at least a similar weight—probably a considerably greater weight— was accorded to other groups who functioned as agents of linguistic, technical and cultural porosity. Such porosity need not be construed in terms of more «open» versus closed, more tolerant versus intolerant, etc. It has been argued that there was a symmetry in Christian and Muslim acceptance of such groups.

In the background, there is the development of border and cross-border societies. These produce institutions such as the «*alcaide de moros y cristianos*», a judge whose area of competence is to adjudicate between Muslims and Christians across the borders in the daily occurrences of questions concerning the *treguas* or peace agreements, lost or stolen cows, small border disputes, etc. Evidence may be found in precise local studies on the regions of Granada and Murcia in the late middle ages¹³.

Along these judges, there are *trujimanes* or *romanceadores*, i.e. people expert in both: language and legal matters. Such *trujimanes* are also in evidence in the town councils of frontier areas. In the 1930's, Baer had already understood the value of (and selected for mention) the late fifteenth century documents on Gabriel Israel, the translator/interpreter from Arabic serving the Catholic Monarchs¹⁴. But later and more regional and local research could be used to gain some more accurate notion of the full extent of the phenomenon. One example comes from Juan Abellan Perez' archival research¹⁵ on the *Actas Capitulares* of the Archivo Municipal de Murcia. It concerns the case of don David Abencox, a translator of legal documents from Arabic into the romance as

11. Carrete Parrondo (1989) notes that: «posteriores historiadores incluso actuales admiten [a Pinel y Monroy] sin especial crítica» [p. 150 n. 2].

12. Gutwirth, 1989.

13. Carriazo y Arroquia, 1948; Seco de Lucena, 1958; Torres Fontes, 1960.

14. Baer, 1936.

15. Abellán, 1981.

well as composer of legal documents Arabic working for the council and the kingdom of Murcia¹⁶.

The activities of this Jewish *romanceador* extend from at least 1382/3 to 24/VII/1403, the date of the document. Another case would be that of Yucaf Handalo, active around 1450, in Murcia. This Jewish resident of Murcia who worked for the town council is engaged in a diplomatic mission, which the municipal document of 11/VII/1450 refers to as *mensajero sobre el fecho de los christianos catiuos en tiempo de paz*, evidently trying to lower the significance of his mission. In any case, the polyglossia is not in question. Similarly clear is the assumption of his familiarity with the different cultures in general and the different practices of governments in particular.

These examples of institutional, salaried, professional, daily crossers of linguistic/religious borders are one aspect which unites law and language. The cultural, creative sides are represented by studies which focus on, for example, certain types within the genre of the late medieval ballad as remains of frontier culture¹⁷.

In addition to these, there are other groups who, unlike the case of al-Gharnati, by their very nature were not likely to be publicized. This has led to lexicographic and philological confusion when trying to disentangle their traces in language and texts. Thus, for, example one of these socio-professional groups, which, like the previous examples are not usually discussed by readers of al-Gharnati are the *almogataces*¹⁸. In his late sixteenth century description of Oran, Diego Suárez speaks of a «type»

...the Moorish spy who has sold them feels that this has become known and he comes to Oran where he is granted- along with his wife and children...and also the truxaman- whatever was stipulated...this Moorish spy settles in Oran where he is given a place and where are usually to be found about six of them and they bear the name *almogataces*¹⁹...

For Maíllo, the presence of *almogataces* in the newly conquered North African communities is not an exoticist, small detail but «uno de los rasgos originales y diferenciadores de estas comunidades hispano-africanas»²⁰. They were not a single occurrence, but a socio- professional category. The phenomenon seems to have begun in the late fifteenth and finished in the eighteenth century. Its traces are only found in the languages

16. Abellán, 1981: «...Dauí Abenacox jodio de la dicha cibdad...de cada ano...por romançar todas las cartas moriscas que eran enbiadas por el rey de Granada o por los alcaydes e aljamas del su señorío así al concejo como al adelantado del regno de Murcia e así mesmo escreuia en morisco todas las cartas quel dicho concejo o el dicho adelantado enbiaua al rey de Granada e a los alcaydes e lugares del su senorio...».

17. MacKay, 1976.

18. Maíllo Salgado, 1984a.

19. Maíllo Salgado, 1984a: «el moro espia que la ha vendido siente que los demas tienen noticia de ello... se viene a Oran... donde le dan libres a su muger e hijos y demas familia... y el truxaman della le dan asimismo lo que concertaron... este tal moro espia se queda en Oran donde se le da plaza... do hay destes... de ordinario media docena de moros con nombre *almogataces*».

20. «One of the features of originality and difference [which characterize] these Hispano-African communities».

and a few texts of description. The *almogavares* are another group. They carry out raids across the borders relying, evidently, on a perfect familiarity with the topography of both sides of the border, Christian and Muslim²¹. The *Farfanés* are an additional element; they were Spanish families in Morocco who remained Christian and sometimes returned to Spain. They are attested in the late medieval and early modern periods²².

The traces in the language and in the texts serve to identify yet another socio-professional category: the *mocaden* or *Almocaden*. Typically, this was a man who served as «*guia o rastreador*» and advisor or consultant to Christian military chiefs, a man who knew what was occurring on both sides —Christian and Muslim— of the border, who had individual or family connections in them and who was bilingual. In the early stages, the *mocaden* was mainly a pedestrian and in the late middle ages he begins to use a horse. Occasionally, the sources give us their names, as in the case of the chronicle of the repopulation of Priego in 1408: «un Almocaden que se llamaba Fernan Sanchez que habia seydo moro y era hombre entendido»²³.

Another such group is that of the *elches*. According to Maíllo they were: «un elemento de peso en las formaciones políticas del norte de África durante los siglos XVI y XVII». The *elches*, for Maíllo, were nothing less than «los artifices y cimiento del poder de los jefes de Marruecos» this was because of their knowledge of tactics and advanced technology. The *elches*, formerly Christians, were, then, a channel for transmission of knowledge, techniques and culture²⁴.

To sum up: Before and during the writing of the *Descrittione* there were, in North Africa and in the Iberian peninsula, numerous socio-professional groups who acted in the transmission of techniques, knowledge, language and culture. They were professional searchers for equivalences but, unlike Africanus, they did not compose books and they did not publicize their function. The tension between cultural elements which since Massignon has been a focus of Al-Gharnati studies appears, when seen in context, as less of an individual quirk than a widespread effect of geography, history and politics in the Mediterranean areas.

— III —

How «Iberian» was Fez at the time of Al-Gharnati, Leo Africanus? Or, in other words, was there a total break with history and the past amongst the communities of Iberian exiles in North Africa²⁵? Rauchenberger points out that, contrary to convention, Leo Africanus describes a Jewish family from Fez as «nobilissima»²⁶.

21. Maíllo Salgado, 1984b.

22. Maíllo Salgado, 1983.

23. Maíllo Salgado, 1985.

24. Maíllo Salgado, 1982.

25. For some recent work on relations between Iberia and North Africa see for example Gutwirth, 2000; Gutwirth, 1999; Gutwirth, 1993; Gutwirth, 2003; Gozalbes Cravioto, 1993; Gonzalbes Busto, 1993, 1976 y 1989.

26. Rauchenberger, 1999: 28 n.103

Additional answers may come from recent work on a collection of texts from Fez²⁷. Born in 1668, Samuel ibn Danan IV collected and edited the chronicles or notes of historical interest kept by his family in Fez²⁸. Family tradition explains the continuity in the activity of history writing of this particular kind over centuries. One cannot judge this effort by measuring its length because there are sections which have been lost over time²⁹. The main subject is the history of the Jews in Fez. Some early fragments have survived from the writings of Saadyah II ben R. Shmuel ibn Danan from about the year 198=1538³⁰. The family could trace its roots even further back, to Saadyah ibn Danan, who was born in Granada in 1440³¹. The colophon of his *Book of Tradition*, 1480, reads: «This book was completed in the city of Granada while its people are hiding and bewildered in their thoughts....because of the taking over of the community by the evil ones the flatterers and because of the plague...» Like al-Gharnati, he was also involved in writing about language and poetry and he composed treatises on prosody and poetry. His writings include this *Book of Tradition* which deals with the chain of transmission, through master-disciple, from R. Yehudah Ha-Nassi to Maimonides. It opens with an assertion, in Judeo-Arabic, about the importance of the study of History. Another composition was written at the request of one of his disciples. It is the *Book of Kings* and deals with the monarchy up to Herod³². Both works attest clearly to the significance of tradition in such societies.

Parallel enterprises, i.e. writings on the history of the Jews composed in Fez, do exist. Abraham ben rav Shelomoh Torrutiel or Ardutiel wrote such a history «in order to inform future generations the tradition from teacher to disciple from the giving of the Torah in Mount Sinai till our own day» In the third chapter he deals with the exiles from Spain in Fez. He writes about «the benefactions of God to the remnant in the kingdom of Fez... Some memory of the kings of Fez until the [time of the] just king Mullay Muhammad son of the great king Mullay Al Sheikh a pious one from the pious of the nations who welcomed the Jewish exiles from Spain...»³³.

In the work of this family we find a certain commitment to memory and writing history which does not support notions of a complete break with cultural traditions amongst the Iberian emigrants in Fez in al-Gharnati's time.

— IV —

The question of another work by Africanus, his glossary, the *Vocabularium trilingue*, is also of interest. It could be argued that this is the case if surveyed from the perspective of Christian European philology, particularly its interest in Semitic and other languages

27. Benayahu, 1993.

28. Benayahu, 1993: 13.

29. Benayahu, 1993: 14.

30. Benayahu, 1993: 21.

31. Benayahu, 1993: 25.

32. Benayahu, 1993: 29.

33. Benayahu, 1993: 20/21.

and in the comparative method. Indeed, Wolf Peter Klein's recent work on the rise of the comparative linguistic method in Christian Europe seems to be arguing for a clear border between medieval and modern: while the former had no comparative philology, the latter did - beginning with humanism and Renaissance. Medieval scholastics were interested in the logical and semantic unity of languages rather than in their material difference³⁴.

Rauchenberger points out³⁵ that medieval glossaries [the *Glossarium Latino-Arabicum* in the twelfth c.; the *Vocabulista in Arabico* of the 13th and Pedro de Alcalá's *Vocabulista aravigo en letra castellana* of 1505] are only bilingual. One may add that the comparative study of the Semitic languages would require at least two Semitic languages and that Latin-Arabic dictionaries are therefore of little relevance from this point of view. The book, produced by the collaboration between Al Gharnati and Jacob Mantino, included about 2.500 Arabic nouns. A possibly significant, additional characteristic of the manuscript concerns the Hebrew columns believed to be by Mantino himself, and it is that the hand is not the Sephardi hand which the exiles clung to and cultivated even after the expulsion, throughout the sixteenth century (and perhaps later), but, rather, the rounder, more cursive, Italianate Hebrew hand.

Jacob Mantino, the scholar of Iberian Jewish origin was (of all the numerous Jewish scholars of the Renaissance) the one who knew best how to integrate into the Christian scholarly world, according to Carpi. Carpi's research in the Archivio Notarile of the Archivio di Stato di Padova allowed him to discover four documents which attest to Al Gharnati's collaborator's banking or money-lending activities and to his being an associate of the Del Banco family in Padua. In the first, dated 1533, he is called «magister Iacob Mantinus hebreus quondam magistri Samuelis Hyspanus...». In the second he is not and in the third we find the same formula again. In the fourth, there is mention of «procurator magistri Iacop Mantini Hyspani»³⁶. This hispanicity, so visible an element in Mantino's self presentation, contrasts with the historiography, which generally presents hispanicity as a physical or biographical detail rather than an intellectual and cultural factor of weight. It is evidently an historiographical problem, rather than one of evidence, as has been seen from a reading of the notarial documents discovered by Carpi.

The historiography is large and beginning to take Mantino seriously as an intellectual and a source for the reconstruction of mind-sets, as can be seen from the return to discussions of precise, single items in the glossary in which he collaborated with al-Gharnati and in which he filled at least the first 170 entries in Hebrew and Latin. It is in the Escorial MS of the work that we find the encomium of Mantino by al-Gharnati.

34. Veltri, 2004: 5.

35. Rauchenberger, 1999: 1119.

36. See Carpi, 1989: 86 and 91-94.

In a corpus of writings as large as that on al-Gharnati, the first step is significant and can mark the directions and assumptions of the rest. Kaufmann's study of 1893³⁷, still frequently cited on these occasions, is not the first or foundational step and, as it was published in the *REJ*, it clearly follows on the article published ten years earlier in the same journal by Hartwig Derenbourg³⁸. The question which naturally arises is whether there is some element in these foundational gestures which can explain the lack of sustained attention to the hispanic component of Mantino in Mantino studies or, in other words, whether the early studies on Mantino, Africanus' associate, were not entirely «about» Mantino.

In this line of thought, the reception in Madrid of the founder's work, may be enlightening. Codera³⁹, the doyen of Arabic studies at the time, presents a report on the appearance of Hartwig Derenbourg's scholarly identifications, the Catalogue of the Arabic manuscripts in the Escorial⁴⁰. Two elements are noticeable in his peculiar presentation. One is an undercurrent of nationalism (cf. terms such as «patria» or «obras que debieran publicarse por los amantes de las glorias de cada población»), and the other a concentration on contingencies. The first is rather short sighted; instead of understanding that the Catalogue was placing the Escorial and therefore Spain on the scholarly map, he seems to give a somewhat guarded, qualified reception to the Parisian's contribution. The second is a relatively lavish concentration on almost picturesque vignettes such as the one about the throwing manuscripts out the windows of the Escorial during a fire. What is clear for our purposes, however, is that there is a choice in Hartwig Derenbourg's concentration and focus on this one Escorial manuscript (textual witness to Al-Gharnati and Mantino's collaboration) out of others. Codera's presentation makes it clear that creating categories for such selections and choices, from amongst the overabundant collection, were a constant preoccupation because the catalogue was not complete and this incompleteness or selectivity had to be justified.

Hartwig Derenbourg was the son of Joseph Derenbourg. The family name comes from a former location of the family, i.e. Derenburg, a town near Halberstadt, Saxony. From there, they moved to Offenbach, Frankfort-on-the-Main, and Mayence. Up to the

37. Kaufmann, 1893.

38. Derenbourg, 1883.

39. Codera, 1885. He also follows Nicolas Antonio in asserting that Leo Africanus had composed a grammar of Arabic for Mantino and left it in his hands. As is so frequently the case, Nicolas Antonio's information cannot be verified. Casiri had, of course, paid attention to Africanus in 1760-1770, but, in the Escorial Catalogue, he was more interested in praising or criticizing him and adding his comments on other works which were not in the Escorial, than in identifying Mantino or the relation between both or transcribing the colophon. See, for Codera's anxieties: e.g. «Derenbourg no vino á España con objeto de hacer un estudio especial de los manuscritos árabes del Escorial»; or his assertion that the Parisian produced «una refundición general de la obra de Casiri» or «Pudiendo disponer de poco tiempo». For his 'colorismo' or 'costumbrismo' cf. » habiendo sido preciso arrojar los manuscritos árabes á uno de los patios del edificio para librarlos de uno de los incendios» or «no habiendo persona inteligente, que pudiera averiguar á qué volumen pertenecía lo que andaba suelto, ...se metió á bulto donde se creyó oportuno...» In contrast, for a balanced and learned perspective see George Sarton's evaluation of *Les manuscrits arabes de l'Escorial* by H. P. J. Renaud, *Isis*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Summer, 1942), pp. 34-35.

40. Derenbourg, 1884.

age of thirteen, Joseph's education was confined exclusively to rabbinical studies. Later, Joseph entered the gymnasium in Mayence, and then attended lectures in the University of Giessen, and afterward in that of Bonn, where he studied Arabic under Freytag.

Hartwig, his son [born in Paris June 17, 1844,] attended the lycées Charlemagne and Bonaparte (or Condorcet). He studied Hebrew, Arabic, and other Semitic languages under Reinaud, Ulmann, chief rabbi of France, and under his father, in Paris; under Ewald, Bertheau, and Wüstenfeld, in Göttingen; under Fleischer and Krehl., in Leipzig. In 1866, after taking his degree in Göttingen, he was engaged at the Bibliothèque Impériale, continuing the preparation of the catalogue of Arabic manuscripts, discontinued since 1859. His father-in-law, Hermann Joseph Baer, the well-known bookseller of Frankfort-on-the-Main, placed him in 1871 at the head of the Paris branch of his house. In 1875 he was called to serve as professor of Arabic and Semitic languages to the Jewish Theological Seminary of Paris, and as instructor in Arabic grammar to the Ecole Speciale des Langues Orientales Vivantes. In April, 1879, he was called to occupy, at the latter institution, the chair of literary Arabic, which had been vacant since Reinaud's death in 1867.

In 1880 the minister of public instruction entrusted him with the investigation of the Arabic manuscripts in the Escorial and in the other libraries of Spain. On his return, Ernest Renan had Derenbourg made assistant to the commission for Semitic Inscriptions at the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres. In 1884 he was appointed professor of Arabic at the Ecole des Hautes-Études, and in 1885 professor of Islamism. In 1897, he was decorated with the cross of the Legion of Honor, and in 1900, he was elected member of the Institute (Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres). He was an honorary member of the Real Academia de la Historia in Madrid, of the Institut Égyptien in Cairo, of the Society of Biblical Archeology in London⁴¹.

For Derenbourg, then, the collaboration of the Spanish Jew and the Spanish Muslim could well be a kind of search for his own intellectual and cultural genealogies, where learning and the love of words and books counted and the precise, specific context was secondary. In his article of 1883, he drew attention to the colophon of the Escorial manuscript:

The copy transcription of this book was finished by the humble servant who composed it, John Leon of Granada, once called Al-Hassan son of Muhammad the weights officer of Fez, at the end of January of the year 24 of the Christian era, 930 of the Muslim era, in the city of Bologna, in Italy, for the use of the scholar, teacher, the illustrious physician Jacob son of Simeon, my Jewish friend.

41. Hartwig Derenbourg took interest in Jewish affairs. He was a member of the central committee of the Alliance Israélite Universelle and of the council of the Société des Études Juives, having become its president in 1890; and was vice-president of the administrative board of the École de Travail Israélite. He was also one of the founders and directors of the Grande Encyclopédie.

Derenbourg adds that Mantino had published in Bologna, in 1526, Maimonides' Introduction to the *Ethics of the Fathers* in Latin with a dedication to Guidone Rangoni. Derenbourg writes: «il etait impossible que deux hommes...vous l'un à l'enseignement l'autre à l'étude de la langue arabe ne se sentissent pas attirés l'un vers l'autre». At the same time, and significantly, Derenbourg remarks that Hurtado de Mendoza is the most likely link between Italy and the Escorial.

Today, however, another additional possibility is to see al Gharnati's collaboration with Mantino as part of a certain philological comparative tradition. To be sure, as has been seen, the precise configuration of the Mantino-Al-Gharnati project has no known precedent. Similarly it is possible, and facile, to trivialize it by seeing it as a minuscule link in a long chain that extends back as far as the Tower of Babel or cultic/linguistic practices such as the Targum. Some sense of balance requires to concentrate on the more precise and closer context of interests in philological work -Iberian, Granadine and Granadine families in Fez.

These Iberian families and scholars had their own philological, comparative tradition. Some aspects have been known for long and can be taken as read. After all, in the nineteenth century it was asserted that the most important MSS consulted by Gesenius for his work, and which he occasionally cites explicitly, included Rabbi Jonah's *Book of Roots*. So that some awareness of the Iberian philological tradition and its continuity are elementary points of departure. But other aspects are being researched today. An example could be the case of Baron.

Ishaq ben Barun was an Iberian Jewish scholar of the second half of the eleventh century and the first quarter of the twelfth. He died at the latest in 1128. His *Muazana* was composed probably before 1080 and was entitled *The book of comparison between the Hebrew and the Arabic languages*. It is particularly interesting because it is not limited to comparative lexicography but includes a comparative approach to the grammar of these Semitic languages. He was not a marginal member of the Jewish communities of Spain, although today he seems to be unknown to students of Africanus' comparative approach to Semitic languages. He was a member of the circles of the best connected celebrities of the Jewish communities of eleventh-twelfth century Spain. His poem to Moses ibn Ezra begins «accept the secret of the language of Hebrews and Arabs». It ends:

should someone ask:
 whose book is it?
 answer him:
 an ephebe's
 of the sons of the poets/princes of Spain

From a perspective grounded in the history of reading, Barun's work is interesting because it unites a consciousness of hispanicity and comparative linguistic/philological

practices. It gives us an insight into the Iberian readings of books in Arabic written by Muslims on the «desks» of Jews in eleventh century Spain. Today we can be precise about such matters and point to the specific Muslim/Arabic sources being studied by that Jewish author from Spain. Whether explicitly mentioned by title; mentioned by author without the title of the work; or not mentioned at all but revealed by modern scholarship as sources of his thought, the Iberian habits of reading are no longer a nebulous area of speculations. Barun' is only one of such scholars who took it for granted that Hebrew, Aramaic and Arabic were not to be studied in isolation⁴².

Had these attitudes to language changed radically after Las Navas de Tolosa? Research today no longer continues in the old attitudes [Bacher, Hirschfeld] of refusing to recognize the evidence from late medieval Spain i.e. the relevant period for the immediate background of the al-Gharnati- Mantino collaborative project. The recent attention to late medieval philology in the case of Profayt Duran is an example. His disciples included members of the Zarc family. In 1448 Joseph ben Judah Zarco compiled a Hebrew dictionary entitled *Baal ha Lashon* [citing Eccl 10/11]. The work, based on *Shorashim*, reminds us that the Zarc family is a case of late medieval families of Iberian exiles attracted to philological work in the Iberian Jewish traditional mode⁴³.

To be sure, a great deal remains to be done, particularly in the area of understanding questions of difference, originality and cultural significance. Similarly, there is no doubt that there is a tradition which is being followed in fifteenth century Spain. But such a «following» is selective. And the process of «opting» is a fifteenth century process. A case in point, where [like those of Ibn Yaish or the Zarc family] the manuscripts had lain unedited for long, and they were ignored by the conventional histories of grammar, is that of the Seadyah ibn Danan from Granada. He was the author of a number of philological and lexicographic works. One of these is the Hebrew biblical glossary or dictionary entitled *Book of Roots-Sefer Ha Shorashim*. He wrote his dictionary in Arabic in Hebrew characters and his language seems to reflect Andalusian Arabic. He also wrote on Aramaic but the relevant manuscript section is apparently illegible today. In some cases [five] he creates a graphic figure of the words he is discussing; only one of a number of visible signs of unconventional innovation. He finished his dictionary in Granada in 1468. But in 1480, the work was still of interest in Granada as it was being copied, possibly by a disciple, on the 23 of Av⁴⁴.

Whatever else, this trajectory shows that the Ibn Danan family of Fez descended from someone in Granada, who, at the time of formation of the cultural interests of al-Gharnati's family, Muhammad the father and Ahmed the grandfather, was seriously devoted to glossaries and to comparative Arabic/Hebrew lexicographic work. He was thus continuing, by his and his school's choices, in a specific aspect of the tradition

42. Becker, 2005; Martínez Delgado, 2006.

43. Gutwirth, 1996; Silver, 1999.

44. Ibn Danan, 1996.

of Hebrew Arabic comparative linguistic study of early Al Andalus, Southern Spain. Africanus' comparative philological interests -like those which led to his readings of al-Ghazali- do have certain conexts in fifteenth century Iberia.

— V —

Within the framework of Renaissance and humanist studies, O. Zhiri⁴⁵ recently formulated a question or rather, a research task for Al-Gharnati students⁴⁶. It concerns mainly the history of reading Al-Gharnati in France. As in the earlier influential case of English readings of Al-Gharnati [e.g. by scholars of Othello] such choices are perfectly comprehensible. And yet Al-Gharnati cannot really be transformed into a subject of English or French studies without a great deal of argument. But they may lead one to think—more relevantly—in terms of communities of readers amongst other Iberian exiles.

Amongst the sixteenth century readers of Africanus was Samuel Usque. His *Consolation for the Tribulations of the People of Israel* was published by the press of Abraham Usque in 1553 in Ferrara. The book opens with a «Dedication to the Gentlemen of the Maamad». Written in the Portuguese vernacular, it deals with the question of language. That is to say that the book presents itself as directed at, and written from, a formally organized Jewish community of Iberian exiles. A main factor here is the establishment of the Inquisition in Portugal in the 1530's and 1540's. Long ago, two main general features were noticed in the book: martyrology and the pastoral. The reading of Leo Africanus comes in a passage which shows traces of Varthema also⁴⁷.

The passage comes in a section where the shepherd Ycabeo addresses the shepherds Zicareo and Numeo, after having led their cattle to a luxuriant plain that lies beneath a slope. There, while resting beneath a green poplar and watching the sheep as they graze, Ycabeo narrates a series of misfortunes. After articulating a list of sins, Ycabeo, nevertheless, considers the punishment excessive, as it is not paralleled in other cases of sinful peoples, such as pagan Rome [p. 219] It continues with Asia, [p. 220] and Africa [p. 221] but not America. The source-passage in Africanus may well be the following in the manuscript⁴⁸: «Del Diserto de Libia, Capitolj quattro. Cap 1º del deserto dj Zanaga;

45. Zhiri, 1991: 9.

46. Zhiri, 1991: 9. «Comment cette oeuvre a ete lue, comprise et utilisee par les auteurs qui, au XVIe siecle...y ont puisé en partie la matiere de leurs textes...Quels sont les traits que Leon a imprimes sur le visage de l'Afrique tel que l'ont dessine et peut être invente les auteurs europeens de la Renaissance?»

47. Usque, 1965. Dialogue 3, p. 221: «In Africa the people commit turpitudes beyond all human comprehension. What can be said of the peoples who live in the deserts in Lybia, Zanhaga, Zuenziga, Targa, Lemta and Berdoa who are called Numidians by the Romans save that they are hell incarnate, for they spend all their days in malefaction, pursuing robbing and killing? And above all, they are not Mohammedans or Jews or Christians nor do they have any religion or offer prayer to anything; rather they live like the beasts in the field. Yet despite this, they have a kingdom, they possess territory and dominion of their own, and they do not wander in alien lands...The Africans in the province of Hea have the same evil character, O Lord on high. They live on the continual robberies they commit against peaceful wayfarers. And their deeds are so wicked that they often despoil innocent passers-by of their lives.»

48. Rauchenberger, 1999: 406 (from the MS 465r-475r); see also, Rauchenberger, 1999: 370. Anhang 2, (ap MS fol.41v and 43 r): «Dellj Vitij & cose nephande che hanno lj Affricani...sonno homini bestialj jdiotj & ignorantj in ogni

Cap 2° Del Deserto de Guenziga; Cap 3° Del Deserto Di Targha; Cap 4° Del Deserto de Lamta Cap 5° Del deserto dj Berdeoa...»

The invocation of Leo Africanus in Usque's third Dialogue echoes that in [p. 43] Dialogue 1, which opens the whole book with six apostrophes, followed by three apostrophes to large geographic areas-continents- to culminate in the motherland. That itself is subdivided into smaller geographic features [Temple, festivals, waters of Jordan, fountain of Idumea]. This procedure is followed in the next paragraph, where Europe is similarly dissected [Italy, France, Germany, England, Spain.]

O Africa, mountainous rugged and scorched, pregnant with the finest gold, cloaked with sweet and handsome palms and sprinkled with milk and honey you keep your children happy with buried wealth and the savory foods of nature.

Usque's citation from Africanus in the third Dialogue is, thus, a return to the comparison between the nations and the people of Israel in the opening of the book, i.e. the first Dialogue. It has been so successfully integrated into the general structure and style that it is somewhat besides the point to argue that like a preacher, he uses literature known to his readers to corroborate his thesis. The use of a list from a table of contents [in Leo Africanus] which had little to do with history and theology, to produce such seamless poetic prose is the noteworthy aspect. It also throws into question the definitive quality of studies on Usque by reopening the possibility of a secondary or intermediate source.

What is the cultural context of Usque's investment in creative, literary 'geography' in a modern language? This is of interest not only because of his use of Africanus. It is also of interest because it appears to be one of the innovative features of Usque's *Consolations*. It contrasts with the «chronologies and events» aspects. These aspects have various parallels which have long since been noticed, studied and used for putative source studies. What are the possible cultural tradition within which we can inscribe Usque's decisions to invest in reading and assimilating creatively such geographic materials as those in al-Gharnati's work?

The procedure of *amplificatio* or *dilatatio* by apostrophe was recommended already in the medieval rhetorical manuals. The enumeration of toponyms also deserves some comment, as poetic geography is a frequent feature of Usque's book. Africa, for example, is mentioned a number of times as has been seen.

Leaving aside Petrarch's use of toponyms and geographic matter in his *Africa*, he also invested in geography in his more frequently read and influential work in the vernacular. In the *Canzoniere*'s poem [L] «Ne la stagion che 'l ciel rapido inchina», Pe-

scientia & sonno ladrij & Assaxinj & vivono como le Bestie salvatiche Hominj senza Fede... » and see n. 1599 and 1600 on *bestialita/civilta* which Rauchenberger links to the «guter maghrebinischer Tradition» of ibn Khaldun, p. 371 se also p. 228ff.

trarch uses enumeration of toponyms in e.g. «e lasci Ispagna dietro a le sue spalle/e Granata, e Marrocco e le Colonne...»⁴⁹ In his «Italia mia...» [CXXVIII, line 5] we find «... ch'e' miei sospir sian quali/ spera 'l Tevero e l'Arno/e 'l Po.» In 1438, in the Prologue to his *Coronacion*, Juan de Mena said that he came «not from Ethiopia with its brilliant stones, not from Syria, with its fine gold, nor from Africa, with its monstrous beasts, but from your [i.e. the King's] knightly Cordoba».⁵⁰

As in so many other cases [e.g. icy fire] the assumption of a purely Petrarchan lineage for certain poetic and cultural practices in romance language texts, while commonsensical, may need some qualification. The enumeration of toponyms in Iberian poetry in Hebrew, while apparently unstudied, is not completely unevicenced.

Almost at random one thinks of the *Mashal Ha-Qadmoni*: a thirteenth century Hebrew work of literature, rather than a chronicle, by an author associated with Guadalajara: Ishaq ben Shelomoh Ibn Sahula. In the third section of his *Mashal* there is a story in rhymed prose which begins⁵¹ «They say there was a man in the land of Togremah... dweller of villages... hamlets without walls». Don Vidal Benveniste, in the fourteenth- fifteenth centuries, shows more marked affinities with this practice as he begins his rhymed prose composition with the mention of toponyms: «There was a man in the land of Nod... he came from the family of Buz [contempt] from the land of Hefer [shame]...».⁵² Bonafed begins his cycle of rhymed prose –a composition against the community of Saragossa: «as I was traveling in the hills of Gilboa I found a great city»⁵³. Also in the fifteenth century, Mattityahu begins his *Ahituw*⁵⁴: «They say that in one of the far islands... past the land of Havilah...» and another section of the *Ahituw* begins: «And Salmon crossed the whole land of Sidon and he came to the Mount of Siy'on and the land of Sevilla to the [river] Shihhor and the [river] Jordan went back, and he went as far as Beth Horon...». The progression to more complex literary geographies in Post-Petrarchan poetry seems probable.

Nevertheless, for an Iberian exile in Italy such as al-Gharnati or Usque, other explanations are also possible. Another Iberian in Italy, writing before Usque, was Antonio de Guevara, whose *Epistolas familiares* had an extensive readership as may be gathered from its editorial history. One composition is entitled: «Disputa muy famosa que el autor hizo con los judíos de Napoles en la qual les declara los altos misterios de

49. Petrarca, 1957.

50. Cited by Rico, 1990: 89, who remarks that if the late medieval authors had to multiply the allusions to Greco-Latin geography they used *De imagine mundi*.

51. Schirman, 1954: 377 and 381. Another poem begins «There was a man in Kefar Hanan/», another begins: «there was a pleasant youth on Mount Zion» [p. 387]; another begins: «there was an old man in the land of Sidon»[p. 400] another: «they say that the city of Luz was great and powerful» [p. 405] Ishaq b Abraham Ha Gorni sings [p. 478] «The city of Arles is a city of fortitude from the day it was founded». Another poem of his is an invective against Draguignan, whose rubric, a short verse, reads: «and to Draguignan he said: the hills of Draguignan let them not have dew, let them not have rain...» [p. 481].

52. Schirman, 1954: 603.

53. Schirman, 1954: 650.

54. Schirman, 1954: 654.

la Trinidad». It is printed after an epistle dated Valladolid, January 26, 1540. It begins: «honrados Rabis y obstinados Iudios.» It refers to «la ultima disputa que yo y vosotros honrados Rabis hezimos el sabado passado.»

Mas ha ya mas de mil y quinientos anos que no teneys Rey a quien obedecer sacerdote a quien vos encomendar templo a do orar sacrificios que ofrecer profetas a quien creer ni aun ciudad a do os amparar...

...De manera que solo el nombre teneys de Iudios y la libertad de esclauos. No ay gente en el mundo por barbara que sea que no tenga algun lugar a do se acoja y algun caudillo que los defienda como lo tenian *los Garamantas en Asia los Mastageras cabe la India y aun los Negros en Etiopia* sino soys vosotros tristes cuytados que a do quiera soys cautivos⁵⁵.

The figure of topographic listings serves here a polemical purpose, while it rhetorically amplifies and dilates the concept of «gente». The adaptation of al-Gharnati by Usque is thus not merely a bibliographical curiosity but touches on one of the mainstream trends in post-Petrarchan modernity: that of the attitudes to and representations of space at the beginnings of modernity.

— VI —

A privileged genre in the representations of space is, of course, the travel narrative. A constant problem in travel narratives —such as Al-Gharnati's— is the extent to which such writings are the product of the experience and observation of the traveler / writer. It is one of the main concerns in scholarship on travel books. It has been raised frequently in the case of such sections in the work of Leo Africanus as may be confronted with other evidence. But such independent evidence is limited, and the question therefore arises as to what is the status of the other sections of the narrative, those for which we have no external, independent, parallel sources: can one accept them unproblematically and uncritically or could they reflect sources other than personal experience. Zemon Davis, for example, asserts that Africanus.

was also curious about matters of every day...*in the Atlas mountains he heard tales of the marvelous Sarmak plant which, when eaten, enhanced man's prowess at sexual intercourse. Indeed, men had an erection and young women lost their virginity just by passing over the plant (Al-Wazzan had his doubts, saying that the story was made up to conceal the penetration of a real penis)*⁵⁶.

55. See Gutwirth, 2004. *Tristes cuytados* is obviously an echo of the *Romance del prisionero*.

56. Gutwirth, 2004: 54.

In Ramusio's edition of the *Descrittione* the story is, in fact, the culmination of the whole book:

Quest'altra e similmente una radice... la qua como dicono quelle genti, ha virtu di confortare il membro dell'uomo... Ne voglio tacer ancora quello che dicono tutti gli abitatori del monte Atlante, che si hanno truovate molte gioveni, di quelle cha vanno pascendo gli animali per questo monte, che hanno perso la loro virginita non per altro accidente se non per aver orinato sopra detta radice: alli quali per giuoco io respondeva creder esser vero cioche dicevan di detta radice, e appresso che se ne trovavan di tanto avvelenate che non solamente facevan perder la virginita, ma ancora enfiarli tutto il corpo.

Philology and pharmacology, presumably, allow the learned editors of the recent edition of Ramusio's *Delle navigationi et viaggi*⁵⁷ to unhesitantly identify, without references or evidence, the «Surag radice»: «Radice della Atriplex dimorphostegius, una varieta di Atriplice detta volgarmente in Nord Africa *zobb el-ard*, pene della terra, o *zobbb er rih*, pene del vento». Evidently, most readers find that such passages are unmediated reflections of experienced reality. Is this the only possibility?

In his *Golden Bough*, Frazer⁵⁸, when discussing the «Myth and Ritual of Attis the Phrygian», refers to Attis' mother, Nana. She was a virgin who conceived by putting a ripe almond or a pomegranate in her bosom; in the Phrygian cosmogony, an almond figured as the father of all things, perhaps «because its delicate lilac blossom is one of the first heralds of the spring, appearing on the bare boughs before the leaves have opened.» Dioscorides' *Materia Medica* refers to a number of drugs exerting an action on the embryo; in some cases, miscarriage occurs when the pregnant woman steps, perhaps accidentally, over a particular substance.

In a genre widely cultivated in medieval Europe, Marian miracles, there is a type, indexed by A. Poncelet in 1904⁵⁹ as «The pregnant abbess». This is his miracle number 4, and has more than 20 occurrences listed. What is relevant for our purposes here is that one of these miracle collections was the source for the thirteenth century Spanish version. It occurs in Castile, La Rioja, in one of the central works in its vernacular literature and the first with a known author: the *Milagros* of Berceo.

... la abadesa cadió una vegada,
fizo una locura qe es mucho vedada;
pisó por su ventura yerva fuert enconada,
quando bien se catido fallóse embargada (507).

57. Ramusio, 1985: 460.

58. Frazer, 1900: 347, XXXIV.

59. The Index of miracles will be found in *Analecta Bollandiana*, 21 (1902), 241-360. A bibliography of French versions is provided in Adgar, 1982. There, the pregnant abbess is number 49.

The appearance in Al Gharnati's description of Africa of the «piso...yerba» motif is not a purely literary question but, as has been seen, it affects the broader, unresolved problem of the character of the historiography. The historical question concerns the status of the sources. There is no need to posit a lost textual *vorlage* for the *Descrittione*. As early as Menéndez Pelayo, attention was paid to oral transmission and culture. One example would be the case of

En mi huerto hay una yerba
blanca, rubia y colorada;
la dama que pisa en ella
della queda embarazada⁶⁰.

In other cases, as in the story of Al Gharnati, the «yerba» had a name. Thus we find an example in the *Coplas* collected by Duran:

Hay una yerba en el campo
que se llama la borraja;
toda mujer que la pisa
luego se siente preñada⁶¹.

The Sephardi oral tradition preserved a number of versions of such songs in Judeo-Spanish. Devoto has produced a wide ranging investigation of antecedents and analogues—including Classical ones—to the «stepping on herbs» motif.⁶² In his «La abadesa embargada por el pie», Miguel Garci-Gómez follows Devoto but argues that the element of «stepping» and the attention to the foot or the leg is at least as significant as the universal magic pregnancy. What this means for us is that the Al-Gharnati text contains the various themes or motifs which are familiar from oral and textual Iberian traditions; the [implied] foot, the herb, a name for the herb. What is particularly noteworthy is the jocular, skeptical attitude in Al-Gharnati. That too is traditional in the Iberian evidence. Finally it raises the question of oral and textual sources other than experience as well as the acceptance of his composition as a «primary source».

— VII —

One of the features of Al-Gharnati's vision of Africa in his travel narrative has to do with the difference between town and country and, in the case of towns, with his attention to walls, to inscriptions in general and to inscriptions on walls in particular and their significance. Michael Greenhalgh, who, in a Spoleto paper, has drawn attention to

60. Menéndez Pelayo, 1908. Cited by Devoto, 1974 and Garci-Gómez, 1989.

61. Cited by Devoto, 1974 and Garci-Gómez, 1989 from Duran's collection.

62. Devoto, 1974; Garci-Gómez, 1989; Boreland, 1983; Fidalgo Francisco, 1995; Dutton, 1980.

this, in the context of his study of Spolia in the fortifications of Turkey, Syria and North Africa⁶³, notes the index entry of al-Gharnati's *Descrittione* where this theme appears as «Romans- destroyers of memory» «Romani, destruttori delle memorie» [p. 44] and cites (amongst others) the following passage from the Ramusio edition:

quando I Romani, che fur loro nimici, dominarono quei luoghi, essi, come e costume de vincitori, e per maggior lor disprezzo, levassero tutti i lor titoli e le lor lettere, e vi mettesero I loro, per levar infieme con la dignita de gli Africani ogni memoria, e sola vi rimanesse quella del popolo Romano... Non e adunque da maravigliarsi che la lettera Africana si perduta...

On a first reading, there would seem to be little doubt that this reflects a «modern» sensibility and poetic preoccupation. Petrarch, horrified by the misery of the people of Rome, writes about its former greatness and contrasts it with its present decadence. His numerous followers include Cola di Rienzo or Poggio, who share this general preoccupation with ruins. In Du Bellay, the pilgrim who searches for Rome in Rome will only find the tomb of its walls and hills; only the Tiber remains, no longer watering but crying. Baltasar de Castiglione's famous lines of 1529, two years after the Sack, read:

Superbi colli, e voi sacre ruine
‘che’l nome sol di Roma anchor tenete;
ahi che reliquie miserande hauete
de tante anime, eccelse e pellegrine⁶⁴.

In an Iberian early modern context, there is the question of the antecedents to famous ruin poems. The memory of Quevedo (and not only Garcilaso) is inevitable «Miré los muros de la patria mía, si un tiempo fuertes ya desmoronados». If we wish to lay bare the layers common to both Iberian writers on ruins, we have to remember, with Bruce Wardropper⁶⁵ that, if for the rest of Europe, Rome was the site of ruins par excellence, in Spanish «ruin literature,» it is Carthage —with Garcilaso de la Vega's ‘A Boscán desde la Goleta’ (1535)— that begins the tradition which informs Quevedo's masterpiece.

There is more than ruins and remains in the concern with «dignita, despresso, memoria» which lends particular poignancy to Al-Gharnati's passage. There is, perhaps —in the refusal to see Rome as the main site for contemplation of ruins and in the contrary emphasis on Rome as responsible for ruins— a polemical riposte by Al Gharnati. And yet, the pathos is present and reminiscent of the Petrarchan tradition and its eary

63. <http://64.233.183.104/search?q=cache:zHbKoMPnPfkJ:rubens.anu.edu.au/new/books_and_papers/spoleto.paper/spoleto.rtf+africanus+Michael+Greenhalgh>.

64. See on this Bastiaensen, 2001.

65. Wardropper, 1969; Vranich, 1980.

modern tributaries [Castiglione, Du Bellay, Quevedo and a multitude of others]. But the romanticism of ruins is transcended in the «modern» interest in ancient languages, in the search for inscriptions in those languages and noting the absence, presence or rarity of epigraphic material and its significance for the study or knowledge of the ancient language. The chapter in which these discussions are framed is not explicitly linked to ruins. It is a chapter on alphabets: «Lettere usate da gli Africani».

Another possibility is to recall other Iberian traditions. In Jewish culture the ruins of the Temple and its Wall are, of course, a central feature and, as in Africa, a reminder of Roman destruction. But in Italy, in the years immediately preceding Al Gharnati's arrival, there was another author, also an immigrant from the Iberian peninsula who had also contemplated ruins and searched for inscriptions and written about them in the context of philological/linguistic inquiries.

Moses ben Shem Tov ibn Habib's Hebrew Treatise, *Darke No`am* [CVI, I, 17] *Paths of Pleasantness* includes a story about the Hebrew inscriptions of Murviedro in an ancient tombstone. He was shown them before 1486⁶⁶. The treatise in which he discusses them is not a description of Spain and its monuments, nor is it a poem on ruins, but a grammatical, rhetorical or Hebrew poetics textbook. The interest of the inscriptions is related to the question of measured or metrical Hebrew poetry and its antiquity and whether the Bible is a literary text. Their study spawned a long line of translations, citations and discussions which affected the thought on, and attitudes towards, the status of literature in Europe in the early modern period⁶⁷. It still reverberated as late as the nineteenth century, at least before Neubauer was able to decipher and read a medieval Hispano-Hebraic inscription rather than a biblical one⁶⁸. They were then still being presented as a specimen of the ruins of antiquity by the Reverend George Margoliouth⁶⁹ «A Hebrew epitaph ... This is the grave of Adoniram, the servant of King Solomon, who came to collect the tribute, and died on the day...» or (p. 23) «a large stone near the gate of the citadel» in Murviedro, «still retains on the front, two lines in the Hebrew language and characters...The sepulcher of Adoniram, the servant of King Solomon...» (p. 25) But these discussions, although they show the modernity of such focusing and such objects of interest, are later than Africanus' writings, as are Garcilaso and Quevedo. Ibn Habib's text, however, *precedes* Africanus' meditations. It was written —as in the case of Al-Gharnati— as a consequence of travel. The two authors were Iberians in Italy. While Africanus searched for lost letters, Ibn Habib could be described as searching for the lost vowels which form the basis of the Hebrew metrical prosodic system.

66. Gutwirth, 1998.

67. For the Spanish *fortuna* of the Murviedro inscriptions see Gutwirth, 1993a; Kugel 1983, Endnotes pp. 1-1; Tatu, 2006; Cantera y Millás, 1956, (numbers 210-211 and 212).

68. Neubauer, 1868: 432.

69. Margoliouth, 1845: 22.

— VIII —

According to the evidence, after the members of the Cabrera family introduced him to Rome and the curia, Al-Gharnati came into contact with a number of people but, as is usually noted, most significant were his contacts with the «Orientalist» patrons and clients. It is their doing that he was accepted and received with some relative warmth. Without them, and without such fundamental attitudes, it would seem, his creative work would not have materialized. Without such creative work there would be no «field» of al-Gharnati studies. They —the patrons— could therefore be seen as significant factors in the «Africanus phenomenon». One could discuss imaginatively their motivations [economical, political, missionary, apologetics, etc.] but, in the evidence, the area of language and translation seems to be paramount. So is the factor of innovation. That is to say that, if we wish to understand the interest which led to Al-Gharnati's presence and acceptance and, finally, to his creativity/work and its character, we have to understand something about the drive towards innovation and modernity in the background to the Granadine. This implies attention to the image such individuals had of language, of innovation, attention to the sources and where to look for them.

The idea of the «new» appears in a number of medieval and Renaissance texts authored in the Iberian peninsula. Studied some decades ago⁷⁰, they seem to have left little mark on Africanus' studies. Of the extensive corpus of Iberian ideas on «the new», one may recall a few, collected by Maravall, including one fourteenth century exponent: Don Juan Manuel. Although he affirms that «sabiduria» cannot be new; that there is not a thing in the world that «ya dicha non sea» he also formulates other attitudes in his *Libro del caballero et del escudero*. Thus, knowledge should be and is increased —«acrescenta»— by writing; this will lead to knowledge being taken forward: «mas levadas adelante». In the fifteenth century, Enrique de Villena represents the need to find a means of expressing the difference from antiquity felt by hispanophones, when he introduces into the language the concept of modernity c.1417. In July 1488, the Spanish ambassador to England, doctor Puebla, expresses the difference between the culture of Spain and others in his assertion that the latter do not like «novedades». In the realm of the law, the Cortes of 1390 ask for new laws, reviving Alfonso X favourable attitude to *ius novum*.

The setting of Al-Gharnati's reception is, of course, post-Petrarchan Italy. As Ottavio di Camillo has emphasized, in a letter written from Vaucluse 1344-6 to Giovanni Anchiseo, Petrarch mentions that he had asked correspondents in Spain to search for ancient texts. Di Camillo also invokes, at the opening of his study of humanism in Spain⁷¹, the assertion of Oskar Paul Kristeller —in the framework of the European diffusion of Italian Humanism— about the great quantity of *quattrocento* manuscripts he had found in Spanish libraries and archives. The image of the Iberian peninsula as storehouse of

70. Maravall, 1983.

71. Di Camillo, 1976.

learning, knowledge or remains of the past, becomes clear. The image of Al-Gharnati could hardly have been unaffected by this. As Rauchenberger points out, the arrival of Africanus coincided chronologically with the return from Spain (where he had searched for texts and translations) of the doyen of Roman orientalists, Egidio da Viterbo, on 6/July, 1519. Africanus would be working on the results of this Spanish venture in 1525⁷².

This could easily be confused with the question of whether Viterbo was concerned with the first translation of the Quran or not. The study of the history of Christian scholarship in fifteenth and sixteenth century Rome shows time and again—in the case of Semitic languages such as Hebrew and Aramaic—that the search for «firsts» is not always the key to the character of the field. Frequently we find that the originality lies in gestures and directions which are not amenable to such clear cut, bookselling or bibliographical standards. We have seen this in the case of «dictionaries» or comparative lexicography. It is the case in other areas too. The understanding of the translations of Aramaic-texts into Hebrew by Fargi-Mithridates i.e. the rise of Christian Kabbalah, to take a random example, has more to do with questions of a passive acceptance and contrasting active elaboration, than with clear cut impenetrabilities of texts and languages as Scholem's seminal work began to point out⁷³. The reason why the convert from the lands of the Crown of Aragon, Flavius Mithridates succeeded, where predecessors did not, is related, as Wirszubsky's analysis⁷⁴ showed, not to an hermetic barrier between Aramaic, Hebrew and Latin in the Middle Ages, but, rather, to a non-bibliographical quality which cannot be reduced to «firsts»: an «excess» or special and consistent effort in the translations for Pico della Mirandola. The *Sermo de passione Domini* may be briefly mentioned because its date is relatively early—Good Friday 1481—and it shows the interest of its public in the philological innovations in the field of Semitic [and possibly of African languages (cf. the question of «Chaldean»)] and their practical applications. The public in question (that of Flavius Mithridates' *Sermo*) is the papacy and curia in Rome. The question of African languages (Chaldean) is raised there. That is also the public of Leo Africanus decades later. The comprehension of the Roman reception of the convert Africanus in 1518 may, thus, benefit from attention to the reception of the convert Mithridates in 1481.

Our conclusion, however, is that in the case of the linguistic interests and directions of the «godfathers» of Al-Gharnati, some effort may be made in distinguishing between different stages in the progress and development of different language studies while acknowledging their common ground. In 1520's Rome, the stages of the field of the study of say, Yiddish and that of, say, Syriac are not identical. Nevertheless, both coincide chronologically and topographically because of the coincidence of Aegidius da Viterbo's patronage of both Levita (who lived at his house for thirteen years after

72. Zemon, 2006: 71.

73. Scholem, 1954.

74. Mithridates, 1963.

1509) and bar Abraham⁷⁵. To be sure, the reconstructions of the conversations between Al-Gharnati and Levita are speculative. The notion that all massoretic studies (one of Levita's most publicized interests) per se have some kind of heterodox or radical quality, which forms the basis for this argument of affinity between Levita and Al-Gharnati, may be laid to rest. They are some of the most traditional and conventional aspects of reading in Jewish communities.

But the underlying common ground in Renaissance philology does seem to exist⁷⁶. The personal contacts are also accepted. No one doubts that, like Levita the Yiddishist, Africanus also had contacts with Egidio da Viterbo in those very years and place. Nor is the fact of his coincidence with the Maronite Syriac scholar Elias bar Abraham in any way polemical; Elias transcribed Syriac texts for Africanus' patron, Aegidio da Viterbo, for Alberto Pio and for Bernardino de Carvajal.

This brings us to the problematic nature of the modernity of such interests among the clients or scholars in receipt of patronage in Al-Gharnati's circles. Indeed, reading Timm's recent analysis⁷⁷ of the field of «*Ashkenaz drey*», the relevant field for understanding Levita, one is struck by the many parallels between different linguistic, philological fields, sometimes touching on precise specificities. Thus, as in the cases discussed before, Timm points out that the usual surveys —let alone Kukenheim— are unreliable, because the field of this area of Yiddish is in «flux», as she puts it, and this is related to frequent discoveries of previously unstudied manuscripts. In some cases, this is directly linked to the relations between catalogues and literary, linguistic or philological surveys. Misidentifications and lack of identifications in catalogues mean that manuscripts are not studied and therefore they are not discussed in the ensuing literary histories and surveys which must therefore be constantly revised. One of her main examples is that of a discovery based on the deficiencies of E. N. Adler's *Catalogue*⁷⁸. Here one should note that Adler himself recognized and excused these, invoking the First World War. The fact that patronage is reflected in the field of Yiddisch (as it was in the other fields mentioned above) leads to the following statements about work such as that of Africanus' contemporary, Levita:

Schon das bisher Gesagte duerfte keinen Zweifel daran lassen, das wir einvier-tel Jahrhunderte italo-jiddischer Literatur blutete nicht vom geistigen Klima der italienischen Renaissance trennen koennen-wobei ich in dem Begriff Renaissance bewusst die Breite und Unscharfe voraussetze, die er durch Burckhardtsche Akzentuirungen und nachburckhardtsche Umakzentuirungen allmaehlich gewonnen hat [p. 167]

75. Secret, 1964 and 1959; Masonen, 2002.

76. See Zemon, 2006. Karl H. Dannenfeldt, 1955, touches lightly on Leo Africanus and also on Syriac when he surveys the knowledge of Arabic among Renaissance humanists. Bisaha, 2004.

77. Timm, 2000.

78. Adler, 1921.

On such a basis, one may note other, non personal/biographical parallels: that of Al Gharnati's evidenced and underlying belief in prosody as a decorous and interesting subject for writing, could indeed be compared to Levita's. This comparison is not obvious: it needs some awareness of Levita's attitudes to the study and practice of prosody. This is especially the case after Harshav's work on the phenomenon of the creation of accentual iambs in European poetry and their first employment in an Yiddisch romance in Italy in 1508-9⁷⁹ or after Timm's analysis of the precise prosodic structure of Levita's poetic work —particularly the link between hexasyllabic verse and male/female rhyme patterns— in the context of both the Germanic and the Semitic language components of Levita's poetic oeuvre and its significance.

Da Viterbo, as mentioned, returned from Spain at the same time (1518) as Al-Gharnati was being converted and his projects there had included a translation of the Quran. Its Spanish character had to do with historical reality: the biographical data and the location of the translator from Arabic, who was not Italian. It is also a reenactment of fifteenth century Segovian setting of priorities⁸⁰. It could also be linked to da Viterbo's apparent belief that Spain was particularly apt for such philological work, but it transcended that. What needs emphasis is that in Spain, the translation of Arabic texts —e.g. into the vernacular— had intensified in the late middle ages as they had not elsewhere. Leaving aside the *Poema de Yusuf*, the *Historia de los amores de Paris y Viana*⁸¹ was of interest to the mudejar reading public of [Hispano-Arabic] *aljamiado* texts no less than to the public of Yiddish texts⁸². In brief, the association of modernity with Italy leads to the search for a context heavily biased towards Italy. The empirical evidence, however, suggests that, in the case of language studies, interest in the remains of the past, attention to other religions, cultures and lands, such hermetic borders are no longer tenable. This means that, again, the Iberian context leads to questioning the conventional oppositions between medieval and modern.

Attention to the evidence on networks, circles or contacts adduced above is by no means necessary only in the case of Africanus' patron- Aegidio Da Viterbo. It is also necessary to understand other (less repeatedly discussed) patrons of Africanus, such as Carvajal. Such attention is particularly comprehensible given the intensity of patronage studies today.

— IX —

Carvajal was the kind of person who would place faith on birth, family and biography as a factor in knowledge and career. Born in Plasencia in 1455, he was the son of don Francisco López de Carvajal, *señor* de Torrejón el Rubio. His uncle, don Juan de Carvajal, had been created Cardinal and bishop of the Placentine diócesis in 1446, by

79. Harshav, 1964.

80. Cabanelas, 1949.

81. Galmes de Fuentes, 1970.

82. Timm, 1996; Baumgarten, 1987.

Eugene IV, and his nephew's career is explained by nepotism. Bernardino de Carvajal was bishop of Astorga, Badajoz, Cartagena and Sigüenza from 1495 to 1511. He figures prominently in early print history because of his orations or sermons, such as the *Ora-tio in die Circumcisionis habita* or the *Sermo in commemoratione victoriae Bacensis*, where he shows his awareness of, and appreciation for, the hispanic tradition of «*Ora-tions*». He was a clearly evidenced patron of Al Gharnati and there are some aspects of his circles which may, therefore, be of interest to students of Leo Africanus, his protege. To be sure, Bataillon⁸³ had already raised the question of conversos' role in the mes-sianic atmosphere which was the background of Carvajal and da Viterbo, but he also discussed the contradictions between reform [inspired by the Hebrew prophets?] and [converso?] messianism on the one hand and occasional anticonverso expressions in, say, da Viterbo. The notion that Spaniards are motivated by a (medieval?) religious zeal and Italians by modern humanist interest seems to be not too far removed. The ques-tion of innovation and access to languages gives us an alternative perspective which is possibly less contradictory. But is there any evidence to suggest such cultural, linguistic motivations in the behaviour of al-Gharnati's patron —i.e. someone usually seen in terms of apocalypse and messianism or purely political intrigues?

In this search for evidence one may recall the character of these circles. The Iberian converso Gratia Dei, like the convert Africanus and the Maronite Syriac scholar, all had some special linguistic ability. All three were documented in Carvajal's circles. In addition, more attention might be paid to the contents of the work dedicated to Carvajal by Joannes Baptista de Gratia Dei: *Liber de confutatione Hebraicae sectae*⁸⁴ Indeed, the work, published c. 1500, argued by implication that the translations were not suf-ficient and that there were «figures» and that Talmud and Kabbalah recognize the value of words, syllables and letters. That is to say that, in Carvajal's entourage, a Spanish converso knows that what is of interest to the (potential) patron is not merely a vague version or translation but the precise «words, syllables and letters» of the Hebrew lan-guage⁸⁵. The visions of Carvajal's life which center careerism, apocalypticism and politics —both secular and ecclesiastic— do not prepare us for this. Then, again, while no one has doubted the historicity of Carvajal's relation with Africanus, the results of recent research on Carvajal are not prominent in Africanus studies. That is why it may be use-ful to recall that the discoveries of recent decades support our emphases on the more intellectual, theological, but also language-related aspects of his profile.

83. Bataillon, 1950.

84. Secret, 1964: 79.

85. The case of the Complutensian Polyglot as a factor is again a question of historiography, institutional background of its readers and students and, also, «traditions» which may need to be disentangled to achieve some kind of accurate idea about the different factors in the development of Semitic studies in the sixteenth century but also about their recogni-tion by the historiographic traditions. Thus, the extent to which Cardinal Ximenes project, the Biblia Poliglota —whose photographs might also show «columns» like Giustiniani's— was leading, innovative and influential, or one of «follow-ing» is not always clear in the usual histories of philology.

Firstly, one may attend to a *comensal* of Carvajal: the Licenciado Torralba⁸⁶. To understand what this means, one simply needs to recall or reread *Don Quixote*, where, in ch. 41, he is made the protagonist of a story and presented as a witch, magician and necromancer, but, mostly, as an air traveler. Torralba had been born [1485-90?] in Deza (Soria), where his father had worked in the administration of the estates of the duke de Medinaceli. He spent more than a decade in Rome.

From our perspective here we should like to emphasize only a few points. Firstly: the Hebrew name of the familiar spirit; secondly: the tradition- in fifteenth century Castilian Christian *romance* texts- of writing about and expressing the belief in, the nominal component of magic [Villena]; thirdly: the belief —also expressed in Christian *romance* texts— in the particular power of Hebrew -language «names» ; fourthly: the notion that angelical onomastics had to be both, theophorous and appropriate to their mission - which was unitary or singular rather than plural. The manuscript's testimonies make it abundantly clear that the angel was not circumscribed to one activity. At the same time «çequiël» cannot be dissociated from Ezequiël and the chariot [Ezekiel I:12]. And they went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went] and the associations of «chariot» which include travel. In other words, the miraculous travel is as conventional as the familiar spirits; the belief in the power of 'names' [= Hebrew language «named» angels, demons or familiar spirits] is what deserves attention in Carvajal's network and entourage.

Goñi's work, for example, makes it clear that Carvajal student's days at Salamanca were significant. His teacher, before he obtained his bachelor's degree in 1472, was one of the most noted fifteenth century theologians, Pedro de Osma. The relations between teacher and disciple were far from perfunctory: Pedro de Osma names him as his replacement during absences from 1475 and onwards. Goñi draws attention to his activities in the area of oratory in Rome and their power in the age of orations. This is particularly the case in the c. six orations/sermons by Carvajal which have survived. He analyzes the arguments in terms of politics and theology but also emphasizes Ciceronianism in his rhetoric, where his superiority to Guilelmus de Perrerris «es patente»⁸⁷ To be sure, neither Pedro de Osma nor Carvajal were oriented «purely» towards philology and Carvajal defended the donation of Constantine against Valla. But the interest in language and rhetoric in the diplomat's culture is also a component.

As neglected as the educational background of Leo Africanus' godfather / patron and as neglected as the beliefs and personalities of members of his network —such as Gratia Dei and Torralba— is the figure of Arcángel de Madriñano and the work of Vartema. The *Itinerario* of Ludovico Vartema was printed in 1510 at the press of Stephano Guillireti in Rome. It contained a travel narrative which became very popular [c. 37

86. Torralba is no newcomer to scholarly research. For a perspective on Torralba see Gutwirth, 2010.

87. Goñi Gaztambide, 1992: 105.

printings between 1510 and 1600]. In 1511, Arcángel de Madriñano⁸⁸, a Cistercian of Spanish origin was charged by the Cardinal, Africanus' patron, with the mission of translating the *Itinerary* into Latin. We know that Arcángel de Madriñano lived in Milan and that he was the author of two other works; the *Itinerary* of Portugal and a biography of the Lombard marshall Trivulcio⁸⁹, the *Res gestae loannis iacobi Trivultii*, as well as the prologue to the translation of Vartema. He mentions his wish to edit a contemporary history of France. The prologue by Madriñano is a dedication in which he expresses his gratitude to Carvajal, the patron of al-Gharnati.

We can interpret these new data as illuminating, again, the activities and interests of Al-Gharnati's Iberian patron. He selects books which deal with travel to the Orient; he is particularly aware of the question of reading public and language; he searches and selects translators, organizes translations. All of this takes place about seven years before Africanus arrives in Rome. A number of other humanists refer to his patronage or write dedications to Carvajal: Paulo Pompilio, Bernardino de Bustos, Benedicto Silvio, Alejandro Celadonio, Fausto Magdalena, Hugolino Verino, Cristiano Canaulo Tifernato.

The marked rhetorical style and the erudition in the citations from classical authors in the Cistercian's dedication give us an idea not only of Madriñano's but also of Carvajal's profile, tastes and reputation. Given the renewed awareness of the significance of patronage in creativity, attention to Carvajal helps to understand Al-Gharnati.

88. Calvo Fernández, 2000; Saquero-González 1999.

89. Jean Jacques Trivulce (1441-1518) or Giangiacomo Trivulzio (not to be confused with his nephew Théodore Trivulce [1456-1531]), Italian patient and patron of Jacob Mantino, Al-Gharnati's collaborator.

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