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# The Circulation of Foreign News and the Construction of Imperial Ideals: The Spanish Translators of Aḥmad al-Manṣūr\*

*La circulación de noticias del extranjero y la construcción de los ideales imperiales: los traductores españoles de Aḥmad al-Manṣūr*

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**Resumen:** A lo largo del reinado de Aḥmad al-Manṣūr (1578-1603), una gran cantidad de noticias e información sobre los acontecimientos políticos y religiosos de Europa circulaban en el reino de Marruecos. Dicha información aparecía en las representaciones y correspondencias elaboradas en la corte marroquí. La información fue transmitida en parte por agentes españoles, portugueses, ingleses, franceses, e holandeses, pero su incorporación en el sistema de información y representación del sultán corrió a cargo del traductor oficial español. Se adoptaron las noticias extranjeras transmitidas por el traductor español en una serie de discursos reales variados. El uso de información europea formó parte de las estrategias de representación imperial de al-Manṣūr, tanto para au-

**Abstract:** During the reign of Aḥmad al-Manṣūr (1578-1603), a good deal of news and information about European political and religious affairs circulated in Morocco and was used in official discourses generated in the Moroccan court. This information was transmitted in part by a range of European agents from Spain, Portugal, England, France, and the Netherlands, but the key figure in its reception and use in the Moroccan court was the Spanish translator, who worked alongside al-Manṣūr's secretaries and other chancellery officials. Foreign news, as relayed by the Spanish translator, was adapted into different royal discourses and was used along with other strategies of representation to reinforce al-Manṣūr's claims to sovereign and imperial legitimacy before Muslim and Christian audien-

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diciencias musulmanas como cristianas.

**Palabras clave:** Marruecos. España. Inglaterra. Aḥmad al-Manṣūr. Felipe II. Isabel I. Diplomacia de la Edad Moderna. Imperio. Traducción. Noticias. ‘Abd al-Azīz al-Fashtālī. Aḥmad Ibn Qāsim al-ḥajarī; Diego Marín. Alonso del Castillo.

ces.

**Keywords:** Morocco. Spain, England; Aḥmad al-Manṣūr. Philip II. Elizabeth I. Early Modern Diplomacy. Empire. Translation. News. ‘Abd al-Azīz al-Fashtālī. Aḥmad Ibn Qāsim al-ḥajarī. Diego Marín. Alonso del Castillo.

In 1588 ‘Abd al-Azīz al-Fashtālī (1549-1621), chief secretary to the Moroccan sultan Aḥmad al-Manṣūr (r. 1578-1603), drafted a letter on behalf of his sovereign to the residents of the coastal region of Sūs in which he described the rout of the Spanish Armada in the English Channel<sup>1</sup>. In the letter, al-Fashtālī recounted the confrontation between the Tyrant of Castile (*tāghiyya Qashtāla*), Philip II (1527-1598), and the Sultana of England (*sulṭāna Naklaṭira*), Elizabeth I (1533-1603), explaining how «their enmity started after she and her people renounced the religion and law of the Christians»<sup>2</sup>. Al-Fashtālī told how Philip prepared a fleet, «manning it with countless nations from the assemblies of polytheism and the parties of infidelity»<sup>3</sup>. The fleet of these polytheists was then broken at the gates of the enemy by a «sharp wind», and Elizabeth sent her fleet to destroy it<sup>4</sup>. According to al-Fashtālī, the English defeat of the Spanish was a «harbinger of success and conquest, and a sign for [al-Manṣūr] to fulfill his awaited promise of taking possession, by God’s will, of [Philip’s] lands and territories»<sup>5</sup>. In other words, news of the defeat of the Spanish Armada in the straights of the English Channel was a divine signal that the hour for al-Manṣūr’s reconquest of al-Andalus, now Christian Iberia under Philip’s control, was at hand.

The use of the foreign news in a royal letter to his own subjects must be understood not only as evidence of al-Manṣūr’s awareness of European affairs, but of his ability to inscribe what he or his advisors knew of Christian rivalries into Muslim political eschatology in order to confirm al-Manṣūr’s legitimacy as Caliph<sup>6</sup>. The dissemination and re-

<sup>1</sup> He later included the text of these letters in his history of the Sa’dī dynasty, al-Fashtālī, 1972, though the text of the 1588 letter at least was also preserved in the scribal register of the al-Fashtālīs (Bibliothèque National du Royaume du Maroc, ms. K278) and then published as part of the selection in Gannūn, 1954.

<sup>2</sup> Nabil Matar has a very useful partial translation of the 1588 letter and the 1596 account of the defeat of the Spanish Armada from al-Fashtālī’s *Manāhil al-Ṣafā’*, modified versions of which I use throughout this article. Matar, 2009, pp. 144-147. Gannūn, 1954, pp. 150-157.

<sup>3</sup> From the Moroccan perspective, Philip and his allies were not only infidels but, as Christians who venerated the trinity, they were polytheists.

<sup>4</sup> Nabil Matar explains the significance of the quranic phrase used in al-Manṣūr’s letter, *rīhan sar-sarān*, positing that al-Fashtālī wished to draw a comparison between the idolatrous people of ‘Ad and the Spaniards. See Matar, 2008, p. 62.

<sup>5</sup> Matar, 2009, p. 146.

<sup>6</sup> On the political conceptions of the overlapping categories of the Caliph (*khalīfa*) and the Imam

elaboration of foreign news through official channels was used to strengthen al-Manṣūr's authority among his own subjects. The 1588 letter to Sūs is one of many examples of European events being reinscribed into a local Moroccan agenda, often by the very same 'Abd al-Azīz al-Fashtālī, who in addition to being the chief royal secretary (*wazīr al-qalam*) was also the chief royal historiographer (*sāhib al-tarjama*). Al-Fashtālī also described in his chronicle of the Sa'dī dynasty, *Manāhil al-Ṣafa'*, the causes and events around the 1596 English attack on Cadiz and the assassination of Henry III (1551-1589), along with an account of the coming to power of Henry IV of France (r. 1553-1610). The audience for these foreign current events was thus not only the fractious people of Sūs, but the entire Sa'dī Empire and succeeding generations of Moroccan historians.

The interest in and circulation of information about European affairs was part of a wider system of regular contact across the Atlantic Mediterranean at the end of the sixteenth century<sup>7</sup>. This system was part of a broader market for news and propaganda that in the sixteenth-century was beginning to take on global dimensions<sup>8</sup>. Between Morocco, Europe, and the Ottoman Empire, one of the motors of this circulation were the men who traveled across the Atlantic Mediterranean in diplomatic or commercial capacities (who were sometimes one and the same), including European representatives in Morocco and Moroccan representatives in Europe<sup>9</sup>. In Morocco, much of this flow of information was

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(*imām*), see the respective entries in Bowering; Crone; Kadi; Stewart; Qasim Zaman, 2013, pp. 81-86 and 247-250. On al-Manṣūr's aspirations to construct caliphal legitimacy to rival the claims of the Ottoman sultans, see the excellent work in Cory, 2013, pp. 3-4 and *passim*.

<sup>7</sup> For a discussion of the entangled histories of the westernmost Mediterranean and the Atlantic networks connected to the Moroccan and Iberian Atlantic coasts, see Ruiz, 2014, pp. 411-424. On the circulation of news and information in the specific context of the widespread practice of captive redemption in both Muslim and Christian territories, see the work of Hershenzon, 2012, pp. 14-20 and *passim*. Al-Fashtālī received at least some of his news about European practices in the context of captivity and redemption from former captives, like his fellow royal historiographer, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Qādī, held captive by Maltese pirates between 1586 and 1587, whose story al-Fashtālī recorded in his chronicle. For a discussion of the event, see Matar, 2009, pp. 48-50. On the important ways in which ibn al-Qādī also participated in the projection of al-Manṣūr's caliphal legitimacy, see Cory, 2013, pp. 98-100.

<sup>8</sup> Pettegree, 2014, pp. 1-13.

<sup>9</sup> Studies of Moroccan representatives in Europe include, Van Koningsveld, al-Samarrai and Wieggers, 1997; García-Arenal and Wieggers, 2006; al-Qaddūrī, 1995. As far as I am aware, there is no dedicat-

achieved through the specialized group of official translators attached to the royal courts, working for royal secretaries like al-Fashtālī, many of whom also had diplomatic and commercial experience across the sea. These translators were expected to be well versed in diplomatic protocols, commercial practices, history, current events, legal norms, and religious beliefs of their interlocutors. This breadth of expertise was expected not only in order to foster mutual intelligibility during a diplomatic or commercial interaction, but was highly necessary so that the translator could help channel the appropriate European information to where it could be best used in official correspondences and historical discourses produced by the Moroccan government.

The goal of this article is to understand how such information was translated and disseminated at the Moroccan court, and how the reception and the use of this information in Morocco was reflected by al-Manṣūr's imperial claims in correspondence and historiography aimed at a Moroccan audience, as well as diplomatic correspondence with European sovereigns. Though much was at stake for al-Manṣūr in his claims to the title of Caliph or Imam before Muslim audiences in Morocco and abroad, his representations of his own power were part of a common early modern discourse of competitive imperial legitimacy that was also used by rulers in Europe and the Ottoman sultan. I will first argue that a crucial premise to the reception of European information was its translation by a network of translators that stretched from Morocco to Spain, meaning that the reception and adaptation of news and information was based not only on the administrative structures of al-Manṣūr's court but on personal strategies for advancement. Beyond my explanation of how al-Manṣūr and his secretaries used this collaborative translation network, I will explore the ways that representations of European information were presented in domestic royal correspondence and historiography, focusing on the work of al-Fashtālī. The Moroccan court, like all other early modern courts, not only received news but produced news from the information it gathered. For all early modern claimants to universal empire, foreign information was of great use not only for external diplomacy and geopolitics, but for internal integration. Lastly I will explain how al-Manṣūr's use of foreign information when addressing foreign

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ed study of European agents in Morocco.

sovereigns, as it was mediated by his translation staff (many of whom were foreigners themselves), may be seen in the light of a broader late sixteenth-century scramble for universal empire, an aspiration which was not limited to Western Europe and its early modern colonial projects.

#### 1. A COOPERATIVE TRANSLATION OFFICE ACROSS THE SEA

Like all early modern monarchs, the Sa'dī sultan neither produced nor received correspondence and information from outside his realms without the intervention of many specialized royal officials. One of the most important of these officials was the Spanish translator, for Spanish had become a diplomatic *lingua franca* for royal diplomacy in the Western Mediterranean by the end of the sixteenth century<sup>10</sup>. Spanish translators were not only charged with creating and translating diplomatic correspondence, but accompanied royal officials when they interviewed foreign agents, and used their own experiences with Europeans or in Europe to collect foreign news for use in the Moroccan chancellery. Because most translators did not sign their work, and most interpreters are not named in the written records, we will likely never know the identity of all the individuals who held an official appointment as a Spanish translator during al-Manṣūr's reign. However, a few fascinating individuals have left enough evidence to piece together the norms of access to and tasks of the position.

During al-Manṣūr's reign (1578-1603), a Spanish translation was usually made in Morocco to be carried with the Arabic original of the diplomatic correspondence, commercial agreements, and letters of safe-conduct destined for European agents or sovereigns, even if those Europeans were not necessarily Spanish. There was no shortage of Europeans (Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, Flemish, French, English, etc.) in Morocco who could relay information to and from Morocco and different parts of Europe, but an interesting feature of the circulation of this information

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<sup>10</sup> In the Western Mediterranean, Spanish, and sometimes Arabic, could function as a *lingua franca* of a certain official register (diplomacy and chancellery documents), closer to what Karla Malette identifies in passing as a *diplomatic lingua franca* (Malette, 2014, pp. 334, 338-339). At the same time Spanish also served as bridge between court Arabic and the court language of other European powers, like the English, Dutch, or French. On the rise of Spanish use in Moroccan diplomacy see the introduction to García-Arenal, Rodríguez Mediano, and El-Hour, 2002, pp. 19-20.

through the Moroccan administration is that much of it took place in Spanish and thus was managed by the Spanish translators of the Sa'dī *makhzan* (government administration and offices). European agents in Morocco, whether from England, France, or the Dutch United Provinces, often used Spanish at some stage in the translation of information back to their home countries<sup>11</sup>. Using the tandem of Spanish and Arabic as a diplomatic language, after 1578 the western axis of the Atlantic Mediterranean functioned as a well-connected network of competing and complementary commercial and political interests. The Spanish translator in Morocco, thus, was a figure of critical importance to the circulation of information between the Western Maghreb and Western Europe, and he played a key role in creating a monopoly over foreign information that was then redeployed in the administration of Moroccan power among local audiences.

The translator ensured not only the circulation of information but also provided material for the construction and representation of power, often before unexpected audiences. In so doing, he made information, materials, and practices intelligible between varied and religiously distinct political and legal systems. The key to the Moroccan administrative system of information and representation was the *kātib al-sirr* (literally, the scribe of secrets), the official in charge of managing the increasing amount of ciphered diplomatic correspondence which flowed through Moroccan, European, and Ottoman royal courts at this time<sup>12</sup>. This charge was held by al-Manṣūr's chief secretary 'Abd al-Azīz al-Fashtālī, who worked closely with the translators, and it would later be held (or claimed to be held) by another royal translator, Aḥmad Ibn Qāsim al-Ḥajarī<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> The majority of correspondence to and from Morocco to European powers after 1578 passed through at least one Spanish translation. There are some Latin translations from Morocco, but by and large any text from the chancellery which was translated into a European language after 1578 was translated into Spanish. In the various European courts the Spanish or Arabic text would then be translated in to English, French, Dutch, etc. During the reign of al-Manṣūr's brother and predecessor, Italian was also used because 'Abd al-Malik had a working knowledge of that European language (among others). On 'Abd al-Malik's multilingualism see García-Arenal, 2009 and also the many documents in the *Archivo General de Simancas (Estado)* that bear his signature «Abdelmelec».

<sup>12</sup> On the cipher office of the chancellery, see Mouline, 2009, pp. 224-228.

<sup>13</sup> On the office of *kātib al-sirr*, see Mouline, 2009, p. 222. On al-Fashtālī's role as *kātib al-sirr*, see al-Maqqarī, 1983, p. 112. Near the end of his life, al-Ḥajarī referred to himself as both *turjumān al-sulṭān Mūlay Zaydān* and *kātib sirrihi* [Mūlay Zaydān] *bi-l-lisān 'ajamī*, in his preface to his 1641 Arabic translation of a Spanish gunnery manual for the Spanish-speaking *morisco* population of Tunis,



This administrative system, enacted by longstanding traditions of mutually intelligible diplomatic and chancellery protocols, was supported by the personal networks of the translators and other officials and achieved through their interventions in official documents.

During the reign of al-Manṣūr, a specialized corps of translators was employed within the Sa'dī *makhzan*<sup>14</sup>. The professional networks of this group overlapped with personal ones, limiting access to royal appointments in chancellery service. After the so-called «Battle of the Three Kings» in August 1578, when Aḥmad al-Manṣūr took the throne, a tremendous number of Spanish and Portuguese military captives remained in Morocco<sup>15</sup>. Thousands of Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking captives were incorporated in various ways into the Sa'dī administration, army, and even into the royal household<sup>16</sup>. However, the robust population of Romance speakers did not mean that any one of those individuals would or could necessarily become a royal translator, and those who gained access to the *makhzan* had to rely on personal relationships and reputation as much as on their linguistic skills and expertise.

Though diplomatic contact between Iberian and North African kingdoms was longstanding, after 1578 a set of cooperative chancellery outposts between Morocco and Spain was created through the personal networks of a group of Granada *moriscos* with ties to Morocco. Chief among these *moriscos* were the well-known figures of Alonso del Castillo and his friend, the priest Diego Marín<sup>17</sup>. The skills and experience of both men as Arabic-Spanish translators and intermediaries had been forged during the Alpujarras war of 1568-1571 in Granada. By 1578, Castillo was still based in Granada while Marín was based largely in Marrakesh, ac-

Vienna Arabic MS 1412, reproduced in Harvey, 1959, p. 75.

<sup>14</sup> This information system dates from at least the Marinids, and probably long before. On the parallels with the Marinid chancellery, see Khaneboubi, 2008, pp. 367-371.

<sup>15</sup> Also called the Battle of the Three Kings or Alcazarquivir (al-Qaṣr al-Kabīr), or Wādī al-Makhāzin. For accounts of this battle, its motives and aftermath, see García-Arenal, 2009, pp. 6-21 and *passim*, Cory, 2013, pp. 9, 75, 109, and *passim*, and Valensi, 2009, pp. 19-25.

<sup>16</sup> García-Arenal, 2009, p. 59.

<sup>17</sup> On the work of Alonso del Castillo and Diego Marín in the correspondence between al-Manṣūr and Philip, see the still-classic articles by Dario Cabanelas (1958a, 1958b, 1972). Diego Marín was not the first Spanish priest to find regular employment as a translator in Morocco. Fr. Luis de Sandoval, a Franciscan from Seville, worked as a Spanish translator in the court of al-Manṣūr's brother and predecessor, 'Abd al-Malik. See the note in *Les Sources Inédites de l'Histoire du Maroc (SIHM)*, Angleterre I, Document XCI (1577), p. 232.

accompanied and aided by his nephew (also called Diego Marín)<sup>18</sup>. Part of Marín's professional legitimacy was his presence in Marrakesh before the influx of captives from the Battle of Alcazarquivir<sup>19</sup>. Having been captured and brought to Morocco in 1573, Marín found a way to make himself useful to al-Manṣūr's predecessor 'Abd al-Malik, earning his freedom in 1577<sup>20</sup>. Once free, he returned to Spain, only to be sent back in the aftermath of the Battle of Alcazarquivir and al-Manṣūr's ascension to the throne<sup>21</sup>. Marín became a fundamental part of Spanish-Moroccan diplomacy. Not only did he facilitate that diplomacy through his role as interpreter, but al-Manṣūr and Philip corresponded frequently about him and whether his next assignment should be in Iberia or in Morocco<sup>22</sup>.

Through the figures of Castillo, the Maríns, and their networks, the Sa'dī-Habsburg diplomatic correspondence, which intensified after 1578, was canalized into personal and commercial relationships of long standing. Whatever al-Manṣūr's actual intentions in his Spanish alliance might have been, he was eager to receive certain luxury and prestige items from Spain<sup>23</sup>. Translators played a very important role in these transactions. One of Castillo's earliest translations from his «Moroccan Period», made in 1579, was a safe-conduct from al-Manṣūr, carried to Spain by Marín and translated there by Castillo. The recipient was Fran-

<sup>18</sup> On the possible paternity of Diego Marín the younger, see García-Arenal and Rodríguez Mediano, 2013, p. 124.

<sup>19</sup> On Marín's capture from near Málaga along with some 800 other captives, see García-Arenal, Rodríguez Mediano and El-Hour, 2002, p. 48. On his life before his capture, see García-Arenal and Rodríguez Mediano, 2013, pp. 123-124.

<sup>20</sup> *SIHM* Angleterre I, document LXXXII (1577), p. 206.

<sup>21</sup> On Marín's diplomatic career, see García-Arenal and Rodríguez Mediano, 2013, pp. 133-136.

<sup>22</sup> On the correspondence about Marín, see Cabanelas, 1972, pp. 10-12. The captive Antonio de Saldanha reported that al-Manṣūr defended Marín from the Spanish ambassador's intimation that he was «merely» an interpreter, but rather claimed that Marín «was a familiar of his own house, for whom he always felt the highest esteem». Quoted in García-Arenal and Rodríguez Mediano, 2013, p. 134. My translation.

<sup>23</sup> Philip's intentions were far more concrete. After the Battle of the Three Kings and Philip II's final ascension to the throne of Portugal as Filipe I, Iberian interest in gaining control over strategically important ports along the Moroccan Atlantic coastline intensified. Meanwhile, other European powers, in particular Elizabeth I's England, were establishing commercial and diplomatic outposts in Morocco. Because the Atlantic port of al-'Arāysh (Sp. Larache), between Tangier and Rabat and was well positioned to defend the Straights of Gibraltar and the Atlantic trade at Sanlúcar de Barrameda, it became the object of intensive diplomatic negotiations for several decades. See García-Arenal, Rodríguez Mediano, and El-Hour, 2002, pp. 47-53 and 64-68.

cisco Barredo, a *morisco* merchant and close friend of both Marín and Castillo. In 1583, al-Manṣūr bought a quantity of jewels and precious cloth from Barredo, and wrote to Marín to have him act as the bank for this transaction<sup>24</sup>. Meanwhile, the letter was passed along to Castillo who dutifully translated it among the lunatic but formal negotiations between Philip and al-Manṣūr over the Moroccan port of Larache (al-'Arāysh), thus inscribing al-Manṣūr's personal purchase into the official political correspondence<sup>25</sup>.

The Spanish translators kept tight control over their mutual posting as servants of the King of Spain and Sultan of Morocco. The seriousness with which the official translators took their positions was manifested in Marín's own death in 1585, when he was poisoned by a rival translator, Jacob Rute (the second attempt)<sup>26</sup>. Following Rute's murder of Marín, his nephew, «took possession of his uncle's papers, worried that al-Manṣūr would take them from him, and then continued in [his uncle's] office»<sup>27</sup>. Al-Manṣūr also wrote to Philip asking that the younger Marín be hired «for our common service»<sup>28</sup>. However, in 1588, the far-away events around the sending and the destruction of the Spanish Armada to England caused a drastic shift in Sa'dī royal policy and the experiences of European agents in Morocco. When the news of the Spanish defeat arrived in Marrakesh, English merchants gathered at Diego Marín's house to taunt him, and in the ensuing conflict the younger Marín killed one of them, causing al-Manṣūr to imprison his formerly trusted agent. The costs of this imprisonment were paid by the Spanish crown for at least the next twenty years, while continuing negotiations over his freedom remained part of the diplomacy around Larache under al-

<sup>24</sup> On this episode, see Cabanelas, 1972, pp. 15-16 and p. 23.

<sup>25</sup> Biblioteca Nacional de España (BNE), ms. 7543, f. 270.

<sup>26</sup> On this rival translator and their rivalry, see García-Arenal, Rodríguez Mediano, and El-Hour, 2002, pp. 20-22. Spanish-speaking Jews had served the Moroccan dynasties as translators and intermediary agents for generations, and would continue to do so during the reigns of al-Manṣūr's descendants, but we have relatively little evidence of prominent Jewish translators in the court of al-Manṣūr himself.

<sup>27</sup> Guadalajara, *Prodición y destierro de los moriscos*, fol. 84r. Quoted in García-Arenal, Rodríguez Mediano, and El-Hour, 2002, p. 61.

<sup>28</sup> On the Rute episode, see García-Arenal, Rodríguez Mediano, and El-Hour, 2002, p. 61. On al-Manṣūr's proposal to Philip, see Cabanelas, 1972, pp. 26-27.

Manṣūr and Philip II's successors<sup>29</sup>. Meanwhile, a version of the bilateral chancellery continued to function, despite the fact that Marín and Castillo's personal connections had been severed. The new iteration of the collaborative chancery was this time based in Spain and embodied in the well-known figure of Diego de Urrea, a Neopolitan renegade who had been educated in Tlemecen with members of the Sa'dī royal family, and who had once traveled to Marrakesh as an Ottoman ambassador where he certainly would have met his predecessor Diego Marín<sup>30</sup>.

Before 1588, however, the Maríns had such control over the office that when other professional candidates presented themselves, in the absence of a personal connection their services were often refused. Prospective translators were sometimes able to cultivate those connections over time. Such was the case of 'Abd al-Raḥman al-Kattānī, one of the very few Sa'dī translators to occasionally sign his work. Very little is known about al-Kattānī's biography, however, he is the translator of Spanish-Moroccan diplomatic correspondence other than Castillo of whose work most evidence remains. According to the Portuguese captive and chronicler Antonio de Saldanha, sometime before 1581 al-Kattānī was sent to Marrakesh as the envoy of the Dey of Ottoman Algiers. For reasons that Saldanha doesn't reveal, al-Kattānī was not received in Marrakesh as an Ottoman ambassador, but was placed in a house abutting the central court where he was under constant surveillance. Notwithstanding the suspicion of many of the court officers, who thought it likely he was an Ottoman spy, during his initial eight months in Marrakesh he was able to incorporate himself as an interpreter, although his access to sensitive materials was restricted. He may have been filling in partially for Marín, who had been recalled to Spain during al-Kattānī's visit. When Marín returned to Marrakesh, al-Manṣūr sent al-Kattānī back to Algiers<sup>31</sup>. Nonetheless, by 1588 al-Kattānī had returned to

<sup>29</sup> On paying for Marín's costs, see Archivo General de Simancas [AGS], Estado, Legajo 2471, n. f., September 11, 1600. On the continued advocacy of Philip III, the Duke of Medina Sidonia, and Marín's family in Iberia, which garnered no sympathy from the warring sons of al-Manṣūr, see García-Arenal, Rodríguez Mediano, and El-Hour, 2002, pp. 65-67.

<sup>30</sup> On Diego de Urrea's career between Constantinople, Ottoman Algiers, Sicily, and Castile, see García-Arenal and Rodríguez Mediano, 2013, pp. 225-244. His own account of his biography is found in various letters to the *Consejo de Estado*, including one dating from September 11, 1601 and another from November 6, 1603. AGS, Estado, Legajo 2741, n.f.

<sup>31</sup> On al-Kattānī as the temporary replacement of Marín, and his dismissal upon Marín's return, see

Marrakesh and ingratiated himself again in the *makhzan*. His tasks were initially of low clearance, and indeed the very first extant Spanish translation that we can definitively ascribe to al-Kattānī is a safe conduct for English merchants authorized in March 1588, five months before the defeat of the Spanish Armada and Marín's eventual fall from grace<sup>32</sup>.

Al-Kattānī worked under the *wazīr al-qalam*, who from 1585 on was al-Fashtālī, and alongside another translator who was in charge of diplomatic correspondence in Latin as well as Spanish, probably the same «chief interpretour of the Spanish and Latine tounges [sic]» who worked with al-Fashtālī to interrogate European agents about Ottoman events in 1599<sup>33</sup>. However, even as early as 1588 al-Kattānī demonstrated knowledge of some Latin formulae, using as a signature phrase *de verbo ad verbum*, which is not a phrase that appears to have been used by the Latin translator. As we will see below, al-Kattānī would eventually be promoted to a position in the *makhzan* that would allow him to translate Moroccan royal correspondence with the Spanish and English monarchs, though the first extant translation of royal correspondence translated by al-Kattānī does not date until 1598, in a letter from al-Manṣūr to Philip<sup>34</sup>.

In 1599, for the last years of al-Manṣūr's reign before his death in 1603 and the outbreak of civil war between his sons, a new translator arrived at court from Spain. This was Aḥmad ibn Qāsim al-Ḥajarī, a *morisco* from Spain who had already been employed as a translator during the *plomos* episode in Granada, before escaping Spain for Morocco so that he could live openly as a Muslim<sup>35</sup>. During the reign of al-Manṣūr's eventual successor, his son Mūlay Zaydān (r.1603/1613-1627), al-Ḥajarī would become a veritable one-man industry of translation<sup>36</sup>. In his otherwise very detailed autobiography, al-Ḥajarī tells us little about his first years

*Crónica de Almançor*, 1997, pp. 76-77.

<sup>32</sup> *SIHM* Angleterre I, document CLXXX (1588), pp. 490-491.

<sup>33</sup> See *SIHM* Angleterre II, document XLIX (1599), pp. 143-145.

<sup>34</sup> *Real Academia de la Historia (RAH)*, Salazar y Castro, F-33. fol. 33r-34v.

<sup>35</sup> Al-Ḥajarī claimed not to know Latin, so even if he had already established himself as an official of al-Manṣūr's court by the time of the Tomson visit, he would not have held the title of Latin translator.

<sup>36</sup> On al-Ḥajarī's prolific and dynamic career in Spain, Morocco, France, the Low Countries, Egypt, and Tunis, see his autobiographical account and the critical introduction in Van Koningsveld, al-Samarrai and Wiegers, 1997.

in Morocco working for al-Manṣūr other than the fact of his employment, and none of his early translations have survived. We may guess that he was given similar tasks to those of al-Kattānī based on his later translation of royal correspondence with the Spanish and United Provinces during the reign of al-Manṣūr's son Mūlay Zaydān<sup>37</sup>.

Al-Ḥajarī's ability to perform the tasks asked of him as translator did not only depend on his fluency in Spanish and Arabic, but on ability to communicate across legal systems and religious traditions. This skill set and experience would have been a special asset as soon as he arrived in Morocco in 1599, though we have only later evidence of how he made use of it. For example, in 1614, in the continuing conflict between the heirs and relatives of al-Manṣūr for control of the Moroccan throne, al-Ḥajarī was called upon to intervene in a legal point of contention before Christian authorities. The intervention took place as part of the diplomatic correspondence between Mūlay Zaydān and the Duke of Medina Sidonia. The son of Mūlay Shaykh (brother and political rival of Mūlay Zaydān), 'Abd Allah, an ally of the Spaniards, tried to claim all of his father's possessions after the latter's death. According to Islamic law, the inheritance should have been divided between Mūlay Shaykh's wives and all of his children<sup>38</sup>. 'Abd Allah, however, tried to evade this partible inheritance by appealing to the Spanish. The properties of Mūlay Shaykh were by and large in Tangiers, controlled by the Spanish. When Philip III granted 'Abd Allah his request, Mūlay Zaydān ordered al-Fashtālī to compose a letter, which was then translated by al-Ḥajarī, in which the scholars (*'ulamā' dīninā wa qudat bilādinā wa fuqahā'ihā*) of Marrakesh offered their opinion on the case. According to the letter composed by al-Fashtālī, the Christian king was obligated to respect the law of his Muslim neighbor<sup>39</sup>. In the Spanish translation, al-Ḥajarī made subtle adjustments to a few key phrases designed to inspire Philip to cooperation, so that the consideration for kings (*al-mulūk al-ladhīm lahum mazīd al-'itibār*) became regard and reputation (*los reyes que son considerados y tenidos en reputación*), while the custody of rights to protection (*ra'ī al-dhimām*) be-

<sup>37</sup> *SIHM Pays-Bas III*, document XXXI and XXXIbis (1619), pp. 105-108.

<sup>38</sup> García-Arenal, Rodríguez Mediano and El-Hour, 2002, document 81 (1614), pp. 337-339.

<sup>39</sup> García-Arenal, Rodríguez Mediano and El-Hour, 2002, document 90 (1614), pp. 367-372.



came the duty to preserve parallel rights and possessions (*guardar el derecho de partes y de semejantes encomiendas*) of another sovereign. Al-Ḥajarī, through his translation, was trying to remind Philip not only of the validity of Islamic law among Muslims even under Christians, but of the obligations of his status as ruler to recognize the rights and wishes of the corresponding ruler in Morocco.

This intervention in the inheritance dispute was not the first time that al-Ḥajarī had made a case before a Christian legal authority. In 1611 he had traveled to France in order to seek restitution in a French court for the robbery of some Spanish *moriscos* who had emigrated in French ships<sup>40</sup>. When al-Ḥajarī arrived in the French town of St. Jean-de-Luz, near the Spanish border, he began to work through the local and royal courts to obtain restitution for the stolen goods. He ultimately received a royal «order that any property robbed of the Andalusians that could be found should be returned to me», but it took him a year and half of negotiations before he recovered the stolen goods of his friends<sup>41</sup>. Among the many fascinating parts of this episode are al-Ḥajarī's reported interactions with representatives of Christian law, and his depictions of these interactions for his Muslim audience two decades later. Among the various polemic episodes that al-Ḥajarī recounts, including debates with Catholics and Protestants in France and the Netherlands, al-Ḥajarī also criticized Christian law. Upon first meeting the judge in St. Jean-de-Luz who was in charge of adjudicating his case, al-Ḥajarī immediately entered into an argument with him (perhaps influencing the later unsuccessful outcome of his suit). The French judge asked him to reconvert to Christianity, using among other arguments: «The well-being which prevails among us in our country, in contrast to your country [... Our] rules indicate the soundness of our religion». To this, al-Ḥajarī answered that Christian law, along with the Christian religion, was hopelessly corrupted through transmission and translation errors, compounded by the interventions of the popes and others<sup>42</sup>. However, whatever he may have thought of law in Christian lands, whether canon or civil, he had enough experience to formulate his cases for Christian audiences.

<sup>40</sup> Van Koningsveld, al-Samarrai and Wiegers, 1997, (English) p. 102; (Arabic) p. 45.

<sup>41</sup> Van Koningsveld, al-Samarrai and Wiegers, 1997, (English) p. 190; (Arabic) p. 134.

<sup>42</sup> Van Koningsveld, al-Samarrai and Wiegers, 1997, (English) pp. 120-124; (Arabic) pp. 61-65.

Such a experience and understanding, according to al-Ḥajarī, was part of his job as translator. During his *riḥla* in 1611 he informed one of his French hosts that:

«You should know that I am the interpreter of the Sultan of Marrakesh. He who occupies that post must study the sciences, as well as the books of the Muslims and Christians, in order to know what he is saying and translating in the court of the Sultan»<sup>43</sup>.

The position of the Spanish translator in the Sa'dī *makhzan*, therefore, was far from a merely technical position, however technical some of the chancellery tasks were, as we will see in the concluding section. It was a crucial position in the system of information management operated at the Moroccan court.

Diego Marín, 'Abd al-Raḥman al-Kattānī, Aḥmad ibn Qāsim al-Ḥajarī, and the anonymous «interpreteur of the Latine and Spanish tounges [sic]», are the few individuals whose working life inside the Sa'dī *makhzan* we are able to trace. All were exceptionally qualified by their experiences outside of Morocco and thus their fluency not only in different languages but different religious and legal systems. Though we have incomplete information about each of these figures, together their professional activities and biographies can give us an indication of what work was done by Spanish translators for al-Manṣūr. They all worked under and with the *wazīr al-qalam* 'Abd al-Azīz al-Fashtālī to gather and interpret information from many sources. What happened to this information once it was received by the royal administration? In the *makhzan*, foreign information and news was rendered official as it was channeled in to other genres, including domestic royal correspondence and official historiography, the topic of the following section. For this, the extant work of al-Fashtālī is crucial, since across his many official roles (*wazīr al-qalam*, *sāhib al-tarjama*, *kātib al-sirr*) he was able to transform the information gathered by the translators and reshape it in to tools for very different kinds of royal discourse.

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<sup>43</sup> Van Koningsveld, al-Samarrai and Wiegers 1997, (English) p. 133; (Arabic) p. 74.



## 2. AL-FASHTĀLĪ'S USE OF FOREIGN INFORMATION

Al-Manṣūr and his advisors were intensely interested in and very well informed about European affairs. Of particular interest were inter-dynastic rivalries, especially between Elizabeth I of England and Philip II of Spain. Spain and Morocco maintained an uneasy alliance at the best of times, restrained by the mutual interest of both powers in avoiding open conflict. Meanwhile, however, al-Manṣūr actively supported Elizabeth's campaigns against Philip by providing her with the raw materials of war like saltpeter. In addition to becoming involved by proxy in the political conflicts between European rulers, the Moroccan *makhzan* was well aware of the religious wars between Catholics and Protestants across Europe, and the information about sectarian divisions would prove to be of great use for the Sa' dī *makhzan* when crafting the discourses of its own politico-religious legitimacy, not for European audiences, but for Moroccans.

Moroccan interest in European affairs was not only part of a strategy of being well-informed about neighboring geopolitics. The information gathered was used in order to advance a Moroccan agenda of jihad for the reconquest of al-Andalus, which had been definitively conquered by the Christian kings of Spain at the conquest of Nasrid Granada in 1492, and to confirm al-Manṣūr's representation in Morocco as Caliph and Emperor. Al-Fashtālī, and through him al-Manṣūr, incorporated information about European affairs into domestic royal correspondence and into the royal historiographical project in such a way that supported al-Manṣūr's imperial and caliphal ambitions before an exclusively Moroccan audience.

As cited in the introduction, in 1588 al-Fashtālī, on behalf of al-Manṣūr, sent detailed information about the defeat of the Armada in a royal letter to the people of the region of Sūs. Much of the letter tells the story of the Spanish-English enmity that culminated in the defeat of the Armada. Al-Manṣūr informed his Sūsī subjects that, «It has been incumbent upon us to provide you with every good tiding that teaches us, and to share with you all the happy news that pertains to our exalted station»<sup>44</sup>. Telling the story of the Spanish defeat allowed al-Manṣūr to explain to the people of Sūs how such an event was «the harbinger of suc-

<sup>44</sup> Matar, 2009, p. 144.

cess and conquest and a sign for him to fulfill his awaited promise of taking possession, by God's will, of [Philip's] lands [...] For al-Andalus is the trust that shall be retrieved, with God's help, by our own hands, and the necklace which time has reserved for our necks»<sup>45</sup>. As a further sign of the coming of the divinely appointed time of reconquest, al-Manṣūr reported that just as news of the Armada defeat reached him, so too did an embassy from Istanbul, «Coming before our imamate presence» (*ḥaḍratinā al-imāmiyya*). Al-Manṣūr hoped that this embassy would mean peace between the Ottomans and the Sa'dīs, which would allow both to renew their attention «to fight the parties of the heretical polytheists until God fulfills for [al-Manṣūr] the great matter [of al-Andalus]»<sup>46</sup>. The retelling of the Armada thus provided an opportunity for al-Manṣūr to enumerate the conjunction of divine signals pointing to his caliphal destiny and legitimacy before a very important local constituency<sup>47</sup>.

That this news was sent to Sūs is significant, as the relationship between Sūs and the monarchy had long been complex. Sūs is a region which lies to the south of Marrakesh and is bounded on the west by the Atlantic. Toward the beginning of the sixteenth century it became the site of an important port city, Agadir. The Portuguese fortified the site by 1505 and then purchased rights to remain in 1513. The fort was conquered by the Sa'dī dynasty in 1541 as part of the consolidation of their power around anti-Portuguese sentiment, and over the next decades it became one of the most important Sa'dī ports. Although it was a region of early Sa'dī success, in the first years of al-Manṣūr's reign it became the site of multiple rebellions<sup>48</sup>. After Sūs was pacified, al-Manṣūr began to exploit the region's favorable conditions for growing sugarcane, establishing many refineries and transforming sugar cultivation into one of the

<sup>45</sup> Matar, 2009, p. 146 and Gannūn, 1954, p. 155. Al-Fashtālī continued using the image of a necklace in his closing to the people of Sūs, as a metaphor for the glad tidings received and the promise of further glory to God, as he invited them to raise up their own voices to spread the word. Gannūn, 1954, pp. 156-157.

<sup>46</sup> I have slightly adapted the translation from Matar, 2009, p. 146 using Gannūn, 1954, p. 156.

<sup>47</sup> Morocco's reception of news about the defeat of the Armada coincided with the intense circulation of images and propaganda across European territories, of which one of the most important was the image of the Armada. On the circulation of images of the Armada (and the precedents of Lepanto and the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre) see Pettegree, 2014, pp. 139-140 and 151-163.

<sup>48</sup> Cory, 2013, pp. 31-33 and al-Fashtālī, 1972, pp. 25-26 and 29-32.

most important regional industries<sup>49</sup>. In the 1590s al-Manṣūr came to rely heavily on Sūs for military support<sup>50</sup>. However, the same coastal access that made Sūs so attractive to the Sa'dīs made it a target for Europeans, first the Portuguese throughout the sixteenth century and then the English and Dutch in the seventeenth century<sup>51</sup>. This frequent European contact meant that Sūs was a crucial audience for Moroccan messages of sovereign legitimacy framed in terms of European defeats.

In addition to royal correspondence with local constituencies, al-Fashtālī also used his chronicle of al-Manṣūr's reign, *Manāhil al-Safā'*, as a space in which to incorporate news of European conflicts into his message of Moroccan political eschatology. In addition to his duties as *wazīr al-qalam* (chief secretary), al-Fashtālī was also *sāhib al-tarjama* (chief historiographer). He was also *kātib al-sirr/ kātib al-rasā'il*, and in that position he was in charge of the other chancellery officials working in the *makhzan*, including the translators<sup>52</sup>. In this role, beginning in 1585 but continuing on throughout his career under al-Manṣūr, al-Fashtālī set out to write the history of the Sa'dī dynasty<sup>53</sup>. Of this work, only the portion of the text concerning fifteen years of the reign of al-Manṣūr has survived<sup>54</sup>. Mentions of Europeans and European affairs appear scattered throughout the text, primarily concerning European embassies to Morocco and the dealings of the pretenders to the Portuguese throne held by Philip II after 1581, don Antonio and don Cristobal<sup>55</sup>. However, al-Fashtālī also used the text to present information about Europeans whose affairs were not immediately connected to Morocco. Just as was the case with his letter to the people of Sūs, this European information was used to convey an ultimately Moroccan message.

<sup>49</sup> See García-Arenal and Wiegers, 2006, p. 44.

<sup>50</sup> Matar, 2008, p. 61.

<sup>51</sup> On Sūs's role in the rise of the Sa'dī dynasty, see García-Arenal, 2006, pp. 256-261.

<sup>52</sup> Mouline, 2009, pp. 222-224.

<sup>53</sup> Al-Fashtālī was far from the only Sa'dī historiographer active in al-Mansūr's court. On the other royal historiographers working with and around al-Fashtālī, see Cory, 2013, pp. 65-67; El-Rouayheb, 2015, pp. 147-153; Lévi-Provençal, 1922, pp. 88-110; and al-Hajjī, 1976, vol. 1, pp. 456-457 and *passim*.

<sup>54</sup> Cory, 2013, p. 105.

<sup>55</sup> See al-Fashtālī, 1972, pp. 136 and 160.

One salient example is the chapter «Concerning the Western Arabs, Oathbreakers and Deviants» (*Dhikr al-Īqā' bi-'Urub al-Ghurub Ahl al-Nakth wa-l-Inḥirāf*) which at first glance should have little to do with European affairs. Al-Fashtālī recounts how some of the western tribes rebelled against al-Manṣūr and allied themselves with the pretender al-Nāṣir, who had been living in Spain and thus was associated with Philip II<sup>56</sup>. The chapter describes the rebellions of these «Nasrids» and al-Manṣūr's preparations to defeat them led by the latter's son Mūlay al-Shaykh. After a concluding section describing a divine punishment for the rebels in the form of overwhelming summer heat and the first signs of plague, the text abruptly changes topic to «A Compilation [of events in] Western Europe in the last years of the Sixteenth Century»<sup>57</sup>.

The events covered in this compilation are for the most part the ways in which al-Manṣūr supported Elizabeth's attacks against Spain in 1588 and 1596. The compilation concludes with a detailed account of the European alliance which attacked Cadiz in 1596<sup>58</sup>. Like the letter to Sūs which detailed the defeat of the Armada in 1588, this account of the attacks of Spain's enemies was written into a larger argument about how conflict among the European powers presaged al-Manṣūr's destiny to reconquer al-Andalus<sup>59</sup>. It was also written into a story of al-Manṣūr's success against rebellion in his kingdoms, a message that echoed the background to the earlier letter to Sūs in 1588.

In the chronicle, however, between his descriptions of the two English attacks on Spain, al-Fashtālī devoted several paragraphs to current

<sup>56</sup> There were various moments of rapprochement between Philip and al-Manṣūr, articulated around negotiations over Larache, but in 1595 Philip sponsored an invasion of Sa'dī territory by al-Manṣūr's nephew Mūlay al-Nāṣir, who had been living in Portugal and Spain since 1578. Cory, 2013, pp. 193-198. On al-Nāṣir's life and motives before al-Manṣūr's victory in 1578 and during his life in the Iberian Peninsula, see García-Arenal, Rodríguez Mediano, and El-Hour, 2002, pp. 62-64 and Acero Alonso, 2006, pp. 98-103.

<sup>57</sup> Al-Fashtālī, 1972, pp. 191-197. This subtitle is probably the editor al-Kariyyam's note rather than al-Fashtālī's title. Note that Matar in *Europe through Arab Eyes* translates only the portion of the chapter following the heading «Compilation of Western European [events] during the last years of the sixteenth century» (al-Fashtālī, 1972 p. 193) and ending on p. 196.

<sup>58</sup> Matar posits that it may have been Sir Edward Hoby, sent from Cadiz to Morocco after the sack, who had given al-Manṣūr and al-Fashtālī the details about the attack. Matar, 2009, p. 159.

<sup>59</sup> See al-Fashtālī, 1972, p. 197.

events in France<sup>60</sup>. As recounted by al-Fashtālī, at the same time that al-Manṣūr and Elizabeth were corresponding about preparations for the attack on Spain, the French king Henry III began to harass the Spanish with attacks of his own in order to support Elizabeth. France, according to al-Fashtālī, had its own problems that caused it to become weak and to allow Spain to make new gains, specifically the conversion of French subjects to Protestantism and the decision of the King to remain Catholic and to rule his people by force. Al-Fashtālī attributed the eventual assassination of Henry in 1589 to a Spanish plot. He then explained that Philip II used the opportunity to take over large swathes of «France [...] and some of Navarre», before Henry of Navarre arrived in Paris to become Henry IV. Together Henry IV and Elizabeth continued to harass Philip<sup>61</sup>. From this French interlude, al-Fashtālī transitioned to the joining of the United Provinces to the anti-Spanish alliance, the preparations for the attack on Cadiz, and then the assault itself<sup>62</sup>.

How could telling the story of the assassination of a fellow sovereign contribute to al-Fashtālī's message of caliphal legitimacy in his official chronicle?<sup>63</sup> Was it an attempt to create solidarity with other Spanish rivals? Certainly, Philip's supposed sponsorship of Henry's assassin and his subsequent invasion of «France [...] and some of Navarre», paint him as a dangerous menace to the French supporters of Morocco's English and Dutch allies.

Although we learn of the Spanish's king's participation in the Catholic *Ligue* that was so opposed to the accession of Henry IV, any gains made by the Tyrant of Castile were soon undone, demonstrating Philip's inevitable weakness. For both reasons, al-Fashtālī's depiction of Henry III's assassination demonstrated chinks in Philip's armor which would have been attractive to a Moroccan audience. However, the rete-

<sup>60</sup> The substance of the account is by and large accurate, if told from a very different perspective than traditional European historiography, even if there are some small inaccuracies (that all of France had converted to Protestantism under Henry III, that Philip II was born in Flanders, etc.)

<sup>61</sup> Henry IV had indeed declared war on Philip in 1595. Darihu Yahya, without explaining the connection between the events, points out that the French declaration of war was quickly followed by Philip's decision to let al-Nāṣir travel to Melilla. Given the ready availability of French news in Morocco, the two events involving Spain may have seemed connected. See Yahya, 1981, pp. 180-181.

<sup>62</sup> Al-Fashtālī, 1972, pp. 193-196. See Matar's translation, 2009, pp. 157-162.

<sup>63</sup> Serge Gruzinski asked an analogous question of the retelling of the assassination of Henry III's successor Henry IV in a Mexican chronicle written in Nahuatl. See Gruzinski, 2004, pp. 17-41.

ling of the French dynastic problems and Spanish machinations had a far more immediate resonance in Moroccan current affairs, as indicated by its placement in the chapter about al-Manṣūr's defeat of the Western Arabs. The explanation of Philip's attempt to destabilize the throne of France through his sponsorship of the murderous priest Jacques Clément was ultimately unsuccessful was told in the actual context (embedded within the longer account) of the defeat of the pretender al-Nāṣir, whom al-Manṣūr believed to have been sponsored by Philip in order to overthrow him<sup>64</sup>. Following al-Nāṣir's invasion, insisting on the failure of Philip's support for rebels and assassins was an important message, one worth even the depiction of a successful regicide.

Al-Fashtālī also used the initial description of the English-Moroccan anti-Spanish alliance as an introduction to al-Manṣūr's own providential conquest of the Sudan, a conquest that made England even more eager to keep him as an ally<sup>65</sup>. This sequence of events inscribed European events into a narrative of Moroccan empire. The conclusion of the chapter is just as telling. Following the accounts of Philip's defeats at the hands of the English and their allies, al-Fashtālī gave an extended meditation on the providential role of God in al-Manṣūr's success, including his conquest and control over the Sudan, and his inevitable destiny with God's help to reconquer all of al-Andalus that was now held by the Habsburg king. Al-Fashtālī concluded the chapter with his own desire to be able to write such a history (in the event that such events should take place), and with reiterations of al-Manṣūr's most important political and religious titles, including *tāj al-khilāfa* (crown of the caliphate), *al-Imām al-mujāhid* (the Imam who fights for God), and *sharīf* (an honorific title indicating that its bearer is a direct descendent from the family of the prophet, claimed by all the members of the Sa' dī dynasty)<sup>66</sup>.

<sup>64</sup> Philip had not sponsored al-Nāṣir, despite repeated requests from the latter. The most Philip would do was to give al-Nāṣir permission to travel to Spanish-held Melilla, from where al-Nāṣir mounted his rebellion. See García-Arenal, Rodríguez Mediano, and El-Hour, 2002, p. 64.

<sup>65</sup> Al-Fashtālī, 1972, pp. 193-194.

<sup>66</sup> Al-Fashtālī, 1972, p. 197. Al-Fashtālī's use of these titles was not an innovation. Al-Manṣūr's previous *kātib al-sirr* was Muhammad ibn 'Isā al-Tāmilī, who was the author of the now-lost work *al-Mamdūd wa-l-Maqṣūr fī siniyy al-khalīfa al-Manṣūr* (*The Extension and the Limits of the Splendor of the Caliph al-Mansūr*). Mouline, 2009, p. 222.



These sovereign qualities, *khilāfa* and *imāma*, were of crucial importance in al-Manṣūr's projection of his power to his own subjects, especially in reference to the claims of the Ottoman emperor<sup>67</sup>. As we will see in the next section, similar titles were also used before European audiences in diplomatic correspondence, and it became the job of al-Manṣūr's corps of Spanish translators to render those titles and the imperial ideals encoded within them intelligible within the European landscape of dynastic rivalry.

Both the letter to Sūs and the «Compendia of European Events» were important parts of al-Manṣūr's internal politics of representation. The providential terms in which the Spanish defeats of 1588 and 1596 were described for the Moroccan audiences reinforced al-Manṣūr's legitimacy as imperial and caliphal ruler. The promise of reconquest also helped mitigate counterpropaganda and justify al-Manṣūr's demands for extra taxation and his annexation (conquest) of the wealthy sub-Saharan Muslim kingdoms<sup>68</sup>. Recounting the rivalries between Elizabeth and Philip gave al-Manṣūr a chance to demonstrate superiority over the Ottomans, or over the Spanish-supported pretender Mūlay al-Nāsir, and to insist on his imperial legitimacy via the conquest of Sudan and his caliphal destiny in the reconquest of al-Andalus. The interest in and awareness of European affairs for these reasons was surely supported by the presence of Europeans in Morocco and the well-connected information networks between Morocco, Europe, and the Ottoman Empire. Although it was al-Fashtālī, in his high court position, who appears as the author of these European accounts, he worked closely with a range of informants and translators, whose primary task was to connect sources of informa-

<sup>67</sup> On al-Fashtālī's use of words related to *khilāfa* and *imāma*, see García-Arenal, 2006, pp. 285-287. As *wazīr al-qalam*, al-Fashtālī was also in charge of drafting important chancellery documents like alliances. One such document, an oath of allegiance (*bay'a*) between al-Manṣūr and the neighboring Sultan of Bornu, a sub-Saharan kingdom, was drawn up in 1582 and described al-Manṣūr as both *imām* and *khalīfat allah*. On al-Manṣūr's correspondence with Bornu within the context of his imperial ambitions over the neighboring Songhay, see Cory, 2013, pp. 119-124.

<sup>68</sup> Ordinarily, conquering fellow Muslims would not be a sign of the piety associated with caliphal legitimacy. However, with the justification of financing a jihad to take back al-Andalus, he accomplished twin goals of consolidating a greater territorial empire along with broader claims to caliphal legitimacy over a larger and more diverse population of Muslims. See the analysis in Cory, 2013, pp. 137-139.

tion to the means of processing and disseminating information within and beyond the Sa' dī *makhzan*.

The detailed and varied knowledge of Moroccans about European affairs indicates a continuous stream of relatively accurate information. How did the process of receiving this information work, and what role might the translator have played? In addition to recounting the major events of this reign, part of al-Fashtālī's chronicle was spent describing the daily life and administrative practices at al-Manṣūr's court. This administrative portion included a description of al-Manṣūr's powerful information-gathering apparatus, which was the source of much of the information that was then transformed into the details of al-Fashtālī's chronicle. This apparatus was staffed by expert informants, the *aṣḥāb al-akhbār*. Al-Fashtālī described how these agents gathered and transmitted information:

«And as for being informed about the news of distant places and far-off regions and learning of the intelligence about those kings who were against him [al-Manṣūr] and their allies, news experts (*aṣḥāb al-akhbār*) sent information from countries near and far, [...] and he had his most industrious men posted on every watchtower and at every mountain pass [...] and the brightest of them were charged with translating [*n-q-l*] what was happening in terms of news and stories, and to make the rounds of informants (*al-alsina*). He [al-Manṣūr] had every kind of sleepless eye and attentive ear in an organized vanguard of informants, and for that reason news always reached him early»<sup>69</sup>.

Although this Arabic passage in al-Fashtālī's history does not mention linguistic translators specifically, it is clear that that the bureaucratic system functioned by relaying information through qualified experts and administrators, including translators, with the final recipient of the information being the king. In this way, the Spanish translators were part of a well-organized information administration. Al-Fashtālī, in his role at the top of the royal bureaucracy, was then able to redeploy the informa-

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<sup>69</sup> Al-Fashtālī, 1972, p. 207.



tion that had been gathered to local audiences, either at court or in key communities across the kingdom.

This system of gathering and relaying information extended to the reception of foreign news, which was then incorporated into the official documents of the chancellery, and we have records of how this gathering of information took place from European sources. For example, in 1599 the English merchant Jaspar Tomson arrived in Morocco and was taken before the king, who had heard that the former had spent some years in Ottoman Turkey, and had witnessed the 1596 Ottoman campaign against Hungary firsthand. According to Tomson's letter to his relative Richard Tomson, also an English merchant,

«[Al-Manşūr] sent Alcaide Azuz with the King's principall secreta-  
rie to carrie me into a chamber within the king's pavillion. And  
then the Vicerey [Azuz] departinge requested me to declare at lar-  
ge the discourse of the Turks viage unto the secreta-rie, whoe would  
sett yt downe Larbie [Arabic] tonge, and left us with the King's  
cheiffe interpretour for the Latine and Spanish tongues. Where we  
spent 6 howres together till the night approached; and then I re-  
quested leave to goe unto my owne tente, until the next morninge  
that I would retourne to fynish the said discourse»<sup>70</sup>.

Jaspar Tomson was recalled various times before the king and his councilors to relate more of his experiences with and observations of the Ottoman court, and in one interview Tomson even related breaking news of the Ottoman defeat at Buda that he had only just received in a letter from a friend. He also gave information about his knowledge of Elizabeth's plans to make an Ottoman alliance against the Spanish, and about English aid to the French. Such interviews, which must have been a common practice, were an important means of getting the newest information.

There were many kinds of informants who could have provided this information, like merchants, missionaries, captives and spies. The practice of then re-elaborating foreign news into a Moroccan context was not a unique phenomenon. News of European dynastic and religious conflicts circulated to the New World, where it was re-inscribed into co-

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<sup>70</sup> *SIHM* Angleterre II, Document XLIX (1599), pp. 143-144.

lonial texts written by indigenous authors<sup>71</sup>. By the same token, news from Morocco or the New World that arrived in Europe was regularly repurposed for specific European discourses<sup>72</sup>.

Though they are only rarely visible, all of this information was mediated by al-Manṣūr's translators, along with other agents. In this way, translators supported the imperial and caliphal agenda among local audiences. The result of this re-elaboration of European news was a discourse of caliphal legitimacy that circulated between the court and the many parts of the Morocco. The translation staff also intervened directly in al-Manṣūr's projection of those ideologies to outside audiences. This combination of local and international representations reinforced the foundations of imperial ideologies in Morocco by the end of the sixteenth century.

### 3. IMPERIAL REPRESENTATIONS: TRANSLATING THE IMAMATE TO EUROPE

In his work as royal historiographer, al-Fashtālī made use of European informants and information in order to re-represent that information in local Moroccan discourses. In his other principle court position, *wazīr al-qalam*, al-Fashtālī oversaw actual interactions with European agents and powers. As recent scholarship like that of Cory, Matar, and García-Arenal has demonstrated, part of al-Manṣūr's longevity and stability as a ruler was due to his elaboration of distinct politics of representation for his European, Ottoman, and domestic audiences. Although these politics of representation never overlapped (for example, Philip never learned of the negative things al-Manṣūr had said in his letter to Sūs, even though he and al-Manṣūr were in continuous contact until the former's death), the sources of information and the men who gathered and reported that information often did overlap, in particular in the figure of the royal translator. The translator thus had ample opportunity to shape representations of al-Manṣūr for European audiences, and he did so in relation to representations of the corresponding rulers, which were con-

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<sup>71</sup> See Gruzinski, 2004, pp. 17-21.

<sup>72</sup> See, as one of innumerable examples, the extensive report of the Flemish Jorge Henin, written to inform Philip III about Moroccan affairs, practices, and geographies, and based on his years of experience working as a captive redeemer and alongside the secretaries and translators of Mūlay Zaydān's court. Henin, 1997.

ditioned by the re-elaboration of European news in other Moroccan discourses.

Al-Manṣūr maintained longstanding correspondence with both Philip and Elizabeth via his chancellery officials like al-Fashtālī and his team of Spanish translators. His epistolary relationship with Philip dated from al-Manṣūr's coming to power in 1578 after the death of his brother 'Abd al-Malik, their nephew and rival Abū 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abd Allah al-Mutawakkil, and the last King of the Portuguese house of Avis, Sebastian I (1554-1578), at the Battle of the Three Kings at Wādī al-Makhāzin in August of 1578. Al-Manṣūr also corresponded with Elizabeth, as had his brothers and predecessors. The English-Moroccan correspondence picked up in the mid 1580s when England began to send regular agents to Morocco to oversee commercial activities. In his correspondence with the Tyrant and the Sultana, the attitudes al-Manṣūr expressed toward their sovereignty and dynastic concerns was, as was only prudent, far different than what he expressed to his own subjects.

More significant for understanding this piece of al-Manṣūr's politics of representation, however, was how he portrayed his own sovereignty and dynastic legitimacy for the European audience, and how such depictions were translated, usually into Spanish, by his officials. Though we know that the Spanish-language office of the Moroccan *makhzan* was prolific, and that it existed before al-Manṣūr's reign, there are relatively few extant translations that were made in Morocco. Those that remain are housed in European archives, rarely with their Arabic source text, and sometimes only in a later copy. A sampling of these letters reveals that al-Manṣūr's politics of representation was managed very carefully for European audiences by his translators.

One of the most important parts of al-Manṣūr's strategy of representation before his different audiences was his claim to the title of Caliph or Imam. As Stephen Cory has demonstrated, al-Manṣūr maintained variable strategies before his different Muslim audiences, Ottoman and Moroccan, all of which emphasized to different degrees his role as caliph, his caliphal qualities and deeds, or the legitimacy of his sharifian lineage. To the Ottoman sultan Murad III (1546-1595) and other Ottoman officials across North Africa, al-Manṣūr made only indirect claims about his own

caliphal qualities, while eschewing any reference to the caliphal title claimed by the Sublime Porte<sup>73</sup>. To different regions in his own kingdom, like Fez or Sūs, he made much stronger claims to his own caliphal and imperial authority. These letters were often sent to announce the news of al-Manṣūr's own victories, but as we have seen in the previous section, he also used the news of European defeats as an excuse to express his own legitimacy and allude to his political eschatology before an audience of his own subjects.

What about when he wrote letters to Europeans? Although the purpose and content of correspondence was very different, it was still a forum in which al-Manṣūr wished to represent his caliphal legitimacy and destiny. To both Philip and Elizabeth he used the titles *al-imām* and *al-khalīfa*, similar to the language used by his historiographers to emphasize his legitimate authority over all Muslims<sup>74</sup>. His predecessors al-Ghālīb and 'Abd al-Malik had not used such titles, preferring *amīr al-mu'minīn* or *al-sharīf al-ḥasanī*, the latter title also used by al-Manṣūr as by all the Sa'dī rulers<sup>75</sup>. As García-Arenal points out, the use of these Islamic imperial titles was part of the intensification of ceremony, symbol, and ritual that were raised to new levels of importance during al-Manṣūr's reign<sup>76</sup>. Although historians have explored the reasons for al-Manṣūr to use these titles when corresponding with European sovereigns, little has been said about the strategies for ensuring that his imperial representations would be received as intended.

<sup>73</sup> On al-Manṣūr's careful strategies of representation as *sharīf* before an Ottoman audience, see Cory, 2013, pp. 87-89.

<sup>74</sup> For example of these titles, see *SIHM* Angleterre II, document VII (1590), pp. 18-20.

<sup>75</sup> Al-Manṣūr's older brother, 'Abd Allah al-Ghālīb (1517-1574), used *amīr al-mu'minīn*, *sulṭān al-muslimīn*, and *al-sharīf al-ḥasanī* for himself. He used *sulṭān* for European kings like Antoine de Navarre (father of Henry IV of France) and Henry VIII of England, and *malika* for Henry's daughter Elizabeth. See *SIHM* France I, document XXXI (1559), pp. 170-173 and *SIHM* Angleterre I, document XLI (1569), pp. 100-101. 'Abd al-Malik, or his Spanish translator (possibly Diego Marín?) was well versed in Spanish chancellery protocol. He wrote in Spanish from Morocco, using regular Spanish titles for Philip (*Sacra Católica Real Magestad el Rey*) and Christian dates, and signed his own name, without a litany of his own royal titles, in Latin letters, «Abdelmelec». See for example the letters in *SIHM* Angleterre II, documents LXXXII and LXXXIII (1577), pp. 206-210 especially note 1 of p. 210. On 'Abd al-Malik's multilingualism, see Oliver Asín, 1948, pp. 20-21.

<sup>76</sup> See García-Arenal, 2006, pp. 274-275.

The translator's task was to make these caliphal titles intelligible and meaningful to European audiences. Until more documents come to light, for now we can turn to a case study based on the few extant translations made by al-Kattānī, focusing not only on the titles of sovereignty used by the Arabic secretaries, but on the choices made in their rendering by the Spanish translator. At least four of al-Kattānī's translations survive, although only two are extant in their original rather than a later copy. These translations range from 1588 to 1602, and include two contemporaneous English translations of al-Kattānī's Spanish translations of letters written by al-Manṣūr (1588 and 1602), two Spanish translations (1598 and 1601). For these four examples, only one Arabic original has been preserved, that of the 1602 letter from al-Manṣūr to Elizabeth. Many more of his translations must have been lost, or have yet to be found, since al-Kattānī was still working as a royal translator in 1611 when he appears with this title in the account books of the Dutch envoy, Pieter Maertenszoon Coy, though he was paid by the Dutch for his services as an informant rather than as a translator<sup>77</sup>.

Al-Kattānī is the most visible translator of the Moroccan *makhzan*, since he not only signed his translations but included additional text before the translation, a kind of translator's preface. Al-Kattānī's «prefaces» worked as a way of situating the letter, as royal, as *from* al-Manṣūr, as destined *for* either Elizabeth or Philip, as a translated text. This repositioning took place as al-Kattānī elaborated the situation of the respective rulers, in terms of their territorial possessions and royal titles. The 1602 letter from al-Manṣūr to Elizabeth is a particularly apt example. Al-Kattānī (via the contemporaneous English translator) introduces the text as:

«a cobby, well and faithfully translated, of a letter missive written in the Arabian tounge[sic] and letter, written by Mully Hamett, Emperour of Moroco, Kinge of Fesse, Süsse, Cyuta, directed to the Ma[ges]tie Royall of Queen Elizabeth, Queen of England and

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<sup>77</sup> *SIHM Pays-Bas I*, document CCXIII (1611), p. 644.

Fraunce, and whose tenour, being translated *verbetim*, is this that followeth»<sup>78</sup>.

Neither al-Manṣūr nor Elizabeth was given those specific territorial titles in the Arabic original. Al-Manṣūr, or rather his court as the source of the letter, was referred to only as *al-maqam al-'alī al-mūlay al-imāmī as-sulṭānī al-aḥmadī al-manṣūrī al-ḥasanī*, and Elizabeth referred to with general titles of nobility (*as-sulṭana al-jalīla al-aṣliya al-mathliya al-athīra al-khatīra as-shahīra as-sulṭana Izabīl*). In the Arabic original, each ruler was situated in a physical hierarchy of power, al-Manṣūr from his high court, Elizabeth in her *mala masīhiyya* (Christian community). Nonetheless, in his translation, al-Kattānī thought it expedient to include more specific territorial referents. Those territorial claims, which appear only in Spanish (and are only extant in the English translation) and not in Arabic in this case, allowed him to reassert his employer's recent imperial claims in West Africa, and flatter Elizabeth's claims to France<sup>79</sup>.

As an earlier but similar example, in 1598 al-Kattānī translated a letter from al-Manṣūr to Philip II, thanking him for the loan of one of Philip's court painters, Blas de Prado, who al-Manṣūr had engaged in 1592 to paint a royal portrait (which has not survived)<sup>80</sup>. The interest of al-Manṣūr in Philip's painter was part of an ambivalent interest and emulation of the Moroccan Sultan for Philip's representations of power, including in the building project of El Escorial on which al-Manṣūr had modeled his al-Badī' palace<sup>81</sup>. However, by 1598, during a period of increasing tensions between al-Manṣūr and Phillip following the invasion al-Nāṣir and the disintegrating diplomacy over Larache, al-Manṣūr's translator asserted the greater prestige of his imperial employer, «Muley Ahmet

<sup>78</sup> *SIHM* Angleterre II, document LXXIX (1602), pp. 210-215.

<sup>79</sup> Matar notes that while the Moroccan monarch was eager to trade with England and keep her as a potential ally against Spain, he never accorded her any special dignity or regard in their letters outside the most formulaic. See Matar, 2008, p. 56.

<sup>80</sup> *RAH, Salazar y Castro*, F-33, ff. 33r-34r, «Copia de una carta del Rey de Marruecos al Rey don Phelipe segundo en rrecomendaciō de Blas de Prado Pintor» (1598). Seventeenth century copy. On the Blas de Prado episode see García-Arenal, 2009, p. 34.

<sup>81</sup> On al-Manṣūr's interest in Philip's building project, see García-Arenal and Wieggers, 2006, pp. 43-44. On the multiple governmental and symbolic functions of the palace, see Mouline, 2009, pp. 214-218.



emperador de Marruecos Rey de fes y etiopia» [sic], reflecting his imperial claims in the Western Sudan, vis-a-vis the Spanish monarch, who was only called *rey de las españas*, not having inherited the imperial title from his father. In these translations, Al-Kattānī rendered the Moroccan translations compatible in the target European chancellery discourse, while at the same time asserting the imperial legitimacy of his ruler through his chosen translation. The rhetorical practice of defining monarchs by their territorial possessions along with using titles of family lineage, religious authority, and comparative majesty allowed him to situate correspondents in a hierarchy, the reading of which was flexible enough to convey both sovereign claims. In this way the ideal of the Imamate, conveyed in Arabic and unintelligible for Christians, was translated effectively for a European audience<sup>82</sup>.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS AND THE LEGACY OF AL-MANŞŪR'S PRACTICES

In the early modern scramble for universal empire, the eyes of all sovereign powers with agents in the Mediterranean were on one another. This attention, and the competition it fostered, was fueled by a world of information and informants in motion. Though that information was highly dynamic, sovereign bureaucracies were able to control and adapt much that was useful into their own agendas. Nowhere was this more true than in the case of the politics of representation during the reign of Ahmad al-Manşūr.

<sup>82</sup> Concern over the translation of royal titles was a two way street. Europeans were equally concerned about whether their sovereign's titles or the carefully chosen honorifics designed for the Moroccan sultan were correctly translated. For example, see the complaint of Elizabeth's Latin secretary, Sir Christopher Perkins, in which he reported that, «Concerning the letters for Barbarie, I was first required to write them in Latin. Afterward I was informed that the last letters coming thence were written in the toungue of that countrie, with a copie of them in Spanish. Whereupon I thought it agreeable that these letters should have been written in Latin, with a copie also in Spanish. But at the length, I found a president of her Magestie's letter to that King written in the Spanish languadg, wherein her Highnes title usuall in the begyning of her letters was omitted, and wordes of speciall courtesy as Magestie, Serenitie and Highnes, etc., weare, as it were, of purpose avoided. As the Marchauntes urging me verie much, I sought your Honors servant whom yow use in that tounge; but finding him absent from the Courte, I drew a form of the letters in English, the which I send your Honor heare inclosed, and caused them to be tourned into Spanish by a verie sufficient man; afterward, for the titles and pointes, conferring them with Sir Edward Hobbie his servaunt Hieronimo, counted the best Spaniard in England». *SIHM* Angleterre, document XXXVIII (1597), pp. 117-118.

Ahmad al-Manṣūr and his translators, along with other advisors like the secretary and historiographer al-Fashtālī, incorporated the wealth of information about European affairs seamlessly into his heterogeneous and strategic politics of representation. The imperial and Islamic discourses of legitimacy that al-Manṣūr's staff generated for the diverse Moroccan, Ottoman, and European audiences, sometimes relied in unexpected and specific ways on the circulation of information about European political and religious affairs was transmitted by the Spanish translators working for al-Manṣūr. The success of these policies were contingent upon the ability of the Sa'dī *makhzan* to find, adapt, and re-contextualize information, and the Spanish translators working for al-Manṣūr played a fundamental role in this process. This process worked in both ways, through the vector of a translator who was himself embedded in complex social and professional hierarchies and networks, and who brought a range of experiences, skills, and contacts to his assignments. It was ultimately a highly collaborative enterprise, in which the same kinds of information were adapted, by the same officials discharging different duties, into distinct discourses destined for domestic and international consumption.

The efficient system of gathering information was not new in al-Manṣūr's reign, though his secretaries made new uses of that information for distinct audiences<sup>83</sup>. Nor would the system he established die with him in 1603, although it was severely disrupted during the civil war between his sons. His imperial and caliphal title, however, lived on in his sons. During the civil war, his son Abū Fāris (d. 1608) imitated his father's chancellery formulae and styled himself Imām and Caliph<sup>84</sup>. The ultimate victor in the dynastic conflict, however, al-Manṣūr's son Mūlay Zaydān, was more restrained, referring to himself as the *son* of the Imam al-Manṣūr<sup>85</sup>. And like the translators and secretaries working in the *makhzan* of al-Manṣūr, subsequent official translators, secretaries, and histo-

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<sup>83</sup> On the continuities of practice in al-Manṣūr's *makhzan*, see Mouline, 2009, pp. 212-214 and 228.

<sup>84</sup> *SIHM Pays-Bas I*, document XXXII (1606), pp. 121-123. Letter from Abū Fāris to the Stadtholder Maurice of Nassau.

<sup>85</sup> *SIHM Pays-Bas I*, document XCIX (1609), pp. 340-341. This was a letter from Mūlay Zaydān to the former Dutch agent Coy, not to a sovereign leader.



riographers would seek out and incorporate information about European affairs into their work.

Al-Manṣūr's information system, with its ability to adapt a wide variety of information into a range of discourses, allowed him to participate fully in the broader early modern contest for empire. In early modern European history this contest is usually articulated around Spain's growing global empire and the loss of the imperial title for the Spanish Habsburgs, followed by subsequent competition for European and colonial hegemony among the European powers and confessions. Morocco was highly attentive to this contest, in particular after Spain assimilated the Portuguese crown in 1580 and thus all of the Portuguese holdings on the Moroccan Atlantic coast<sup>86</sup>. In early modern Islamic history the contest for empire is usually articulated around the Ottoman claims to the caliphate, in the context of expanding Islamic territorial empires like the Safavids in Iran and the Mughals in India, as well as Morocco although the latter is more rarely included in traditional narratives. In fact, as I hope to have demonstrated in this paper, Sa'dī Morocco, especially during the reign of al-Manṣūr, was well informed about and thusly able to participate actively in a range of domains where imperial legitimacy was being contested. The ability of the Sa'dī *makhzan* to incorporate information from a wide range of claimants to universal authority and to integrate it variously into distinct Sa'dī discourses allowed al-Manṣūr to consolidate his imperial claims before his most important audience, his own subjects.



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<sup>86</sup> On these holdings, see Hess, 1978, pp. 26-44.

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