

## NOTAS BIBLIOGRÁFICAS

Abū-ṭ-Ṭāhir, el Zaragozano, *Las sesiones del Zaragocí: Relatos picarescos* (maqāmāt) *del siglo XII*, Estudio preliminar, traducción y notas de Ignacio Ferrando, Zaragoza: Prensas Universitarias de Zaragoza, 1999, XLIV, 311 pp.

As early as 1930, Emilio García Gómez, the late doyen of Andalusī-Arabic literary studies, was able to write with regret that «la poesía árabe es la Cenicienta de los estudios orientales»<sup>1</sup> alleging, in support of his claim, the many linguistic, philological, and textual difficulties encountered in the corpus, not to speak of its heavy reliance on punning and other forms of rhetorical embellishment. To García Gómez's claims, one might add that, at the time he was writing, Oriental Studies, at least in their Arabic dimension, tended to be dominated by scholars who, though they were often impressive in their mastery of other disciplines, lacked adequate schooling in the techniques of literary theory and criticism. While matters certainly have improved over the course of the ensuing seventy years, García Gómez's remarks still remain largely valid today and, what is more, they may even be expanded to include much of Arabic literary prose as well as poetry.

Today, and thanks in no small part to García Gómez's efforts, Andalusī literature is better known in the West than it ever was before him. His early editions and translations of Arabic poetry from al-Andalus, be they collective anthologies or individual *dīwāns*; his brilliant theories about, and studies and editions of, Andalusī strophic poetry, as well as his translations of important prose works such as Ibn Ḥazm's *Ṭawq al-ḥamāma* have all contributed to this end. Nevertheless, much work remains to be done. Thus, whenever a major, and as yet untranslated, literary work from the corpus of Andalusī literature finally appears in Western garb, this only adds further to our knowledge, and is no less than a cause for celebration. Such is certainly the case with Ferrando's Spanish version<sup>2</sup> of the highly rhetoricized and very difficult *Maqāmāt al-luzūmiya* by al-Saraqusṭī, in undertaking the translation of which, Ferrando may be said to have earned a well-deserved position within the scholarly tradition initiated by García Gómez.

Al-Saraqusṭī died in the year 538/1143. Notwithstanding his extreme importance to the field of Arabic literature, modern editions of his *Maqāmāt* did not appear until the last

<sup>1</sup> García Gómez, E., *Poemas arábigo-andaluces*, Plutarco, Madrid, 1930, 33.

<sup>2</sup> Henceforward abbreviated F.

two decades of the previous century. They are those of Ibrāhīm Badr Aḥmad Ḍayf<sup>3</sup> and Ḥasan al-Waragī. <sup>4</sup> The key manuscripts on which these two editions are based differ, as a result of which the number and order of *maqāmāt* in each edition varies, as does the occasional reading. Ferrando's translation follows the order of *maqāmāt* found in W, while he indicates in his footnotes the alternate sequence provided in Ḍ. He is eclectic insofar as the source of the variant reading he chooses to translate is concerned but, in this case, his source is normally not indicated in the critical apparatus.

The *Maqāmāt al-luzūmiya* are so called because they employ the artifice known in Arabic as *luzūm mā lā yalzam* ('requiring what is not required') which consists in rhyming not only the final consonant of words (*-imū / -imū*), as is required by the rules of Arabic rhyme, but also the penultimate consonant (*-alimū / -alimū*), which is optional. The systematic adoption of this constraint makes rhyming more difficult, and has often led the author to the expedient of rhyming two or more cola on the same word, which is employed, in each instance, with a different meaning, as the following example illustrates:

...dufi 'tu 'ilā jazīrati *ṭarīf*,  
fa-ja 'altu 'afdī-hā bi-t-talīdi ḥīnan wa-bi-ṭ-*ṭarīf*,  
wa-'arā bi-hā kulla 'ajībin aw *ṭarīf*.

...I was propelled to the peninsula of *Ṭarīf*  
For which I began to sacrifice both my inherited and my *earned wealth*  
Once I had observed how marvelous it was, and how *unique*.<sup>5</sup>

Inevitably, this tendency to overcome the difficulty of biconsonantal rhyming by using the same word with different meanings in rhyme position leads to a heightened awareness of the ambiguity of meaning and, ultimately, to an increase in puns, with which the text is literally riddled. This makes translation no easy task, so that it is unlikely that any two translators will ever fully coincide in their understanding of the text. Taking this difficulty into account, Ferrando has acquitted himself most admirably, and is to be thanked for providing us with a translation that is, on the whole, not only accurate, but also eminently readable and couched in an elegant form of Spanish.

<sup>3</sup> *Al-Maqāmāt al-luzūmiya li-l-Saraqusṭī*, al-Ḥay'ah al-Miṣriyah al-'Āmmah li-l-Kitāb, Alexandria, 1982. Henceforward abbreviated Ḍ.

<sup>4</sup> *Al-Maqāmāt al-luzūmiya: ta'rif Abi l-Ṭāhir Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Tamīmī, al-Saraqusṭī*, Maṭābi' Mansūrāt 'Ukāz, 1995. Henceforward abbreviated W.

<sup>5</sup> W43, p. 401. My translation.

This having been said, let me make a few suggestions he may wish to consider for possible inclusion in a future edition of his book.

(1) Regarding the translation of puns, Ferrando has generally adopted the policy of providing a single Spanish meaning for what are often deliberately ambivalent Arabic words. For example, in «*Maqāma 7* (The Sea)» after the trickster Abū Ḥabīb al-Sadūsī has used his guile to persuade a group of gullible men to part with their money, he lectures one of his victims, the agent-narrator al-Sā'ib ibn Tammām, on the ways of the world, declaring in verse:

jahilta ḥulqa l-barāyā / wa-ḥalqa hādā l-zaman  
*fa-ḥtal* li-'ayši-ka wa-jhad / fa-mā li-'ayšin taman.<sup>6</sup>

This Ferrando translates as:

Ignoras la naturaleza de las criaturas y los seres de  
este tiempo.  
*Esfuérzate* y trama ardidés para obtener sustento,  
pues el condumio no tiene precio.<sup>7</sup>

Let me suggest the following clarification in the translation:

You are ignorant of the nature of mankind, and of the  
people of this age,  
So strive [or: 'deceive' (*fa-ḥtal*)] to earn your livelihood,  
and work hard at it, for life is priceless.<sup>8</sup>

Since Form VIII of the verb *ḥāla* can mean both 'to strive' or 'to deceive', in this context, under the guise of a moral message, the speaker is actually concealing his true and perverse recommendation, namely that one should use deceit in order to get ahead in life. In this instance, the pun, of a type known as *tawriya*, is not merely decorative; it draws attention to the discrepancy between the elegant words with which an act is being recommended, and the essential ugliness of that act itself, while this form of linguistic perversity is essential to the strategies of picaresque writings in general. Puns are, by their very nature, untranslatable into a foreign language. Ideally, their nature should, nevertheless, be explained in the modest obscurity of a footnote,

<sup>6</sup> W, 71.

<sup>7</sup> F, 35. Emphasis mine.

<sup>8</sup> My translation.

particularly when the subtleties of meaning hidden in a text hinge upon their being recognized.

(2) In «*Maqāma* 15» there is a line of verse that reads:

yā layta šī'rī du'ā'a majdin / mā fa'alat ba'da-nā nawāru.<sup>9</sup>

This is translated by Ferrando as:

¡Ojalá supiera yo evocar toda esta gloria y conocer lo que,  
libre de sospecha, hará después de que perezcamos!

In a footnote, the translator admits that the line offers a «sentido algo confuso».<sup>10</sup>

Nawār is a woman's name conventional in Arabic poetry, and found, for example, in the *Mu'allāqa* of the pre-Islamic poet Labīd.<sup>11</sup> It was also the name of the wife of the Umayyad poet al-Farazdaq (d. 109/728), who repudiated her, only to repent of that precipitous act, and to spend the remainder of his life writing poems of hopeless love about her inaccessibility to him. The passion of al-Farazdaq for Nawār is, moreover, alluded to elsewhere in the *Maqāmāt al-luzūmīya*, where Ferrando has identified that lady's name correctly.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, this line should be translated:

Would that I knew —as I invoke glory— what became  
of Nawār after her separation from us.

(3) In «*Maqāma* 41 (The Berbers)» a group of Berbers from the area around Tangier are said to have gotten drunk on an alcoholic beverage called *anzīz*.<sup>13</sup> A note in one of the manuscripts explains that this potion is made of cooked (*maṭbūḥ* [or perhaps 'fermented', or even 'distilled' ?]) grapes, but neither of the editors offers any further information about its identity, while Ferrando adds, in a note, that it is a «palabra que no aparece en los diccionarios».<sup>14</sup> The Arab geographer al-Idrīsī (d. 564/1169) confirms the claim made in the marginal manuscript note. In describing the people of Sūs al-Aqṣā, in southwestern Morocco, he says:

<sup>9</sup> W, 151.

<sup>10</sup> F, 81, and n. 168.

<sup>11</sup> See Captain Johnson, F. E., *The Seven Poems Suspended in the Temple at Mecca*, Education Society's Steam Press, Byculla, Bombay, 1893, 97, l. 16; 112, l. 55.

<sup>12</sup> See W20, 190, and compare with F20, 103; W31, 295, and compare with F31, 164.

<sup>13</sup> W, 388.

<sup>14</sup> F, 225, n. 533.

It is a land of wheat, barley, and rice, all available at the lowest rates. Its prices are cheap. Roughness, coarseness of nature, and unruliness prevail among its inhabitants. They are a medley of Maṣmūda Berbers, whose attire is a woolen garment that they wrap around themselves. On their heads they wear a lot of hair, to which they attach great importance and which they groom with much care, for they dye it every Friday with henna, and wash it twice every Friday with egg-white and Andalusī clay. They gird themselves around the waist with woolen aprons they call *asfāqis*. Not a man among them ever goes about without carrying two slender, short-staffed, long-pointed spears in his hand, which they fashion out of the best iron.<sup>15</sup> They eat a lot of fried and salted locusts. The people of Sūs are made up of two groups, for the people of the city of Tārūdant follow the Islamic Mālikī doctrine, and are members of the Ḥaṣawī sect, whereas the people of the town of Tūyūwīn adhere to the doctrine of Mūsā ibn Ja'far. Between them there is constant warfare, murder, bloodshed, and vengeance, save that they are a people leading the most comfortable of lives and blessed with the most fertile of soils. Their beverage is called *anzīz*. It is sweet and causes an extreme intoxication. It produces in its drinker an effect that wine does not produce, because of its strength and the thickness of its consistency, for they take the juice of sweet grapes and boil it over the fire until it is reduced by one third. Then it is removed from the fire, stored [to ferment?], and drunk. There is no way to drink it without mixing it with water. The people of Sūs al-Aqṣā consider its consumption to be permissible according to the Holy Law, as long as its drinker does not go to the extreme of getting drunk.<sup>16</sup>

What is particularly interesting about this account is that al-Idrīsī describes *anzīz* as being an alcoholic beverage typical of southwestern Morocco (Sūs), whereas al-Sā'ib ibn Tammām, the speaker in al-Saraqusī's *maqāma*, places it in the extreme north, around the area of Tangier. This inconsistency is either a mistake on the part of the author, or an inaccuracy on the part of the agent-narrator, introduced to suggest that his story is unreliable and, therefore, not to be trusted by the reader. Since there are many such inconsistencies in the *Maqāmāt al-luzūmīya*, it is probably an instance of the latter.

(4) In «*Maqāma* 48» the agent-narrator al-Sā'ib begins his tale of woe by stating: «Aqamtu fī raḥbati maliki bni ṭawq»<sup>17</sup> concerning whom (and which), the Arab editors

<sup>15</sup> They seem to be the short, *nayzaq*-like spears described in the same *maqāma* (see p. 387). The word derives from the Persian *nayzah*, and designates spears that were shorter than the average Arab ones.

<sup>16</sup> See al-Idrīsī, *Description de l'Afrique et de l'Espagne*, ed. R. Dozy and M. J. de Goeje, Brill, Leiden, 1866, 2 vols. Arabic text, vol. 2, 62-63; French translation, vol. 1, 72-73. My translation.

<sup>17</sup> W, 445.

provide no explanation in their footnotes to the text, thus indicating that they do not know to whom (and to what) the passage in question refers. Ferrando translates: «Me establecí en los dominios de Malik ibn Ṭawq», adding in a footnote: «No es fácil dar con identificación precisa de este antropónimo». <sup>18</sup>

Here is what I have come across concerning this unexplained passage: First of all, the reading *malik*, which is recorded in both Arabic editions, should be corrected to *mālik*, with a long *ā*. Secondly, Raḥbat Mālik ibn Ṭawq is a town on the right bank of the Euphrates, the modern al-Miyādīn. <sup>19</sup> The name means literally ‘the courtyard of Mālik ibn Ṭawq’. It was so named after a famous general and governor of Damascus, who founded al-Raḥba during the days of Hārūn al-Rašīd (r. 170/786-193/809). He was also a distinguished literary patron, whose entourage included the famous ‘Abbāsīd poets Abū Tammām (d. ca. 236/850) and al-Buḥturī (206/821-284/898), both of whom composed panegyrics in his honor. <sup>20</sup> He died in the year 260/873. The following anecdote about him is provided in one Arabic source:

*Mālik ibn Ṭawq al-Taḡlibī, the founder of al-Raḥba.*

He was a noble and valiant chevalier who governed the prefecture of Damascus for al-Mutawakkil. <sup>21</sup> After sunset, he used to call out at the door of his house in al-Ḥaḍrā’, <sup>22</sup> which was the seat of his authority: «Break your fast, may God have mercy on you», while his doors were kept open so that the people could enter.

It was he who built al-Raḥba, named after him, on the Euphrates. The reason for it was that Hārūn al-Rašīd <sup>23</sup> was sailing with his boon companions, among whom was Mālik ibn Ṭawq, in a fire-throwing boat on the Euphrates, and when he drew near to the water-wheels, he said: «O Prince of the Faithful, if you go toward the shore we will avoid those water-wheels.» The Caliph said: «Are you afraid of them?» Mālik replied: «May God recompense the Prince of the Faithful for any calamity [that may befall him].» Al-Rašīd said: «I augur ill from your words.» Then he [jumped ship and] made for the shore, and when the [abandoned] fire-throwing vessel reached the water wheels, it span around in a circle and then capsized with all that was in it. Al-Rašīd wondered at that, knelt in gratitude to God Almighty, distributed much money in alms, and said to Mālik: «It is our duty

<sup>18</sup> F, 257, and n. 620.

<sup>19</sup> See *EI*<sup>2</sup>, vol. 8, 393-396; *Jacut's Geographisches Wörterbuch (Mu'jam al-buldān)*, ed. Ferdinand Wüstenfeld, F. A. Brockhaus, Leipzig, 1866-1871, 6 vols., vol. 1, 567 and *passim*.

<sup>20</sup> See *EI*<sup>2</sup>, vol. 1, 751, col. b; p. 1289, col. b; Supplement, 122, col. b.

<sup>21</sup> R. 232/847-247/861.

<sup>22</sup> The palace of Damascus, built by Mu'āwiya I (r. 41/661-60/680). See *EI*<sup>2</sup>, vol. 7, 268, col. b.

<sup>23</sup> R. 170/786-193/809.

to satisfy some need of yours, so ask what you will.» Mālik replied: «Let the Prince of the Faithful give me, on this spot, a piece of land to develop, so that it will be named after me.» The Caliph responded: «No sooner said than done, for we will assist you with money and men.»

Once Mālik had developed his land, his affairs had prospered, and people had settled on it, the Caliph sent him a message requesting money of him, but Mālik made excuses, rejected the request, offered resistance, entrenched himself in his castle, and summoned his troops, so that prolonged battles between him and al-Rašīd took place, until al-Rašīd's general overpowered him and bore him off in irons, to languish in prison for ten days. Then the Caliph ordered him to be brought before a group of leaders and notables of the dynasty, whereupon Mālik kissed the ground but refrained from speaking. Al-Rašīd wondered at his silence, was angered by it, and ordered his head to be cut off. The leather execution-mat was rolled out, the sword was unsheathed, and Mālik was brought forth. Then the vizier said: «O Mālik, speak, for the Prince of the Faithful will hear your words.» Then Mālik raised his head and said: «O Prince of the Faithful, I have been reduced to silence out of fear, having been too afraid to greet and salute you, but if the Prince of the Faithful will allow me, I will declare: "Peace be upon the Prince of the Faithful, as well as God's mercy, along with His blessings! Praise be to God who created man out of clay!" O Prince of the Faithful, may God mend, through you, the fissure in the Faith, may He straighten out the muddled affairs of the Nation, extinguish, through you, the blaze of error, and illuminate, through you, the path of truth. Sins silence eloquent tongues and break men's hearts. I swear by God that my crime is great, my defense is stymied, and naught remains but your forgiveness or your revenge.» Then he composed a poem, saying, after having turned right and left:

I see Death, as it lurks between the leather execution-mat and the sword, gazing at me wherever I turn.

My foremost thought is that you will kill me today, and what man can escape from what God has decreed?

Standing still is difficult for a man of Aws ibn Taġlib, for the sword is brandished against me, yet I remain silent.

What man can offer excuses, or an argument in his defense, when the sword of the Fates is unsheathed before his eyes?

In me, there is no fear to be suppressed, for I know well that Death is an appointed end.

Rather, my fear is for my boys whom I have left behind, and whose hearts are torn apart from grief.

It is as if I can see them well enough to announce my death to them, while they claw at their faces and raise their voices high in mourning.

If I live, they will survive peacefully and in bliss, with me to avert Death from them; but if I die, they will be left to perish.

How many a man entreats God not to cause his home to perish, when another is cheerful, and rejoices over the misfortunes of his fellow.

Then Hārūn al-Rašid wept and said: «First you refrained from speaking, out of a highminded purpose, and now you have spoken with forbearance and wisdom. Hence, I forgive your youthful and impulsive behavior, and release you to your boys, so return to your children, and do not repeat your offense.» Mālik replied: «To hear is to obey,» and he departed.<sup>24</sup>

(5) In both Arabic editions, «*Maqāma* 12» is subtitled «*al-fārisīya*.» In the subtitle to his Spanish version, Ferrando translates this word as «la del caballero,» whereas in the page-headings he renders it as «la persa.» How are we to resolve this contradiction?

In the *maqāma* itself, the agent-narrator comes across a caravan in the deserts of Arabia. Its leader declares:

We are the caravan of Iraq, the worn garment of parting and separation, the importers of head-veils and silken shawls, and the descendants of proud-necked princes. We are the offspring of Persia (*Fāris*), and the places where we were born, and in which we grew up, remain serenely undisturbed. Brave exploits and backgrounds are attributed to us, and any man who strives for abundance and precedence is one of us. Entire nations have submitted to us, and our goal has always been within our reach. We Persians possess towns and large cities, just as you Arabs possess the *muhājirūn*<sup>25</sup> and the *anṣār*<sup>26</sup>. To us belong the scholars and men of learning, just as the men of noble origin and forbearance belong to you. Islam came to us, and we received it hospitably,

<sup>24</sup> See Muḥammad ibn Šākir al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-wafayāt*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī l-Dīn ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd, Cairo, 1951, vol. 2, 294-295, n. 362. See too *Jacut’s Geographisches Wörterbuch*, vol. 2, 764-767, where the same anecdote is told.

<sup>25</sup> The Prophet Muḥammad’s Meccan supporters, who fled with him to Medina in AD 622 (see *EI*<sup>2</sup>, vol. 7, 356-357).

<sup>26</sup> The Prophet’s Medinan supporters, who received him and his Meccan followers hospitably (see *EI*<sup>2</sup>, vol. 1, 514-515).



inhaling both its south and east winds. We soon became attached to its bonds, mounted its highest summits, and transmitted knowledge about it, in order to extend its tent ropes and fill its buckets and riverbeds, while we straightened its crookedness, and accepted the duty of avenging the insults made against it. How many of its pillars did we raise, how many of its eye diseases did we cure, how many a cold spell and a sweltering night-heat did we endure for its sake, and how many a purpose and goal did we achieve through it! We are its foundation and support, while it inclines or stands erect according to our will. We possess power and strength, and control height and might; no one can match the level of our courage, nor can any solitary wild beast elude us. We have never aimed at a target without hitting it, nor desired a kingdom without taking it by force; we go about, performing great deeds and acquiring rights to glory, initiating and concluding events of such magnificence that they cannot be encompassed or enumerated, nor can Ya'rub<sup>27</sup> or Ma'add<sup>28</sup> rise to their level, for no one can vie with us in superiority, in marksmanship, or in archery.<sup>29</sup>

Although it is true that the Arabic word *fāris* can mean both «a knight» as well as «Persia» one cannot, in this case, have things both ways. The context provided by the above passage, in which the speaker contrasts the virtues of the Persians with those of the Arabs, at the expense of the latter, after the fashion of the Šu'ūbiya, seems to suggest that the title of this *maqāma* should be translated «la persa,» and not «la del caballero.»

(6) There is an unusual problem of interpretation posed by a passage in «*Maqāma* 43 (Ṭarīf).» In it, the trickster al-Sadūsī, who appears to the agent-narrator al-Sā'ib in the guise of an old man, delivers a long oration in which he claims, among other things to be 120 years old.<sup>30</sup> At the end of the same *maqāma*, the trickster reveals his deception by declaring in verse:

a mā tarā-nī 'adda'ī kibratān / wa-jildatī rayyan wa-'azmī raṣīf?

Do you not observe that I am just pretending to be old, since my skin is fresh, and my bones are solid?<sup>31</sup>

<sup>27</sup> The legendary son of Qaḥṭān, ancestor of the Southern Arabs. He was said to have been the first to use the Arabic language (see *EI*<sup>1</sup>, vol. 4, 1160).

<sup>28</sup> Ancestor of the great Northern Arab tribal confederations of Rabī'a and Muḍar (see *EI*<sup>2</sup>, vol. 5, 894-895).

<sup>29</sup> W, 120-121. My translation.

<sup>30</sup> W, 402; F, 232.

<sup>31</sup> W, 406. My translation.

This inconsistency suggests that other elements of the speaker's story may also be unreliable. In particular, he claims to descend from a king of Ṭarīf (the modern Tarifa) who had two sons. One of these became jealous of the other's accomplishments *fa-ġtāla 'aḥā-hu wa-'tamada-hu bi-s-sū'i wa-tawaḥḥā-hu*.<sup>32</sup> This is translated by Ferrando as «así que tendió una trampa mortal a su hermano, se dispuso a perpetrar maldades contra él...».<sup>33</sup> More specifically, however, the Arabic verb *ġtāla* means «he covertly assassinated, murdered...» rather than «he set a deadly trap for...» Therefore, I would prefer to translate the passage: «... for he covertly murdered his brother, taking him unawares, having sought to bring intentional harm upon him.» Let us note that, further on in the narrative, this surviving fratricidal son overthrows his father who, when restored to his seat of power, retaliates by having his mutinous son executed. If we accept this interpretation of the above sentence, then it follows that both the king's sons die, the first at the hands of his brother, and the second at those of his father. The father is thus left childless. As a consequence, it becomes difficult to understand how the speaker disguised as an old man can convincingly claim to descend from a sovereign who has been left without issue. This internal inconsistency in the narration parallels the external deception perpetrated by the speaker who, though still young, disguises himself as an old man, as described above. In turn, this multileveled series of deceptions adds up to an authorial warning that the narrator's words are unreliable and, therefore, not be trusted by the reader. If the above suggested interpretation of who killed whom is correct, it would modify Ferrando's version of the narrative to some extent, insofar as Ferrando does not have the jealous brother murder the accomplished one, who survives to be killed by his father instead. According to such an interpretation, the jealous brother may thus be assumed to have survived and lived long enough to produce the offspring from whom the trickster in the *maqāma* claims descent. But although the Spanish version avoids a contradiction (that I consider essential to a tale told by an unreliable narrator), this avoidance rests upon a misinterpretation of the verb *ġtāla*.

(7) In «*Maqāma* 30 (The Poets)»<sup>34</sup> al-Sā'ib tells us that, on one occasion, when he was traveling in a caravan through a trackless wilderness, the noonday heat became unbearable. The travelers then proceeded to eat up all that was left of their food, after which they pitched their tents, in order to sleep through the noonday heat. Suddenly, a beggar appeared before them, whom they fed (presumably with the food they no longer had, since we have previously been told that they had already consumed all of it!). The agent-narrator, who is now wealthy, recognizes the beggar to be al-Sadūsī, and asks him

<sup>32</sup> W, 403.

<sup>33</sup> F, 233

<sup>34</sup> W, 264-278.

not to disgrace culture (*adab*) by begging, but offers to provide for him instead. Then, he mounts the trickster on one of his own camels,<sup>35</sup> and they ride off, discussing the great poets of Arabic literature along the way. Some thirty poets are mentioned and anecdotal snippets of information are provided about each one of them.<sup>36</sup> Eventually, al-Sadūsī becomes bored with al-Sā'ib's seemingly unquenchable thirst for knowledge, and announces his intention of leaving the desert in order to go to some fertile area where he can find a Christian monastery, which he will visit, presumably not for reasons of piety, but in order to get drunk and seduce Christian altar-boys after the manner of Abū Nuwās, as «*Maqāma 20 (Wine)*»<sup>37</sup> richly illustrates. Then, al-Sadūsī turns to al-Sā'ib and declares: *fa-'awwiḍ-nī min al-rāḥilati bi-l-'ayn, fa-'inna-hu lā 'aṭara ba'da 'ayn* («so give me some cash [*'ayn*] in exchange for this traveling-camel, and you will see [*'ayn*] no further trace of me»).<sup>38</sup> Al-Sā'ib gives the trickster all that is left of his

<sup>35</sup> At his point, the Arabic text reads *fa-ḥamaltu-hu 'alā ḍ-ḍurā wa-l-ḡawārib* (literally «then I bore him on the humps and withers of camels», i.e. «then I gave him a camel on the hump and withers of which to ride» [W, 265]), which Ferrando chooses to translate «así que lo llevé por cimas y cumbres» (F, 146). The word *ḍirwah* (pl. *ḍurā*) can mean «the uppermost part of a thing» (*cima*), but more specifically «a camel's hump», whereas *ḡārib* (pl. *ḡawārib*) can mean «the western side of a mountain» (*cumbres?*), but also «the withers of a camel, the fore part of a camel's hump.» In conjunction, they normally mean «the upper part and the fore part of the camel's hump» (see Lane, E. W., *Arabic-English Lexicon* [Williams and Norgate, London, 1863-1893], Book 1, 8 vols., vol. 3, 964-965; vol. 6, 2240-2244). Although Ferrando's interpretation is not impossible, in this context the stranger appears to be indigent and on foot. As a result, al-Sā'ib feeds him and provides him with one of his camels to ride. As I shall show, below, this interpretation is far more plausible.

<sup>36</sup> This scene provides the author with an opportunity to pun on the names of the poets, which he does systematically, according to the following formula: Imru' al-Qays «was a Hunduj Abū l-Ḥārīt̄ [“an eminence and a lion”] rather than a mere hired hand or a ploughman [*ḥārīt̄*];» Ṭarafa «was a Ṭarafa and a *ṭarafa* [“French tamarisk”]! Time cast the evil eye on him with its glance when it gazed on him (*ṭarafa-hu*), uprooting both his deeply rooted *at̄l* [“Oriental tamarisk”] and his *ṭarafa* [“French tamarisk”];» Zuhayr ibn Abī Sulmā «was Mount Ajā' or Mount Salmā; a flower in bloom [*zahaṛ*], not a bud [*zuhayr*];» al-Nābiḡa al-Ḍubyanī «was an Abū Umāma, and what an *abū umāma* [“a possessor of three hundred camels”];» al-A'šā «was an Abū Bašīr, and what an *abū bašīr* [“visionary”, a term often applied to the blind],» etc. (W30, 266-267). This approach rests on the ancient Stoic idea that the connection between any given signifier and its signified is deliberate and meaningful, rather than arbitrary or accidental, so that the proper goal of etymology is to discover and clarify that connection. Relying on Stoic principles, and centuries before al-Saraqusṭī, Saint Isidore of Seville (ca. 560-636) had explained in Latin that the cat (*cattus*) was so called *quod cattat* («because it looks»). See Magallón García, Ana-Isabel, *Concordantia in Isidori Hispalensis Etymologias: A Lemmatized Concordance to the Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, Hildesheim-Zurich-New York 1995, vol. 1, 273. And centuries after al-Saraqusṭī, Sebastián de Covarrubias Orozco (1539-1613), the first lexicographer to compile a dictionary of the Spanish language, was to explain in Spanish that ladies (*damas*) were so called because they habitually say to their lovers and husbands *da más* («give me more»). See Covarrubias Orozco, Sebastián de, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española*, ed. Felipe C. R. Maldonado, revised Manuel Camarero, Castalia, Madrid, 1994, 395-396.

<sup>37</sup> W, 190-195.

<sup>38</sup> W, 278.

money, thereby buying from the trickster al-Sā'ib's own camel! How the beggar, now loaded down with money, plans to get out of the trackless wilderness on foot, is left entirely unexplained. Note too, that the trickster's statement contains a rhyming pun of the sort mentioned earlier, for the word *'ayn*, the basic meaning of which is «eye», can also mean «cash», and «seeing.» The trickster is thus saying: «Give me some cash / *'ayn* for the camel, and you will see / *'ayn* no further trace of me.»<sup>39</sup> To further complicate matters, after having ploughed through anecdotes about some thirty major poets of Arabic literature, in what constitutes the longest *maqāma* in the collection, our critical eye / *'ayn* may fail to detect the improbability of a man being so stupid as to buy his own camel, unless we are very careful readers indeed!

(8) In «*Maqāma* 49» the agent-narrator al-Sā'ib halts at a waterhole in the desert, where he meets an old man, the trickster, who asks him where he is going. Al-Sā'ib answers:

I come from the land of the east, and I am going to that of the west, of wondrous report, and of the remarkable phoenix.<sup>40</sup> I am going to where kingship (*mulk*) is magnificent, honor is resplendant, magnanimity is inexhaustible, sport is serious, glory is widespread, no goal is unattainable; Time smiles, the breeze of prosperity blows, generosity pours forth its gifts, and praise spreads its fragrance; I am going to a king (*malik*) whose robe is ample, whose acts of generosity flow freely, whose disposition is loyal, whose glory is limitless, whose favors are noble, and who boasts freeborn ancestors; I am going to a young man (*ḡulām*) on whom leadership and command shine, and in whom resoluteness and political ability are transparent; I am going to one, of whose courage the misfortunes and calamities of Fate are terrified, and whose mention songs and orchestras are asked to repeat; to a sovereign who is magnanimous when difficulties incapacitate; to one who is generous when the generous are avaricious; to one who is bold when the feet of the timid stumble.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Translated in F, 161, as «cámbiame pues mi montura por dinero, y si te he visto no me acuerdo.» In light of the above explanation, however, it should be translated as «cámbiame pues la (i. e., «tu, your») montura...»

<sup>40</sup> The «*'anqā'*» or «phoenix» was believed to dwell in the wildernesses of Arabia (see *ET*<sup>2</sup>, vol. 1, 509), but in «*Maqāma* 36 (The Phoenix)» its home is also (falsely) declared by the trickster to be in the west. Since, in that *maqāma*, al-Sā'ib clearly sees through al-Sadūsī's deceptive claim to the effect that the phoenix was a western creature, we can only conclude that he is also lying here.

<sup>41</sup> W, 454. My translation.

When the old man learns that al-Sā'ib is planning to court the favor of this young ruler in the west, he asks the former what poetry he plans to recite in the youth's praise, and when al-Sā'ib admits that he does not know how to compose poetry, the old man offers to do so for him, and then proceeds to improvise a panegyric in four sections, all of which have a common final rhyme-consonant, whereas the rhyme of the penultimate consonant varies from section to section. In the fourth and final section, the name of the patron, Tāšufīn, is mentioned.<sup>42</sup> In an explanatory note, Ferrando states: «Ésta es una clara alusión panegírica al sultán almorávide Yūsuf ibn Tašfīn, que es el famoso rey de reyes hacia el que se dirige as-Sā'ib en este caso».<sup>43</sup>

In the prologue to his *Maqāmāt al-luzūmiya*, al-Saraqusī acknowledges his indebtedness to al-Ḥarīrī of Basra (446/1054-516/1122), whom he is imitating, in al-Andalus, only a few years after al-Ḥarīrī had composed his own work in the East.<sup>44</sup> The *Maqāmāt* of al-Ḥarīrī were introduced to al-Andalus by one Abū l-Ḥajjāj Yūsuf ibn 'Alī al-Qudā'ī, who heard them directly from their author in Šawwāl 504/April 1111, before which date they could not have been known in al-Andalus.<sup>45</sup> On chronological grounds, it would, therefore, seem more logical to conclude that the above passage, contained in «*Maqāma* 49» is a dedication of that *maqāma*, if not of the entire collection, to Tāšufīn ibn 'Alī, the third Almoravid ruler to take the title of Amīr al-Muslimīn, and *not* to Yūsuf ibn Tāšufīn, contrary to what Ferrando believes. Tāšufīn ibn 'Alī was first appointed governor of al-Andalus in 519/1126, and then deposed in 532/1138, when his jealous brother Sīr, the heir apparent, succeeded in persuading their father, 'Alī ibn Yūsuf, to replace Tāšufīn with Sīr. After having distinguished himself for his brilliant campaigns against the Christians, Tāšufīn thus returned to live obscurely in the Almoravid capital of Marrakesh. When Sīr died unexpectedly, that very year, Tāšufīn was declared heir apparent by his father, whom he succeeded in 537/1143, the same year al-Saraqusī died, after a severe illness that lasted three years and that, presumably prevented him from composing *maqāmāt*. Tāšufīn reigned briefly, until 539/1145, when the Almohads overthrew the Almoravid dynasty.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, this penultimate *maqāma* must have been written between 519/1126 and 532/1138, when Tāšufīn, whom the author refers to as a «youth» (*gūlām*) was still governor of al-Andalus, and not between 537/1143 and 539/1145, when he was the

<sup>42</sup> W, 456.

<sup>43</sup> F, 267, n. 647.

<sup>44</sup> W, 17; F, 1.

<sup>45</sup> See Mackay, Pierre A., *Certificates of Transmission on a Manuscript of the Maqāmāt of Ḥarīrī (MS Cairo, Adab 105)*, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, series 2, vol. 61, part 4, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, 1971, 8, n. 5; 30.

<sup>46</sup> See Bosch Vilá, Jacinto, *Historia de Marruecos: los almorávides*, Editora Marroquí, Tetuán 1956, 9, n. 1 and *passim*.

Almoravid Amīr al-Muslimīn, and al-Saraqusṭī was already dead. Thus, there are strong grounds to suggest that al-Saraqusṭī's work was written between the years 519/1126 and 532/1138, and that it was dedicated to his contemporary, the popular Almoravid governor of al-Andalus, the royal prince Tāšufīn ibn 'Alī, rather than to his more famous grandfather, Yūsuf ibn Tāšufīn (r. 453/1061-500/1106), who died at least five years before al-Ḥarīrī's *Maqāmāt* could have even been known, much less imitated, in al-Andalus.

Aside from the eight suggestions listed above, which are offered in a positive spirit, and in the interest of further improving on an otherwise impressive translation, there are several other instances in which I respectfully disagree with the specific rendering of the Arabic text proposed by Ferrando. Since that text is riddled with puns and obscure allusions, however, these are instances of legitimate disagreement among scholars, and it is not impossible that, in his understanding of these passages, Ferrando will eventually be proven right, where I will be declared wrong. In my own forthcoming English translation of the *Maqāmāt al-luzūmīya* which, let me hasten to add, has benefitted in no small measure from Ferrando's remarkable pioneering effort, the reader will, therefore, be invited to take *both* translations into account before drawing his own conclusions. In sum, Ferrando's translation may be characterized as a major step forward in our understanding of a difficult author, as well as valuable contribution to our knowledge of Arabic literature.

In the course of the above exposition, much linguistic ambiguity, leading to internal contradictions in the narrative logic of the text, has been isolated. It is this ambiguity that makes it so difficult to understand and, therefore, to appreciate, Arabic literary texts from the late, and misnamed «Age of Decadence» (*'aṣr al-inḥiṭāt*). With the help of translations such as that provided by Ferrando, however, we can begin to perceive that works such as that of al-Saraqusṭī are hardly decadent at all, but rather, that they embody surprising literary values. In fact, the very concept of the so-called Age of Decadence is in urgent need of revision. Its case is not dissimilar to that exemplified by the Spanish baroque poet Góngora who, in his own lifetime was subjected by his enemies to harsh criticism because of the perceived obscurity of his thought. By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, he had fallen into disfavor on the grounds that he was a poet who embodied the very essence of bad taste, particularly in the eyes of critics such as Menéndez y Pelayo.<sup>47</sup> It was not until the early twentieth century that Góngora's true genius came to be recognized, and his literary value to be appreciated, largely as a result

<sup>47</sup> See, for example, Menéndez y Pelayo, Marcelino, *Historia de las ideas estéticas en España*, A. Pérez Dubrull, Madrid, 1884, 4 vols., vol. 2, chap. 10, 315-543, at pp. 488-541, where the author inveighs against Góngora and his school, namely *culteranismo*.

of the critical efforts of Dámaso Alonso.<sup>48</sup> Today, as a result of that scholar's work, it would be hard to deny the obvious fact that Góngora, even at his most obscure, is a truly great poet. Thus, while making allowances for the fact that the Arabic Age of Decadence lasted several centuries longer than the Spanish baroque period, it is becoming increasingly clear that what the study of late classical Arabic literature urgently needs, is an army of Dámaso Alonso. The more scholars such as Ferrando makes writers from the *aṣr al-inḥiṭāt* accessible to Western readers, the more it becomes obvious that that period too, can offer us a number of world-class authors such as al-Saraqustī. Let us have more of this.

James T. MONROE

#### LAS CARACTERÍSTICAS DE LA SOCIEDAD ISLÁMICA EN EL MAGREB

CORNELL, Vincent J., *The Realm of the Saint. Power and Authority in Moroccan Sufism*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998, XLIV-398 pp.

SHATZMILLER, Maya, *The Berbers and the Islamic State. The Marīnid Experience in Pre-Protectorate Morocco*, Princeton: Marcus Wiener Publishers, 2000, 200 pp.

Estos dos libros que aquí reseño juntos son ambos importantes y van a ser sin duda influyentes. Tienen muy poco en común, salvo que tratan de historia de Marruecos, y que ambos están interesados por el poder, aunque el primero se centre sobre todo en el poder y la autoridad religiosa y el segundo en el poder dinástico. Uno se basa en fuentes hagiográficas principalmente, el otro en crónicas históricas... Pero los he leído con muy poca distancia en el tiempo, y el hecho de que ambos tengan un programa, una pro-

<sup>48</sup> He wrote some sixty critical items on Góngora, prominent among them, Luis de Góngora y Argote, *Soledades*, ed. Dámaso Alonso, *Revista de Occidente*, Madrid, 1927; Dámaso Alonso, *La lengua poética de Góngora*, S. Aguirre, Madrid, 1935; *Estudios y ensayos gongorinos*, Gredos, Madrid, 1955; *Góngora y el «Polifemo»: Texto, estudio, versión en prosa, comentarios y notas, estrofa por estrofa*, 4th ed., Gredos, Madrid, 1951.