

## TWO PASSAGES IN IBN AL-KHAṬĪB'S ACCOUNT OF THE KINGS OF CHRISTIAN IBERIA

JUSTIN STEARNS

Department of Near Eastern Studies  
Princeton University

### Introduction: Writing about Christians

This article offers a reading of a fourteenth century account of the Christian kings of Iberia as found at the end of *Kitāb a 'māl al-a 'lām*, a history written in the late 8<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> century by the famed Granadan polymath and sometime vizier Ibn al-Khaṭīb (d.776/1374). In this brief account he described the history of Christian kings in the Iberian peninsula following the Muslim conquest.<sup>1</sup> The text was first studied and translated into Spanish by Melchor Martínez Antuña in 1933, after which it seems to have remained for the most part uncommented upon.<sup>2</sup> In recent years both the degree of Muslim interest in Europe

<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Professors Michael Cook, Maribel Fierro, William Jordan, and Luis Molina for their comments and suggestions on various drafts of the paper. In addition I am very grateful to Professor David Wasserstein for the time that he took in giving me detailed comments and feedback. I am of course solely responsible for the opinions presented.

On the life and work of Lisān al-Dīn Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh b. Sa'īd b. al-Khaṭīb al-Salmānī (713/1313-776/1374) see 'Inān, *Lisān al-dīn b. al-Khaṭīb* and most recently Molina López, *Ibn al-Jatīb*. See also the articles mentioned below by Arié, De Aldéco and Martínez Antuña as well as Pons Boigues, *Ensayo Bio-Bibliográfico*, 334-347, Bosch-Vilá's article in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition), 3:835-7 and Kaḥḥālāh, *Mu'jam al-Mu'allifin*, 3:440-1. For an overview of the sizable secondary literature on Ibn al-Khaṭīb see Waragilī, *Lisān al-Dīn b. al-Khaṭīb fī athār al-dārisīn*. The *Kitāb a 'māl al-a 'lām* was edited by Lévi-Provençal in 1956 as *Tārīkh Isbānīyah al-Islāmīyah*, aw, *Kitāb a 'māl al-a 'lām*. The relevant passage on the Christian kings can be found on pages 322-338.

<sup>2</sup> My attention was initially directed to Martínez Antuña's article by a very informative passage in a survey of Ibn al-Khaṭīb's works by Rachel Arié, published in 1967, Arié, "Lisān al-Dīn b. al-Khaṭīb: quelques aspects de son oeuvre", 75-76. This text is given again in Arié, *L'Espagne Musulmane au Temps des Naṣrides. (1232-1492)*, 444. I have not been able to find any secondary material since that date that refers to this passage. Wilhelm Honerbach's otherwise very useful translation of the *Kitāb a 'māl al-a 'lām* along with other supplementary material curiously stops on page 294 on Lévi-Provençal's text, 28 pages before the section on the Christian kings begins. For those interested



and Christianity as well as the way in which Christians were described by Muslim historians have attracted interest in the works of such scholars as Bernard Lewis, Aziz al-Azmeh, Bettina Münzel, and Maribel Fierro.<sup>3</sup> The section of the *Kitāb a'māl al-a'lām* described above is of interest to a discussion of the arguments of all four scholars, for it is not remarked upon in the first two and offers an opportunity to expand upon the framework established by the latter two. Both Lewis and al-Azmeh argue, albeit with differing emphasis, that the Muslim world of the late Middle Ages displayed a great deal of indifference towards its Christian neighbors. The brief chapter in the *Kitāb a'māl al-a'lām* is the exception that proves the rule, for it is both qualitatively different from the material that precedes it as well as from that of Ibn Khaldūn, which immediately follows. Its exceptional nature can to a great extent be attributed to it consisting largely of a summarized translation (or possibly a translated summary) of a Christian source that Antuñña believes to be the thirteenth century *Estoria de España* of the Castilian monarch Alfonso X.<sup>4</sup> Since European historical texts were rarely translated into Arabic, although they may have been consulted by Muslim historians, this would explain the section's remarkable perspective.<sup>5</sup> The more narrative tone of this chapter al-

in working on the earlier sections of this book, Honerbach's introduction and his corrections of Lévi-Provençal's text on pages 41-46 are particularly valuable.

<sup>3</sup> Another recent work dealing with the image of Christians in the Muslim historical tradition in al-Andalus is Eva Lapiedra Gutiérrez's *Cómo los musulmanes llamaban a los cristianos hispánicos*. While a valuable reference, I have not used this work in this paper because of its greater focus on terminology at the expense of wider historiographical issues.

<sup>4</sup> For Lévi-Provençal's doubts regarding this identification, see below.

<sup>5</sup> Until recently it was believed that the only translation from Latin to Arabic that was commissioned by Muslims, as opposed to having been translated by Mozarabs for their own use, was the work of Paulus Orosius, or Hurushiyush. Recently, Ann Christys in her *Christians in al-Andalus* has summarized previous work on how the history of Orosius came to be translated into Arabic, stressing that this process did not necessarily happen at the request of the Muslim ruler al-Hakam. However, she does not cite the recent edition of Hurushiyush, in which its editor, Mayte Penelas, presents new information regarding the book's redaction and authorship. Compare Christys on pages 135-157 with Penelas, *Kitāb Hurūshiyūsh*, 30-35. For the Christian-Arabic material, including a detailed discussion of Ibn al-Qūṭīyya, see Christys, *Christians in al-Andalus*, 158-186.

For those interested in Muslim use of Christian historical material it is insightful to compare the topic of Orosius with the history of the Franks found in Mas'ūdī's *Murūj al-Dhahab*, where Mas'ūdī claims that he is using the history of a Catalanian bishop as his source. The parallels between this attribution and that of Ibn al-Khaṭīb, discussed below, are obvious. I am grateful to Cyrille Aillet for drawing this similarity to my attention. The passage has been translated and commented upon in Lewis, "Mas'ūdī on the



lows it to escape the limits of the tropes found in much of the annalist, or *tārīkh* history as written by Ibn Ḥayyān and often by Ibn al-Khaṭīb himself, and to present an image of the Christian world not only outside of the context of the *dār al-islām*, but one which at times also offered glimpses of Christian self-depiction. I do not mean to argue that there was an opportunity here for inter-faith dialogue, or a cross-confessional humanism, for these are at best concepts anachronistically projected into the past. Tellingly, the passage seems to have generated even less interest among Ibn al-Khaṭīb's contemporaries and successors than it has among modern scholars. Neither Ibn Khaldūn's (808/1406) *Kitāb al-'Ibar*, al-Qalqashandī's (821/1418) *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā* or al-Maqqarī's (1041/1632) magnum opus, *Nafḥ al-ṭīb*, refer to this part of Ibn al-Khaṭīb's work in any way.

### Situating Christians

The image of the non-*dhimmi* Christian in early Andalusian Muslim historiography has been studied recently by Bettina Münzel in her *Feinde, Nachbarn, Bündnispartner*, in which she examines three histories: the anonymous *Akhbār Majmū'a* (of uncertain date), Ibn al-Qūṭīyya's (d. 366/977) *Tārīkh Iftitāḥ al-Andalus* and two of the edited volumes of Ibn Ḥayyān's (d. 469/1076) *Muqtabis*.<sup>6</sup> By excluding

Kings of the Franks". Yet whatever the source of Ibn al-Khaṭīb's material, it was summarized and is not the translation of any extant text in Spanish. Considering the errors and inaccuracies present in his text it is highly probable that Mas'ūdī also used his Christian source in a selective fashion. See especially footnote 13 in al-Mas'ūdī, *Les Prairies d'Or*, 2:345. This is borne out in an article by Miquel Barceló in which he compares the passage in Mas'ūdī to Ibn Ḥayyān's *Muqtabis*, arguing that the alleged author of the section, Gotmar, was not necessarily its author. After remarking on the symbolism of a Christian bishop giving al-Ḥakam a history of Frankish kings – a proof of the legitimacy of Christian rule – Barceló notes that al-Ḥakam was known for his interest in having Latin texts translated, possibly a reference to the translation of Orosius. Barceló, "Una nota", 132.

<sup>6</sup> Münzel, *Feinde, Nachbarn, Bündnispartner*, 16-21 and 121-4. While Münzel bases her dating of the *Akhbār* on previous discussion by Dozy, Chalmeta, Sánchez-Albornoz and others, she does not refer to an article by Luis Molina in which he argues for a later, at least 6<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> century, dating of the work based, in part, on its similarities with Ibn Ḥayyān's *Muqtabis* and Ibn 'Idhārī's *al-Bayān al-Mughrib*. See Molina "Los *Ajbār Majmū'a*", especially pages 513-16 and 540-42. For a thorough discussion of the relationship of the *Akhbār Majmū'a* to other sources for the early history of al-Andalus see Molina, "Un relato", in which he argues that the *Akhbār* was based on written, and not oral sources, as Chalmeta believes. Needless to say, Molina's article emphasizes the dan-



those Christians living within the *dār al-islām*, Münzel's study focuses first on the encounters of Christians and Muslims immediately preceeding and following the Muslim invasion of Spain in the early eighth century. Here she draws on material found in the *Akhbār Majmū'a* and the *Tārīkh Iftitāh al-Andalus*. With regard to the interaction between the Cordoban caliphate of the tenth century and its northern Christian neighbors, Ibn Ḥayyān's *Muqtabis* provides her with passages both on diplomatic history and border warfare. Broadly speaking, Münzel, drawing on the earlier work of Ron Barkai and Bernard Lewis, notes in the historiographical writing under consideration a considerable lack of interest on the part of the Muslims regarding their Christian neighbors. This lack of interest continued through the eleventh century and the work of Ibn Ḥayyān.<sup>7</sup> Christian history in this period is only taken into account by Muslim historiography when Christians came to interact with Muslims, principally in the realm of military exploits. In this fashion Münzel sees the stories describing Pelayo's early resistance movement against the Muslims as serving to explain the continued existence and later spread of Christian sovereignty in north-west Iberia, as well as setting the stage for later resistance movements against the central Arab Muslim court.<sup>8</sup> In Ibn Ḥayyān's work – which deals with the fourth/tenth century – she notes that the Christians in the north were predominantly seen as vassals of the Muslims: they were sometimes rebellious, but dangerous only insofar as they aided rebels within the realm of Islam. This did not preclude Christian heritage from playing a legitimating role in the writing of history, as becomes clearer when the figure of

ger of linking *akhbār* history with oral transmission. See the discussion of Schoeler's article below.

Münzel used volumes V and VII of the *Muqtabis* for her study. There are now five volumes available: II-1, II-2, III, V and VII. For an overview of the fascinating history of this work see Marín "El halcón maltés". Following the appearance of Marín's article M. Makki and F. Corriente have published a translation of II-1 into Spanish. The edition by M. Makki was published in Riyāḍ, 2003.

<sup>7</sup> Münzel, *Feinde, Nachbarn, Bündnispartner*, 113, 117, 165, 189. I was not able to consult Ron Barkai's book *Cristianos y musulmanes en la España medieval: el enemigo en el espejo* (1984) until this article was near completion. This should however not weaken the paper's argument. While Barkai deals with the psychological representation of the other, his chronological scope extends only to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, precluding consideration of Ibn al-Khaṭīb. In addition many of his theoretical concerns seem to have been incorporated by Münzel into her analysis.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* 100-1.



Ibn al-Qūṭīyya (d. 368/977) is reconsidered. A judge and a respected scholar, his special position within the historiographical tradition is present in his name, "Son of the Gothic woman".<sup>9</sup> His great-grandmother belonged to the pre-Islamic Gothic aristocracy and married into the Arab ruling class, providing her descendant with the opportunity to write what some historians have held to be a history of early Muslim Spain that is critical of the Arabs.<sup>10</sup> Thus, while equally uninterested in the Christians to the north, Ibn al-Qūṭīyya's work suggests that Christians could play a role in the historiography of the founding of al-Andalus, though not of Ibn al-Qūṭīyya's own time.<sup>11</sup>

Ibn Ḥayyān was the most prolific of the Andalusian historians, yet only a fragment of his work remains. Of the edited material that is available, Münzel used the *Muqtabis V* and *VII*, covering respectively the first thirty years of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III's reign (300-330 / 912/13-941/2) and a short period toward the end of the century (360-364 / 971-975).<sup>12</sup> Here again, Münzel notes the relatively cursory treatment that the Christian kingdoms receive in comparison with the amount of time and detail invested in describing the complex and puzzling figure of the rebel ʿUmar b. Ḥafṣūn.<sup>13</sup> Both before and

<sup>9</sup> See Kaḥḥālāh, *Muʿjam al-Muʿallifīn*. 3:562.

<sup>10</sup> Münzel, *Feinde, Nachbarn, Bündnispartner*, 24. The historians in question are Pedro Chalmeta and Julián Ribera. For opposing views see the next footnote.

<sup>11</sup> Münzel situates Ibn al-Qūṭīyya explicitly within the context of the *shuʿūbiyya* (p. 68-9), the anti-Arab literary movement which was initially formulated in Iran, and which developed in Andalusia out of a similar resentment to Arab 'high handedness'. As might be expected, in his history he welcomes the fall of Roderick and the Muslim invasion, emphasizing the importance of those Goths who facilitated the conquest (p. 53). We find in his description of the early period of Islamic rule in Spain a sympathetic depiction of Goths who still hold substantial amounts of both land and authority (p. 65-66). Recent views on Ibn al-Qūṭīyya differ from those of Chalmeta and Ribera, upon whom Münzel drew for her understanding of the historian. Ann Christys, in her book *Christians in al-Andalus*, summarizes much of recent scholarship surrounding the figure of Ibn al-Qūṭīyya and argues that if indeed the history attributed to Ibn al-Qūṭīyya was written by him, then it could be read as an attempt of the author to achieve greater legitimacy for himself within Umayyad Spain. In her interpretation, as opposed to Münzel's, this would not involve an attack on the Arab elite, but rather situate the author within the loyal hangers-on of the Umayyad establishment. See *Christians in al-Andalus*, 158-186. Similarly, Luis Molina has told me that he sees Ibn al-Qūṭīyya as an historian of the Umayyads and not at all a *shuʿūbī* (personal communication). Christys has unfortunately not consulted Münzel's work, for it would have been interesting to see her engage with the arguments there presented.

<sup>12</sup> Münzel, *Feinde, Nachbarn, Bündnispartner*, 153. As mentioned above, Münzel's study uses only two of the five volumes of the *Muqtabis*.



after the defeat of the Ḥafṣūnids the Christian kings are discussed in the most general terms, at times not even being referred to by name. In the vision of the Islamic state presented to us by Ibn Ḥayyān's sources – in which the father and son Aḥmad and 'Isā al-Rāzī figure prominently – internal not external enemies were of importance. This was not only because Muslim rebels such as Ibn Ḥafṣūn made use of the same languages of legitimacy and authority as did the Umayyad court in Cordoba and could thus present themselves as a viable alternative to the regime, but also because of the sheer weakness of the Christian kingdom.<sup>14</sup> The Muslim historians varied their rhetoric with regard to the Christian kingdoms according to whether they were in a state of war with the Muslims and to whether they emerged victorious in battle against them: Christians are generally more favorably portrayed when at peace with their Muslim neighbors or when they successfully display their prowess on the battle field.<sup>15</sup> Thus, much of the second half of Münzel's book focuses on the rhetorical construction of "war and peace, victory and defeat".<sup>16</sup> In all of this there is little if any discussion of the internal history of the Christian realms.

In part bridging the temporal gap between the authors examined by Münzel in her study and Ibn al-Khaṭīb, Maribel Fierro has examined the changing depictions of Christians in the Muslim historiography of the Almoravid and Almohad era. While this period was characterized by several profound changes in the attitude of Andalusī rulers towards Christians, including those implicit in the expulsion of many Mozarab communities from Muslim-controlled Spain, Fierro's study shows most intriguingly that the historiographic struggle shifted to the arena of miracles, both Christian and Muslim.<sup>17</sup> Fierro argues that this shift was the direct result of the contemporary perception of increased Christian military power and Muslim impotence: the Christian claim that they benefited from divine support in their strug-

<sup>13</sup> Münzel, *Feinde, Nachbarn, Bündnispartner*, 168-9. For the importance of Ibn Ḥafṣūn in understanding the history of pre-caliphate Umayyad history see the provoking study of Ación Almansa *Entre el feudalismo y el Islam* and the equally important response to Ación's arguments in Maribel Fierro's article "Four Questions". Ación Almansa has addressed his critics in the 1997 preface to his book's second edition.

<sup>14</sup> On Ibn Ḥayyān's sources see Münzel, *Feinde, Nachbarn, Bündnispartner*, 125-7.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 269.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 189.

<sup>17</sup> On the deportation of Mozarab communities see Fierro, "Christian Success", 155-6. On miracles, *Ibid.*, 164-178.



gle against Islam could no longer go unanswered.<sup>18</sup> While military successes and failures against the Christians continued to be recorded, increased energy was invested in refuting Christian claims of miracles and presenting parallel accounts of the effectiveness of the deeds of Muslim saints.<sup>19</sup> This move in the historiography from the recording of military exploits to insisting on moral and spiritual superiority finds a later echo in Ibn al-Khaṭīb's verbal besting of Pedro I el Cruel's emissary, Ibn al-Zarzār.<sup>20</sup> The material discussed by Fierro, while not of the same type as the narrative history offered by Ibn al-Waqqār in the *Kitāb a'māl al-a'lām*, contains a brief moment in the memoirs of 'Abd Allāh b. Buluggīn in which a Mozarab affirms his belief that al-Andalus will one day again be Christian.<sup>21</sup> Although within Andalusian historiography 'Abd Allāh b. Buluggīn's *Tibyān* is remarkable for its autobiographical nature, this anecdote shows that glimpses of Christian political aspirations can at times be found within historical literature.<sup>22</sup> The fact that such moments are closely tied to the struggle with Muslims, and do not reflect internal Christian affairs, throws the unique nature of the narrative used by Ibn al-Khaṭīb into stark relief.

Though her book's scope ends in the eleventh century, Münzel notes that in the fourteenth century historical work of Ibn al-Khaṭīb the interpretation of the rebellions of the tenth century and the role that the Christians played in them varies little from that of Ibn Ḥayyān: "Die Rede wert sind die christlichen Offensiven also nur insofern, als sie versuchen, den aufständischen Herren der Marken zu

<sup>18</sup> Münzel, 165.

<sup>19</sup> For the former Fierro looks to al-Khazrajī's (d.582/1187) *Kitāb maqāmi' al-ṣulbān fī al-radd 'alā 'abadat al-awthān* and for the latter to various examples from the then budding Andalusī hagiographic tradition. Fierro, «Christian Success», 169 and 174. For an example of how God could use Christians to miraculously save Muslims from danger, *Ibid.*, 173.

<sup>20</sup> See below.

<sup>21</sup> Fierro, "Christian Success", 159.

<sup>22</sup> Another example of an intriguing glimpse of Christian identity within Andalusian historiography can be found in the *Rayḥān al-adāb wa-ray'ān al-shabāb* of Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Khayra (d. 564 H), edited and commented on by Dozy in his *Scriptorum Arabum Loci de Abbadidis*, 1: 1-10. On page seven Ibn Khayra relates a brief anecdote regarding a group of Arabic speaking Christians who claimed to be the descendants of the Ghassanid Jabla b. al-Ayham, a convert to Christianity. Al-Khayra's biography is found in Ibn al-Khaṭīb's *Iḥāṭa*, on pages 337-8 of volume two of 'Inān's four volume edition. For the reference to Ibn Khayra, I am indebted to Cyrille Aillet.



helfen".<sup>23</sup> It is likely that there is no consistent understanding or representation of Christians to be found in Ibn al-Khaṭīb's work. The qualitative difference between the history of the Christian kings given in the *Kitāb a'māl al-a'lām* and Ibn al-Khaṭīb's other writings on the Christians is to be understood as being due primarily to the source he was using and not, say, a certain sympathy on his part for their cause or culture. His use of a Christian history as a source for a narrative on Christian kings can be likened to the inclusion of what seems to be the Spanish translation of an Arabic *Mi'rāj* narrative in the biography of the prophet Muḥammad in the *Estoria de España*.<sup>24</sup> In both cases histories that aspired to some degree of universality availed themselves of texts with substantially different ideological orientations from those of the narratives into which they were placed. Constructing history through a juxtaposition of earlier materials with interspersed comments by the author/editor is characteristic of Islamic and of much of Medieval European historiography and the (post)modern reader should beware of privileging the tone of any one passage over the structure of the narrative as a whole.

### Situating Scholarship

The depiction of Christians in the historiography of al-Andalus is given rather short shrift in Bernard Lewis's valuable *The Muslim Discovery of Europe*. This is understandable for many reasons, the most immediate perhaps being the quantity of historical and geographic material regarding Europe that was produced in the Ottoman Empire from the sixteenth century onwards. Compared to the increasingly intricate relationship of the Ottomans with Europe, the earlier historiographical tradition seems meager indeed. Thus, though Lewis notes of Ibn al-Qūṭīyya that he was "the first major historian of Muslim Spain", he says nothing of his writing on the Christians beyond the fact that he omits both Tours and Poitiers in his description of the Is-

<sup>23</sup> Münzel, *Feinde, Nachbarn, Bündnispartner*, 215. To what degree this is surprising is another question, considering that Ibn al-Khaṭīb is presumably quoting Ibn Ḥayyān to a large extent.

<sup>24</sup> See, most recently, David Hanlon, "Islam and Stereotypical Discourse".



lamic invasion.<sup>25</sup> Concerning the later Andalusī authors, Lewis is more informative. He mentions Ibn Khaldūn's embassy to Pedro I in 1364, and notes the brevity with which the historian described this visit. Far more interesting for him is the section in the *Muqaddima* in which Ibn Khaldūn acknowledges that philosophy and the sciences are being practiced and developed in Europe.<sup>26</sup> This type of curiosity in the internal intellectual life of Europe is held by Lewis to be extraordinary for its time, though it is worth considering that it is found only in the *Muqaddima*, and not in Ibn Khaldūn's history proper.<sup>27</sup> Lewis does not mention Ibn Khaldūn's chapter on the Christian kings in his *Ibar*, noting regarding this history that "In Europe only the Visigoths are mentioned – a brief account of them is necessary as an introduction to the Muslim conquest of Spain and is part of the Spanish-Arab historiography".<sup>28</sup> Most relevantly for this paper, Ibn al-Khaṭīb does not appear in Lewis' narrative.

A more recent article by Aziz al-Azmeh picks up where Lewis' analysis leaves off.<sup>29</sup> While agreeing with Lewis' study that the writings of scholars of al-Andalus exhibit deep ignorance of their northern neighbors, al-Azmeh makes a crucial distinction between "every-day knowledge" and scholarly writing:

<sup>25</sup> Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe*, 19. Lewis seems most interested in information on northern Europe or writing that deals with Europe as a geographic region. The possible ethnic and religious politics of Ibn al-Qūṭīyya are therefore of less interest to him than they are to this article, which focuses on the portrayal of Christians within the Iberian Peninsula. For a critical view of Lewis' failure to discuss the translation of Latin works into Arabic during the Umayyad Caliphate of Spain see Barceló "Una nota", 131-134. It should be noted that Barceló is referring in this article to Lewis' 1957 article 'The Muslim Discovery of Europe' as published in the 1973 *Islam in History* and not to Lewis' 1982 book of the same title (published after Barceló's article).

<sup>26</sup> Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe*, 149-151.

<sup>27</sup> Al-Azmeh argues that the *Muqaddima* does not deal with history proper but instead forms a theoretical introduction to its study. Ibn Khaldūn's placing of his remarks in the *Muqaddima* separates Europe from the flow of history itself. See Al-Azmeh, "Mortal Enemies, Invisible Neighbours", 266. and the quoted passages from al-Azmeh below.

<sup>28</sup> Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe*, 150. As discussed below the information supplied by Ibn Khaldūn is inaccurate and not as intriguing as the chapter found in Ibn al-Khaṭīb. Lewis finds a much more interesting source on Europe in the fourteenth century universal history of Rashīd al-Dīn, which contains a great deal of original information that seems to have been collected by the author himself. *Ibid.*, 150-1.

<sup>29</sup> Al-Azmeh, "Mortal Enemies, Invisible Neighbours".



The portrayal of this northern Other did not in fact reflect the everyday knowledge Andalusis had of him, but was rather forced into the moulds required by the classicising sentiment and figures of Andalusí belles lettres – sentiments and figures based to a great extent on Eastern Arabic models, which, in al-Andalus, passed for the very essence of literature.<sup>30</sup>

By focusing on the tropes used to describe Christians, al-Azmeh opens several new avenues for future research. First, his emphasis that there were other forms of knowledge in al-Andalus than those being set down in writing is a helpful reminder of the world of language and lived experience that does not make its way into the historical record: Muslim historians may have known much more about the Christian past, especially the immediate past, than they recorded, but if their knowledge did not fit into the themes that the genre of history provided it was not likely to be included in their writing. Yet this does not imply silence. Al-Azmeh correctly underlines the abundance of statements referring to the northern Christians, and their nature as stock labels and epithets that describe the external image of the Christians as perceived by their Muslim enemies.<sup>31</sup> It is therefore unfortunate that, like Lewis, al-Azmeh has neglected Ibn al-Khaṭīb's chapter on the Christian kings. Instead, al-Azmeh singles out Ibn Khaldūn's text in the *Ibar*, which he is careful to separate from the comments found in the *Muqaddima* to which Lewis had already drawn attention:

Yet his remains the most competent and connected exposition of Christian Spanish history, representing all that is best in earlier

<sup>30</sup> Al-Azmeh, 258.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* "Throughout, the reader is almost invariably presented with a series of standard epithets, a token of externality, most specifically of religious externality. Thus the neutral *ṣaḥīb* Qashtāla, or the generic Alfunsh or Adhfūnish, constantly gives way to *al-tāghīya* or *ṭaḡhiyat al-Naṣāra* who, when angered, 'swears by his gods', and appoints at the head of his armies 'one from among his rabid dogs'. Royal correspondence from the pen of Ibn al-Khaṭīb repeats the stock images with great regularity: al-Andalus is assaulted by unbelief, by worship of the cross and other idolatrous abominations, a not unnatural notion in time of war". (p.264) This should not be taken to suggest that Christians and Muslims were in a state of constant war, far from it. Still, it does reflect the unsurprising fact that the normative subject of Muslim historical discourse was a Muslim, and that adherents to other religions would inevitably be discussed primarily as objects. As mentioned above, the full range of interactions between Muslims and Christians in Andalusia greatly exceeded the range of the options offered by historiographic discourse.



Andalusī and eastern historical writing, while not departing in any way from previous canons of historical writing – his ethnographic remarks belong not to history, but to its preliminary discourse, the celebrated *Muqaddima* being something totally apart.<sup>32</sup>

Considering the importance of Ibn Khaldūn's chapter as a counter-example to the work of Ibn al-Khaṭīb within eighth/fourteenth century Muslim historiography, I will briefly comment on his work before turning to that of the Granadan vizier.

### Ibn Khaldūn's account of "the Sons of Alfonso of Galicia"

In 1881 Reinhart Dozy published his *Recherches sur l'histoire et la littérature de l'Espagne pendant le moyen âge* in which as part of a chapter entitled *Recherches sur l'histoire du royaume des Asturies et de Léon* he included a translation of and commentary on a chapter of Ibn Khaldūn's *Kitāb al-ʿIbar* entitled "History regarding the Kings of the Sons of Alfonso of Galicia, kings of Spain after the Goths during the age of the Muslims and the histories of those Franks who neighbored them and the Basques and the Portuguese and a summary of some of their history".<sup>33</sup> In his observations Dozy notes the history's

<sup>32</sup> Al-Azmeh, 266.

<sup>33</sup> *al-khabar ʿan mulūk banī adh-fūnsh min al-jalāliqah mulūk al-andalus baʿda al-qūṭ wa-li-ʾahd al-muslimīn wa-akhbār man jāwarahum min al-afranjah wa-al-bashkūnis wa-al-burtaqāl wa-al-ilmām bi-baʿd akhbārihim*, Dozy, "Recherches", X/92. At the end of the volume together with other primary sources Dozy included a copy of the Arabic text. It is this text that I quote here and not that found on pages 385-397 in Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ʿIbar*, v.4., because Dozy's text, on which his translation is based, is much more accurate than that found in the later edition. There are several examples of this, some of which are quite striking. Describing the early Christian rulers following the Arab conquest, the text of the 1956 edition of Ibn Khaldūn reads "*malakū ʿalayhim thalāthah*" (p.386), apparently rearranging the punctuation on the third word, for in Dozy we find "*malakū ʿalayhim balāyuh*" (p.XI). The editor of the 1956 edition may well not have known much about early Andalusian history and, suspecting an error, have rearranged the diacritic marks to create "*thalāthah*" out of "*balāyuh*". The effect of this change however, is to write Palayo out of Ibn Khaldūn's history. A similar mistake is made further down on the page where, concerning the name of Palayo's father, the 1956 edition reads "Nāqilah" whereas Dozy's text has "Fāfilah". Without examining the manuscripts in question it is hard to say to what degree Dozy has corrected them in light of what he knows of Iberian history. A further and more discouraging error in the 1956 printing is found on p.387 (p.XII of Dozy's text), where the date of Fruela's (son of Alfonso I) death is given as (1)58, while Dozy's text reads 152. Comparison with Dozy's text shows that, possibly



imprecise nature, replete with genealogical and chronological errors. Nevertheless, it is structurally distinct from the earlier works examined by Münzel in that it explicitly expressed its focus on Christian history as opposed to discussing Christians solely in terms of their interaction with Muslim rulers during the waging of war or the negotiating for peace.

As mentioned above, Ibn Khaldūn, aside from his fame as an historian and social theorist, is a figure of interest for the study of Muslim historical writing on Christians due to the time he spent in Spain, and specifically the embassy to Pedro el Cruel that he undertook on behalf of the Granadan emir Muḥammad V. As Lewis and Abdeslam Chaddadi have noted, Ibn Khaldūn's reflections in his autobiography on this trip are disappointingly brief.<sup>34</sup> Yet it is difficult not to think this trip sparked his interest in the Christian kingdoms and contributed to his later decision to devote a chapter of his history to them. Dozy observes that he wrote two different versions of the chapter, one in Tunis in 1380, the other in Cairo in 1392.<sup>35</sup> As both of these were written after the death of Ibn al-Khaṭīb in 776/1374 it is of interest that they do not refer to Ibn al-Khaṭīb's chapter on the Christians. After all, the two men knew each other and, while perhaps not always on the best of terms, had reason to be familiar with the other's writings.<sup>36</sup>

slipping from one *halika* to another, the 1956 text has omitted the clause "*wa-halika sannat 52 wa-waliya ibnuhu Aurāl b. Fruela 6 sinīn*". The 1956 text has thus given Fruela 6 more years of life in exchange for removing his son Aurelio from the text.

<sup>34</sup> Similar to al-Azmeh, Abdeslam Chaddadi stresses the importance of understanding the degree to which the themes available to the historian limited the ability to write or think about contacts with the Christian kingdom in a fashion different from those that had gone before. "Que l'Occident et l'Islam médiévaux aient vécu sous des systèmes sociaux différents, sinon opposés sur bien des points est une chose évidente bien qu'assez imparfaitement étudiée. Ce n'est pas, bien entendu, ce que je visais à démontrer. Moins connue, par contre, sont les formes de conscience que cette différence revêtait, les limites qu'elle entraînait dans les contacts entre les Etats, les peuples, les individus." Chaddadi, "A propos d'une ambassade", 21.

<sup>35</sup> Dozy, "Recherches", 2:91. Dozy's text is based on the second of the two versions.

<sup>36</sup> Martínez Antuña, "Una versión árabe", 108. For the intertwined careers of Ibn Khaldūn and Ibn al-Khaṭīb see De Aldécoa, "Ibn el Khatib", especially pages 71-3, 79, and 'Inān, *Lisān al-dīn b. al-Khaṭīb*, 103-115. While it is difficult to gauge the degree of friendship between the two men, and acknowledging the considerable rivalry, both political and scholarly that seems to have existed between them, it is important to remember that Ibn Khaldūn attempted to intercede, albeit in vain, on Ibn al-Khaṭīb's behalf after the latter was convicted of heresy in Fes. De Aldécoa, "Ibn el Khatib", 83.



In the following I will refrain from summarizing the contents of Ibn Khaldūn's chapter and will instead select a few episodes that reflect the tone and the character of his writing. Though the accuracy of his chronology is not of primary interest to this paper, I have included as an appendix a table of the kings discussed by Ibn Khaldūn. Since so much of both Ibn Khaldūn's and Ibn al-Khaṭīb's texts are based on genealogy, these tables juxtaposed with the corresponding dates accepted by current scholarship are of interest when it comes to evaluating their knowledge of the Christian kings.<sup>37</sup> For the purposes of this paper, however, a focus on narrative passages in which the actions or characteristics of the Christians are described is of greater concern.

The chapter begins by dividing Christian Iberia into four separate kingdoms. Before specifying their nature, Ibn Khaldūn notes that it has become clear that the Muslims will not be able to remain where they are – across the sea – after their retreat from what they had initially held [*wa-qad zahara i'jāz al-millah fī maqāmihim ma'ahum warā' al-baḥr ba'da mā istarja'ū min aydīhim kamā intaẓamahu al-faṭḥ al-islāmī awwal al-amr*].<sup>38</sup> This is an appropriate reminder that things have changed substantially since the time of earlier historians.<sup>39</sup> By the fourteenth century the *dār al-islām* was reduced to a small triangle surrounding Granada in the south of the peninsula and the Christians were no longer insignificant opponents, dangerous only insofar as they aided and abetted internal rebels. The four kingdoms, Ibn Khaldūn continues, are Castile – the most powerful, ruled by the Banu Alfons – Portugal, Navarre and Barcelona.

As was the case with earlier histories such as the *Akhbār Majmū'a*, Ibn Khaldūn places the origins of the Christian kingdoms in the resis-

<sup>37</sup> In the end any detailed comparison between Christian and Muslim accounts over a substantial stretch of time is confusing, as can be seen in my attempted juxtaposition of the dates given in the sources. Christian Spain was fractured into Asturias, León, Navarre, Aragon, Portugal and Castile during the period under consideration, with two or more of these territories at times coming under one rule. One can sympathize with Muslim historians trying to make sense out of the tangled forest of strange names. Regarding specific rulers I refer the reader to the sources cited. Both Dozy and Martínez Antuña remark upon the many errors that Ibn Khaldūn and Ibn al-Khaṭīb make in their histories and point out many of these discrepancies in their footnotes.

<sup>38</sup> Dozy, "Recherches", X. In this I am following Dozy's translation, 92.

<sup>39</sup> Ibn Khaldūn was by far not the first one to express such sentiments. For the existence of prophetic traditions as early as the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century foretelling the loss of al-Andalus to the Christians see Fierro, "Christian Success", 160-1.



tance movement of Pelayo, who was declared by his followers to be king in Galicia. Concerning Alfonso I (d.757), the progenitor of the Christian kings until his day, Ibn Khaldūn disputes Ibn Ḥayyān's assertion that this king descended from the Goths, noting that dynasties that are wiped out seldom return to power. Instead, in his opinion, this must be a new dynasty.<sup>40</sup> For the following period until the arrival of the Almoravids in the eleventh century, the narrative draws on Ibn Ḥayyān.<sup>41</sup> No other source is mentioned by name for this or later periods.<sup>42</sup> It is likely that Ibn Khaldūn selected information on Christians from his sources and then reassembled this material into a narrative of his own, making it difficult to ascertain the sources' identity. In addition, it is reasonable to assume that for the information regarding the second half of the fourteenth century Ibn Khaldūn was drawing on his own memories and notes. With respect to the tone employed, the history fulfills stereotypical expectations of chronicles, presenting king upon king and battle after battle. Of interest here is that not only battles with Muslim leaders are recorded, but also the numerous civil wars that plagued Christian Iberia. Certain episodes do emerge as memorable, such as Alfonso X's pawning of his crown in the late seventh/thirteenth century to persuade the Merinid Sultan to come to his aid. Ibn Khaldūn adds regarding this affair that the crown remains in Morocco because of this pact [*fā-lam yazal bi-dār banī 'Abd al-Haqq al-mulūk min banī marīn li-hādhā al-'ahd*].<sup>43</sup> As the history moves into the eighth/fourteenth century it becomes livelier in tone. Alfonso XI dies of the plague in 751/1350. His son Pedro el Cruel wars with his brother Enrique II and seeks aid by marrying his daughter to the Prince of Wales [*al-binsh ghālis*]. However, the latter's help proves insufficient

<sup>40</sup> Dozy, "Recherches", XI/93. Dozy notes in a footnote on the same page that Ibn Khaldūn's philosophical spirit has gotten the better of him and that Alfonso I was descended from Reccared, the first Catholic Gothic king.

<sup>41</sup> Without a direct comparison with the text of Ibn Ḥayyān it is difficult to tell how much Ibn Khaldūn is quoting directly. He mentions Ibn Ḥayyān twice on page 97/XII-XIII, the first time quoting directly – *qāla Ibn Ḥayyān* – the second time referring to Ibn Ḥayyān's text in passing: *kamā naqala Ibn Ḥayyān*.

<sup>42</sup> Following the period of the Taifa kings, during which little beyond the conquest of Toledo by Alfonso (VI) in 1085 is mentioned, Ibn Khaldūn cites as sources but does not identify certain "histories of the Lamtuna" [*fī tawārīkh lamtūnah wa-akhbārihim*] (104/XVI). A similar reference is made to the histories of the Almohads [*min tawārīkh al-muwahhidīn*] a few pages later, 106/XVIII.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, XIX/109. As Dozy notes, Ibn Khaldūn mistakenly refers to Alfonso X by the name of his son Fernando who had predeceased him.



and Enrique is able to defeat Pedro. Despite his ally's defeat, the Prince of Wales contests the Castilian throne.<sup>44</sup> Both in this and in the years that follow, Christian Iberia is torn by war and Ibn Khaldūn notes that this distracted it from the neighboring Muslims. Following the death of Enrique's son Juan in 791/1389, his grandson comes to power under the tutelage of an older relative. This, with the Castilians still at war with the prince of the Gauls, is the situation at the time of Ibn Khaldūn's writing.<sup>45</sup> The remainder of the chapter is taken up with a very short history of the kingdom of Barcelona. Here again Ibn Ḥayyān is cited and provides most of the narrative, though Ibn Khaldūn takes care to mention the current rulers, and that one of them – though he misidentifies him – has recently conquered Sicily.<sup>46</sup> The chapter ends with an invocation to God as inheritor of the world [*wa-Allāh wārith al-arḍ wa-man 'alayhā wa-huwa khayr al-wārithīn*].<sup>47</sup>

### Ibn al-Khaṭīb's account of the Christian Kings

Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh b. Sa'īd b. al-Khaṭīb al-Salmānī was born in Loja in 713/1313 into a family that had a history of both scholarship and political power. He was appointed Granadan vizir in 1349 after his predecessor died in the Black Death and subsequently served under both Yūsuf I and Muḥammad V. Having fled Granada out of fear of his opponents, he was found guilty of heresy and strangled in Fes in 776/1374.<sup>48</sup> It was in Fes, in the two years before his death, that he

<sup>44</sup> Dozy, 111/XX. I follow Dozy's translation of the title. As Dozy notes, Ibn Khaldūn has confused the Prince of Wales, Edward the Black Prince, with his younger brother John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster. It was John, not Edward, who married Pedro's daughter and heiress Constance in 1371 and who pursued his claim to Castile in the 1380s, renouncing it in 1389. See Gillespie's article "John of Gaunt" in the *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, v.7. p.134-5.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 113/XXI. Consult Dozy's footnote, page 113, for the exact nature of the young king's relation to the regent and Ibn Khaldūn's misunderstanding of it. Dozy also notes that the final declaration of continuing war between the Prince of Wales/Duke of Lancaster and the Castilians was accurate in the first version of Ibn Khaldūn's chapter in 1388, but no longer so in the emended one, the Duke having given up his claims before Juan's death in 1389.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 116/XXIV.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> On both the trial of Ibn al-Khaṭīb and his subsequent murder see Calero Secall, "El proceso de Ibn al-Jaṭīb". Compare with 'Inān, *Lisān al-dīn b. al-Khaṭīb*, 150-97.



wrote the *Kitāb a'māl al-a'lām fī man būyi'a min al-mulūk qabla al-ihtilām*, dedicated to the very young Sultan Abū Zayyān Muḥammad al-Sa'īd.<sup>49</sup> As the title indicates the work presented itself as a collection of the deeds of those rulers who came to power before reaching puberty. While it does contain information on several kings who came to power as minors, it can more prosaically be seen as containing a summary of the history of al-Andalus that concludes with a chapter on the history of the Christian kings.<sup>50</sup> In 1933 Melchor Martínez Antuña published an edition of this chapter with a translation and commentary and this article was reviewed a year later by Lévi-Provençal.<sup>51</sup> In his introduction to his translation Antuña deals with the chapter's intriguing frame narrative: when writing his history and wishing to devote part of it to the Christian Kings of Spain Ibn al-Khaṭīb turned to a visiting Jewish scholar, Yūsūf b. Waqqār. The latter served the Castilian king and was able to relate to Ibn al-Khaṭīb what he had read of Christian history in a book fashioned on the order of a certain Alfonso. Antuña noted that it was difficult to identify Ibn Waqqār, as there were three Jewish authors by that name who might qualify.<sup>52</sup> Since the publication of this article, Arié has expressed her preference for the third of the authors listed by Antuña, the Yūsūf b. Waqqār who was still alive at the end of the fourteenth century and able to translate his own astronomical tables into Hebrew.<sup>53</sup> The issue of the original Christian source is a complex one. As we do not have the text that Ibn Waqqār wrote for Ibn al-Khaṭīb and that Ibn al-Khaṭīb in turn modified, it is difficult to agree on a source.<sup>54</sup> Despite these un-

<sup>49</sup> Martínez Antuña, "Una versión árabe", 105.

<sup>50</sup> Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Kitāb a'māl al-a'lām*. The chapter in question is found on pages 322-338.

<sup>51</sup> Lévi-Provençal, review "Al-Andalus, volume 1", *Hespéris* 18 (1934). Lévi-Provençal notes several textual errors and takes issue with Antuña's claim that the Spanish source is the *Estoria de España*. Unfortunately he neither lists his reasons for doubting the source, nor suggests an alternative.

<sup>52</sup> His source for this is the work of Steinschneider, *Die arabische Literatur der Juden*, 168-9. One was a translator of the medical work of Zahrāwī (a translation completed in 1295), the second a renowned cabalist from Toledo who may have been referred to as being alive in 1355, the third from Seville or Toledo, was the author of a series of astronomical tables in Arabic (1357/8) which he himself translated into Hebrew in 1395/6.

<sup>53</sup> Arié, "Lisān al-Dīn b. al-Khaṭīb", 76.

<sup>54</sup> That Ibn Waqqār gave Ibn al-Khaṭīb a written text is suggested by Ibn al-Khaṭīb's phrase: *'qayyada lī fī dhālik taqyīdan*, Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Kitāb a'māl al-a'lām*, 322. The



certainities and perhaps in part because of them, the narrative is fascinating due to its difference from other histories both earlier and later.

Ibn al-Khaṭīb introduces his chapter on the Christian kings by noting that due to the frequency with which the kings of Castile had appeared in his history, it was only appropriate and accurate [*kāna min kamālihi*] for him to discuss some of their kings.<sup>55</sup> To provide further justification for his undertaking he comments that “history is not empty of those who look forward to this, especially kings, for they are ever curious as to news of [other] kings and look forward to hearing of them”.<sup>56</sup> Thus our author turns to the most likely place [*ṭalabtu*

sheer amount of the *Estoria de España* that would have been summarized for Antuñía to be correct is impressive: from chapter 564, in which Pelayo rises up against the Muslims, to chapter 1134 in which the burial of Fernando III is described. In simpler terms, that would entail summarizing a bit more than the 774 pages contained by the second volume of Menéndez Pidal's edition into the 16 pages of Lévi-Provençal's text. This would have been quite a feat. Considering the process of transmission involved between the Spanish text consulted by Ibn Waqqār and the Arabic one written down by Ibn al-Khaṭīb, it is useful to refer to an article by Gregor Schoeler on how knowledge was transmitted in the first centuries of the Islamic era. While Schoeler focused on how a student would study a book with his teacher, the question of transmission is relevant to this section of *Kitāb a'māl al-a'lām* because the complicated transmission process described in Ibn al-Khaṭīb's preface to Ibn Waqqār's text is similar to that outlined by Schoeler.

Schoeler argues that a student usually received instruction in an oral form from the teacher, but also that the teacher himself could be reading the text out loud to the student who took notes or, more rarely, reconstructed the lecture later: Schoeler, “Die Frage der schriftlichen oder mündlichen Überlieferung”, 224. The framework offered by Schoeler does not fit the case of the current text exactly – which involves a double transmission, the first being Ibn Waqqār's reconstruction and translation of what he had read, the second Ibn al-Khaṭīb's rendering of Ibn Waqqār's text – but it goes some way to explaining how discrepancies between the Spanish and Arabic texts could have occurred.

That Ibn al-Khaṭīb's source was a Spanish text does not seem to be up for debate. As Lévi-Provençal notes, “les nombreux hispanismes qui l'émaillent, le ‘déalquage’ de la construction permettent très vite de s'en convaincre”. Lévi-Provençal, review of “*Al-Andalus*, volume 1”, 102.

<sup>55</sup> Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Kitāb a'māl al-a'lām*, 322. and Antuñía, “Una versión árabe”, 129. The “*hi*” in “*kamālihi*” refers to the mentioning (*dhikr*) of the kings of Castile. Throughout my discussion I have used the text of the 1956 edition edited by Lévi-Provençal, which I believe to be more reliable than that of Antuñía, primarily due to Lévi-Provençal's comments in his 1934 review. Any further treatment of the chapter's text will have to be based on a reconsideration of the relevant manuscripts in the libraries of Madrid, Algiers and Fes. Lévi-Provençal, review of “*Al-Andalus*, volume 1”, 102.

<sup>56</sup> “*Idh lā yakhlū al-zamān mimman yatashawwafa li-dhālik, lā siyyamā al-mulūk fa-hiya abadan li-akhbār al-mulūk mutafalli'a wa-li-samā'a anba' iha mutashawwifa*”. Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Kitāb a'māl al-a'lām*. 322. The translation is my own, with consultation of Antuñía, “Una versión árabe”, 129.



*shai'an min dhalik min maẓinnatihi*] for such information, which happens to be the famous doctor and scholar of the court of Castile, Yūsūf b. Waqqār, in Granada on a mission from his lord.<sup>57</sup> The subsequent history was written down by Ibn Waqqār and then adapted by Ibn al-Khaṭīb, according to Ibn Waqqār's wording or meaning [*bi-lafẓihi aw bi-ma'nīhi*], "correcting what he (Yūsūf) neglected, when it was not precise in its intention" [*wa-astadriku mā aghfala idh laysa bi-qādihin fī-l-gharaḍ*].<sup>58</sup> At this point we leave Ibn al-Khaṭīb behind and shift into the voice of Ibn Waqqār. After praising Ibn al-Khaṭīb he notes that what he knows regarding the kings of Castile he has taken from a book made on the order of the Great King [*al-malik al-a'ẓam*], Don Alfons, and that he can vouch for its accuracy. What follows is for the most part an annalistic chronicle, similar to that of Ibn Khaldūn, though more accurate and with greater detail. As with my brief reading of Ibn Khaldūn, instead of summarizing Ibn al-Khaṭīb's chapter, I will focus on those episodes that most clearly distinguish it from other Muslim chronicles.<sup>59</sup> By doing this I hope to show that the image of the Christians in this section of Ibn al-Khaṭīb's writing presents the reader with a wider variety of human experience than in other chronicles and that it does so by employing a literary style which has many common features with that of the *ahkbār* narratives so typical of the early Muslim chronicles studied by Münzel.

The story of Fernán González (d.970), count of Castile, is by far the most striking of those covered by Ibn al-Khaṭīb.<sup>60</sup> The narrative of Ibn Waqqār introduces Fernán by stating that it was during the reign of Sancho I of León (d.966) that Castile became independent of

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* For the enigmatic nature of Ibn Waqqār, see above.

<sup>58</sup> The meaning of the phrase is not completely clear to me. Antuña translates 'y suplo sus deficiencias cuando no da en el blanco' (129) which is idiomatic and difficult for me to understand, unless *qādiḥ* is to be understood as "precise, exact".

<sup>59</sup> In his introduction to his edition and translation of Ibn al-Khaṭīb's text, Antuña discussed the passage that describing the re-burial of the body of the *infante* Pedro, killed in battle with the Muslims in 1319. In this passage, as with the second of the two examined here, the greater part of the narrative is an interjection of Ibn al-Khaṭīb's words. In addition, as with his conversation with Ibn Zarzār, discussed below, this episode gave Ibn al-Khaṭīb an opportunity to see God as favoring the Muslims of al-Andalus over the Christians. See Antuña, "Una versión Árabe", 110-113.

<sup>60</sup> See Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Kitāb a'māl al-a'lām*, 325-7. and Martínez Antuña, "Una versión árabe", 133-37. I have added the appropriate dates from O'Callaghan, *A History of Medieval Spain*. For the story to make sense, the dates as given seem rather improbable. See the reference to West's book below.



León under the leadership of Don Fernán. This happened as follows: Don Fernán was at war with Sancho I Garcés of Navarre (d.926), for unexplained reasons. After some time he defeated and killed the king of Navarre who was succeeded by his son García I Sánchez (d.970). García's sister, who remains unnamed, was married to Sancho I of León and, filled with hatred against Don Fernán for having killed her father, she hatched a plan to revenge herself. She feigned friendship towards Fernán and offered to marry her niece, García's daughter, to him in order to end the enmity between them [*li-tazūl baynahum al-'adāwa ra'san*]. On this pretext her husband summoned Fernán to a meeting of the Cortes, which Ibn Waqqār has glossed as "a large counsel... frequented by Kings and leaders for the settling of peace treaties both temporary and permanent".<sup>61</sup> Fernán agrees to come and Sancho's wife writes to her brother García, king of Navarre, to meet Fernán en route, putting him at ease [*wa-yu'annisahu*] so that his revenge over him might be easy [*la'allahu yata'atā fihi tha'ruhu*].<sup>62</sup> And so, as Fernán returns from the Cortes towards Burgos, the count of Navarre requests a meeting. Fernán agrees on the condition that each of them come to the meeting with only seven unarmed men.<sup>63</sup> Arriving at the meeting place with his companions he finds the count of Navarre with 35 men in armor. Ascertaining their evil intent [*ayqana bi-l-sharr*], he turns and flees into a forest, making his way to a tower located nearby. There ensues a brief siege, after which Fernán surrenders on the understanding that his life will be spared. He and his men are taken to Nájera and imprisoned there by the Count of Navarre. After a year and a half his knights are released on his request and return to Castile. Fernán remains in prison.

The narrative shifts to the unnamed daughter of García who had been supposed to marry Don Fernán. An anonymous count, passing through the court of Navarre, takes pity on Fernán's situation and becomes a go-between between him and García's daughter. He pleads

<sup>61</sup> "ra'y kabīr yusammūnahu al-qurt taḥḍur fihi al-mulūk wa-al-umarā' li-taqdīr al-muṣālahah al-waqtīyya wa-al-abadiyya", al-Khaṭīb, *Kitāb a'māl al-a'lām*, 325. Compare with Antuña, "Una versión árabe", 134, where he translates "abadiyya" as "territorial".

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> As Antuña notes, the number of soldiers is five in the *Estoria de España*. If Roman numerals were used in the manuscript as they are in Menéndez-Pidal's edition of the *Estoria*, this discrepancy would make perfect sense, for the Roman V strongly resembles the Arabic V (7). Alfonso El Sabio, *Primera crónica general de España*. 2:410.



with her on Fernán's behalf, promising her that if she helps Fernán out of prison, Fernán will take her back to Castile with him and marry her. As an aside Ibn Waqqār notes that concerning this matter the Christians have many stories, poems, and allegories concerning the slyness of lovers and their risky undertakings [*wa-li-l-naṣārā fī athnā' hādha aḥādīth wa-ash'ār wa-ma'ānin tarji' ilā shaṭārat al-'ushshāq wa-irtikābihim al-akhṭār*].<sup>64</sup> García's daughter assents, sets Fernán free, and returns to Castile with him where they are married. Fernán promptly engages García in battle and takes him prisoner. After three months of prison in Castile, García's daughter intercedes and Fernán willingly releases him [*aṭlaqahu ṭaw'an*]. Some time passes and in the year 971, Fernán revokes the treaty between Castile and León and is soon after captured by the King of León.<sup>65</sup> There follows the marvelous story of his rescue by his wife Sancha, whom we may well give the name she bears in the *Estoria de España*, although she is anonymous in the *Kitāb a'māl al-a'lām*. Sancha organizes a band of five hundred knights and by night quickly crosses from Burgos to a spot close to León. She leaves the knights and, dressing as a nun [*fī ziyy rāhibah*] on pilgrimage to Santiago [*taṣīd al-hajj li-shant yāqub*], enters León. She is given a warm welcome by

<sup>64</sup> As Antuña observes, this is probably a reference to the 13<sup>th</sup> century *Poema de Fernán González*, which as Menéndez-Pidal has noted (Ibid., 2:CLVI-II.) is also the source for this section of the *Estoria de España*. A useful overview of the poem and the relation of the historical Fernán González to the poem can be found in chapters one and four of West's *Epic, folk, and Christian traditions* as in well as in Márquez-Sterling, *Fernán González*.

<sup>65</sup> This is the date in the Bronze Age calendar, as it is referred to in Ibn al-Khaṭīb. In the *Estoria de España* it is simply the first of the many calendar dates given, and is set in contrast to the "anno de Encarnación del Sennor", which follows upon it. In this case, the *EE* gives the date as 968 and the year of our Lord as 928. Alfonso El Sabio, *Primera crónica general de España*, 412. For information on the "Bronze Age", I refer the reader to an article by Giorgio Levi Della Vida cited below (Michael Cook was kind enough to both refer me to this reference and give me a copy). Though the original source for this dating is unclear, Levi Della Vida offers compelling evidence for the following: "It... originated from the legend about the paving of the banks of the Tiber with bronze plates made out of the metal collected by Augustus through an alleged census which was supposed to have taken place in 38 B.C., the fourth year of his reign. The legend about the census and its connection with the Spanish Provincial Era existed as early as the seventh century (Isidore of Seville); not much later, it was grafted upon the legend about the paving of the Tiber, which is still quite obscure in its origin but undoubtedly was born, or at least developed in Spain, where it is first attested in the *Historia Pseudo-Isidoriana* and in the chronographic interpolations to the Arabic translation of Orosius. From these two texts, or else from their still unknown source, it entered Arabic literature..." Levi Della Vida, "The 'Bronze Age' in Moslem Spain", 122.



the King of León, whom she ask if she can visit his prisoner, as she will be departing the following day. He grants her request. After conversing with Fernán, she orders him to leave the prison dressed in her clothing with one of her servants [*amarathu yakhruj fī ziyyihā ma'a aḥad khadamatihā*]. She herself remained in the count's bed, sleeping. Fernán makes his way to the waiting knights and escapes. The ruler of León discovers Sancha, and embittered [*shaqqa 'alaihi*] sends her, "the one who liberates from misfortunes" [*mufarrijat al-shadā'id*], back to her husband.<sup>66</sup> Undeterred by his repeated stays in prison, and perhaps trusting that his wife would rescue him should he again fall into enemy hands, Fernán begins hostilities anew with Sancho and after repeated raids is granted the independence of Castile. Thus the long excursus explaining Castile's independence comes to an end.

The second anecdote that I wish to examine occurs somewhat later in the chapter and involves Alfonso X's petition to the Merinids for support and an anecdote that Ibn al-Khaṭīb interjects into the narrative.<sup>67</sup> As in the chapter of Ibn Khaldūn, Alfonso X asks the Merinid Sultan Abū Yūsuf b. 'Abd al-Ḥaqq for assistance against his son Sancho, and deposits his crown with him as security [*rahana 'indahū tājahū*]. The two monarchs meet on the outskirts of Ronda and greet

<sup>66</sup> It is not surprising that this story is not told in the same detail as it is found in the *EE*, or that much of the Christian's invocations of God and their professing of their reliance upon him is not included in the *Kitāb a'māl al-a'lām*. Yet it is a pity that the encounter between Sancho of León and Sancha did not carry over into the latter text. In the *EE* Sancha responds to Sancho's question of how she had dared to rescue her husband with an ingenious plea, the rhetorical effectiveness of which explains her release, so quickly passed over in Ibn al-Khaṭīb: "Sennor, atreuime en sacar el conde daqui porque ui que estaua en grand cueyta et por que era cosa que me conuinie cada que lo yo pudiesse guisar. Et demas atreuendome en la uuestra medida, tengo que lo fiz muy bien; et uos, sennor, faredes contra mi como buen sennor et buen rey, ca fija so de rey et muger de muy alto uaron, et uos non querades fazer contra mi cosa desguisada, ca muy gran debdo e con uuestros fijos, et en la mi desondra grand parte auredes uos. Et assi como sodes vos de muy buen connoçer et muy entendudo sennor, deuedes escoger lo meior, et catar que non fagades cosa que uos ayan los omnes en que trauuar; et yo por fazer derecho non deuo caer mal." *Ibid.* Sancho's response is testimony to the degree to which Sancha was able to win him over, and he sends her back to her husband with highest honors. One may, however, harbor some slight skepticism towards Fernán's chivalry in this whole affair.

<sup>67</sup> Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Kitāb a'māl al-a'lām*, 332-4. and Antuña, "Una versión árabe", 143-7. Since the *Éstoria de España* ends with the death of Alfonso X's father, Fernando III el Santo, it could not be the source for this and all subsequent episodes. Two other possibilities include the Chronicle of Alfonso XI and the Chronicle of 1344.



each other. After having received Alfonso's kiss or handshake [*qublat Alfunsh aw musāfaḥatihi*] the Merinid Sultan calls for water in Berber [*bi-lisān al-zanātiyya*], so that he can wash his hands. At this Ibn al-Khaṭīb interrupts the narrative to relate an anecdote of which this reminds him [*wa-al-shai'u yudhakkir bi-l-shai'i*]. One evening, while entertaining scholars and notables in his house located next to the Sultan's palace in the Alhambra, Ibn al-Khaṭīb is approached by the Jewish scholar and emissary, Ibn Zarzār.<sup>68</sup> He bears a letter written by Muḥammad b. Abī 'Abd al-Raḥmān, the Merinid Sultan who had fled Morocco due to internal strife and had sought refuge at the court of Pedro el Cruel. Ibn al-Khaṭīb notes that Muḥammad was seeking help from Pedro in order to regain his throne, and that Pedro had imposed conditions with which Muḥammad may not have been content. This letter might contain remarks with which Pedro was unhappy [*wa-rubbamā waṣalahu khitābuhu bi-mā lam yuqni 'hu fī iṭrā'ihī*]. Ibn Zarzār proceeds to request that Ibn al-Khaṭīb read the letter, relating greetings to him from Pedro and maligning the letter's author, describing him as one of the dogs that loiters by Pedro's door [*kalban min kilābi bābihi*]. Ibn al-Khaṭīb reads the letter and retorts that Ibn Zarzār should relay to Pedro that there may be people at his court, some of whom are lions and some dogs – the difference seen in whose kiss prompts one to wash one's hands – but that it was Pedro's grandfather [*jadd*] who kissed the hand of Muḥammad's grandfather, and grandsons are to each other as their grandfathers were to each other. Muḥammad's actions were not shameful and Muḥammad will return twofold what he has experienced at Pedro's hands [*fa-yukāfika bi-aḍ'āf mā 'āmaltahu bi-hī*].<sup>69</sup> At these words the surrounding scholars cry out their acclaim and the judge Abū Ḥasan begins weeping, kissing Ibn al-Khaṭīb's hand and addressing him as a "friend of God" [*walī*

<sup>68</sup> Antuña's text has a long footnote on Ibrāhīm Ibn Zarzār, noting that he was an astronomer and astrologer of the first degree who had at one point been part of Muḥammad's court, and following the murder of the chancellor Riḍwān in 760/1359, had grown afraid, and moved to the court of Pedro el Cruel, whom he here serves as emissary. Antuña also notes that Ibn Khaldūn spoke highly of him in his autobiography, where he described him as serving at three courts: the third being that of the Merinid Abū 'Inān. *Ibid.*, 144.

<sup>69</sup> Pedro el Cruel was the great-great grandson of Alfonso X, though *jadd* could easily mean ancestor here, and not simply grandfather.



*Allāh*].<sup>70</sup> The incident warrants a messenger being sent to North Africa to tell the Merinid court the details of what has occurred. Being himself in Fes at the time of his writing the *A'māl al-a'lām*, Ibn al-Khaṭīb is able to reflect that there are still many there who remember the messenger's account. Victory over the Christians was still possible in fourteenth century Granada, through eloquence if not on the field of battle.

### Conclusion

One of the historian's main tasks is to identify and study the ways in which a text is constructed and is positioned in relation to other texts. How complex this process can be is exemplified in the story of Fernán González: as an example of Christian history Ibn al-Khaṭīb provides his reader here with a summary of a translation of what was probably a prose version of a thirteenth century Spanish poem romanticizing a tenth century count.<sup>71</sup> As mentioned in this article's introduction, this specific anecdote along with Ibn al-Khaṭīb's chapter on Christian kings in general was not given much attention by his Muslim contemporaries. If they had chosen to give it greater consideration, they would have found themselves reading something that they encountered rarely in Muslim Andalusī scholarship: a text in which Christians told stories about themselves. Perhaps they did read Ibn al-Khaṭīb's work and did not think it interesting or relevant enough to include in their own histories. We do not know. Still, in the eighth/fourteenth century a Granadan vizir recorded a brief history of the kings of Christian Iberia based almost solely on Christian sources. That he did so was remarkable and, as I have argued, the apparent lack of interest the history aroused at the time should not be taken as a measure of its importance or lack thereof. Ibn al-Khaṭīb's account

<sup>70</sup> As Maribel Fierro pointed out to me, this is, of course, Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. 'Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan al-Judhamī al-Bunnāhī (alive in 794 H. and until recently known as al-Nubāhī), author of *Tārīkh quḍāt al-Andalus*. Considering al-Bunnāhī's actions against Ibn al-Khaṭīb only a few years later, his emotional response to the former's verbal skill is particularly poignant. For the most recent assessment of the complicated relationship between these two men see Calero Secall, "El proceso de Ibn al-Jatīb".

<sup>71</sup> See above, footnote 54.



gave its readers a glimpse of a world that they may have known of through their own experience but had seldom encountered in the written word.

Appendix I: Chronology of Christian Rulers according to the *Kitāb al-ʿIbar* and the *Aʿmāl al-aʿlām*<sup>72</sup>

Christian Rulers	Kitāb al-ʿIbar	Aʿmāl al-aʿlām	Dates as in OʻCallaghan
Pelayo	d.133/750-1	d.102/760	d.737
Fafila	d.135/752-3	d.114/772	d.739
Alfonso I	d.142/759-60	d.133/791	d.757
Fruela	d.152/769-70	d.148/800	d.768
Aurelio	d.158/774-5		d.774
Silon	d.168/784-5	d. /818	d.783
Maurecat	d.175/791-2		d.788
Alfonso II	d.227/841-2	d. /865	d.842
Ordoño I		d.248/875	d.866
Alfonso III		d.297/924	d.910
García I		d.305/932	d.914
Ramiro II	d.339/950-1	d.331/958	d.951
Ordoño III		d.336/936	d.956
Fernán González		d. /978	d.970
Vermudo II		d. /1027	d.999 (Asturias-Léon)
Sancho III	d.406/1015-16	d. /975	d.1035 (Navarre/Aragon)
Alfonso VI	d.501/1107-8	d. /1147	d.1109
Sancho		d. /1198	d.1158
Alfonso VIII		d. /1241	d.1214 (Castile)
Fernando III		d. /1300	d.1252
Alfonso X	d.683/1284	d. /1323	d.1284
Sancho IV	d.693/1294	d. /1334	d.1295
Ferdinand IV	d.712/1312	d. /1350	d.1312
Alfonso XI	d.751/1350	d. /1389	d.1351
Pedro the Cruel	d.772/1370-1		
Enrico II	d.781/1379		d.1379
Enrico III	currently reigning		d.1406

<sup>72</sup> The Christian dates in the *Aʿmāl al-aʿlām* are given according to what in Arabic is referred to as the Bronze Age and in Spanish as “la era”. It began 38 years before the Common Era. For its origins, see footnote 67 above. I have followed Ibn al-Khaṭīb in his listing of the dates of both Muslim and Christian calendars, leaving out the *hijri* dates where he omitted them. For the dates given by Ibn Khaldūn I have given their Common Era equivalent as established by Dozy in his translation of the passage.



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