Dragomans and Crusaders: The Role of Translators and Translation in the Medieval
Eastern Mediterranean, 1098-1291

By

William Stephen Murrell, Jr.

Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty of the

Graduate School of Vanderbilt University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

History

June 30, 2018

Nashville, Tennessee

Approved:

David J. Wasserstein, Ph.D

Leor Halevi, Ph.D

William Caferro, Ph.D

Richard McGregor, Ph.D

To Rachel

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

ABBREVIATIONS

Ambroise   Ambroise, *The History of the Holy War: Ambroise's Estoire De La Guerre Sainte*. Edited by Marianne Ailes. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003.

AOL   *Archives de l'Orient Latin*. Edited by Paul Riant. Paris: E. Leroux, 1881-1884.

CGOH   Delaville Le Roulx, Joseph. *Cartulaire général de l'ordre des Hospitaliers de Saint-Jean de Jérusalem (1100-1310)*. 4 vols. Paris: Leroux, 1894.

Cod. Dipl. Geros.   *Codice Diplomatico Del Sacro Militare Ordine Gerosolimitano*. Edited by Sebastiano Paoli. Lucca, 1733.

Delaborde, *Chartes*   Delaborde, Henri François. *Chartes de Terre Sainte provenant de l'Abbaye de N.-D. de Josaphat*. Paris: E. Thorin, 1880.

EI²   Encyclopaedia *of Islam, Second Edition*, edited by P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Leiden: Brill, 2006.

ELS   *Enchiridion Locorum Sanctorum*. Edited by Donato Baldi. Jerusalem: Typis PP. Franciscanorum, 1955.

FC   Fulcher of Chartres. *Fulcheri Carnotensis Historia Hierosolymitana*. Edited by H. Hagenmeyer. Heidelberg: Winter, 1913.

          __*A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem, 1097-1127*. Translated by Frances R. Ryan and H.S. Fink. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1969.

GF   *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum*. Edited and translated by Rosalind Hill. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967.

Al-Harawī   'Alī al-Harawī. *A Lonely Wayfarer's Guide to Pilgrimage: 'Alī Ibn Abī Bakr Al-Harawī's Kitāb Al-Ishārāt Ilā Ma'rifat Al-Ziyārāt*. Edited and translated by Josef Meri. Princeton: Darwin Press, 2004.

Ibn al-Athīr   Ibn al-Athīr. *Al-Kāmil fi'l-tarīkh*. 12 vols. Edited by C.J. Tornberg. Leiden, 1851-76.

          __*The chronicle of Ibn al-Athīr for the crusading period from al-Kāmil fī'l-ta'rīkh*, 3 vols. Translated by D.S. Richards. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006.

IHC *Itinera Hierosolymitana crucesignatorum (sace. XII-XIII)*. Vol. 3. Edited by Sabino De Sandoli. Jerusalem: Franciscan Print. Press, 1983.

John of Würzburg John of Würzburg. *Descriptio Locorum Terrae Sanctae*. Edited by R.B.C. Huygens, *Peregrinationes Tres*, *CCCM* 139. Turnholt: Brepols, 1994.

__*Jerusalem Pilgrimage, 1099-1185*. Edited and translated by John Wilkinson, Joyce Hill, and W. F. Ryan. London: Hakluyt Society, 1988.

Tashrīf Ibn 'Abd al-Ẓāhir. *Tashrīf al-aiyām wa-'l-'uṣūr fī sīrat al-Malik al-Manṣūr*. Cairo: Wizārat at-Ṯaqāfa wa-'l-Iršād al-Qaumī, 1961.

Ibn Jubayr Ibn Jubayr. *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*. Edited by William Wright and M.J. de Goeje. Leiden: Brill, 1907.

__*The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*. Translated by Roland Broadhurst. New Delhi: Goodword Books, 2001.

Ibn Shaddād Ibn Shaddād, Bahā' al-Dīn. *Al-nawādir al-sultāniyya wa-l-maḥāsin al-Yūsufiyya*. Edited by Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl. Cairo, 1964.

__*The Rare and Excellent History of Saladin*. Translated by D.S. Richards. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001.

'Imād ad-Dīn 'Imād ad-Dīn, *Conquête de la Syrie et de la Palestine par Ṣalâh ed-dîn*. Edited by Carlo Landberg. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1888.

__*Conquête de la Syrie (Al-fatḥ al-qussī fī l-fatḥ al-qudsī)*. Translated by Henri Massé. Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1972.

IP *Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Ricardi*. Edited by William Stubbs. London, 1864.

__ *Chronicle of the Third Crusade: The Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta*. Translated by Helen J. Nicholson. London: Routledge, 2017.

Joinville Jean Joinville. *Histoire de Saint Louis*. Edited by Natalis de Wailly. Paris: Librarie de Firmin-Didot, 1868.

__ *Joinville and Villehardouin: Chronicles of the Crusades*. Translated by Caroline Smith. London: Penguin, 2008.

Nāsir Khusraw   Nāṣir-i Khusraw. *Nasir-i Khusraw's Book of Travels = Safarnāmah*. Edited and translated by W. M. Thackston. Costa Mesa, Calif: Mazda Publishers, 2001.

Piacenza Pilgrim Piacenza Pilgrim. *Itinera hierosolymitana et descriptiones Terrae Sanctae*. Edited by Titus Tobler and Augustus Molinier. Geneva: J.G. Fick, 1877.

       __*Of the Holy Places Visited*. Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society. Translated by Aubrey Stewart. London: Adelphi, 1887.

PL   *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series latina*. Edited by J.P. Migne. Vol. 202. Paris, 1855.

PT   Petrus Tudebodus. *Historia de hierosolymitano itinere*. Edited by John Hugh Hill and Laurita L. Hill. Paris: Librairie Orientaliste, Paul Geuthner, 1977.

       __ *Historia de hierosolymitano itinere: Peter Tudebode*. Translated by John Hugh Hill and Laurita L. Hill. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1974.

Al-Qalqashandi Al-Qalqashandi, Ahmad ibn. *Kitab subh al-a'shá*. 14 vols. Cairo: al-Matba'ah al-Amryah, 1913.

RRH   *Regesta Regni Hiersolymitani (MXCVII-MCCXCI)*. 2 vols. Edited by Reinhold Röhricht. Oeniponti: Libraria Academica Wagneriana, 1893-1904.

RHC Arm.   *Recueil des historiens des croisades: documents arméniens*. 2 Vols. Paris: Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, 1869-1906.

RHC Lois   *Recueil des historiens des croisades: les Assises de Jérusalem*. 2 Vols. Paris: Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, 1841-43.

RHC Occ.   *Recueil des historiens des croisades, Historiens occidentaux*. 5 Vols. Paris: Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, 1841-95.

RHC Or.   *Recueil des historiens des croisades, Historiens orientaux*. 5 Vols. Paris: Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, 1872-1906.

Rozière, *Cart.*   de Rozière, Eugène. *Cartulaire de l'Eglise du Saint-Sépulchre de Jérusalem*. Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1849.

ROL   *Revue de l'Orient Latin*. 12 vols. Paris: Leroux, 1899.

Saewulf
Saewulf. *Peregrinationes Tres*, *CCCM* 139. Edited by R.B.C. Huygens. Turnholt: Brepols, 1994.

Tab. Ord. Theut.
Tabulae Ordinis Theutonici. Edited by Ernest Strehlke. Berlin: Weidman, 1869.

Tafel & Thomas
Tafel, G. L. F., and G. M. Thomas. *Urkunden zur älteren Handels- und Staatsgeschichte der Republik Venedig*. 3 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1856.

Thietmar
Thietmar. *Magestri Thietmari Peregrinatio*. Edited by J.C.M. Laurent. Hamburg: Nolte & Köhler, 1857.

Usama
Usāmah ibn Munqidh (1930). *Kitāb al-I'tibār*. Edited by Philip K. Hitti. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

__ *The Book of Contemplation: Islam and the Crusades*. Translated by Paul Cobb. London: Penguin, 2008.

WT
William of Tyre. *Chronicon.* Edited by R.B.C. Huygens. Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 63/63A. 2 vols. Turnhout, 1986.

__*A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*. Translated by E.A. Babcock and A.C. Krey. 2 vols. New York: Columbia University Press, 1943.

INTRODUCTION

"MORE THAN MERE INTERPRETERS"

Travellers who are unacquainted with the language and customs of the country will find a dragoman (Arabic terjumân) *almost indispensable… Dragomans in Syria are more than mere interpreters; they are contractors for the management of tours and of caravans, and they relieve the traveller of all the difficulties of preparation and of intercourse with the natives. Throughout the whole journey they are useful in many important particulars…*
-Palestine & Syria: Handbook for Travelers, ed. K. Baedeker (Leipzig, 1876), 15.

Introduction: The Ubiquity of Language Barriers

In his *Kitāb al-I'tibār*, Usama ibn Munqidh tells a story about a truce made between Muslim

Shayzar and Frankish Antioch in the early twelfth century. The truce between these neighboring

principalities was set for one year, but the agreement also included a guarantee of safe-conduct

for a young Kurdish knight, named Hasanūn, who had won a friendly horse race against some

Frankish knights. Tancred, the regent of Antioch (1100-03, 1105-12), was so impressed with the

skills of the Muslim horseman that he gave him robes of honor and a personal guarantee of safe-

conduct.[1] Usama comments ominously, "And so Tancred granted him his guarantee of safe-

conduct, or so Hasanūn assumed, for they only speak Frankish [*faranjī*] and we do not

understand what they say."[2] A year later, Hasanūn was captured in battle with the Franks. After

being brutally tortured, he was presented to Tancred by Frankish knights who wanted to gouge

---

[1] The "safe-conduct" (or *amān*) granted in this case was unique in that it guaranteed that
 Hasanūn would be released if he was captured in battle by Tancred. "'My lord, I ask that
 you grant me your guarantee of safe-conduct, so that if you overcome me in battle, you
 would have mercy upon me and release me.'" Usāmah ibn Munqidh, *Kitāb al-I'tibār*, ed.
 Philip K. Hitti (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1930), 66. For English translation,
 see Usama ibn Munqidh, *The Book of Contemplation: Islam and the Crusades*, trans. P.
 Cobb (London: Penguin, 2008), 77. Henceforth, references to and translated quotes from
 Usama will be abbreviated "Usama, ed. Hitti, p._; trans. Cobb, p. _."
[2] Usama, ed. Hitti, 66; trans. Cobb, 77.

1

out his right eye. But Tancred stopped them—and instead, ordered them to gouge out his left eye so that in battle when he held a shield (which covers the right eye), he would not be able to see at all.[3]

So what of Tancred's personal guarantee of safe-conduct to Hasanūn? Was this a case of Frankish treachery? Or was this a problem of language and translation? Usama seems to leave both possibilities on the table. While his anecdote certainly would have reinforced the deceitfulness of the Franks to his Muslim audience, his comment about the language barrier between Franks and Muslims suggests an alternative explanation of Hasanūn's misfortune. Considering that Tancred and Hasanūn almost certainly negotiated through an interpreter, it is possible that the terms of the safe-conduct were obscured (or lost) in translation. Perhaps Tancred and Hasanūn had different understandings of the duration of the safe-conduct—or perhaps the interpreter failed to explain to Hasanūn the exact terms and conditions of the truce. Whatever the case, this curious story reminds us of the often-overlooked, yet ever-present reality of language barriers in the medieval eastern Mediterranean. This was a world where a renowned knight could lose an eye because of a slight mistranslation on the lips of an unnamed interpreter.

The ubiquity of language barriers in this period was not limited to Muslim-Frankish encounters. Both Muslim and Frankish contingents regularly faced language barriers within their own ranks. For example, commenting on the diversity of the crusader army in 1096, Fulcher of Chartres observes:

> And whoever heard of such a mixture of languages in one army? There were present Franks, Flemings, Frisians, Gauls, *Allobroges*, Lotharingians, *Alemani*, Bavarians, Normans, English, Scots, Aquitanians, Italians, Dacians, Apulians, Iberians, Bretons, Greeks, and Armenians. If any Briton or Teuton wished to question me I could neither reply nor understand.[4]

---

[3] Usama, ed. Hitti, 66-67; trans. Cobb, 78.

[4] Fulcher of Chartres, *Fulcheri Carnotensis Historia Hierosolymitana*, ed. H. Hagenmeyer (Heidelberg: Winter, 1913), 202-203. For English translation, see Fulcher of Chartres, *A*

Though Fulcher was certainly showing off his geographical knowledge and though some of the languages listed were mutually intelligible, the difficulties of communication—in particular between the Germanic- and Romance-speaking contingents of the crusader army—were real and are well attested in other contemporary sources.[5] Language diversity was also an issue among Muslims in Syria. When serving under Zangī, the Seljuk Atabeg of Mosul (1127-46), Usama recalls a minor dispute he had with his commanding officer, al-Yaghisiyani, over the amount of armor needed for a particular military engagement. In the middle of the conversation, Usama recounts, "Al-Yaghisiyani then turned to one of his attendants and said something to him in Turkish—I didn't understand what he was saying."[6] Such instances of code-switching must have been common in Muslim armies that included speakers of Arabic, Kurdish, Turkish, and Persian. How did Arabic speakers, like Usama, communicate with the Turkic-speaking warriors they fought alongside? Unless we presuppose (with little evidence) a broad bilingualism in Seljuk armies, we have to assume that translators and interpreters were crucial for interactions not only with the Christian invaders but also among the Muslim defenders of Syria.

Language barriers were not only prominent in war and diplomacy. They were a feature of everyday life in the medieval eastern Mediterranean—especially after the Frankish conquests of Syria and subsequent settlement in the twelfth century. For example, Usama recounts

---

History of the Expedition to Jerusalem, 1097-1127, trans. F.R. Ryan (Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 1969), 88. Henceforth, references to and translated quotes from Fulcher will be abbreviated "FC" followed by the section number from the Hagenmeyer edition and (when necessary) the page number from the Ryan and Fink translation.

[5] For further discussion, see Alan V. Murray, "National Identity, Language and Conflict in the Crusades to the Holy Land, 1096-1192," in *The Crusades and the Near East: Cultural Histories,* ed. C. Kostick, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 107-130. For a recent discussion of the spoken language of the Franks in Syria, see Laura K. Morreale and Nicholas Paul (eds.), *The French of Outremer: Communities and Communications in the Crusading Mediterranean* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2018).

[6] Usama, ed. Hitti, 100; trans. Cobb, 114.

(secondhand) the story of a Muslim merchant's unique encounter with a Frankish knight in Antioch. Usama had sent a man from his household to Antioch on business, and this merchant was invited by Usama's business associate, a local Christian headman (*ra'īs*) named Tadrus ibn al-Saffi, to dine at the home of a retired crusader in the city. Considering that we have a Frankish knight, a Melkite city official, and a Muslim merchant dining around the same table, it is only natural to wonder what language they were conversing in. Did the Frankish knight (who had lived in Syria for many years) know Arabic? Or did the Melkite official know French (acting as a translator for the Muslim merchant)? Or did the dinner conversation go back and forth between languages depending on the topic of conversation? While historians often discuss the fascinating dinner party—where the pleasantly surprised Muslim merchant encounters a sumptuous *halal* spread prepared by the Frankish knight's Egyptian cook—few comment on the most interesting part of the story, which happens after the merchant leaves dinner:

> After passing through the market, a Frankish woman suddenly hung onto me while babbling at me in their language—I didn't understand what she was saying. Then a group of Franks began to gather around and I was certain that I was going to perish. But suddenly, who should turn up but that knight, who saw me and approached. He came and said to that woman, "What's the matter with you and this Muslim?"[7]

The Frankish knight, who it seems spoke Anglo-Norman French and Arabic, mediated between the bewildered Muslim merchant and the angry Frankish woman—who had accused the merchant of killing her brother in a recent battle. Explaining that the man was a merchant who did not fight in the army, the old crusader dispersed the growing mob and saved the life of his dinner guest.

What would have become of the Muslim merchant had the bilingual crusader not defended (and translated for) him? It's unclear. In the merchant's telling, he would have been killed in the streets of Antioch by the Frankish mob. But it is perhaps more likely that he would

---

[7] Usama, ed. Hitti, 140-41; trans. Cobb, 153-54.

have been charged with murder and brought to court. Had Usama's servant found himself in a Frankish court, how would he have defended himself considering that he spoke nothing but Arabic? How did Frankish rulers and administrators deal not only with the challenge of legal pluralism but also with the reality of linguistic pluralism in medieval Syrian cities? Both Hasanūn's lost eye and the merchant's harrowing market incident remind us that language barriers were ever-present in the medieval eastern Mediterranean. Whether one was on the battlefield or in the market, negotiating a truce with a crusader army or dining in the home of a retired crusader, the problem of language was inescapable.

While scholars frequently highlight the religious, cultural, political, and socioeconomic barriers between Franks, Muslims, and indigenous Christians in crusader Syria, many fail to acknowledge that language was often the fundamental and most persistent barrier between ethno-religious groups in the eastern Mediterranean. Though Latin and Arabic were the primary languages of administration, it would be oversimplifying to regard medieval Syria as a bilingual (or even trilingual) society. This was a region where Franks spoke Anglo-Norman French, Provençal, or any of a variety of other Romance and Germanic languages; where Muslims spoke Arabic, Turkish, Kurdish, or Persian; and where local Christians spoke Arabic, Greek, Syriac, or Armenian. Therefore, when we want to think about intercultural relations in this diverse region, we must start with language and think about translation as the basic step in overcoming the primary barrier to meaningful interaction between individuals and groups. In diplomacy, language was a barrier between war and peace. In local administration, language was a barrier between rulers and subjects. In trade, language was a barrier between buyers and sellers. In pilgrimage, language was a barrier between pilgrims and holy people, places, and objects. In

scholarship, language was a barrier between ignorance and knowledge, reader and text. In each

context, these barriers required human bridges.

The Absence of Translators: A Historiographical Sketch

Despite their central role in the history of Muslim-Frankish relations, translators are

peripheral in the historiography, both medieval and modern.[8] Though we can assume that

translators and interpreters were always present in contact zones between Franks and Muslims in

the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, their ubiquitous presence often did not strike medieval

chroniclers as something worth mentioning. When they appear in the texts, they are usually

mentioned in passing and are often discussed at length only if they fail to do their job. Thus,

these shadowy figures are ever-present in medieval diplomacy, administration, trade, pilgrimage,

and scholarship; yet conspicuously absent in extant sources. Consequently, modern historians,

with a few recent exceptions, have shown little interest in uncovering the identities, languages,

and roles of these often-invisible historical actors. Though intercultural encounter in the

medieval eastern Mediterranean is a robust and growing field of study, few scholars have offered

---

[8] Throughout this study, our protagonists will at times be called "interpreters" and at other times "translators." While the terms in modern English are often synonyms, for the purpose of clarity, I will reserve "interpreter" to denote individuals engaged in the act of oral translation, while the term "translator" will be reserved for individuals engaged in the act of written translation. It is important to point out here that medieval languages generally do not make a distinction between those who mediate languages orally and those who do so textually. Thus, medieval writers in Latin, Old French, and Arabic all used one word (L: *interpres;* OF: *drugemen*; A: *tarjumān*) to refer to both "interpreters" and "translators." My insistence on this (somewhat artificial) distinction is meant to recall the significant differences between oral translation and written translation—and more broadly, the significant differences between oral and written communication.

substantive commentary on the role of interpreters and translators in making possible these contacts between Muslims, Franks, and local Christians.[9]

For example, in his field-defining work on the Latin East and its institutions, *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (1972), Joshua Prawer acknowledges the language barrier and the need for interpreters but makes no effort to investigate institutional solutions to the ubiquitous problem of language barriers between Franks and locals. Though he does discuss the role of the dragoman in local administration, he argues that these officials rarely actually functioned as translators.[10] In more general surveys of the crusades and the crusader states, such as Hans Mayer's *The Crusades* (1988) or Christopher Tyerman's *God's War* (2008), the problem of language and the work of translators typically merits a few paragraphs that highlight a handful of well-known scholarly translators as well as bilingual Frankish nobles who functioned as diplomatic interpreters.[11] In her encyclopedic work, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (2000), Carole Hillenbrand likewise offers a few paragraphs on the language barrier between Franks and Muslims and articulates the common assumption "that the Franks used local dragomans (interpreters) for official encounters at a high level with Muslim princes and generals."[12] Even in his pioneering work on interactions between Franks and local Syrian Christians, *The Crusades and the Christian World of the East: Rough Tolerance* (2008), Christopher MacEvitt, though

---

[9] For important work on Muslim-Frankish relations in the eastern Mediterranean, see Ronnie Ellenblum, *Frankish Rural Settlement in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Benjamin Z. Kedar, *Franks, Muslims, and Oriental Christians in the Latin Levant: Studies in Frontier Acculturation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006); and Christopher MacEvitt, *The Crusades and the Christian World of the East: Rough Tolerance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

[10] Joshua Prawer, *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem: European Colonialism in the Middle Ages* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson: London, 1972), 369.

[11] See Hans E. Mayer, *The Crusades,* trans. J. Gillingham, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, London, 1988), 192; and Christopher Tyerman, *God's War: A New History of the Crusades* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press, 2008), 233-35. It is worth pointing out that Tyerman also briefly acknowledges the need for translation in local administration.

[12] Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 333.

acutely aware of language differences among ethno-religious groups, discusses neither the role

of translators in mediating encounters between Franks and locals Christian nor that of local

Christians as linguistic intermediaries between Franks and Muslims.[13]

While scholarship on translators and translation in the early modern Mediterranean is

gaining prominence, scholarly publications on the roles and identities of translators in the

medieval Mediterranean are almost non-existent. For example, nothing like Natalie Rothman's

groundbreaking *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (2012)

exists at present for the medieval eastern or western Mediterranean.[14] Though scholars such as

Dominique Valérian and Travis Bruce are beginning to show a keen interest in the problem of

language and the role of translators in western Mediterranean trade, scholarship on the eastern

Mediterranean is lagging behind.[15] Aside from the prolific work of Charles Burnett (to be

---

[13] MacEvitt does retell a colorful anecdote from Michael the Syrian about a critical mistranslation during a meeting between a Latin patriarch and a Jacobite bishop that seriously damaged the mediation attempts of the Latin patriarch. However, MacEvitt seems to see this as an isolated incident, rather than as just one example of a much larger issue. See MacEvitt, *The Crusades and the Christian World of the East*, 107-108.

[14] See Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012); and N. Rothman, "Interpreting Dragomans: Boundaries and Crossing in the Early Modern Mediterranean," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51, no. 4 (2009): 771-800. In addition to Rothman's work on dragomans in the early modern eastern Mediterranean, one might also cite Claire Gilbert's work on dragomans and multilingual institutions in the early modern western Mediterranean. See Claire Gilbert, "The Politics of Language in the Western Mediterranean, c. 1492-1669: Multilingual Institutions and the Status of Arabic in Early Modern Spain," (PhD diss., UCLA, 2014); and C. Gilbert, "Transmission, Translation, Legitimacy and Control: The Activities of a Multilingual Scribe in *Morisco* Granada," in *Multilingual and Multigraphic Manuscripts and Documents of East and West*, eds., Giuseppe Mandalà and Inmaculada Pérez Marin (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2016), 339-376.

[15] See Dominique Valérian, "Marchands latins et sociétés portuaires dan le Maghreb médiéval: Le rôle central des intermédiares," in *"Arriver" en Ville: Les Migrants en Milieu Urbain au Moyen Âge*, eds. Cédric Quertier, Roxane Chilà, and Nicolas Pluchot (Paris: Sorbonne, 2013), 213-23; and Travis Bruce, "Translating the Divide: Dragomans as Cultural Mediators in the Thirteenth-Century Mediterranean" (forthcoming).

discussed in Chapter 5), which focuses narrowly on translations of Greco-Arabic science and philosophy into Latin, to date, only three articles have been published on the problem of language and the role of translators in the medieval eastern Mediterranean. The first to appear was a short five-page essay by Laura Minervini in 1996 entitled, "Les contacts entre indigènes et croisés dans l'Orient latin: le rôle de drogmans."[16] Through brief, her article provides numerous anecdotes and examples (primarily from narrative sources) that aptly illustrate the importance of dragomans in diplomacy, local administration, and trade in Frankish Syria.

Since then, two studies have come out that provide more in-depth analysis on the roles and identities of translators in the eastern Mediterranean. In 2013, K.A. Tuley published an article on the role of interpreters and intermediaries in war and diplomacy in Syria in the twelfth century.[17] Beginning with the First Crusade (1095-99) and ending with the Third Crusade (1189-92), Tuley puts well-known examples of diplomatic translation and translators (as well as a few obscure ones) into a historical framework. She argues that when the Franks first arrived in Syria in the late eleventh century, they were reliant on other ethno-linguistic groups to provide translation services—primarily southern Italians, local Syrians, and Byzantine Greeks. However, after a generation of settlement, Frankish principalities were able to employ bilingual Syrian-born Frankish nobles in the work of diplomatic translation and negotiation. Her study, while focusing narrowly on the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem in the twelfth century, is to date the most comprehensive and thorough discussion of interpreters in crusading war and diplomacy.

---

[16] Laura Minervini, "Les contacts entre indigènes et croisés dans l'Orient latin: le rôle de drogmans," in *Romania Arabica: Festschrift für Reinhold Kontzi zum 70*, ed. Jens Ludtke (Tubingen: G. Narr, 1996), 57-62.

[17] K.A. Tuley, "A Century of Communication and Acclimatization: Interpreters and Intermediaries in the Kingdom of Jerusalem," in *East Meets West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Transcultural Experiences in the Premodern World*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), 311-339.

Kevin Lewis' wide-ranging article, "Medieval Diglossia: The Diversity of the Latin Christian Encounter with Written and Spoken Arabic in the 'Crusader' County of Tripoli" (2015), focuses on the broader question of Frankish engagement with written and spoken Arabic. Drawing on the work of the linguist Charles Ferguson, Lewis argues that in order to understand the language situation in the crusader period, we must remember that medieval Syria was not only multilingual but thoroughly diglossic.[18] The diverse inhabitants of the medieval eastern Mediterranean not only operated in a wide variety of languages—Arabic, French, Turkish, Greek, Armenian—but they also operated on a variety of linguistic registers.[19] Though his explicit geographical focus is limited to the County of Tripoli, the insights of Lewis' detailed study of the complexity of the language barrier(s), the extent of language learning, and the multifaceted need for linguistic intermediaries, can be applied broadly to the entire Latin East. His brief yet thoughtful explorations of the complex linguistic needs in war and diplomacy, local administration, and cross-cultural trade demonstrate both the ubiquity of the language problem in Franco-Syrian society and the need for further research.

[18] Kevin J. Lewis, "Medieval Diglossia: The Diversity of the Latin Christian Encounter with Written and Spoken Arabic in the 'Crusader' County of Tripoli, with a Hitherto Unpublished Arabic Note from the Principality of Antioch (MS, AOM 3, Valletta: National Library of Malta, no. 51v)," *Al-Masaq: Journal of the Medieval Mediterranean* 27, no. 2 (2015): 119-52.

[19] For example, for Arabic, there was the high or formal variety, called *fusha*, and the low or colloquial variety, called *ammiyya*. For "Frankish," there was Latin and there was Anglo-Norman French. These distinctions are crucial when we talk about translation, for when we say that an interpreter *knew* Arabic, we need to be clear what exactly we mean by that. Just because a Frankish interpreter skillfully mediated between Franks and Muslims on the battlefield in spoken (*ammiyya*) Arabic does not mean that he could write or even read the formal Arabic treaty drafted by the chancery. Likewise, just because a Muslim scribe could read and even produce Latin documents, does not necessarily mean that he could converse in French at the market. Lewis also points out that though the contrast between "written" and "spoken" language does not always perfectly map onto Ferguson's notions of "high" and "low" linguistic registers, there is enough correspondence (especially considering our source base) to use written and spoken language as an entry point for understanding the diglossic situation of Syria in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. See Lewis, "Medieval Diglossia," 122.

Well-Trodden Fields, Emerging Interdisciplines, and Blank Spaces

This present study builds upon the recent work of Tuley and Lewis but parts company with them in some significant ways. Like Tuley, I am interested in change over time—how and when and where we see translation practices and personnel change in response to new political, cultural, and economic developments. However, whenever the sources allow, I trace change over time across the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Chronologically, this study is framed by the classic Clermont (1095) to Acre (1291) narrative—not because I am invested in a traditionalist definition of the crusading phenomenon, but rather because it is in these two centuries (and only these centuries) that Franks originally from western Europe settled and ruled portions of the Syrian littoral in the eastern Mediterranean. Though intercultural contact between Latin Christians and Muslims predated the crusades and continued well after the fall of Acre, there was never a time in the history of the eastern Mediterranean when contact between Latins and Muslims was so intense and so multifaceted as the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Put differently, translators between Latins and Muslims were always needed in the eastern Mediterranean, but never so much as in the era of the crusades and the crusader states.

Because Franks were living in and ruling Syria in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (rather than just trading or raiding as in other periods), translators were needed for more than just diplomacy and cross-cultural trade. This is why, like Lewis, I am interested in both diachronic and synchronic analysis of the problem of language and translation. This emphasis on the ubiquity of the language barrier in Frankish Syria demands studies of the role of translators and translation in multiple spheres of contact (such as diplomacy, local administration, trade, pilgrimage, and scholarship); and it also demands a broader geographical scope than that of

11

Lewis' original study. Whether out of methodological concerns or because of source limitations, most studies of intercultural contact in this period focus on a particular Latin principality or city in Syria. However, I am opting for a more ambitious geographical framework: the eastern Mediterranean, stretching as far south as Alexandria and as far north as Antioch and its mountainous hinterland. While focused studies on particular principalities and their institutions are valuable, the language problems and the translation needs of this particular period transcend political, dynastic, and geographical boundaries. Nevertheless, because of the limitations of our sources concerning translators and translation, some case studies will necessarily focus on a particular region or city and, for the moment, will have to stand as proxy data for other regions and cities with less evidence.

Mediterranean Studies as a Framework

Beyond functioning as a convenient geographical framework, the eastern Mediterranean as a unit of analysis also functions as an intentional methodological intervention. Though the scholarship on intercultural encounter in the medieval eastern Mediterranean has grown up as a fruitful branch of the larger (and older) tree of crusade studies, it is my contention that the subfield needs to be liberated from the confines of crusade studies and brought into conversation with the emerging interdiscipline of Mediterranean studies.[20] For far too long, the crusader states in the eastern Mediterranean have been viewed as exceptional and qualitatively different than other Mediterranean contact zones between the Islamic world and Latin Christendom (such as Spain or

---

[20] While Fernand Braudel is without a doubt the father of modern Mediterranean studies, the watershed moment that reinvigorated studies of the Mediterranean was the publication of Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell's *The Corrupting Sea* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000). For a recent work that assesses where the field is going, see Brian Catlos and Sharon Kinoshita, *Can We Talk Mediterranean?: Conversations on an Emerging Field in Medieval and Early Modern Studies* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

Sicily). Whereas intercultural contacts in Spain (and to a lesser extent Sicily) have been framed in terms of *convivencia* (and intercultural cooperation), Muslim-Christian contact in Syria has been framed in terms of crusade (and intercultural conflict). What Mediterranean studies offers us is a way out of these problematic (national and colonial) frameworks for intercultural contact. Rather than grappling with old models of *convivencia* and crusade, cooperation and conflict, or tolerance and intolerance, we should begin to think about intercultural contact in general and the problem of language and translation in particular in terms of "fragmentation" and "connectivity"—the central themes of Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell's ground-breaking work.

While for Horden and Purcell, the Mediterranean's fragmentation and connectivity were fundamentally ecological realities, these themes have been taken up by cultural, literary, and art historians in order to reframe the medieval Mediterranean as a unified "culture area." According to these scholars, the Mediterranean "culture area" is marked by cultural, linguistic, and religious fragmentation on the one hand and exceptional connectivity (and even hybridity) on the other.[21] Peregrine Horden, while appreciating the explosion of Mediterranean studies since the publication of *The Corrupting Sea* in 2000, has some strong misgivings about the "culturological" approach to the Mediterranean—or the "hybridity industry" as he calls it. First, he argues that the ideas of "fluidity" and "hybridity" have been overused to the point of meaninglessness. If everything is fluid (identity, religion, ethnicity, etc.), then nothing is. Second, he balks at many scholars' "obsession with religion," as though any (and every) encounter between a Muslim and a Christian in the medieval Mediterranean must have had a confessional valence. Finally, he critiques the "geographical narrowness" of the scholars

---

[21] For a framework for this approach, see Brian Catlos, "Why the Mediterranean?" in eds. Catlos and Kinoshita, *Can We Talk Mediterranean?,* 1-17.

currently adopting this culturological approach to the Mediterranean, most of whom are specialists of Spain, Sicily, and southern Italy.[22]

Writing a history of translation in the eastern Mediterranean presents a unique opportunity to benefit from the promise and to avoid the pitfalls of the culturological approach to the Mediterranean. For example, while language contact between Arabic and Latin (and Old French) in the medieval eastern Mediterranean certainly resulted in lexical borrowing, the boundaries between Arabic and Latin, though clearly penetrable, never became so fluid (or hybridized) as to effectively erase the language barrier. On the contrary, the persistence of these language barriers was the reason why translators and interpreters were so important in this period. Therefore, though this is a study of linguistic connectivity (by means of translation), it is not a study of linguistic fluidity in any substantial sense. Additionally, my emphasis on language (and corresponding de-emphasis on religion) is intentional. While religion (and religious distinction) mattered a great deal for both Muslims and Latin Christians in the medieval eastern Mediterranean, in most intercultural encounters, language, not religion or politics, was the fundamental barrier between parties. Horden's final critique—that Mediterranean studies is simply a new name for studies of intercultural contact in Spain and Sicily—brings me back to my original contention that studies of intercultural contact in Syria need to adopt a framework that brings it into conversation (and comparison) with Spain and Sicily.

---

[22] In conclusion, Horden advises, "do not try to do too much, and certainly not everything, with a Mediterranean heuristic." Peregrine Horden, "The Maritime, the Ecological, the Cultural—and the Fig Leaf: Prospects for Medieval Mediterranean Studies," in eds. Catlos and Kinoshita, *Can We Talk Mediterranean?*, 71-76.

Themes in Translation Studies

If Mediterranean studies provides a broad framework to reorient crusade studies and to reconnect Syria with the broader Mediterranean, then translation studies provides the narrow methodological thrust of this work. In his important work *Method in Translation History* (1998), Anthony Pym argues that translators (as opposed to translations) ought to be the "central object" of inquiry in the history of translation.[23] In her own work on translators in the early modern Mediterranean, Natalie Rothman observes that the study of translators and translation practices and institutions is a fruitful way to explore Horden and Purcell's idea of "diversity-in-connectivity" in the Mediterranean.[24] Few figures better embody this theme than translators, as their very work is to facilitate (political, administrative, commercial, religious, and intellectual) connections in the context of linguistic fragmentation. While Tuley and Lewis implicitly (or perhaps incidentally) engage with the field of translation studies by focusing on language barriers and linguistic intermediaries, this study makes a more concerted effort to apply the questions and methodological insights of translation studies to the topic at hand.

Though the field of translation studies began in the 1950s as an obscure branch of applied linguistics concerned primarily with the actual practice of literary translation, in recent decades, the interdiscipline has broadened considerably. Sociologists, ethnographers, and historians have found the idea of translation (and the theories surrounding its practice) to be a particularly rich conceptual framework within which to analyze intercultural contact.[25] Despite the rapid growth

---

[23] Anthony Pym, *Method in Translation History* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 1998), ix-x.
[24] Rothman, "Interpreting Dragomans," 772.
[25] Two notable examples that provided inspiration for this project include: Finbarr B. Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval "Hindu-Muslim" Encounter* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); and Karla Mallette, "Translating Sicily," *Medieval Encounters* 9, no. 1 (2003): 140-163. For a brief history of the development of translation studies, see Susan Bassnett, "The Translation Turn in Cultural Studies," in

15

of this field, the history of translation is still "a young branch in the large tree of translation studies" according to Julio-César Santoyo.[26] Furthermore, outside of the rich historical studies on the translation of sacred texts (like the Bible) and canonical literary works (like Shakespeare's oeuvre), there are still many "blank spaces" in the history of translation. Among them, Santoyo lists "the history of interpretation," "the daily practice of translation," "traditions of the East and the Middle East," and "translations as agents of History."[27] If one were to answer Santoyo's call to fill in the "large empty spaces" in the history of translation, one need look no further than the eastern Mediterranean in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Not only does the frequency of intercultural contact and the ubiquity of language barriers beg for a pioneering study of translation and translators in this period, but also the unusual density of source material surrounding the crusading movement (both in Latin and in Arabic) demands a new look at familiar sources and offers an opportunity to uncover new actors in old stories.

Old Debates, New Directions

To write a social and cultural history of translators and translation in the medieval eastern Mediterranean is more than just an opportunity to fill blank spaces. This line of inquiry offers us the opportunity to engage one of the central debates animating studies of medieval Syria—what was the nature of Muslim-Frankish relations in Syria during the crusader period? Or framed differently, how did Arabic speakers and French speakers coexist in such close proximity in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries? Given the ideological resonance of the crusades in modern

---

Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation, eds. S. Bassnett and A. Lefevere, (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1998).

[26] Julio-César Santoyo, "Blank Spaces in the History of Translation," in *Charting the Future of Translation History*, eds. Georges L. Bastin and Paul F. Bandia (Ottawa [Ont.]: University of Ottawa Press, 2006), 11.

[27] Santoyo, "Blank Spaces in the History of Translation," 39.

politics, scholarly consensus has vacillated wildly since the late nineteenth century, as historians have interpreted and reinterpreted the same sources and have often come up with radically different conclusions.[28]

The first specialized study of the Frankish Levant, *Les colonies franques de Syrie aux XIIme et XIIIme siècles* (1883), was the work of the French historian and archeologist Emmanuel Rey. In this pioneering work, Rey reflected on the nature of interaction between Franks and locals, painting a picture of an integrated colonial society in which Franks, Muslims, and local Christians lived in harmonious coexistence under the tolerant rule of enlightened Frankish knights (who themselves had assimilated into Levantine culture, adopting local dress, food, medicine, and architecture).[29] This vision of an integrated colonial society in the Levant became the accepted model in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, especially among French historians.[30] The challenge to the French school came from post-World War II British and Israeli historians who argued that the Frankish Levant was a profoundly segregated society "based on a strict segregation between conquerors and conquered." The most comprehensive articulation of the segregationist model can be found in Joshua Prawer's *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (1972) where he argues: "Frankish society ruled over an alien and subjugated majority. It perpetuated its own existence and way of life by… creating barriers between itself and the native

---

[28] For a helpful summary of these debates, see Ellenblum, *Frankish Rural Settlement*, 3-11.

[29] E.G. Rey, *Les colonies franques de Syrie aux XIIme et XIIIme siècles* (Paris: Picard, 1883), v.

[30] The culmination of the French school came with René Grousset's multi-volume *Histoire des croisades et du royaume franc du Jérusalem* (Paris: Librarie Plon, 1934-36). One notable exception among French historians was Claude Cahen, who offered an early critique of the integrationist model in *La Syrie du nord à l'époque des croisades* (Paris: Geuthner, 1940) iv.

population, which were never bridged or broken."[31] Prawer claims that this strict policy of non-integration between Franks and locals could be best described as "apartheid."[32]

While the segregationist model is still influential, especially outside of crusade scholarship,[33] this model has begun to weaken in the face of recent critiques from Ronnie Ellenblum and Christopher MacEvitt.[34] Challenging the widely held opinion that the embattled Franks formed a primarily urbanized society—one that settled safely within fortified cities and was insulated from a rural local population that cultivated the land—Ellenblum argues that there is overwhelming archeological evidence that proves significant Frankish rural settlement.[35] Moreover, the spatial distribution of Frankish settlement suggests that the Franks settled almost exclusively among local Christians and rarely, if ever, among Muslims, leading Ellenblum to a new model of cultural interaction—one which synthesizes the integrationist and segregationist models and suggests that the Franks shared close relations with local Christians while remaining segregated from local Muslims.[36] MacEvitt's entry point into the debate is through the lens of indigenous Christian communities. Based on a close reading of Armenian narrative sources, MacEvitt comes to a conclusion similar to Ellenblum's—that Frankish Syria was neither a harmonious integrated society nor an "apartheid" state, but rather it was a realm of "rough

---

[31] Prawer, *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 60. For earlier discussions, see J. Prawer, "Colonisation Activities in the Latin Kingdom," *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, 29 (1951), 1063-1118.

[32] Prawer, *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 524.

[33] See, for example, Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change, 950-1350* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 32; and A.E. Laiou, "The Many Faces of Medieval Colonialism," in *Native Traditions in the Post Conquest World*, eds. E.H. Boone and T. Cummins (Dumbarton Oaks: Washington, D.C., 1998), 15. Both Laiou and Barlett cite Prawer as their main authority on Frankish Levantine society.

[34] See Ellenblum, *Frankish Rural Settlement*; R. Ellenblum, *Crusader Castles and Modern Histories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); and MacEvitt, *The Crusades and the Christian World of the East*.

[35] Ellenblum, *Frankish Rural Settlement,* 36.

[36] Ellenblum, *Frankish Rural Settlement*, 30.

tolerance"—"a world in which religious and social identities were flexible, and in which violence and tolerance were not exclusive characteristics, but strategies often employed simultaneously."[37] The addition of new archeological evidence and neglected oriental Christian sources has breathed new life into the debate over intercultural relations in crusader Syria, but there is still more work to be done. Though Ellenblum and MacEvitt have been effective in undermining the segregationist model, what is now needed are studies that bring clarity and shape to the emerging model of intercultural relations and move us beyond the binaries of integration versus segregation and tolerance versus intolerance.[38]

The Mediterranean themes of "fragmentation and connectivity" offer a new way of thinking about intercultural relations that moves us beyond the old binaries. Likewise, the figure of the translator not only offers us an embodiment of connectivity in diversity, but it also presents us with a new protagonist in an old story. Though the source base for medieval Syria has changed little since the late nineteenth century and the evidence has been thoroughly debated and reinterpreted for over a century, in these well-known sources, there is a set of crucial actors who until now have been totally neglected. By uncovering these forgotten linguistic intermediaries, I am recovering a hitherto lost perspective on intercultural encounter in medieval Syria. In the same way that Ellenblum's work on rural Franks and MacEvitt's work on Armenian Christians provide new vantage points from which to view intercultural contact, this study of translators and linguistic intermediaries will offer another set of eyes (and ears) through which to see (and hear) those often-inaccessible conversations and interactions between Muslim, Franks, and local Christians in medieval Syria.

---

[37] MacEvitt, *The Crusades and the Christian World of the East*, 14.
[38] Ellenblum calls it a "synthesis," MacEvitt calls it "rough tolerance," but it is yet to be seen if these early articulations of the new model are the final versions.

Finding Dragomans: Sources and Methods

In the 1876 Baedeker's guide to Palestine and Syria, travelers are cautioned against

touring the Holy Land on their own without the "indispensable" services of a dragoman. Why?

Because in nineteenth-century Ottoman Palestine, dragomans were "more than mere

interpreters;" they were "contractors for the management of tours and of caravans" who

"relieve[d] the traveller of all the difficulties of preparation and of intercourse with the

natives."[39] The necessity of finding a reliable and multitalented dragoman is not a modern

Ottoman phenomenon but has its roots in the medieval period. In fact, the earliest mention of the

term "dragoman" in any Western language seems to be in Peter Tudebode's narrative of the First

Crusade, the *Historia de Hierosolymitano itinere*, probably composed in the first decade of the

twelfth century.[40] In his account of Peter the Hermit's embassy to Kerbogha in 1098, he writes,

"So they sent Peter the Hermit and Herluin, an interpreter [*drogamundum*]…"[41] What is

intriguing about Tudebode's use of the word *drogamundum* in reference to Herluin is that no

other eyewitness account uses this term to describe Peter the Hermit's famed interpreter.[42] The

Gesta Francorum, often thought to be the source text of Tudebode's chronicle, uses the Latin

---

[39] Karl Baedeker, ed., *Palestine & Syria: Handbook for Travellers* (Leipzig: Karl Baedeker, 1876), 15.

[40] Though modern historical dictionaries vaguely locate the origins of the term "dragoman" in the twelfth or thirteenth century, it was in the *Glossarium mediae et infimae Latinitatis* of Charles du Fresne, sieur Du Cange (1611-88), where I found the reference to Peter Tudebode as an early (perhaps the earliest) appearance of this term in Latin literature. See Charles du Fresne Du Cange and Leopold Favre, *Glossarium mediæ et infimæ latinitatis*, vol. 3 (Niort : L. Favre, 1883-1887), col. 192b.

[41] Petrus Tudebodus, *Historia de hierosolymitano itinere*, eds. John Hugh Hill and Laurita L. Hill (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste, Paul Geuthner, 1977), 108. For English translation, see *Historia de hierosolymitano itinere: Peter Tudebode*, trans. John Hugh Hill and Laurita L. Hill (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1974), 84. Henceforth, references to and translated quotes from Peter Tudebode will be abbreviated "PT, eds. Hill & Hill, p._; trans. Hill & Hill, p. _."

[42] Tudebode also uses the term *drogamundum* in two other instances. See PT, eds. Hill & Hill, 80 and 139.

interpres to refer to Herluin, as do all later chroniclers who mention Herluin.[43] Considering that

Tudebode's chronicle borrows heavily from the *Gesta* text and typically only diverges from it in

order to expand or embellish, it appears that Tudebode changed the conventional Latin term for

diplomatic translators (*interpres*) to a (Latinized Arabic) vernacular term (*drogamundum*) that he

had heard while on crusade in the east. Though the oral transmission of this term (from Arabic

into Western languages) must have a deeper (albeit still untraceable) history, the First Crusade

and Peter Tudebode's accounting of it appears to be the point (or at least one of the earliest

points) where the figure of the dragoman emerges in Latin literature and Western consciousness.

Though in this first instance our dragoman (Herluin) is functioning as an interpreter-

envoy, when we look at sources from the twelfth, thirteenth, and early fourteenth centuries,

dragomans can be found in a wide variety of contexts. In a Latin charter from 1175, we find

records of the transfer of the rights of the *drugomanagiam* of the villages of Toron, Cabor, and

Coket to a man named Barutus.[44] From this document, it is clear that as a dragoman, Barutus

functioned as a rural administrator, mediating between a Frankish feudal lord and Syrian

villagers. In a commercial treaty from 1254 outlining the rights and privileges of Venetian

merchants in Mamluk lands, we find a clause that states that "if any Venetian or Saracen buy

anything from one another or sell one to another" then the "dragoman [*Turcimannus*] is the

---

[43] For an introduction to the lively scholarly debate concerning the connections between the Gesta Francorum, Peter Tudebode, and a recently discovered Cambridge manuscript (St. Catherine's College MS 3), see Marcus Bull, "The Relationship Between the *Gesta Francorum* and Peter Tudebode's *Historia de Hierosolymitano Itinere*: The Evidence of a Hitherto Unexamined Manuscript (St. Catherine's College, Cambridge, 3), *Crusades* 11 (2012): 1-17; and Samu Niskanen, "The origins of the *Gesta Francorum* and two related texts: their textual and literary character," *Sacris Erudiri: A Journal of Late Antique and Medieval Christianity* 51 (2012): 287-316.

[44] See Joseph Delaville Le Roulx, *Cartulaire général de l'ordre des Hospitaliers de Saint-Jean de Jérusalem (1100-1310)* (Paris: Leroux, 1894), no. 480. Henceforth, references to and quotes from the *Cartulaire générale* will be abbreviated *CGOH*. For more on this document, see Ellenblum, *Frankish Rural Settlement*, 194-98.

arbiter in their sales and their purchases...”[45] The dragoman referred to in this case was an

official of the Mamluk dīwān whose chief role was to facilitate and ratify transactions between

foreign merchants and local buyers and sellers.[46] Finally, in a pilgrimage account from 1323, the

Irish pilgrim Symon Semeonis describes his reliance on his “dragomen (*druchemannis*),” who

not only served as his interpreters but also obtained travel permits and toll exemptions and

arranged Symon’s transportation throughout Egypt and Syria-Palestine.[47]

These diverse examples demonstrate the ubiquity of translators as well as the difficulty of

defining their identities and their roles. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, dragomans can be

found on the battlefield and in the wheat field, in Islamic dīwāns and at Christian pilgrimage

sites. Some dragomans functioned as guides and others as brokers. Some mediated between

opposing armies and others mediated between feudal lords and rural peasants. While scholars

have tended to assume that the role of the linguistic intermediary was typically filled by

(polyglot) religious minorities, such as Syrian Christians or Jews, our four dragomans

immediately challenge this notion. The origins of Peter the Hermit’s dragoman, Herluin, are

obscure, but he appears to have been a Norman priest (or knight) accompanying the crusader

army. Barutus, the dragoman of Toron, Cabor, and Coket, seems to have been a local (perhaps

Syrian-born) Frank. From the few names that are mentioned in extant commercial treaties, the

dragomans of the Ayyubid (and later Mamluk) dīwān in Alexandria appear to have been local

---

[45] Tafel, G. L. F., and G. M. Thomas, *Urkunden zur älteren Handels- und Staatsgeschichte der Republik Venedig,* Vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1856), 485. Henceforth, references to this source will be abbreviated “Tafel & Thomas” followed by the volume and page number.

[46] See, for example, Antoine Isaac Silvestre de Sacy, *Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque nationale et autres bibliothèques*, IX (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1827), 36.

[47] Symon Semeonis, *Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis ab Hybernia ad Terram Sanctam*, ed. and trans. Mario Esposito (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1960) 96-99 [77-81].

Muslims (or perhaps Coptic Christians). And Symon Semeonis' dragoman, Brother Assedinus, was a former Franciscan friar who had converted to Islam. This initial sample suggests that we cannot simply assume that religious minorities or trading diasporas always filled the role of the intermediary between Franks and Muslims. Nor can we assume that the identities of linguistic intermediaries are stable across time and space. As we will see in the chapters that follow, the question of identity is very often determined by the time, place, and context of intercultural exchange.

An additional challenge to finding dragomans in the historical record is the wide variety of sources where they can be found. The four examples discussed above come from a chronicle, a monastic cartulary, a commercial treaty, and a pilgrimage account respectively. Considering that no one source (or genre) offers a full picture of the identities and roles of translators in the medieval eastern Mediterranean, I explore a wide range of sources in Arabic, Latin, and Old French. Different sources offer different kinds of detail. For example, the best sources on diplomatic translators are Latin and Arabic chronicles as well as the small corpus of extant diplomatic treaties (primarily in Arabic). While medieval chroniclers are often silent on the role of translators, they occasionally offer detailed accounts of diplomatic negotiations that incidentally provide valuable insights into the roles of translators in diplomacy. The difficulty with chronicles (and to a lesser extent treaties) is that translators are rarely mentioned by name. On the other hand, the witness lists of monastic cartularies offer rich prosopographical data for dragomans and scribes serving in local administration, but these sources tell us very little about how figures like Barutus actually mediated between Frankish lords and Syrian villagers. Italian commercial treaties are a particularly rich source on translation and translators—offering both onomastic data and details on translation practices in cross-cultural trade. These sources are

particularly helpful when read alongside (or occasionally against) contemporary Arabic fiscal

treatises which outline the procedures and personnel of the Islamic dīwān. In the context of

pilgrimage, the expansive corpus of Latin, Old French, and Arabic pilgrimage accounts can be

read in a similar fashion to chronicles. Interpreter-guides are usually nameless and in the

background, but occasionally, their methods are made explicit and their agency is implied.

In many ways, this study can be seen as a social history of translators.[48] As victims of

repeated scholarly neglect, translators need to be uncovered and made visible in the historical

record. Who were they? Where did they work? What exactly did they do? How were they

implicated in different kinds of Muslim-Frankish encounters? These questions are basic. But

they have rarely been asked and have never been answered thoroughly. For some of these

questions, our sources can offer surprisingly concrete answers. For others, our sources raise more

questions than they answer. My goal is that this initial study should lay the groundwork for

future studies into the identities and roles of translators in the medieval eastern Mediterranean.

In addition to following the people who crossed the language barrier, I examine what

Finbarr Flood has termed "objects of translation"—objects that acquired transcultural identities

in the process of circulation.[49] This line of inquiry allows me to include new kinds of evidence,

like coins or relics, and it allows me to examine not only the people involved in translation but

also the products of translation. For example, rather than simply analyzing cross-cultural trade as

a one-time transaction between a Frank and a Muslim (with the mediation of a dragoman), this

allows me to follow the commodity that traded hands and was translated (often repeatedly) into

---

[48] For examples of this kind of work on translators in the early modern Mediterranean, see
Rothman, *Brokering Empire*; and Claire Gilbert, "The Politics of Language in the
Western Mediterranean."
[49] See Flood, *Objects of Translation*.

new cultures and communities.[50] Rather than simply analyzing how interpreter-guides helped

pilgrims like Symeon get from Alexandria to Jerusalem, this focus on objects (or relics) of

translation helps us understand how interpreter-guides mediated pilgrims' experiences at sacred

sites through translations (and adaptations) of local oral traditions. If some of the case studies

that follow amount to social histories of translators, others might best be characterized as cultural

histories of translation—an examination of how terms, commodities, relics, and institutions

move from one language and culture to another.

More than Mere Interpreters: Argument and Structure

Three central claims will echo throughout the chapters that follow. First, because language

barriers were ubiquitous in the medieval eastern Mediterranean, so were translators. They were

not merely confined to contexts of diplomacy or scholarship, the two arenas of contact where we

expect to find them. Rather, they were integral to every sort of intercultural contact between

Muslims, Franks, and local Christians. In order to demonstrate the extent to which the medieval

eastern Mediterranean was reliant on interpreters and translators, I will explore the role of

translators in five distinct arenas of intercultural contact: war and diplomacy (Chapter 1), local

administration (Chapter 2), cross-cultural trade (Chapter 3), religious pilgrimage (Chapter 4), and

scientific scholarship (Chapter 5). Though there is occasional overlap in the personnel and the

practices of translation in these different arenas, there is sufficient difference in the respective

social contexts to demand separate studies. In each chapter, I will explain the particularities of

the language barriers in a given context, the people tasked to bridge the language barriers, and

the practices of translation developed in these particular contexts. My goal is that after

---

[50] This approach was inspired in part by Leor Halevi's article "Christian Impurity vs. Economic Necessity: A Fifteenth-Century Fatwa on European Paper," *Speculum* 83 (2008): 917-945.

examining this evidence, we will never again be able to imagine Muslim-Frankish encounter in medieval Syria —on the battlefield, in the tax booth, in the port of trade, at a holy site, or in the scriptorium—without seeing in our mind's eye the ever-present figure of the translator.

Beyond highlighting their ubiquity and necessity in the medieval eastern Mediterranean, I also emphasize the versatility of translators. To echo the words of the Baedeker guide to Syria and Palestine, in medieval Syria, linguistic intermediaries are always "more than mere interpreters." Whether one is talking about diplomacy, local administration, trade, pilgrimage, or even scientific scholarship, translators are always involved in more than mere linguistic mediation. In diplomacy, dragomans functioned as envoys and negotiators. In local administration, dragomans functioned as tax collectors and judges. In trade, dragomans functioned as witnesses and brokers. In pilgrimage, dragomans functioned as spiritual guides and tour guides. And in scholarship, dragomans often functioned as court advisors and treasurers. By bridging language barriers, dragomans always become more than mere linguistic intermediaries.

While it is important to point out that not all dragomans had the same roles and functions in Muslim-Frankish contact, it is also important to point out that not all translators were called dragomans. In our diverse source base, we find a wide variety of official titles and generic terms used to denote translators and interpreters, with some titles more transparent than others. In each chapter, I will explore the figure of the dragoman/*tarjumān*/*interpres* and officials with other titles—such as *nuntius*/*rasūl*, *rays*/*ra'īs*, *scriba*/*kātib, ductus*/*dalīl,* or *philosophus*/*ḥakīm*—who nonetheless served as linguistic intermediaries in Muslim-Frankish encounters. Whether we are expanding our understanding of the term "dragoman" or expanding our list of Latin and Arabic terms denoting linguistic intermediaries, we will continually return to the idea that when we find a translator in the medieval eastern Mediterranean, we always find more than that.

The first and second claims lead to a third and final claim. Because of their ubiquitous presence and their multifaceted involvement in Muslim-Frankish contact, it is not too bold to make the claim that translators and interpreters are indeed "agents of history" in the medieval eastern Mediterranean. That they are often absent in the medieval sources is not a testament to their insignificance but rather to their ubiquity in everyday life and their success in mediating complex language barriers in diplomacy, local administration, trade, pilgrimage, and scholarship. If past scholarship has largely ignored translators and interpreters, assuming that their work was peripheral and mechanical, the purpose of this study is to recover the centrality and agency of the translator—to help us see the nameless man (for it was, it seems, always a man) standing between the supposed history makers and to hear his faint voice speaking the only syllables that either party will actually understand.

In Chapter One, "Life and Death," I examine three prominent episodes in the history of crusading warfare and diplomacy in order to explore the identities, roles, and agency of translators and interpreters in Syria in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Contrary to the current scholarly assumption that local Christians and Jews functioned as the primary linguistic intermediaries between Latins and Muslims in diplomacy, I have found that interpreters and translators in this period come from a wide variety of socio-linguistic backgrounds—with Syrian-born Franks and local Muslims particularly prominent in contexts of war and diplomacy. I demonstrate this with *longue durée* prosopographical data, as well as a focused biographical study of two families from the Franco-Syrian nobility that produced multiple generations of Arabic-speaking interpreter-envoys who were deeply implicated in the local politics of Syria and the international politics of the eastern Mediterranean. Additionally, in each of the three

episodes, I outline the wide variety of roles and functions filled by interpreters in war and diplomacy—from court interpreter to spy to battlefield negotiator.

In Chapter Two, "Death and Taxes," I explore the problems of governance and communication between the conquerers and the conquered. In particular, I focus on the problems of taxation and the administration of justice. While it is no secret that the Franks adopted many Seljuk and Fatimid administrative institutions (and possibly personnel too), few scholars have considered the linguistic implications of these continuing administrative practices. Examining Frankish legal treatises, I map the institutional framework that governed interactions between the ruling Franks and the subjected Syrian population and identify the officials who were tasked with mediating encounters between French-speaking lords and Arabic-speaking subjects. In order to understand more about these officials and their identities, I mine witness lists from the rich archive of monastic cartularies to see what kinds of people served as dragomans and other intermediary officials in Frankish local administration. These prosopographical data enable me to reconstruct a profile of the typical intermediary official, as well as to map change over time in these institutions from the early twelfth to the late thirteenth century.

In Chapter Three, "Coins and Customs Houses," I consider the problem of translation and trade and investigate how language was mediated in instances of cross-cultural trade between Muslim and Latin Christian merchants. Using Italian commercial treaties as well as Islamic administrative and fiscal treatises, I explore the central economic institutions birthed in this period of intensified trade and the officials tasked with brokering the language barriers between merchants of different tongues. In addition to uncovering the people who frequently crossed the language barrier, I also reflect on the historical reality that trade commodities themselves were "objects of translation" across political, cultural, and linguistic boundaries. For example, I

consider the Franks' longstanding practice of minting pseudo-Fatimid dīnārs and argue that these coins are best understood not as imitations but rather as translations—coins that began as a foreign (Arabic-Islamic) commodity and over time became a local (Arabic-Christian) currency.

In Chapter Four, "Holy Men and Holy Footprints," I examine the role of translation in religious pilgrimage. The need for translation was particularly acute during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries because the Holy Land was fragmented not only politically but linguistically. French-speaking authorities controlled pilgrimage sites on the Syrian littoral, and Arabic-speaking authorities controlled those in the Syrian hinterland (and Jerusalem after 1187). Working from Latin-Christian and Arabic-Muslim pilgrimage accounts of the period, I survey how pilgrimage was mediated linguistically and who was typically tasked with the critical work of translating pilgrims across the Holy Land and translating the Holy Land for foreign pilgrims. I explore this dynamic further by tracing the curious history of the "Noble Footprints" at the Dome of the Rock. These famous footprints allegedly belonged to Jacob or Jesus or Muhammad depending on the interpreter-guide—whose task it seems not only involved translating inscriptions at holy sites but the relics themselves and the oral traditions surrounding them.

In Chapter Five, "Philosophers and Treasurers," I reconsider the well-known eastern Mediterranean "translation movement"—in which Arabic and Greek scientific and philosophical texts were translated into Latin—and situate it in the larger context of Muslim-Christian relations after the First Crusade. Not only did many scientific translators develop their language and translation skills in more mundane sites of translation (like the customs house or the tax office), but their patronage, intellectual networks, and scholarly motivation were inextricably linked to their roles as diplomats, customs officials, tax collectors, and monastic scribes. In addition to examining the biographies of translators, I also consider the geography of translation in Antioch

29

and northern Syria. In particular, I consider the monasteries of the Black Mountain outside of Antioch and the Benedictine Monastery of St. Paul in Antioch, reflecting on how and why these institutions served as sources of texts, sites of language learning, and centers of translation and collaboration.

Conclusion: The Absence of Language Barriers

In the early 1140s, Usama ibn Munqidh brought a legal case before King Fulk V (r. 1131-43) and his *Haute Cour*, or high court. Usama's complaint was that the Frankish lord of Banias had seized sheep from his flock that was grazing on the borderlands between Frankish and Islamic (Burid) Syria. Moreover, this seizure had occurred during a truce. Usama appealed to Fulk directly, saying, "This man has encroached upon our rights and seized our flocks right at the time of lambing. But they gave birth and the lambs died, so he returned them to us after so many lambs were lost." Upon hearing Usama's case, Fulk turned to his *Haute Cour*, composed of half a dozen knights, and asked them to render a judgment. After private deliberations, the *Haute Cour* reached their verdict: "the lord of Banias should pay compensation equal to the value of the lambs that were lost from their flock of sheep," a value settled at four hundred dīnārs.[51] While Usama's retrospective commentary on this event emphasizes the peculiar Frankish tradition of employing knights (rather than trained jurists) to dispense justice, Usama also probably included this story to demonstrate his ability to deal with the Franks and to secure justice from an enemy who, as we have seen, did not always keep promises.

But how exactly did Usama make his persuasive appeal to Fulk and the knights of the *Haute Cour*? Considering his avowed ignorance of the "Frankish" language, one must assume that he made his case to Fulk and the jurors through a translator. However, court interpreters,

---

[51] Usama, ed. Hitti, 64-65; trans. Cobb, 76-77.

30

who must have certainly been there, are entirely absent from Usama's account. In his brief account of the proceedings, Usama records speech between himself and the Frankish high court as direct and unmediated. Therefore, not only are translators conspicuously absent from Usama's account but language barriers altogether. Unlike the case of Usama's friend who was accosted by a Frankish woman in the market in Antioch and unlike the case of Tancred's "guarantee" of safe-conduct to Hasanūn, language barriers were clearly not a factor in this story. They must have been mediated sufficiently, but Usama gives us no indication as to how. If the case of Hasanūn's misfortune gives us a glimpse into the terrifyingly awful potential of language barriers and the complexities they added to Muslim-Frankish relations in the medieval eastern Mediterranean, then the case of Usama's triumph gives us a glimpse into a different (and perhaps more mundane) reality—that most language barriers were bridged effectively. After just a few decades of contact, Franks and Muslims in the eastern Mediterranean found the right people and developed the right practices and institutions to ensure that a Syrian-Muslim who spoke no French could make a case against a Frankish lord before a Frankish court—in Arabic—and possibly win his suit. In what follows, I will explore how such complex connections between Franks and Muslims in Syria were made possible in a linguistically, culturally, and politically fragmented medieval eastern Mediterranean.

CHAPTER 1

LIFE AND DEATH: WAR & DIPLOMACY

Introduction: The Enigma of Herluin

On June 24th, 1098, a Frankish delegation exited the walls of Antioch and entered the

lavish tent of Kerbogha, the Seljuk atabeg of Mosul. Just a few weeks earlier, the Franks had

breached the walls of Antioch and captured the impregnable city from the Seljuks. But shortly

after their victory, the Franks found themselves under siege, surrounded by reinforcements from

Mosul. Starving and desperate, the Frankish nobles sent two envoys to meet with the formidable

Seljuk general. The first was Peter the Hermit, the charismatic preacher and barefooted leader of

the peasant contingent of the First Crusade. The second was Herluin, Peter's interpreter. For all

of the scholarly reflection and speculation on Peter the Hermit, we know a great deal less about

his companion.[52] In the *Gesta Francorum*, our closest eyewitness source to the event, the

anonymous author writes tersely, "It is reported that Herluin knew both languages, and that he

acted as an interpreter [*interpres*] for Peter the Hermit."[53]

Which languages exactly? Historians, both medieval and modern, are divided. Nirmal

Dass claims that Herluin knew French and Turkish, which is plausible, considering that he was

---

[52] See Jean Flori, *Pierre l'ermite et la première croisade* (Paris: Fayard, 1999); and E.O. Blake and C. Morris, "A Hermit Goes to War: Peter and the Origins of the First Crusade," *Studies in Church History* 22 (1985): 79-107.

[53] *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum*, ed. and trans. Rosalind Hill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 67. Henceforth, references to the *Gesta* will be abbreviated "GF" followed by the section and page numbers from Hill's edition.

interpreting for a French priest from Amiens and a Turkish general from Mosul.[54] Emily

Babcock and A. C. Krey, oddly enough, offer three—Provençal, Arabic, and Latin.[55] However,

things get more complicated when we turn to William of Tyre, who claims that Herluin was "a

man who possessed some knowledge of the Persian idiom and was also skilled in the tongue of

the Parthians."[56] What are we to make of this? The idea that Herluin needed Persian for these

negotiations is not implausible considering that Persian was the official language of Seljuk

administration, even as far west as Anatolia.[57] But what does William mean by "the tongue of the

Parthians [*Parthicae linguae*]"? He only mentions Parthians a handful of times in his history—

the most explicit time being his comment on Qutb al-Dīn Mawdūd, the Zengid emir of Mosul,

who, according to William was "one of the most powerful among the Orientals of the Parthian

race [*gentis Parthorum*]."[58] Considering that William is clearly denoting an ethno-linguistic

---

[54] See footnote #71 in *The Deeds of the Franks and Other Jerusalem-Bound Pilgrims: The Earliest Chronicle of the First Crusades*, trans. Nirmal Dass (Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2011), 141.

[55] It is unclear why Babcock and Krey added Provençal (the language of southern France) to Herluin's potential language range, considering that he was interpreting for Peter the Hermit, who was from northern France (Amiens) and would have most likely spoken a variety of Anglo-Norman French.

[56] "… Persarum idiomatis, et Parthicae linguae aliquam habens peritiam." William of Tyre, *Chronicon,* ed. R.B.C. Huygens, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 63/63A, 2 vols. (Turnhout, 1986), VI.15. For English translation, see William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, trans. E.A. Babcock and A.C. Krey, 2 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), I, 282-83. Henceforth, references to William of Tyre's chronicle will be abbreviated "WT" with the section numbers from Huygens' Latin edition followed by (when necessary) the volume and page number of the English translation.

[57] See Claude Cahen, *The Formation of Turkey* (Harlow: Longman, 2001), 140-41; and R. Shukurov, "Harem Christianity: The Byzantine Identity of Seljuk Princes" in *The Seljuks of Anatolia Court and Society in the Medieval Middle East*, eds. A. C. S. Peacock and Sara Nur Yildiz (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 129-30.

[58] WT XXI.8 [II, 408].

group other than Arabs or Persians, the "tongue of the Parthians" must refer to some other language spoken by the Zangids of Mosul, most likely Turkish.[59]

Herluin's knowledge of one (or more) of these eastern languages raises questions about his identity. Who was this Herluin and how would he have learned any of these languages? On questions of identity, the primary sources are silent, and the secondary sources lack consensus. In a footnote to his recent translation of the *Gesta*, Nirmal Dass writes, "Nothing is known of this Herluin; he might have been a priest."[60] Hadia Dajani-Shakeel, on the other hand, claims that Herluin was a "native Christian."[61] How Dajani-Shakeel came to her conclusion about Herluin's identity is unclear, but the assumption that most interpreters were local Christians is pervasive in modern scholarship (as will be demonstrated shortly).[62] K.A. Tuley, on the other hand, citing onomastic evidence, suggests that Herluin was an Italo-Norman knight who probably traveled to Syria with Bohemond's army from southern Italy.[63]

Whether Herluin was a French priest, a Syrian Christian, or an Italo-Norman knight, we are still left with the question of Herluin's role as an interpreter in these famous negotiations. How exactly did he function as a linguistic mediator? As usual, the author of the *Gesta*—our closest source to the event—gives painfully little detail about Herluin's role in the negotiations. All we know is that he "served as an interpreter" to Peter the Hermit. William of Tyre, who writes a generation later, portrays Herluin's role as an interpreter in the way we might typically

---

[59] See Andrew C. S. Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 181-82.

[60] See footnote #69 in *The Deeds of the Franks*, trans. Nirmal Dass, 141.

[61] Hadia Dajani-Shakeel, "Diplomatic Relations Between Muslim and Frankish Rulers, 1097-1153 A.D.," in *Crusaders and Muslims in Twelfth-Century Syria*, ed. Maya Shatzmiller (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 197.

[62] As evidence for her claim, Dajani-Shakeel cites Emily Babcock and A.C. Krey, who tentatively comment in a footnote that Herluin is "thought to have been a priest familiar with Provençal as well as Arabic and Latin." See footnote #8 in WT [I, 282-83].

[63] See Tuley, "A Century of Communication and Acclimatization: Interpreters and Intermediaries in the Kingdom of Jerusalem," 316 fn, 18.

imagine these figures. Peter delivers a speech to the enemy general, while Herluin faithfully renders these words into Kerbogha's tongue (whatever it may have been).[64] Robert the Monk, on the other hand, portrays Herluin's role rather differently. In his account of the diplomatic mission, he adds an additional interpreter to the Frankish contingent, and it is this unnamed figure who interprets Peter's initial speech. Only after Kerbogha's arrogant rejection of Peter's terms does Herluin enter the negotiations with his own speech—extemporaneous and unmediated by an interpreter for he "knew their language."[65] If William of Tyre depicts Herluin as a classic court interpreter providing simultaneous translation of Peter's speech, Robert the Monk depicts Herluin as a bilingual envoy who had the freedom to speak extemporaneously and negotiate with the enemy in their language. Considering William's distance from the events and Robert's tendency to embellish on the *Gesta*, it is difficult (if not impossible) to know what Herluin's actual role was in these negotiations.[66]

If the vexing case of Herluin demonstrates the real difficulty of uncovering the identities, languages, and roles of interpreters in crusader diplomacy and warfare, it also demonstrates the potential value of reexamining Muslim-Frankish relations with an attentive eye (and ear) to the problem of language. For when we find an interpreter, we find a peculiar site of contact—the human bridge between Franks and Muslims across their linguistic, religious, political, and

---

[64] See WT VI.15 [II, 282-84].

[65] Robert the Monk, *Historia Iherosolimitana*, RHC Oc., III, 825. As listed here, all references to the multi-volume *Recueil des historiens des croisades* will be abbreviated RHC followed by the series abbreviation (Oc., Or., Lois, Arm.), then followed by the volume and page numbers.

[66] The difficulty of this task comes into even greater relief when one considers that Herluin is not mentioned in important Western sources, such as Fulcher of Chartres, Raymond d'Aguilers, Albert of Aachen, and Ralph of Caen—nor is he mentioned in any "Eastern" sources (Arabic/Greek/Syriac/Armenian).

cultural divides. While much work has been done on crusader diplomacy,[67] few scholars have

offered serious commentary on the role of interpreters and translators in diplomatic exchange

between Franks and Muslims in the eastern Mediterranean.[68] The same could be said for the

copious literature on crusading warfare, which all but ignores the role of interpreters in war.[69]

This scholarly neglect is rooted in the fact that contemporary sources often have little to say

about interpreters and translators. These shadowy figures are ever-present in medieval diplomacy

and warfare, yet conspicuously absent in most narrative sources. When they appear in the texts,

they are usually mentioned in passing.

In this chapter, I will explore the identities and roles of these neglected individuals in

crusading warfare and diplomacy. Even though no single contemporary source thoroughly

fleshes out the role of the diplomatic translators and interpreters in this period, a comprehensive

survey of narrative sources from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries provides enough data to give

us a valuable, albeit partial, picture of these neglected figures. Most of my material comes from

the massive corpus of Latin, Old French, and Arabic chronicles (and the handful of diplomatic

treaties preserved in these narratives), but some valuable information can also be mined from

extant Greek, Armenian, and Syriac sources. In addition, we have at our disposal a fifteenth-

century Mamluk chancery manual, Aḥmad al-Qalqashandī's *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā,* which contains the

---

[67] See Köhler, Michael, P. M. Holt, and Konrad Hirschler, *Alliances and Treaties between Frankish and Muslim Rulers in the Middle East: Cross-Cultural Diplomacy in the Period of the Crusades* (Leiden: Brill, 2013); P. M. Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy, 1260-1290: Treaties of Baybars and Qalāwūn with Christian Rulers* (Leiden: Brill, 1995); and Dajani-Shakeel, "Diplomatic Relations Between Muslim and Frankish Rulers."

[68] The recent exception (discussed in the Introduction) is Tuley, "A Century of Communication and Acclimatization."

[69] See R.C. Smail, *Crusading Warfare, 1097-1193* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956); J. France, *Victory in the East: A Military History of the First Crusade* (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1994); idem, *Western Warfare in the Age of the Crusades, 1000-1300* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1999); and D. Nicolle, *Crusader Warfare* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2007).

texts of several Mamluk-Frankish treaties as well as a fascinating discussion on the process (and challenges) of producing bilingual peace treaties. Drawing on these sources, the central aim of this chapter is to answer three basic, yet crucial, questions about translation and diplomacy. First, how were translators implicated in war and diplomacy in the medieval eastern Mediterranean? Second, who exactly were these linguistic mediators? And third, to what extent can we think about these often-invisible figures as "agents of history?"

I began my initial foray into the primary source material with three basic assumptions that I had gleaned from modern scholarship. The first was that the work of translation in diplomacy—whether oral translation or textual translation—was straightforward and somewhat mechanical. The second assumption was that most interpreters in the crusader period were local (Arabic-speaking) Christians or Jews. And the third was that interpreters were peripheral figures in Muslim-Frankish diplomacy—ever-present but relatively insignificant compared to monarchs, soldiers, and other power brokers. All three assumptions are reasonable, yet none of them hold up when we take a closer look at the sources. In order to examine (and ultimately challenge) these assumptions, I will explore three distinct episodes in the history of Muslim-Frankish relations in the medieval eastern Mediterranean. In each episode, I will address one of our central questions in particular but will gesture at evidence that touches upon the other questions as well. In the first section, I will examine the Frankish siege of Antioch in 1097-98 and explore the wide variety of roles played by interpreters and translators in war and diplomacy. In the second section, I will analyze the negotiations between Richard I of England and Saladin in the final years of the Third Crusade (1191-92), and I will explore the ethnic and religious identities of the interpreter-envoys implicated in this well-chronicled episode of diplomacy. In the final section, I will investigate the diplomatic contacts between Franks and Mamluks in the final decades of

thirteenth century; and in particular, I will analyze the products of translation—diplomatic oaths and written treaties—and consider what they tell us about the practices and agency of translators in peacemaking.

The Role of Translators in the Siege of Antioch, 1097-98

Though Peter and Herluin have gone down in crusader lore for their famous (albeit unsuccessful) negotiations with Kerbogha in late June of 1098, they were not the first Frankish envoys to have diplomatic contacts with the Muslim enemy during the grueling eight-month siege of Antioch. In the spring of 1098, the Fatimids sent a delegation to the Franks in an attempt to forge an alliance against the Seljuks.[70] (The Fatimids initially assumed that the Frankish presence in Syria would serve as a buffer between the Seljuks in Anatolia and northern Syria and the Fatimids in Egypt and southern Palestine.) Given that the Franks had been aided by Byzantine forces in the early stages of their march through Anatolia, this diplomatic encounter represents the first major diplomatic negotiation that the Franks undertook on their own. So how did the Franks communicate with the Fatimids during the siege of Antioch? It is possible, perhaps even likely, that the Frankish army employed Byzantine interpreters even after they parted ways with the Byzantine army in the Anatolia, but the sources are silent on this possibility. According to Albert of Aachen, the Fatimids sent fifteen envoys "who were skilled in different languages."[71] What languages these envoys knew is not specified, but Albert's comment suggests that the Fatimids had envoys who knew the appropriate languages (French,

---

[70] For more on these early Frankish-Fatimid diplomatic contacts, see H. Dajani-Shakeel, "Diplomatic Relations Between Muslim and Frankish Rulers," 192-96.

[71] Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana = History of the Journey to Jerusalem*, ed. and trans. Susan B. Edgington (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 3.59, 230-31. Henceforth, references to Albert's chronicle will be abbreviated "AA" followed by the section and page numbers.

Latin, perhaps even German) to conduct negotiations with the Frankish armies from Western Europe. It is possible that the negotiations were mediated in Greek (with Byzantine interpreters), but it is also possible that the Fatimids sent envoys to the crusader army with a ready knowledge of Western European languages.

Interpreter as Courtier

Though the Franks and Fatimids did not reach a peace agreement during these initial diplomatic contacts, several Frankish envoys returned with the Fatimid delegation to Cairo to continue talks.[72] One wonders if the Franks sent polyglot envoys (as the Fatimids had done) or if they relied on Fatimid court interpreters when they arrived in Cairo. The interpreter as courtier is a model which we find in all courts (Byzantine, Frankish, and Islamic) throughout the crusader period. The role of the court interpreter is straightforward—to mediate the language barrier when foreign envoys (or even local subjects) request an audience with the ruler. For example, when the first crusaders arrived in Constantinople in 1096/7, Alexius already had interpreters in his court skilled in the "Latin tongue."[73] Likewise, Bohemond of Taranto, a prominent leader in the crusade army, traveled with at least one interpreter who was a member in his household.[74] After the First Crusade and the establishment of Latin kingdoms in the Levant, it seems that Frankish sovereigns also made efforts to employ court interpreters. For example, King Baldwin I of Jerusalem (r. 1100-18) employed a Turkish convert who seems to have served as a court

---

[72] Gilo of Paris, *The Historia Vie Hierosolimitane of Gilo of Paris and a Second, Anonymous Author*, ed. and trans. C. W. Grocock, and J. E. Siberry (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 154-55.

[73] Anna Comnena, *The Alexiad*, trans. Elizabeth Dawes (Cambridge: Byzantine Series, 2000), X.X, 187.

[74] See AA 4.17, 274-75.

interpreter;[75] and Roger of Salerno, regent of Antioch (1112-19) had at least one interpreter

(perhaps more) at his court who helped him gather intelligence from his multiethnic squad of

scouts and spies.[76] This practice continued throughout the crusader period, as we find a court

interpreter at the side of King Hugh of Jerusalem (1268-84) mediating negotiations with Mamluk

envoys in 1268.[77]

The role of these trusted courtiers is discussed at some length in the Old French Rothelin

continuation of William of Tyre, which describes the involved process for foreign envoys to gain

access to al-'Ādil:

> When any kings or princes sent envoys to him, they were received on the first day in the
> hall of his palace… On the second day Saphadin's [al-'Ādil] translators and interpreters
> [*li drugemenz et li latinnier*] asked the envoys what they wanted and why they had come;
> then they would go to Saphadin and report to him.[78]

This passage is interesting for a few reasons. First, it suggests that al-'Ādil (and presumably

other Ayyubid sultans) possessed a fairly large staff of court interpreters, at least large enough to

cover the wide variety of languages needed to facilitate diplomatic contacts with neighboring and

sometimes distant kingdoms. Second, it suggests that before ever functioning as linguistic

mediators at al-'Ādil's side, these interpreters interfaced with foreign envoys on their own and

effectively screened requests to meet with the sultan. This of course raises the question of

agency. For here we have a diplomatic tradition in which court interpreters are not merely

linguistic mediators but they play an active role in granting (or limiting) access to the sultan. In

order to effectively fulfill this role, court interpreters needed more than excellent language skills.

---

[75] WT XI.14.

[76] Walter the Chancellor, *Bella Antiochena*, ed. H. Hagenmeyer (Innsbruck, 1896), I.2.

[77] See Shāfi' ibn 'Alī, *Kitāb Ḥusn al-manāqib al-sarīyah al-muntaza'ah min al-Sīrah al-Ẓāhirīyah* (al-Riyāḍ: 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Khuwayṭir, 1976), 138.

[78] *RHC Occ*. II, 522. For English translation, see *Crusader Syria in the Thirteenth Century: The Rothelin Continuation of the History of William of Tyre with Part of the Eracles or Acre Text*, trans. Janet Shirley (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1999), 35.

They needed the trust and confidence of the ruler. This dynamic of trust is demonstrated vividly

in Villehardouin's account of negotiations between Byzantine emperor Isaac and Frankish

envoys during the Fourth Crusade. After entering Isaac's lavish and crowded court, the Frankish

envoys requested a private meeting with the emperor. Villehardouin observes, "The emperor rose

to his feet and went into a side chamber, taking with him only his empress, his chancellor, his

translator [*druguemant*] and the four envoys."[79] On the one hand, we should not be surprised that

one of the three people selected to accompany the emperor in these private negotiations was his

interpreter. But on the other hand, this scenario, which was certainly not exceptional in

diplomatic contexts, underscores the important role played by the court interpreter in diplomacy

and the absolute necessity for trust between the interpreter and his employer.

Interpreter as Envoy

For the Franks, more important than forming an alliance with the Fatimids in Egypt was

finding a collaborator inside the impenetrable walls of Antioch. By the late spring, Bohemond

had found one—Firuz, an Armenian convert to Islam who was responsible for guarding a tower

on the city walls.[80] It is unclear how Bohemond established a relationship with Firuz or how

exactly he persuaded him to betray the city, but what is clear is that Bohemond conducted his

secret negotiations with Firuz through a polyglot envoy, "a Lombard by race and a member of

Bohemond's household," according to Albert of Aachen.[81] Like the official Fatimid envoys,

---

[79] Geoffroi deVillehardouin, *Conquête de Constantinople*, ed. and trans. M. Natalis de Wailly
(Paris: Librairie de Firmin-Didot, 1882), XXXIX, 186. For English translation, *Joinville
and Villehardouin: Chronicles of the Crusades*, trans. Caronline Smith (London:
Penguin, 2008), 49-50 [186].

[80] On Firuz's shadowy identity, see Thomas Asbridge, *The Creation of the Principality of
Antioch, 1098-1130* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000)*,* 200-01.

[81] AA 4.17, 274-75. What is interesting about this exchange is that Bohemond's Lombard
interpreter communicates with Firuz in Greek. See also GF VIII.xx, 44.

Bohemond's man did not need to be accompanied by an interpreter because he could speak the language of the person he was negotiating with. This dual role of interpreter-envoy is exemplified in the terms ascribed to Bohemond's envoy in the primary sources. Some chroniclers, like the *Gesta* author and Peter Tudebode, refer to this intermediary as a "messenger" [*nuntius*] while others, such as William of Tyre and Baldric of Bourgueil, refer to this figure as an "interpreter" [*interpres*].[82] A similar overlap in terminology can be found in Arabic chronicles, where the same intermediary can be described as both an "interpreter" [*tarjumān*] and an "envoy" [*rasūl*].[83] This suggests that in diplomacy in the medieval eastern Mediterranean, there was often no functional difference between an interpreter and an envoy.[84] Thus, when we find interpreters [A: *tarjumān;* L: *interpres*] in the medieval sources, we should not be surprised to see them functioning as diplomatic envoys. And when we find envoys [A: *rasūl*; L: *nuntius*], we should not be surprised to see them functioning as linguistic intermediaries. Contrary to our modern conception of diplomatic interpreters who mechanically translate for rulers and diplomats while standing by their side, diplomatic interpreters of the medieval Mediterranean were often granted the freedom to engage in negotiation with the enemy and sometimes at great distances from the rulers they were "interpreting" for. As a result, the success or failure of diplomatic efforts often depended not on the negotiating skills of kings and sultans, but rather on the linguistic skills of interpreter-envoys.

---

[82] See *GF* VIII.xx, 44; PT, 81; WT V.21; and Baldric of Bourgueil, *The Historia Ierosolimitana of Baldric of Bourgueil*, ed. Steven Biddlecombe (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2014), 53.

[83] See Bahā' al-Dīn b. Shaddād, *Al-nawādir al-sultāniyya wa-l-maḥāsin al-Yūsufiyya*, ed. Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl, (Cairo, 1964), 201. For English translation, see *The Rare and Excellent History of Saladin*, trans. D.S. Richards (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 193. Unless otherwise stated, all English translations of Ibn Shaddād will come from Richards. Henceforth, all references to Ibn Shaddād will be abbreviated "Ibn Shaddād" followed by the page number.

[84] For a similar argument, see Yvonne Friedman, "Peacemaking: Perceptions and Practices in the Medieval Latin East," in *The Crusades and the Near East*, ed. Conor Kostick (London: Routledge, 2011), 238; and Köhler, *Alliances and Treaties,* 303.

Interpreter as Spy

Bohemond, it turns out, was not the only person conducting covert operations behind enemy lines during the siege of Antioch. According to William of Tyre, Seljuk spies [*exploratores*] infiltrated the Frankish camp in the fall of 1097. William observes that numerous Muslims spies, disguised as Greeks, Syrians, and Armenians, passed in and out of the crusader ranks with little difficulty, "for they possessed much facility in various languages."[85] William's observation—that the work of espionage in the First Crusade was contingent on language—is not novel but rather normative throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In 1155, a company of Fatimid seamen were selected for a special mission because they "spoke the Frankish tongue" and were fitted with "Frankish dress"—presumably in order to blend in with Frankish ships and infiltrate enemy ports.[86] In the Third Crusade, Richard employed a man named Bernard and at least two other unnamed spies [*exploratores*], who "wore Saracen clothes" and "spoke the Saracen language better than anyone." Their "sole occupation," we are told, "was to keep King Richard fully informed of the Saracens' movements."[87] In 1211, William the Frank, we are told by al-Maqrizī, infiltrated the court of al-ʿĀdil (and later al-Kāmil), bearing gifts and offering his services to the sultan. But it was later discovered that he was "a spy of the Franks, informing

---

[85] WT IV.23 [I: 221].

[86] Ibn al-Qalanisi, *Dhayl tarikh Dimishq*, ed. H. F. Amedroz (Leiden, 1908), 332. For English translation, see Ibn al-Qalanisi, *The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades*, trans. H.A.R. Gibb (London: Luzac & Co., 1932), 323.

[87] See *Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Ricardi*, ed. William Stubbs (London, 1864), 6.3. For English translation, see *Chronicle of the Third Crusade: The Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta*, trans. Helen J. Nicholson (London: Routledge, 2017), 338. Henceforth, this chronicle will be referred to as "IP" followed by the section number from Stubbs edition and (when necessary) the page number (in brackets) of Nicholson's translation.

them of the affairs (in Cairo)."[88] We do not know whom William was working for—whether the Genoese or the Franks in Syria, but we can assume that he was not the first polyglot Frank to attempt to gain access to a Muslim court.

Our most detailed discussion of the work of spies comes from Walter the Chancellor, who discusses Roger of Salerno's (r. 1112-19) use of "scouts [*exploratores*] of different races" whom he sent as far as Iraq to gather intelligence on the enemy.[89] As mentioned earlier, what is interesting about Roger's diverse band of scouts is that at least some of them did not speak French, and thus required an interpreter in order to report their findings to Roger. Other scouts employed by Roger, such as Theodoric of Barneville, seemed to have known both French and Arabic (or Turkish) and were able to relay important intelligence to Roger unmediated by an interpreter.[90] Nevertheless, we must not forget that any military intelligence (military reports, rumors, eavsedropped conversations, documents, etc.) that Theodoric gathered while scouting an enemy land still had to be translated—whether by himself or by a court interpreter—and made intelligible to Roger. This was a time and place where the transmission of intelligence almost always required some form of linguistic mediation. And as a result, the distinction between spy and interpreter, like the distinction between interpreter and envoy, is a blurry one in this period.[91]

---

[88] al-Maqrizi, *Kitāb al-sulūk*, trans. Broadhurst as *History of the Ayyubids and Mamluks* (Boston, 1980) 154-55, 59.

[89] Walter the Chancellor, I.2. For English translation, see *Walter the Chancellor's Antiochene Wars: A Translation and Commentary*, trans. S.B. Edgington and T.S. Asbridge (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 85, 87.

[90] Walter the Chancellor, I.5.

[91] For more on spies in crusading warfare, see Susan Edgington, "Espionage and Military Intelligence During the First Crusade, 1095-99," in *Crusading Warfare in the Middle Ages: Realities and Representations. Essays in Honour of John France*, eds. S. John and N. Morton (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 75-85.

Interpreter as Guide

Just as polyglot spies were needed to scout out the land before military engagements between Muslims and Franks, polyglot guides were needed to lead Western armies as they travelled through the foreign terrain of Syria-Palestine—especially after the departure of the Byzantine forces in 1097. Both before and after the siege of Antioch, several local Muslim sovereigns in northern Syria made truces with the incoming Frankish armies and offered local guides [*ductor*] to help lead the foreign army to Jerusalem.[92] We do not know if these particular guides knew French. They may have communicated through interpreters in the army; however, the steady stream of Western pilgrims through the Holy Land in the late eleventh century may have already generated a small industry of local guides who could speak Western European languages. The need for a trustworthy guide was essential, as it was always possible that a local guide might lead a foreign crusade army into an ambush. Beyond trust, two essential qualities of a guide in this period were knowledge of the land and knowledge of the language of the land.

For example, when a German contingent of crusaders journeyed through Byzantine territory en route to the Third Crusade, they brought along an unnamed citizen of Regensburg as a guide because he "knew this province and the Greek language."[93] It turns out that this German contingent employed numerous guides to help them journey across the vast Byzantine empire. In an interesting passage in the *Historia de Expeditione Friderici Imperatoris*, we learn that the German crusaders "were warned by their guides [*ductoribus*] and Greek interpreters [*interpretibus Graecae*] to avoid at all costs the wine of this land because of the known danger of

---

[92] See AA 5.38, 388; and GF X.xxxiii, 81-82.

[93] See *Historia de expeditione Friderici Imperatoris*, eds. Friedrich Ansbertus and Josef Dobrovský (Pragae: Apud Cajetanum de Mayregg, 1827), 57-58. For translation, see *The crusade of Frederick Barbarossa: the history of the expedition of the Emperor Frederick and related texts*, trans. Graham Loud (London: Routledge, 2016), 80-81.

poison."[94] Whether or not the threat of poison wine was real, what is interesting once again is the blurry line between interpreter and guide. In this instance, it is unclear in the original Latin text if the guides and interpreters were two different groups of people, or if the author is referring to the same group of people with two different functions.[95] It seems that in the crusader period, when foreign armies—from both the Christian West and the Islamic East (that is east of Syria)—traveled and fought in Syria-Palestine, it was essential to have an interpreter-guide who could help navigate both the rugged topography of the land and the complex linguistic map of the region.

Interpreter as Interrogator

In the late spring of 1098, as the resolve of both the besieger and the besieged was wavering, Yaghi Siyan, the Seljuk emir of Antioch, engaged in a bit of psychological warfare with the Franks. According to Peter Tudebode's dramatic retelling, Yaghi Siyan perched a captive crusader, named Rainald Porchet, on the walls of Antioch before the eyes of his fellow Franks and offered him freedom if he would convert to Islam. In response to the emir's offer, Rainald knelt down in prayer. Tudebode reports, "When the emir saw Rainald in prayer, he called his interpreter and said to him: 'What is Rainald's answer?'" Interpreting Rainald's actions before he ever uttered a response, the interpreter replied, "He completely denies your god. He also refuses your worldly goods and your gods."[96] With that, Yaghi Siyan ordered Rainald's swift decapitation on the walls of Antioch before the eyes of the Frankish armies. Whether or not Peter embellished (or even totally fabricated) this account, we are reminded that

---

[94] *Historia de Expeditione,* eds. Ansbertus and Dobrovský, 58; trans. Loud, 82.

[95] Latin text: "… et a ductoribus, seu interpretibus Graecae linguae praemoniti essent, ut vinum terrae illius summopere vitarent propter conscientiam veneni…" *Historia de expeditione,* 58.

[96] PT, eds. Hill & Hill, 80; trans. Hill & Hill, 58-59.

interpreters as interrogators were called upon not merely to interpret the exact words of the captive. Like all interrogators, they were called upon to read the body language of the captive and help determine what information could be extracted—and perhaps most importantly, if the captive was telling the truth.

Examples of interpreters acting as *interrogators* are found in both Arabic and Latin primary sources throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, from Bohemond using an interpreter to interrogate Turkish prisoners in the First Crusade to the Mamluks using interpreters to interrogate Jean de Joinville and his fellow captives during the Seventh Crusade.[97] During the Third Crusade, Ibn Shaddād recounts Saladin's interrogation of a Frankish captive through an interpreter. After gaining the information he needed, Saladin ordered that the Frank be executed immediately. Upon hearing the bad news, the Frank pleaded with the interpreter to intervene on his behalf and beg Saladin to reverse his sentence. Surprisingly, the interpreter persuaded Saladin to delay his sentence of execution.[98] In both Yaghi Siyan's interrogation (and execution) of Rainald and Saladin's interrogation (and clemency) of the Frankish captive, it is clear that interpreters did more than merely relay words between captor and captive—rather, they exercised a considerable degree of agency in the fate of the captive.

---

[97] See Ibn Shaddād, ed. al-Shayyāl, 19; Metellus von Tegernsee, *Expeditio Ierosolimitana*, ed. Peter Christian Jacobsen (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1982); and Jean Joinville, *Histoire de Saint Louis*, ed. Natalis de Wailly (Paris, 1868), LXX, 334-35. In English translation, Jean Joinville, *Joinville and Villehardouin: Chronicles of the Crusades*, trans. Caronline Smith (London, 2008), 228. Henceforth, references to Joinville's *Histoire de Saint Louis* will be abbreviated "Joinville" followed by the page number in de Wailly's editions and (if necessary) the page number in Smith's translation.

[98] Ibn Shaddād, ed. al-Shayyāl, 178.

Interpreter as Soldier

Through the mediation of his Lombard interpreter-envoy, by late May, Bohemond and Firuz had agreed on a plot to deliver Antioch to the Franks. On the evening of June 2, the Frankish armies would march away from the city, making the Muslim forces of Antioch think that they were ending the siege. Then under cover of darkness, they would secretly return to the city, to the tower by the Gate of St. George where Firuz was the watchman. After the night watchman had made his rounds, Firuz would signal the Frankish troops at the foot of the walls who would then climb the tower on a rope ladder. Upon entering the city, the Franks would kill the other watchmen, throw open the city gates, and allow the rest of the Frankish army to storm the city. The plan was executed flawlessly, until they began to scale the city walls.[99]

The first round of sixty crusaders began the climb, but in their anxiety about being spotted mid-climb, they rushed onto the rope ladder one after another—causing the ladder to break. Not only did the tremendous crash nearly ruin the element of surprise and injure and kill several Franks, this horrific turn of events struck terror into the next round of Frankish troops who were supposed to climb the ladder. According to Albert of Aachen, among the first crusaders to reach the top of the city walls before the ladder broke was Bohemond's interpreter and envoy to Firuz. As Firuz lowered the rope a second time, the Lombard interpreter called down to his fellow crusaders from atop the city wall, "urging them all to faithfully repeat the climb." Albert, reporting the effect of the interpreter's appeal, writes,

> The men hesitated no longer but, strengthened by the interpreter's words… they climbed the ladder a second time and were brought inside the ramparts, until some sixty had been brought over in the walls…[100]

---

[99] A good summary and synthesis of the primary source accounts for this event can be found in
        Thomas Asbridge, *The First Crusade: A New History* (New York: Free, 2004), 200-209.
[100] AA 4.20, 278-79.

This was the defining moment that effectively ended the eight-month siege of Antioch. And it would not have been possible without the unnamed interpreter—who not only translated the hushed messages from Firuz on the tower but "strengthened" his fellow crusaders with his own words as they climbed the walls of Antioch.[101] In moments like these, interpreters functioned as much more than invisible linguistic intermediaries. Here, we have an interpreter acting as both an interpreter and a soldier. Far away from the safety of a ruler's court or even the neutral sites of diplomatic negotiation, these interpreters found themselves on the front line of military conflict—at times brokering peace and at other times engaging in warfare.

While there is no doubt that the crusader armies traveled with skilled interpreters, whose primary role was diplomatic translation and negotiation, the case of Bohemond's interpreter on the city walls of Antioch points to the reality that some interpreters we find in the sources may have actually been polyglot soldiers who could be called upon for linguistic mediation when necessary. For example, in 1119, Fulcher of Chartres mentions a Frankish knight, who knew the "Persian language" and seemed to function as an intermediary on the battlefield.[102] It seems that this knight was in the first instance a soldier and, on occasion, an interpreter. Similarly, Usama Ibn Munqidh writes about a Frank named "Yaruq" who served in Qara Aslan's army.[103] While Usama does not comment explicitly on his use as a linguistic intermediary, it seems plausible

---

[101] Even if Albert, who was not a participant in the crusades, embellishes his account for literary purposes, we know from other sources that Bohemond used an interpreter to mediate between Firuz and his soldiers in the siege of Antioch. See WT V.21 [I: 255].

[102] Fulcher reports a conversation between this knight and a Turk across enemy lines just before the battle of *Hab*, suggesting that the polyglot knight was involved in some sort of diplomatic talks on the battlefield before the actual outbreak of hostilities. FC III.IV.4 [228-29].

[103] The name "Yaruq" is not a typical Frankish name, suggesting either that this Frank had converted to Islam—or that "Yaruq" was a nickname he acquired while fighting in Qara Arslan's army.

that Yaruq might have also filled the role of interpreter at least as a secondary function.[104]

Turcopoles, who were typically born of Turkish-Muslim fathers and Greek-Christian mothers, are prime candidates for the soldier-interpreter type. As mercenaries for the Byzantine and Frankish armies, Turcopoles were soldiers who often knew the language and culture of the enemy and could be called upon to interpret on the battlefield.[105]

Interpreter as Negotiator

The elation of victory at Antioch on June 3 soon turned to horror when the Franks found themselves surrounded by Kerbogha's vast army from Mosul within a matter of days. When Peter and Herluin entered the tent of Kerbogha on June 24, 1098, the Franks had few options— and Kerbogha knew it. Though we have several accounts of this event, the actual contents of the high-stakes negotiations are difficult to reconstruct. Most early Latin accounts place bold demands in the mouth of Peter, as though he was negotiating from a place of strength: retreat or we will destroy you.[106] Ibn al-Athīr, on the other hand, writes that the Frankish envoys offered to surrender in exchange for safe passage out of the city.[107] Still other Latin chroniclers, like Fulcher of Chartres, report Peter offering an alternative to retreat or full-scale war: trial by combat—in which a limited number of soldiers (five, ten, twenty, etc.) would be selected from

---

[104] See Usama, ed. Hitti, 83; trans. Cobb, 96.

[105] See Jean Richard, "Les Turcopoles au service des royaumes de Jérusalem et de Chypre: Musulmans convertis ou Chrétiens orientaux?" *Revue des études islamiques* 54 (1986): 259-70.

[106] See GF, IX.xxviii, 66; PT, eds. Hill & Hill, 108-09. A few Latin accounts also portray Peter as offering a middle option—trial by ordeal. See FC I.XXXI.1.

[107] Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil fi'l-tarīkh* X, ed. C.J. Tornberg (Leiden, 1851-76), 276-77. For English translation see *The chronicle of Ibn al-Athīr for the crusading period from al-Kāmil fi'l-ta'rīkh*, I trans. D.S. Richards (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006) 16. Henceforth refences to Ibn al-Athīr will be abbreviated "Ibn al-Athīr" followed by the volume and page number from Tornberg's edition and (when necessary) the volume and page number from Richard's translation.

each army and the outcome of their battle would determine who had the rights to Antioch.[108]

Whether Peter was as defiant as some Latin accounts would have us believe or as desperate as

Ibn al-Athīr suggests (or somewhere in the middle), Kerbogha recognized his superior numbers

and refused to negotiate. Some scholars, taking the Latin accounts at face value, argue that the

Frankish princes must have known that Kerbogha would never accept Peter's terms but instead,

sent the diplomatic envoy for intelligence gathering and espionage before the Franks' (already-

planned) frontal attack on Kerbogha's army a few days later.[109] Whether the true purpose of this

embassy was negotiation or subterfuge, the success of Peter's mission hinged entirely on his

fellow envoy and interpreter, Herluin. It is unlikely that in 1098, a general from Mosul would

have had an interpreter in his court familiar with European languages. So the Franks must have

known that the delivery of their message (whatever that message was) was entirely up to Herluin.

One of the most (in)famous examples (depending on the source) of the importance of the

interpreter-negotiator at the end of battles comes from the Third Crusade when Reynald of Sidon

negotiated the surrender of Shaqif Arnun (Beaufort Castle). After a long siege and a long round

of negotiations with Saladin outside the walls of the castle, Reynald finally agreed to surrender—

or so it appeared. Ibn al-Athīr reports:

> Reynald asked for a priest, whom he named, to carry a message to the men within that they should surrender. When he was brought to him, he whispered to him some instructions that the Muslims did not understand.[110] This priest then went into the castle and the defenders made clear their intention to resist.[111]

---

[108] FC I, XXXI, 1.

[109] Considering that they sent an eccentric hermit with no military experience as their spokesman, perhaps the Frankish delegation was an (intentional) display of weakness—a move to make Kerbogha underestimate his enemy. This approach is argued by Jay Rubenstein in *Armies of Heaven: The First Crusade and the Quest for Apocalypse* (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 216-26.

[110] Ibn Shaddād's account clarifies, "He asked for a priest, with whom, when he appeared, he conversed in his language." Ibn Shaddād, ed. al-Shayyāl, 103; trans. Richards, 96.

[111] Ibn al-Athīr, XII, 27-28; trans. Richard, II, 360-61.

In this instance, Reynald not only used his linguistic skills to extend the negotiations in hopes of receiving reinforcements, he also leveraged the enemy's linguistic ignorance—surrendering in Arabic while giving the command to resist in French. While this is certainly a remarkable story, this is not the only instance in the period where we see negotiators leveraging linguistic competence (and incompetence) in negotiations—often in a last-ditch effort to resist surrender.[112]

Interpreter as Propagandist

On June 28, 1098, the Franks launched a desperate head-on attack against Kerbogha's army surrounding the city. Though vastly outnumbered, the Franks managed a seemingly miraculous victory—which can only be explained by Kerbogha's costly underestimation of the Franks and/or by treachery within his ranks. Whatever the case, the Franks not only renewed hopes that the pilgrimage to Jerusalem would continue, but they secured their grasp on the ancient city of Antioch—a city that would remain in Frankish hands for nearly two centuries (1098-1268). This brings us to the final context where interpreters were needed—in the aftermath of conquest. These occasions are seldom mentioned in the sources but were a regular necessity. Though we have little detail on how Bohemond established rule in Antioch in the days and weeks following the victory against Kerbogha, we do have one account of such a process in nearby Tarsus, which was captured by crusader forces just before the siege of Antioch. Albert of Aachen tells us that, after the fall of Tarsus in September of 1097, Baldwin of Boulogne addressed the people of the city through an interpreter.

---

[112] For example, see Michael the Syrian, *The Syriac Chronicle of Michael Rabo (the Great): A Universal History from the Creation*, trans. Matti Moosa (Teaneck, NJ: Beth Antioch Press, 2014), XV.8, 622.

Why was this important? Because Baldwin was vying for control of the city with a rival and fellow-crusader, Tancred. Baldwin's address to the townspeople through an interpreter was his attempt to win them to his side and turn them against Tancred:

> You should not believe that… this Tancred whom you so respect and fear [is] in any way the greatest and most powerful chief[] of the Christian army… If indeed you obey our will in the matter of throwing down this standard and surrendering the city we shall raise you up above all who live within these boundaries…[113]

The result? Albert reports, "The townspeople and Turks were seduced by this expectation… and they made a treaty and pact of friendship with Baldwin…"[114] If we have seen the interpreter function in different contexts as a courtier, envoy, spy, guide, interrogator, soldier, and negotiator, in this case, we are seeing an interpreter function as a propagandist. In post-conquest Tarsus, Baldwin's appeal to the townspeople was only as persuasive as his interpreter chose to make it. Here the interpreter—whether he was a local Christian or a Frank and whether he was speaking Arabic, Greek, or possibly Armenian—had a great deal of agency, as he was responsible not only to translate the words of Baldwin's appeal but also to convey the righteousness of the cause and the credibility of the speaker. Apparently, he was successful, for the people sided with Baldwin and Tancred was expelled from the city.

This recounting of the siege of Antioch from the perspective of the interpreter is meant to reveal what (and whom) we often miss in conventional accounts of war and diplomacy. Whether functioning as courtiers, envoys, spies, guides, interrogators, soldiers, negotiators, or propagandists, interpreters and translators were crucial in virtually every stage of war and diplomacy in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Sometimes, the extant sources make such retellings difficult if not impossible. But famous episodes, such as the siege of Antioch, provide

---

[113] AA, 3.9, 152-53.
[114] AA, 3.9, 153.

us an opportunity to see the hidden figure of the interpreter at work and reimagine war and

diplomacy in the period with new actors and new contingencies.

The Identity of Interpreter-Envoys in Third Crusade Negotiations, 1191-92

On June 17, 1191, in what would be the final weeks of a two-year Frankish siege of Acre,

Richard I of England requested a face-to-face meeting with Saladin. His request was denied.

Saladin explained to Richard's envoy:

> Kings do not meet unless an agreement has been reached. It is not good for them to fight
> after meeting and eating together. If he wants this, an agreement must be settled before it
> can happen. We must have an interpreter we can trust to act between us, who can make
> each of us understand what the other says. Let the envoy be our mutual interpreter. If we
> come to an agreement, the meeting can happen later, God willing.[115]

On November 8, after a decisive victory at Arsuf and as the Frankish armies neared Jerusalem,

Richard once again requested a face-to-face meeting with Saladin. Once again, he was denied

with a familiar rationale from Saladin: "I do not understand your language and you do not

understand mine. Someone to interpret for us both, one whom you trust and I trust, is essential,

so let that interpreter be an envoy until something is settled…[116]"

In these initial diplomatic exchanges, Saladin insisted that Richard conform to the

customary procedure for diplomatic negotiations in the medieval eastern Mediterranean—

namely that polyglot envoys function as the chief intermediaries between sovereigns.[117] While

Richard was accustomed to diplomatic negotiations occurring between sovereigns face-to-face,

he found that diplomacy worked differently in Syria. Saladin's recommendation to let the

"interpreter [*tarjumān*] be an envoy [*rasūl*]" reminds us of what we saw in the First Crusade with

---

[115] Ibn Shaddād, ed. al-Shayyāl, 163; trans. Richards, 153.
[116] Ibn Shaddād, ed. al-Shayyāl, 201; trans. Richards, 193.
[117] See Friedman, "Peacemaking: Perceptions and Practices in the Medieval Latin East," 238;
and Köhler, *Alliances and Treaties,* 303.

Bohemond's use of the Lombard intermediary between himself and Firuz. After repeatedly being denied an audience with Saladin, Richard finally accepted that diplomatic negotiations with the Ayyubids would have to be conducted through intermediaries. So, he chose his interpreter-envoy carefully.[118] On November 9, Humphrey IV of Toron (1160s – 1190s), a young Syrian-born Frankish noble, was granted an audience with Saladin. As Richard's envoy, he proposed a settlement where Richard and al-ʿĀdil (Saladin's brother) would divide the lands of the Syrian littoral, and Latin priests and monks would manage the Christian holy sites in Jerusalem. In return, Richard would end his military campaign and seal the agreement by offering his sister, Joanne, in marriage to al-ʿĀdil.

To make matters more complicated, Humphrey was not the only Frankish envoy negotiating with Saladin. Earlier that day, Reynald of Sidon (1130s – 1202), a powerful Syrian-born Frankish noble who represented the interests of Conrad of Montferrat, had also been granted an audience with the sultan. As Conrad's envoy, Reynald had attempted to persuade Saladin to negotiate an exclusive peace treaty with Conrad—with the promise, according to Ibn Shaddād, that Conrad and the Franco-Syrian nobility would turn against Richard and "show open hostility" to crusaders from the West.[119] Two days later, Saladin met with the emirs of the region and sought their counsel on the two competing offers.[120] According to Ibn Shaddād, the emirs preferred Richard's offer, so Saladin requested a meeting with Humphrey to discuss further the

---

[118] According to Ibn Shaddād, Richard "fully appreciated its significance and realised that he could only achieve any aim by adapting to what would satisfy the sultan." Ibn Shaddād, ed. al-Shayyāl, 201; trans. Richards, 194.

[119] Ibn Shaddād, ed. al-Shayyāl, 202-04; trans. Richards, 194-95.

[120] Though Ibn Shaddād claims that Saladin took neither Frankish proposal seriously, Saladin's meeting with his emirs and his continued negotiations with both Frankish contingents suggest that he was serious about finding a diplomatic end to the conflict. Considering that it was Ibn Shaddād's goal to boost Saladin's jihad credentials, it should not surprise us that he consistently claims that Saladin's preference was for war, not peace. Ibn Shaddād, ed. al-Shayyāl, 203.

details of a possible marriage between al-ʿĀdil and Richard's sister. At the same time, Reynald continued his negotiations with al-ʿĀdil. Ibn Shaddād writes, "On occasions the lord of Sidon went riding with al-ʿĀdil, observing the Franks as the Muslims engaged them in battle." The effect of these very public negotiations, according to Ibn Shaddād, was that Richard's contingent "redoubled their efforts in search of peace, fearing that the marquis would ally himself with the Muslims…"[121]

Franks as Diplomatic Interpreters

Though these complex negotiations have often been framed as a contest between two brilliant military strategists and negotiators—Saladin and Richard—they were as much about the intermediaries as they were about the rulers. Unable to persuade Saladin to negotiate face-to-face, Richard had to rely on interpreter-envoys to conduct negotiations with the enemy. That Richard and Conrad, both newcomers to the Levant, would have chosen Syrian-born Franks to act as their chief intermediaries with Saladin and al-ʿĀdil is not surprising. However, though moving and mediating between Islamicate and Latinate languages and cultures may seem like a natural role for a Syrian-born Frank, Humphrey and Reynald have long been considered exceptional. Why? Because the common assumption is that very few Franks learned Arabic and that they were typically reliant on local Syrian-Christian interpreters in diplomatic negotiations with Muslims.[122] For example, on Reynald's Arabic skills—much lauded by Ibn Shaddād—one scholar has recently argued, "By drawing attention to Raynald's talents, it is implied that he was

---

[121] Ibn Shaddād, ed. al-Shayyāl, 204; trans. Richards, 196.

[122] See Prawer, *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem,* 369; and Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*, 333. For a more optimistic take on the language situation in the Levant, see Hussein M. Attiya, "Knowledge of Arabic in the Crusader States in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries," *Journal of Medieval History* 25, no. 3 (1999): 203-13.

an exception and that most Franks in the East could not speak the language, at least not fluently."[123]

This line of reasoning echoes an older argument from Joshua Prawer about language-learning among Franks: "A knowledge of Arabic does not seem to have been very common. Not only was there a need for interpreters, but the special attention in the sources, Western and Eastern, to men who spoke Arabic is symptomatic."[124] As a result, according to Carole Hillenbrand, "It seems likely that the Franks used local dragomans (interpreters) for official encounters at a high level with Muslim princes and generals. These dragomans were often local Oriental Christians who must have mastered a number of languages."[125] Following the lead of Prawer and others, scholars who write on Muslim-Frankish diplomacy assume that most of the interpreters in this period were local Christians or perhaps Jews.[126] As evidence for this widely accepted hypothesis, scholars furnish examples of polyglot scribes with Arabic-Christian names found in the extant documentary sources. Additionally, Holt points out that the extant treaties between Muslims and Franks are reckoned according to the *Hijri* and Seleucid eras; and he argues that the use of the latter "suggests that the clerks employed by the Franks were Orthodox Christians or local Jews."[127]

The only problem with this widely accepted thesis is that local Syrian interpreters are very difficult to find in the sources, and when we do occasionally find them, they are usually bilingual Syrian scribes employed in local administration—not high-level diplomacy.[128] On the

---

[123] Lewis, "Medieval Diglossia," 123.
[124] Prawer, *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem,* 522.
[125] Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*, 333.
[126] See Köhler, *Alliances and Treaties* 304; and Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy,* 9.
[127] Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy,* 9.
[128] For examples, see *CGOH* nos. 2925 and 3213. For discussions on the role of indigenous scribes in local administration, see Benjamin Kedar, "The Subjected Muslims of the Frankish Levant," in *Muslims Under Latin Rule, 1100-1300*, ed. James M. Powell

other hand, Franks—especially Syrian-born Franks—frequently appear in the sources as interpreter-envoys in diplomatic contexts. From the extant sources, we can make a few basic observations about the identity of Frankish interpreters in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In the First Crusade and the early decades of Frankish settlement, it seems that Franks from Sicily and southern Italy, like Bohemond's Lombard interpreter-envoy, served as the primary pool of interpreters and translators in the context of war and diplomacy.[129] However, after the middle of the twelfth century, and especially during the Third Crusade, we see a shift to a reliance on Syrian-born Frankish nobles. By the middle of the thirteenth century (perhaps even earlier), we see the work of diplomatic translation shifting to Italian merchants,[130] mendicant missionaries,[131] and members of the military orders.[132]

(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 157-58; and Jonathan Riley-Smith, "Some Lesser Officials in Latin Syria," *The English Historical Review* 87, (1972): 23.

[129] Norman Sicily and southern Italy, with its diverse population of Greek, Arabic, and French speakers, seems to have served as the primary pool of Frankish interpreters in the First Crusade and in early decades of Frankish settlement. Take, for example, Roger of Barneville, a Norman knight from southern Italy who, according to Albert of Aachen, "had gained such renown among those same Turks as a remarkable and famous soldier that he was frequently employed between the Christians and them as a mediator [*internuncius*] in any settlement of prisoners on both sides, or negotiation of any matter." AA, 3.61, 234-35. In the anonymous *Historia Peregrinorum Euntium Jerusolomam*, we find the unique claim that Tancred and Richard of the Principate were Arabic speakers (*qui syriacam linguam sciebant*) and that they were sent by their cousin, Bohemond, to negotiate directly with Kerbogha. See *Historia Peregrinorum Euntium Jerusolomam, RHC Occ III*, LXVII, 198. For more discussion on the question of Tancred's knowledge of Arabic, see Ralph Bailey Yewdale, *Bohemond I, Prince of Antioch* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1924), 38; and more recently, Tuley, "A Century of Communication and Acclimatization," 313, 317.

[130] The role of Italian merchants as translators will be discussed at greater length in Chapter 3, but it seems that as a result of their frequent commercial contacts with Muslims, some Italian merchants did indeed become quite proficient in spoken Arabic. And in some cases, these polyglot merchants were called upon to leverage their language skills in the interest of Frankish diplomacy. See, for example, Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, 149.

[131] In a time of burgeoning missionary fervor among Dominicans and Franciscans in the thirteenth century, many missionary monks learned Arabic (and other non-European languages) in order to preach to the infidel beyond the borders of Christendom, and at times they were called upon to used their linguistic skills in diplomacy. For example,

While it is entirely possible that the apparent prevalence of Frankish (and to a lesser extent Muslim) interpreters in the extant sources is an optical illusion and simply reflects the fact that we are relying on Latin Christian and Muslim sources, it is still worth revisiting the question and asking how exceptional Syrian-born Frankish interpreters were. What are we to make of their apparent prominence in Muslim-Frankish diplomacy in the latter half of the twelfth century? Using Humphrey and Reynald as test cases, I will explore three related questions. First, why were Humphrey and Reynald chosen as Richard's and Conrad's chief interpreters and diplomatic envoys in the Third Crusade? Second, is there "special attention" in the sources to their linguistic skills which would suggest that they were exceptional figures in the period? Third, were they really that exceptional historically?

Why Humphrey and Reynald?

Concerning the first question, it is clear that Humphrey's and Reynald's roles as interpreters were in part contingent on their knowledge of Arabic. However, it is also clear that neither figure was chosen *merely* for his linguistic skills. In fact, as members of two of the most prominent and powerful baronial families in the Frankish Levant—the Lords of Toron and the Lords of Sidon—Humphrey and (especially) Reynald would probably have been involved in

---

during the Seventh Crusade, Joinville writes of Yves le Breton, "a friar of the Dominican order who knew the Saracen language," who functioned as one of Louis IX's chief envoys to both the sultan of Damascus and the Old Man of the Mountain. See Joinville, ed. de Wailly, 444-45, 458-63; trans. Smith, 254-55, 258-59. For more on Catholic missions to Muslims during the crusader period, see Benjamin Z. Kedar, *Crusade and Mission: European Approaches Toward the Muslims* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984).

[132] In the thirteenth century, we find several instances where members of the military orders functioned as interpreters in diplomatic negotiations. For example, Joinville writes of negotiations between Louis and envoys from the Old Man of the Mountain, where the Master of the Hospital and the Master of the Temple sat on either side of the king and served as his interpreters. See Joinville, ed. de Wailly, 454-55.

Third Crusade diplomatic negotiations whether or not they knew Arabic. Considering the

intrigues and factions within the Frankish contingent in the 1180s and 1190s, one might say that

Humphrey's and Reynald's involvement in the negotiations with Saladin had less to do with their

linguistic skills and more to do with their personal and political stakes in the Third Crusade.

The conflict between Humphrey and Reynald was rooted in the succession crisis of the

Kingdom of Jerusalem.[133] On the untimely deaths of Baldwin IV in 1185 and Baldwin V in

1186, many prominent nobles (including Reynald of Sidon) attempted to crown Humphrey king,

for he was married to Baldwin IV's younger sister, Isabelle. Surprisingly, Humphrey refused the

crown and supported the claims of Guy of Lusignan, who was married to Isabelle's half-sister,

Sybilla. In 1190, the same barons who had attempted to crown him king (led by Balian of Ibelin

and Reynald of Sidon) forced Humphrey to divorce Isabelle—so that she might be married to

Conrad of Montferrat, who the barons believed would provide a more suitable contender for the

throne.

It is in this context that we have to consider Humphrey's and Reynald's roles as

competing Frankish negotiators with the Ayyubids in the early 1190s. Neither Humphrey nor

Reynald was a disinterested actor, nor were they employed as interpreters merely because they

spoke Arabic. On the contrary, they were both deeply implicated in the local politics of the

Frankish Levant, something that in turn affected the international politics of the Third Crusade.

Reynald, who had supported the kingship of Conrad from the beginning, was invested in

negotiating a settlement with Saladin that would secure Conrad's rights to the throne. Humphrey,

on the other hand, who had lost his wife to Conrad and been betrayed by the Franco-Syrian

---

[133] The complex local politics are outlined in great detail in Jonathan Riley-Smith's *The Feudal Nobility and the Kingdom of Jerusalem, 1174-1277* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1973), 101-120.

nobility, was in need of new allies. Therefore, when Richard arrived in 1191, Humphrey offered

his services (and linguistic skills) to the foreign monarch.

"Special Attention" in the Sources?

If their deep involvement in the politics of the period provides a compelling rationale for

why Humphrey and Reynald served as interpreter-envoys in the Third Crusade (which

deemphasizes the importance of their language skills), there is still the question of the supposed

emphasis in the sources. Do the sources give "special attention" to Humphrey's and Reynald's

linguistic skills? The short answer is no. First, consider Humphrey. As a prominent noble, both

politically and personally involved in the succession crisis of the 1180s and 1190s, Humphrey

appears frequently in the chronicle of William of Tyre and his various continuators. And yet

none of these works mentions Humphrey's linguistic skills or his role as an interpreter for

Richard in the Third Crusade. What's more, neither the *Itinerarium Peregrinorum* nor

Ambroise's *Estoire de la Guerre Sainte*, which both recount the Third Crusade from the

perspective of Richard's faction, mentions Humphrey's role as an interpreter and diplomatic

envoy for Richard. The primary interest of these sources in reference to Humphrey is the

attempted coronation in 1186 and the forced divorce in 1190.[134]

The same observation can be made about Reynald of Sidon—namely that the relevant

Western sources make no mention of Reynald's role as an interpreter in the Third Crusade. The

Itinerarium Peregrinorum and Ambroise do mention Reynald's role as Conrad's envoy to

Saladin, but neither source explicitly mentions Reynald's language skills or his role as a

---

[134] See *La Continuation de Guillaume de Tyr (1184-1197)*, ed. Margaret Ruth Morgan (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1982), 34, 105-106; and IP 1:46, 1:63.

linguistic intermediary.[135] Reynald is discussed in these pro-Richard chronicles not as an exceptionally gifted linguist but rather as an exceptionally treacherous negotiator.

Our knowledge of both Humphrey's and Reynald's language skills comes solely from Arabic sources, and even there, it is difficult to argue that these sources make much of these Franco-Syrian polyglots. For example, Humphrey is mentioned seven times in Ibn Shaddād, with all but one instance referring to his role as Richard's interpreter and envoy.[136] In these passages, Ibn Shaddād places no emphasis on Humphrey's linguistic skills that would suggest he was an exceptional figure. He is mentioned straightforwardly as an interpreter-envoy for Richard with no further comment: "During this day al-ʿĀdil met with the accursed king of England and the son of Humphrey acted as their interpreter [*tarjumān*]."[137] And "The evening of this same day the king of England's envoy [*rasūl*] arrived, namely, the son of Humphrey, one of their nobles…"[138] If anything, Humphrey is exceptional and worth naming not because of his Arabic skills but because of his status as a prominent Frankish noble.[139] Humphrey also makes several appearances in ʿImād ad-Dīn's chronicle. Just one passage briefly mentions his role as Richard's

---

[135] See IP 5:26; and Ambroise, *The History of the Holy War: Ambroise's Estoire De La Guerre Sainte*, ed. Marianne Ailes (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003), lns. 8690-93. Henceforth, references to Ambroise's text will be abbreviated "Ambroise" followed by the page or line number.

[136] Ibn Shaddād, ed. al-Shayyāl, 77, 182, 187, 202, 204, 205, 234; trans. Richards, 74, 173, 179, 194, 196, 198, 231.

[137] Ibn Shaddād, ed. al-Shayyāl, 182; trans. Richards, 173. Here Humphrey IV is referred to as the "son of Humphrey" [*ibn Humfrī*] because his father and grandfather were both named Humphrey.

[138] Ibn Shaddād, ed. al-Shayyāl, 202; trans. Richards, 194.

[139] Ibn Shaddād's perception of his prominence as a Frankish noble certainly stemmed from the reputation of his grandfather, Humphrey II, who also had close dealings with Saladin as the constable of Jerusalem.

interpreter, while the rest are concerned with his capture and release in 1187 and his marriage woes in 1190.[140]

Though Reynald receives more attention in the Arabic sources than Humphrey, presumably due to his complex relationship with Saladin, it is still questionable whether the treatment suggests that he was exceptional in his knowledge of Arabic. For example, though Ibn al-Athīr and 'Imād ad-Dīn mention Reynald's role in negotiations with Saladin (a role that implied a knowledge of Arabic) only Ibn Shaddād's account explicitly claims that Reynald spoke Arabic.[141] Ibn Shaddād writes of Reynald, "He was one of the Frankish nobles and one of their wise heads who knew Arabic and had some familiarity with histories and Hadith collections. I heard that he kept a Muslim who read to him and explained things… He was an excellent conversationalist and cultured in his talk."[142] Here, Ibn Shaddād refers to Reynald as one Frankish noble—among others like Humphrey—who knew Arabic. Though he is clearly impressed with Reynald's Arabic skills, what Ibn Shaddād finds exceptional is the Frankish baron's apparent interest in Islam and his familiarity with Hadith collections and Islamic history. Ibn Shaddād's praise of Reynald should be situated within the context of the other Arabic chronicles that mention Reynald's role as an envoy with no further commentary. These Arabic sources should be considered along with the Latin and Old French sources that make no comment on Reynald's Arabic skills or his role as an interpreter-envoy. If anything, what is noteworthy about Humphrey and Reynald is what *little* attention the sources—Eastern and

---

[140] On his work as an interpreter, see 'Imād ad-Dīn, *Conquête de la Syrie et de la Palestine par Ṣalâh ed-dîn*, ed. Carlo Landberg (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1888). In French translation, see *Conquête de la Syrie (Al-fatḥ al-qussī fī l-fatḥ al-qudsī)*, trans. Henri Massé (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1972), 340; for other mentions, see 27, 31, 97, 105-107, 304-305. Henceforth, references to 'Imād ad-Dīn's chronicle will be abbreviated "'Imād ad-Dīn" with the page number from Landberg's edition followed by (if necessary) the page number from Massé's translation.

[141] See 'Imād ad-Dīn, trans. Massé, 159-162; and Ibn al-Athīr, XII, 27-28.

[142] Ibn Shaddād, ed. al-Shayyāl, 97-98; trans. Richards, 90-91.

Western—give to their remarkable linguistic skills and their role as diplomatic interpreters in the late twelfth century.

How Exceptional were Humphrey and Reynald?

If Humphrey and Reynald, contrary to Prawer's claims, were rather unexceptional historiographically, how exceptional were they historically—as Syrian-born Franks who spoke Arabic and functioned as diplomatic interpreters? It is clear that interpreters—regardless of ethnicity or religion—are always exceptional historical figures. The ability to move between and mediate languages and cultures is rare in any society—even those in which functional bilingualism may have been commonplace. In this sense, Reynald and Humphrey (and the other interpreters discussed in this chapter) are exceptional figures. However, when most scholars label Reynald and Humphrey "exceptional," they are referring to the fact that they were *Frankish* translators; for it is widely assumed that Franks didn't (and couldn't) do this kind of work. It is this claim of exceptionalism that I am challenging here. One comprehensive way of answering this question might be to compile a prosopographical database of Frankish interpreters mentioned in the narrative sources—both Latin/French and Arabic. Such a database could be helpful, but at best, it would provide a thin sample of the actual pool of diplomatic interpreters in the period. Perhaps a "thicker" and more focused way to address this question is to look at the family trees of the lords of Toron and Sidon to see how exceptional Humphrey and Reynald were in their own families.

Though we know little about Humphrey's father, Humphrey III (who appears to have died relatively young), we do have sources on Humphrey's grandfather, Humphrey II (1117-

1179). As the constable of the Kingdom of Jerusalem for nearly three decades (1152/3-1179),[143] Humphrey II was frequently involved in diplomatic negotiations with Muslims. William of Tyre writes of an interesting encounter on the battlefield in 1150 when Humphrey engaged in *ad hoc* negotiations with the envoy of a "very powerful Turkish noble who was bound to the constable in a fraternal alliance [*fraterno foedere junctus erat*]."[144] If William's portrayal of the exchange (which likely came from Humphrey's report) is at all accurate, then it seems that this battlefield exchange was unmediated and probably took place in Arabic (or possibly Turkish). In 1175, Humphrey was also involved in negotiating a truce between Raymond of Tripoli and Saladin. Looking back on these negotiations several years later, William recognized that allowing Saladin to unite Syria and Egypt would ultimately prove detrimental for the Franks, and he blamed the negotiator (Humphrey) who was "too closely associated in the bonds of friendship with Saladin."[145] Though William never explicitly claims that Humphrey II was an Arabic speaker, Humphrey's frequent role as a mediator in diplomatic negotiations with Muslims neatly fits the mold of the interpreter-envoy described by Ibn Shaddād and exemplified by Humphrey's grandson several decades later.[146] One might wonder if Richard selected young Humphrey IV as an envoy to Saladin in part because of his grandfather's ties with the sultan.

---

[143] For more on the grand officers of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, see John La Monte, *Feudal Monarchy in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, 1100 to 1291* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1932), 114-18, 252-53.

[144] WT XVII, 17 [II, 211-12].

[145] WT XXI, 8 [II, 410].

[146] One curious piece of evidence that further links Humphrey II with Saladin is found in the *Itinerarium Peregrinorum*, which claims that in his youth Saladin "went as a candidate for knighthood to Enrid [Humphrey II of Toron, or Tibnin]… and received a belt of knighthood from him in accordance with the rite of the Franks." IP 1:27 [27]. This fantastic and unsupported claim, which is given little credence by Saladin's modern biographers, may tell us more about Humphrey than it does about Saladin, namely, that decades after his death, Humphrey II was widely-known as the kind of Frankish noble who might enlist a Kurdish-Muslim warrior in his retinue.

In Reynald's family, at least two other family members also functioned as interpreter-envoys. In 1167, Reynald's cousin, Hugh of Caesarea (1130s-1168/74), was sent by King Amaury to the Fatimid caliph in order to renew a treaty. One of the most striking aspects of this diplomatic exchange was that Hugh, negotiating from a position of strength in 1167, convinced the caliph to ratify the treaty by extending his bare hand (a gesture of peacemaking that was decidedly Western and scandalously foreign to the Muslim caliph and his court).[147] As seems to have been his habit, William makes no explicit comment about Hugh's linguistic abilities, but judging from his account of the negotiations, it appears that Hugh was very likely an able Arabic speaker whose negotiations with the Fatimids were unmediated by an auxiliary interpreter.[148] Hugh's linguistic abilities are further confirmed by the fact that when he was in captivity with the Muslims later that year, he was enlisted by his captors to negotiate on their behalf with the Franks.[149] If Hugh had not died an untimely death in the early 1170s, it seems likely that he would also have been involved in the diplomatic negotiations of the Third Crusade alongside his

---

[147] For more on this incident see Yvonne Friedman, "Gestures of Conciliation: Peacemaking Endeavors in the Latin East," in *In Laudem Hierosolymitani: Studies in Crusades and Medieval Culture in Honour of Benjamin Z. Kedar*, eds. Iris Shagrir, Ronnie Ellenblum, and Jonathan Riley-Smith (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 36-38.

[148] There are two clues in the account which suggest that Hugh's conversation may have been in Arabic and unmediated by an interpreter. The first clue is the "consternation of the Egyptians" at court with the bold negotiations of Hugh, for they were "amazed that anyone should talk so freely with their supreme lord…" This mention of Hugh talking "freely" with the caliph does not necessarily mean that Hugh wasn't conversing through an interpreter; however, it seems less likely that negotiations mediated by an interpreter would be described in this way. The second clue comes from William's intriguing description of the diplomatic oath which was dictated by Hugh and repeated by the caliph "almost syllable by syllable." If, in fact, the caliph was repeating Hugh's words, syllable by syllable, this would suggest that at the very least the moment of oath-taking (and perhaps the entire conversation) was unmediated by an interpreter. See WT XIX, 19 [II, 321]. For a similar assessment of Hugh's linguistic abilities, see Tuley, "A Century of Communication and Acclimatization," 327; and Yvonne Friedman, *Encounter between Enemies: Captivity and Ransom in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 118.

[149] WT XIX, 29 [II, 339-40].

cousin, Reynald. This line of Syrian-born Frankish nobles who were deeply involved in

diplomacy with Muslims did not stop with Hugh and Reynald. In the early thirteenth century,

Reynald's son, Balian of Sidon, functioned as Frederick II's chief envoy to al-Kāmil and played

a crucial role in crafting the Treaty of Jaffa in 1229.[150]

A similar lineage of diplomatic interpreters can be traced for the powerful Ibelin family

as well. Though the evidence is less clear, it appears that Balian of Ibelin (c. 1143-93), a

contemporary and ally of Reynald, was also an Arabic speaker who employed his linguistic skills

in diplomatic negotiations with Muslim sovereigns.[151] We know, for example, that Balian

personally negotiated the surrender of Jerusalem to Saladin in 1187 (apparently without the use

of an interpreter), and that he was involved (along with Humphrey) in negotiating the Treaty of

Jaffa in 1192.[152] We also know from Joinville that Balian's grandson, Baldwin of Ibelin (d.

1267), "knew the Saracen language well" and interpreted for Joinville when he was a fellow

captive in Egypt during Louis IX's crusade.[153] Thus, it does not seem that the lords of Toron and

Sidon were exceptional in producing multiple generations of Arabic-speaking Frankish nobles.

More importantly, Humphrey and Reynald (and even Balian) were by no means isolated cases of

interpreter-envoys. In their own family trees, we find grandfathers, cousins, sons, and grandsons

fulfilling similar diplomatic roles throughout the (late) twelfth and (early) thirteenth centuries.

Contrary to current assumptions about language learning among the Franks in Syria, our

evidence suggests that at least for the Frankish ruling elite, knowledge of Arabic was by no

---

[150] Eracles, *RHC Occ. II*, 111; see also Thomas C. Van Cleve, "The Crusade of Frederick II," in *A History of the Crusades, Volume 2: The Later Crusades, 1189-1311*, eds. Harry W. Hazard, Kenneth Meyer Setton, and Robert Lee Wolff (London, 1969), 453-54.

[151] Köhler places Balian of Ibelin in company with Reynald of Sidon and Humphrey IV of Toron as Arabic-speaking Franks employed as envoys and interpreters. See Köhler, *Alliances and Treaties,* 303.

[152] Ibn al-Athīr, XI, 548-49; Ibn Shaddād, ed. al-Shayyāl, 234.

[153] Joinville, ed. de Wailly, LXX, 354; trans. Smith, 233.

means exceptional. In fact, it may have been essential for several generations of Syrian-born nobles whose enemies were also their close neighbors.

Language Learning among the Franks

How did Frankish settlers (especially those of the second and third generations) learn Arabic (and possibly Turkish)? Though we know very little about language learning in the period, two modes of contact stand out as likely sites of language learning: cohabitation and captivity. We know, for example, that a number of Frankish settlers intermarried with local Christians and Muslim converts.[154] At least some of these Franks learned the language of their spouses. But perhaps more importantly, some of the children of these mixed marriages learned both their mother's and their father's tongues. We have no concrete evidence of interpreters coming from mixed Franco-Syrian families, but contemporary Byzantine sources offer evidence of interpreters coming from Greco-Turkish families.[155]

Captivity was another site of language learning that produced diplomatic interpreters. Taken from their homes in raids or captured in war, captives were forced to live in a foreign land among people of a foreign tongue for months, even years, at a time. In a region where warfare was constant and captives were regularly used as bargaining chips in diplomacy, thousands of Frankish and Muslim captives spent lengthy periods living with the enemy—enough time for at least some to learn the language. Some (usually high-ranking nobles) were ransomed. Others were exchanged. And many became slaves. The population of Frankish captives in Arab hands

---

[154] Fulcher of Chartres famously claims, "Some [Franks] have taken wives not merely of their own people, but Syrians, or Armenians, or even Saracens who have received the grace of Baptism." FC III, XXXVII.5; trans. Ryan and Fink, 271-72. On this topic, see Natasha Hodgson, "Conflict and Cohabitation: Marriage and diplomacy between Latins and Cilician Armenians, c. 1097-1253," in *The Crusades and the Near East: Cultural Histories*, ed. Conor Kostick (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011).

[155] See *Alexiad*, trans. Dawes, XI.II, 274.

grew in the second half of the twelfth century, as the jihad against the Franks gained momentum

with the successful conquests of Saladin in the 1170s and 1180s. Frankish captivity reached a

peak in 1187 at the Battle of Hattin when Saladin captured nearly the entire Frankish army and

numerous Frankish nobles, including Humphrey of Toron. It is difficult to estimate the number

of Franks captured at Hattin, as Muslim sources offer substantially larger numbers than Latin

sources. However, even if the lowest number found in the narrative sources—12,000—is an

exaggeration, this figure still suggests an unprecedented number of Frankish captives in the

hands of Muslim rulers.[156]

The difficulty with this attractive theory of the captive-turned-interpreter, which has been

argued persuasively by Yvonne Friedman, is that we have a very small number of concrete

examples of interpreters who acquired linguistic skills in captivity. If we look to Byzantium,

more such figures emerge. For example, during the First Crusade, we find a Byzantine

interpreter named Rhodomerus "who had once been captured by the Turks and dwelt sometime

with them, [and] was likewise not ignorant of their language."[157] In the 1160s, we find an

interpreter, named Aaron Isaakios of Corinth "who had mastered the Latin tongue when he was

carried off captive to Sicily."[158]

What was unique about polyglot captives is that they could be used as interpreters by

their coreligionists after their ransom, or by their captors while in captivity. This seems to have

been the case with Arnulf of Turbessel, who in 1167, as a captive of the Fatimids, was sent to

Jerusalem to negotiate a treaty with the Franks. Arnulf's language skills are not discussed

---

[156] 'Imād ad-Dīn estimates 100,000, while Latin sources say 12,000. So large was the number of Frankish prisoners entering the slave market, one Muslim chronicler observes, that the price for slaves in Syria plummeted in the years after Hattin. See Friedman, *Encounter Between Enemies*, 44, 86 n. 59.

[157] *Alexiad*, trans. Dawes XI.II, 274.

[158] Niketas Choniates, *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniatēs*, trans. Harry J. Magoulias (Detroit, Mich: Wayne State University Press, 1984), 83.

explicitly in the sources, but Yvonne Friedman suspects that Arnulf was one of many Frankish nobles who learned the language of the enemy in captivity.[159] Captivity was a common experience for many Frankish nobles. For example, Bohemond I of Antioch spent three years in captivity in Seljuk Anatolia (1100-03); Baldwin II of Jerusalem had two stints in Muslim captivity, one for five years (1104-08) and another for 16 months (1123-24); Raymond III of Tripoli was held captive in Aleppo for nine years (1164-73); and Reynald of Chatillon was in Aleppan captivity for fifteen years (1161-76). While the conditions of their captivity are unknown, certainly some (if not all) of these nobles learned at least some Arabic (and/or Turkish). Nonetheless, for all of the years these Frankish nobles spent in captivity, we have no explicit evidence that any of them learned Arabic in captivity and used their linguistic skills in diplomacy—with one possible exception.

This brings us back to Humphrey IV and the question of language—namely, where and when did he learn Arabic? Could he have learned the language in his season of captivity after Hattin? While this theory is attractive, his time in captivity was relatively short, just under two years (July 1187 – May 1189), and the circumstances of his captivity are unclear from the sources. Humphrey was quite young (probably in his mid-twenties)[160] when called upon by Richard in 1191 to be his envoy to Saladin, so it is difficult to imagine that Humphrey's brief time in captivity could have adequately prepared him for his role as a skilled diplomatic interpreter. Though our knowledge of Humphrey's childhood and adolescence is limited, we can identify several opportunities for Humphrey to have learned (or at least have been exposed to) Arabic before his captivity in 1187. The lordship of Toron, situated in the mountains of southern

---

[159] Friedman, *Encounter Between Enemies*, 118.

[160] We do not know Humphrey's exact date of birth, but we do know that when he was betrothed to Isabella in 1180 he was probably a young teenager since William of Tyre observes that "young Humphrey… had now reached man's estate." WT XXII, 5 [II, 451-52].

Lebanon between Damascus and Tyre, was on the frontier of Latin and Muslim Syria. According to Ibn Jubayr, who traveled through the region in the early 1180s, merchant caravans traveling from Damascus to Tyre customarily stopped at the fortress of Toron (*Tibnīn*) to pay taxes. Additionally, as a frontier zone, much of the cultivable land was held as a condominium (AR: *munāṣafa*), which meant that the lords of Toron were in frequent contact with their Muslim neighbors with whom they divided the produce of their borderlands.[161]

While the inevitable contact between the lords of Toron and their Muslim neighbors does not make language learning inevitable, it is clear that the milieu in which Humphrey grew up was one where Muslims and Franks were in close proximity. Caffaro of Genoa recounts an interesting story from the same frontier region a generation earlier (1140) . In the story, the Muslim lord of Margat and Renaud le Mazoir, the Frankish lord of (neighboring) Banyas,[162] struck a truce—and developed a friendship. The lord of Margat would visit Renaud in Banyas and the two would go to the public bath, walk in the gardens outside the city, and engage in drinking bouts.[163] Whether this Renaud and the lord of Margat learned each other's language is unclear. But one can imagine social interactions like these between neighboring lords as a plausible context for Humphrey not only to have learned Arabic in his teens or early twenties but also to have learned the procedures and protocols of Muslim courts.

---

[161] Ibn Jubayr, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr,* eds. William Wright and M.J. de Goeje (Leiden: Brill, 1907), 301. For English translation, see *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, trans. Roland Broadhurst (New Delhi: Goodword Books, 2001) 317-18. Henceforth, all references to Ibn Jubayr's travelogue will be abbreviated "Ibn Jubayr" followed by the page number from the Wright edition and (when necessary) the page number from the Broadhurst translation.

[162] Banyas was in the same frontier region as Toron and by the late 1170s was held by the lords of Toron. See WT XXII, 5.

[163] Caffaro, *De liberatione civitatum Orientis*, *RHC Occ.* V, 67. In English translation, *Caffaro, Genoa and the Twelfth-Century Crusades*, trans. Martin Hall and Jonathan Phillips (Routledge: London, 2016), 115.

In the case of Reynald, it is possible that he learned the language from his Arabic-speaking employees. In an Old French continuation of William of Tyre, there is a story about an Arabic scribe in Reynald's entourage named Belheis who betrayed Reynald and helped Saladin capture Shaqīf Arnun in 1189.[164] Ibn Shaddād does not mention Belheis by name in his account of Saladin's siege of Shaqīf Arnun, but, as we saw earlier, he does remark that Reynald employed a Muslim who read to him Hadith and other Arabic texts.[165] Whether or not this individual mentioned by Ibn Shaddād and Belheis are the same person, it is clear that Reynald had literate Arabic speakers in his household who could have tutored him in Arabic. Though he had been betrayed by Belheis, Reynald apparently continued to keep local Arabic speakers in his entourage. Ibn Shaddād reports that during the negotiations of 1192, Reynald sent his servant [*ghulām*] Yusuf as his envoy to Saladin.[166] It is unclear if Yusuf was a Muslim or a local Christian, but he must have been a trusted member of Reynald's entourage to have been sent on such an important diplomatic mission. While employing locals in his entourage does not necessarily mean that Reynald learned Arabic from them, this practice put Reynald in close proximity with Arabic speakers, who, if they didn't teach him, may have helped him hone his Arabic skills.

Muslims as Diplomatic Interpreters

After a winter of back-and-forth negotiations (and little fighting), al-ʿĀdil wrote to Saladin in Jerusalem in March 1192 informing him of recent developments that he had learned about during a meeting with Humphrey. Also present at the meeting was al-ʿĀdil's chamberlain (*ḥājib*), Abu Bakr al-ʿĀdili. Though Humphrey spoke with al-ʿĀdil on behalf of Richard, it was

---

[164] Eracles*, RHC Occ. II*, 111.
[165] Ibn Shaddād, ed. al-Shayyāl, 97.
[166] Ibn Shaddād, ed. al-Shayyāl, 206-08.

Abu Bakr who had negotiated the new settlement with Richard: that both parties would keep the lands they presently held and that the Muslims would keep the Dome of the Rock while Jerusalem would be shared.[167] Though Ibn Shaddād does not explicitly state that Abu Bakr knew French, his role as al-ʿĀdil's envoy to Richard mirrors that of Humphrey and Reynald in their diplomatic missions to al-ʿĀdil and Saladin. Like his Frankish counterparts, Abu Bakr was probably a polyglot envoy sent by al-ʿĀdil to negotiate on his behalf with Richard.[168] After months of negotiations, Abu Bakr had developed a friendly relationship with Richard similar to that of Humphrey and Saladin. For example, when Richard sought for a renewal of the peace talks with Saladin a few months later, he asked specifically for Abu Bakr, "with whom he was on very friendly terms." Ibn Shaddād also notes that Abu Bakr, though sometimes traveling with a larger entourage, claimed to have had a "private talk" with Richard in the course of their back-and-forth negotiations at the close of the Third Crusade.[169] Of course, an unnamed interpreter could have been present for those private talks between Richard and Abu Bakr, but this would have been a departure from the normal diplomatic practice in the period in which envoys effectively functioned as their own interpreters.

Another key member of al-ʿĀdil's entourage who had close dealings with Richard and seems to have functioned as an interpreter-envoy was al-ʿĀdil's secretary [*kātib*], al-Ṣanīʿat ibn al-Naḥḥāl. Like Abu Bakr, al-Ṣanīʿat was sent as an envoy to Richard to discuss, among other

---

[167] Ibn Shaddād, ed. al-Shayyāl, 205-06.

[168] Both Friedman and Köhler argue that the procedure described by Ibn Shaddād was the dominant model for diplomatic negotiations in the medieval eastern Mediterranean; and it is this model that we see operating in negotiations between Richard and Saladin in 1191-92. See Friedman, "Peacemaking: Perceptions and Practices in the Medieval Latin East," 238; and Köhler, *Alliances and Treaties*, 303.

[169] The Arabic literally says that Abu Bakr was "alone with" [*infirād bihī*] Richard when he reportedly made his counter proposal for Saladin. Ibn Shaddād, ed. al-Shayyāl, 231-32; trans. Richards, 228.

things, the proposed marriage between al-'Ādil and Richard's sister.[170] While we know little

about al-Ṣanī'at beyond his role as al-'Ādil's secretary [*kātib*] and envoy [*rasūl*], we do learn

from Ibn al-'Adīm that al-Ṣanī'at was a recent convert (from Christianity) who had joined al-

'Ādil's court during his time as governor of Aleppo (1183-86).[171] Though it is reasonable to

imagine that every Muslim ruler who had frequent diplomatic interaction with the Franks in the

crusader period must have employed a small pool of highly trusted and highly skilled interpreter-

envoys, it is quite unusual to uncover the identity of two such individuals in the same court. The

fact that both of these diplomatic interpreters were Muslims once again forces us to confront the

question of identity and the common assumption that local Christians were the primary labor

force in diplomatic translation. While it is not insignificant that al-Ṣanī'at had been a Syrian

Christian prior to his conversion to Islam, we may wonder what role his conversion played in

earning the trust of al-'Ādil. It is possible that his conversion was inconsequential to his

promotion, but one might also argue that al-Ṣanī'at's conversion likely opened up his career

opportunities in al-'Ādil's court—first in Aleppo, then in greater Syria during the Third

Crusade.[172]

---

[170] Ibn Shaddād, ed. al-Shayyāl, 193, 196; trans. Richards, 185, 188. See also 'Imād ad-Dīn*, trans. Massé, 353.

[171] See Ibn-al-'Adīm. *Zubdat al-ḥalab min ta'rīḫ Ḥalab,* vol. 3, ed. S. Dahan (Damascus: Inst. Français de Damas, 1968), 75.

[172] Another interesting question raised by al-Ṣanī'at is that of literacy. As a secretary [*kātib*], he would have been tasked with drafting diplomatic correspondence. Should we imagine that al-Ṣanī'at was not only fluent in French but literate in Latin and was tasked with drafting diplomatic correspondence for Richard during the Third Crusade negotiations? It is difficult to come to any firm conclusions based on the available evidence; however, even if it turns out that al-Ṣanī'at was not literate in Latin, someone else in al-'Ādil's entourage must have been.

If the prevailing scholarly skepticism about language-learning among Muslims in the crusader period pushes us to see Abu Bakr and al-Ṣanīʿat as exceptional figures,[173] the existing evidence does not. While there is a great deal more evidence for Franks learning Arabic than there is for Muslims learning French, it is striking that the evidence for Muslims learning "Frankish" is more substantial than our evidence of local Christians doing so. In the latter stages of the First Crusade and in the early decades of Frankish settlement, Muslim converts seem to have played an important role as diplomatic interpreters. For example, Raymond d'Aguilers mentions the diplomatic role of "Bohemond the Turk" in negotiations with Ascalon in 1099. He comments that Raymond of Toulouse sent Bohemond on this crucial mission because "although a Turk, [he] was multilingual, clever and shrewd as well as loyal to us."[174]

Although Muslim converts (limited as they probably were) offered valuable linguistic expertise in diplomatic negotiations with Muslim sovereigns, their roles as intermediaries between their new coreligionists and their former coreligionists were not always unproblematic. Take, for example, Baldwin, a Muslim convert who served Baldwin I of Jerusalem as "a trusted retainer, practically his valet de chambre." Though William of Tyre is not explicit about Baldwin the convert's role in King Baldwin's court, it is plausible (perhaps likely) that the new convert served as an interpreter when Muslim sovereigns or their envoys visited Baldwin at court. This trusted courtier's involvement in diplomatic contacts with Muslim rulers is further suggested

---

[173] This dominant perspective can be summarized by Hillenbrand: "The Islamic sources suggest that very few Muslims were concerned to learn the languages of the Crusaders. In fact, although there is some awareness of their ethnic diversity on the part of the Muslim chroniclers… there seems to be no perception that there was more than one 'Frankish language.'" Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*, 331.

[174] He received the Latin Christian name, Bohemond, Raymond explains, because it was Bohemond of Taranto who "received him at the baptismal font when he turned apostate and came to us." See Raymond d'Aguilers, *Historia Francorum qui ceperint Jerusalem*, *RHC Occ.* III. In English translation, *Historia Francorum qui ceperint Jerusalem*, trans. J.H. Hill and L.L. Hill (Philadelphia, 1968) XV, 135.

when William of Tyre notes that Baldwin was contacted secretly by envoys from Sidon who persuaded him to participate in a plot to assassinate King Baldwin (who in 1111 was attempting to capture Sidon from the Muslims). Though the plot was foiled, according to William of Tyre, the threat of treachery of recent converts made their employment as interpreters risky if sometimes necessary, especially in the early period of Frankish settlement.

By the mid-twelfth century, we begin to find Muslim soldiers with a knowledge of Frankish. For example, Ibn al-Qalanisi writes about a Fatimid naval officer in 1155 who "selected a company of seaman who spoke the Frankish tongue, dressed them in Frankish dress, and sent them forth on a number of vessels belonging to the fleet."[175] What is interesting about this particular use of polyglot sailors in war and diplomacy is that the same strategy resurfaces in the Third Crusade when Saladin sends a boat of polyglot sailors into the port of Acre to aid the Muslims who were under siege. The author of the *Itinerarium Peregrinorum* writes, "Equipped with Christian symbols and imitating Christians' speech, they mingled with our ships; then suddenly and unexpectedly slipped into the city."[176] While captivity may be the best explanation for Muslim soldiers learning French in this period, we do have one interesting case of a Syrian-Muslim soldier from *Hisn al-Akrad* (Crac des Chevaliers), who, according to Ibn al-Athīr, spent most of his military career fighting (and perhaps translating?) for Frankish armies. Presumably, he learned at least one European language in the process. Ibn al-Athīr even mentions that this exceptional (though unnamed) figure traveled to Byzantium and Rome.[177]

---

[175] Ibn al-Qalanisi, *Dhayl tarikh Dimishq*, 332; trans Gibb, 323.

[176] IP 1.41 [97]. Not long after Acre, Saladin attempted a similar ruse where an Ayyubid naval ship, supplied with at least one French-interpeter, attempted to pass as a Genoese ship; however, in this case the ruse was discovered by the Franks. IP 2.42 [196-97]; see also Ambroise, lns. 2187-88.

[177] Ibn al-Athīr, XII, 32-33; trans. Richards II, 364.

Perhaps the most legendary group of Muslims in the crusader period who excelled in the tongue of the Franks were the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs, known in the West as the Assassins. The Assassins were behind the assassination of Conrad of Monferrat in 1192 when two of their number infiltrated the inner circle of Conrad by pretending to convert to Christianity and apparently taking monastic vows. There are a variety of accounts—both Western and Eastern—of this (in)famous event, as well as a variety of debates about the instigator(s) of the assassination plot. However, what is interesting for our purposes is the unambiguous fact that these two assassins knew the Frankish tongue. It is unclear whether they learned the language during their six months under cover—or if they learned it beforehand, as one Ismāʿīlī source claims.[178] But we do know that the Assassins had a reputation for learning languages and employing their linguistic skills to maximum effect in war and diplomacy. For example, the author of the *Itinerarium Peregrinorum* claims, "It is the hereditary practice of the Old Man of the Mountain to bring up a great many noble boys in his palace to serve him. He has taught them all wisdom and knowledge and various languages, so that they can deal on familiar terms with every race and in any land without an interpreter."[179]

This remarkable and seemingly spectacular claim is worth examining. According to Farhad Daftary, the first mention in Western sources of what Daftary calls the "training legend," originates with Burchard of Strassburg who travelled to Syria in 1175. In his account, he makes a similar claim about language training among young Assassins: "In these palaces he has many of the sons of his peasants brought up from early childhood. He has them taught various languages,

---

[178] *Un grand maître des assassins au temps de Saladin : Extrait du journal asiatique*, ed.
    Stanislas Guyard (Paris: Impr. National, 1877).
[179] IP 5.26 [306].

as Latin, Greek, Roman, Saracen as well as many others."[180] Though Daftary is skeptical of

Burchard's account of the "training legend," which is reproduced in most subsequent Western

sources, his skepticism is focused on Burchard's portrayal of Ismāʿīlī beliefs and the basic

premise of the Old Man of the Mountain training assassins from childhood. He makes no

substantive comment on the claim about language learning among Nizarīs. Interestingly, Jacques

de Vitry, whom Daftary sees as "the best informed Frankish observer of Muslim affairs in the

Latin East, after William of Tyre," also claims that the Nizarīs were "diligently trained and

instructed in the different kinds of languages."[181] Whether or not the famous "training legend"

perpetuated in Western sources is wholly accurate, there does seem to be some historical reality

behind the Assassin's reputation for their facility in Western languages—which they leveraged in

both diplomacy and war.

Whether as courtiers, envoys, spies, or soldiers, at least a small segment of Muslims in

Syria needed to learn European languages in order to act as linguistic intermediaries in war and

diplomacy.[182] Though I am not arguing that local Christians were not involved in diplomacy, the

evidence of their involvement is sparse. In fact, our sources only offer four possible instances of

local Christians acting as interpreter-envoys during the Third Crusade. Two of these references

clearly identify a local Christian as the diplomatic intermediary;[183] one of these references is

unclear about whether the interpreter is a local Christian or a Muslim;[184] and the other is unclear

about whether the interpreter-spy is a local Christian or a Syrian-born Frank.[185] At least in the

---

[180] Quoted in F. Daftary, *The Assassin Legends: Myths of the Isma'ilis* (London: Tauris, 1994), 95-96.
[181] Quoted in F. Daftary, *The Assassin Legends,* 101-102.
[182] For examples of Muslim polyglots leveraging their linguistic skills on the battlefield or as spies, see Ibn al-Qalanisi, *Dhayl tarikh Dimishq*, 332; IP 1:41; Ibn al-Athīr, XII, 32-33.
[183] See Ibn al-Athīr, XI, 398-99; and Ibn Shaddād, ed. al-Shayyāl, 223.
[184] Ibn Shaddād, ed. al-Shayyāl, 206.
[185] IP 6:3; Ambroise, ln. 10239.

case of Muslim-Frankish diplomacy in this period, the evidence overwhelmingly points to

Franks and Muslims mediating between Franks and Muslims.

The Identity and Agency of Interpreter-Envoys

The shocking news of Conrad's assassination in April combined with news of unrest in

England prompted Richard to make one final push for Jerusalem in the summer of 1192. In July,

the Frankish armies reached *Beit Nuba*, but after much deliberation, Richard chose to withdraw

rather than risk having his supply line to the coast compromised. With both sides depleted from

another summer of fighting, Richard asked to renew talks with Abu Bakr.[186] After back-and-

forth negotiations, Richard and Saladin finally reached a three-year truce—without ever having

met face-to-face. This final stage of diplomatic negotiations between Saladin and Richard

involved two crucial components—written treaties and oral oaths of ratification. Interpreter-

envoys were central in both. On September 1, Saladin's envoy delivered a written treaty to

Richard in Jaffa outlining the following terms: Saladin would keep Jerusalem but allow Christian

pilgrims to visit the city and its holy places; the Franks would keep their holdings on the coast

from Tyre to Jaffa; and Ascalon's fortifications were to be demolished. Sick and bed-ridden,

Richard delegated the task of reviewing the written treaty to Henry of Champagne (Conrad's

recent replacement as Latin King of Jerusalem), Balian of Ibelin, and other prominent members

of the Franco-Syrian nobility and the military orders. After approving the treaty and swearing

oaths of ratification, a Frankish delegation, led by Balian and Humphrey, traveled to Saladin's

camp in Ramla where they witnessed Saladin's oath of ratification and those of his chief emirs in

the region.[187]

---

[186] Ibn Shaddād, ed. al-Shayyāl, 231.
[187] Ibn Shaddād, ed. al-Shayyāl, 233-35.

On October 9, 1192, just a month after the Treaty of Jaffa, Richard left Syria, never to return again. Five months later, in March of 1193, Saladin died of a fever. Richard's sudden departure and Saladin's sudden death ensured that the military and political contest between these two rulers would forever be remembered as the defining moments in their respective careers as warriors and rulers. Perhaps this is why it is easy to forget that this legendary rivalry never involved a face-to-face meeting between the English king and the Ayyubid sultan. Every single interaction in this famous episode of Muslim-Christian contact was mediated by an interpreter-envoy. In many ways, the story of Third Crusade diplomacy is just as much about Richard's dealings with Abu Bakr and al-ʿĀdil as it was about the English king's legendary relationship with Saladin. Similarly, the fate of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem had as much to do with Humphrey's and Reynald's competing efforts to strike a deal with Saladin as it had to do with the content of Richard's and Conrad's peace proposals. In other words, these negotiations were less about the messages sent from the top and more about the messengers working on the ground. Whether they were interpreting for two rulers who were face to face or negotiating on behalf of one ruler before another, these seemingly peripheral figures were literally at the center of the action in Muslim-Frankish diplomacy in the Third Crusade. And contrary to current scholarly assumptions, high-level diplomatic negotiations were not mediated by nameless local Christians or Jews, but rather they were conducted by Franco-Syrian nobles and Muslim courtiers—figures who were deeply implicated in the local politics of the region and had as much to gain (or lose) in these negotiations as Richard and Saladin.

The Products of Translation in Peace-Making with the Mamluks, 1268-90

On July 7, 1268, a few months after the fall of crusader Antioch to the Mamluks, a

delegation from Cairo entered the walls of Acre to ratify terms of peace with King Hugh of

Jerusalem (r. 1268-84). The meeting between Hugh and the sultan's ambassador, Ibn 'Abd al-

Ẓāhir, was fraught with tension, as his newphew Shāfi' b. 'Ali recounts:

> When this king summoned us, we found him on an elevated throne; he wished to be
> above with us below. Islam made that impossible for us, so we were raised up to him, and
> began the discussion with him. He proceeded to make mistakes, bringing one subject into
> another, so I spoke out harshly. He looked angrily at me, and said to the interpreter, 'Tell
> him to look who is behind him!' I looked, and lo! he had his troops in their ranks drawn
> up into companies… I said, 'Let the king know that in Khizanat al-bunud, which is a
> prison in the sultan's realm in Cairo, there are Frankish prisoners more in number than
> these.'[188]

While Shāfi' may have embellished the dialogue to emphasize his uncle's boldness in the face of

the enemy, he could not have exaggerated the stakes of these negotiations. For Hugh and the

Franks, a truce with the Mamluks was essential to preserving their rapidly shrinking hold on the

Syrian littoral, especially after the devastating loss of Antioch in the spring. And for the

Mamluks, a truce with the Franks was crucial to keeping this declining, yet still well-entrenched,

regional power from allying with the Mongols, who were a constant threat from the east and the

Mamluks' primary military concern in the latter half the thirteenth century.

For both parties, coming to terms was essential but complicated. Not only did Hugh and

Ibn 'Abd al-Ẓāhir differ on the substance of the negotiations, they also differed on the

procedures. Hugh wanted to physically tower over the Mamluk envoy while Ibn 'Abd al-Ẓāhir

demanded to speak with the Frankish king eye to eye. Hugh wanted his *wazīr* to collect the

written terms from the Mamluk delegation, but Ibn 'Abd al-Ẓāhir refused to hand over the

documents until Hugh stretched out his own hand to take them.[189] Literally in the middle of these

tense negotiations, we find the figure of the court interpreter. When Shāfi' writes, "He [Hugh]

---

[188] Quoted in Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, 71. See Shāfi' ibn 'Alī, *Ḥusn al-manāqib*, 138.
[189] See Ibn 'Abd az-Ẓahir, *Baybars I of Egypt*, ed. and trans. Syedah Fatima Sadeque (New York:
AMS Press, 1980) 331-33; and Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, 70.

looked angrily at me, and said to the interpreter…" he reminds us that outside of hand gestures and facial expressions, Hugh and Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir were completely reliant on this unnamed interpreter to communicate with one another. As is so often the case with high-stakes diplomatic negotiations, this interpreter was required to do so much more than merely translate the words being uttered between negotiators. He not only had to translate Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir's (Arabic) words but his willingness to negotiate on the terms of peace. He not only needed to convey the emotions behind Hugh's (French) words, he probably also had to filter out anything that might have unnecessarily offended the Mamluk envoy and endangered the success of the negotiations. In short, he had to read the air. For this interpreter's ultimate goal was not merely to translate an exchange of words between French and Arabic but rather to broker peace between Franks and Muslims.

In this final section, we will consider how interpreters and translators were implicated in peacemaking at the end of hostilities. In addition to the real negotiating power wielded by interpreters, these figures also played a crucial role in two well-established practices of peace-making in the medieval eastern Mediterranean—drafting (and translating) written treaties and administering the oath of ratification at the conclusion of a truce. Though we know that from the earliest days of Muslim-Frankish war and diplomacy peacemaking involved both written treaties and spoken oaths of ratification, our best sources on these practices come from the latter half of the thirteenth century. This section will focus on diplomatic encounters between Franks and Mamluks in the final decades of the crusader period and reflect on the agency of translators by looking at two ubiquitous products of translation—oaths and treaties.

Diplomatic Oaths

When Ibn 'Abd al-Ẓāhir arrived in Acre to negotiate with Hugh, his ultimate goal was to come to an agreement on the written terms of the treaty and to obtain an oath of ratification from the Frankish monarch before returning to Cairo. Diplomatic oaths—which carried political and religious significance for both Christians and Muslims—were a crucial part of eastern Mediterranean diplomacy throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[190] According to Yvonne Friedman, oaths were "probably more binding than the written contract" because the oath-takers publicly agreed to abrogate the central tenets of their religion if they failed to honor the treaty.[191] The stakes were high in this crucial final stage of diplomatic negotiations, and this process could not be completed without an interpreter. It is unclear from the extant sources how exactly the oaths of ratification were administered in July of 1268 in Acre. But we do have several detailed accounts of this process from other diplomatic episodes.

When Hugh of Caesarea was sent to Cairo to negotiate with the Fatimids in 1167, he not only negotiated a written treaty to bring back to Jerusalem but also administered an oath of ratification to the caliph. Practically, this meant that Hugh read aloud the words of the oath, and the caliph repeated them. William of Tyre reports that the caliph repeated "almost syllable by syllable [*eisdem pene sillabis sequens*], the words of Hugh as he dictated the formula of the treaty…" William does not specify the language of the oath, but the caliph probably repeated the oath in his own language (Arabic), as seems to have been the diplomatic custom.[192] During the Seventh Crusade, Nicholas of Acre served as an interpreter and envoy for Louis IX as he

---

[190] For early examples, see FC II, XLI.3; and Ibn al-Qalanisi, *Dhayl tarikh Dimishq*, 190.

[191] Friedman, "Peacemaking: Perceptions and Practices in the Medieval Latin East," 247.

[192] WT XIX, 19 [II, 321]. However, Köhler hypothesizes, based on the fact that the caliph repeated "syllable by syllable," that perhaps Hugh dictated the oath to the caliph in French or Latin. This is possible, but I have found no evidence in this period of sovereigns repeating oaths of ratification in a foreign tongue. See Köhler, *Alliances and Treaties,* 305.

negotiated the terms of peace with the Mamluks in 1250. His primary role in the negotiations was to ensure that the Muslim sovereigns swore (Arabic/Islamic) oaths of ratification that were comparable to the (French/Christian) oath that Louis was asked to swear. Joinville writes that Nicholas, "who knew the Saracen language," confirmed to Louis that the Muslim emirs "could not swear a more powerful oath according to their law."[193]

While Joinville does not record the entire oath, he does note the most important feature—the abrogation clauses (what happens if one party fails to honor the treaty). For the Muslim emirs, Joinville recounts:

> If they did not keep the agreement made with the king, they would be as dishonoured as he who, because of his sinfulness, goes on pilgrimage to Muhammad at Mecca with his head uncovered, and as dishonoured as those who leave their wives and then take them back afterwards… The third oath was this: that if they did not keep the agreement made with the king they would be as dishonoured as the Saracen who eats pig's flesh.[194]

On Louis' part, he was asked to make the following oath:

> If the king did not keep the agreement he had made with the emirs, he would be as dishonoured as the Christian who denies God and his Mother, and is barred from the fellowship of his twelve companions and of all the saints… if he did not keep terms with the emirs, he would be as dishonoured as the Christian who denies God and his law and who, scorning God, spits and tramples on the cross.[195]

In negotiating the content of a diplomatic oath, interpreters were not only required to find linguistic equivalence between Arabic and Latin—they were required to find conceptual equivalence between Islam and Christianity. Here we have a series of shameful acts for a Muslim—bareheaded pilgrimage, unlawful divorce and remarriage, and pork consumption—being equated with shameful acts for a Christian—renouncing God, Mary, the Apostles and saints, rejecting God's law, and spitting and trampling on the Cross.

---

[193] Joinville, LXXI, 360-63; trans. Smith, 234-35.
[194] Joinville, LXXI, 360-63; trans. Smith, 234.
[195] Joinville, LXXI, 360-63; trans. Smith, 235.

After over a century of negotiation, the conceptual and religious equivalencies must have been rather well-established by the middle of the thirteenth century. Even so, diplomatic translators would have needed to be prepared to make last-minute adjustments (or retranslations) in the event that one or another party balked at a particular element of the oath. For example, in 1250 Louis strongly objected to the final clause of his oath—that he should spit and trample on the cross. While this feature is rather common in the surviving texts of Frankish oaths administered by Muslims, it is not always present in abrogation clauses. For example, in the Arabic text of a treaty between the Latin Kingdom and al-Mansūr Qalawūn in 1283, we find the oaths of ratification appended to the text. In this text, al-Mansūr Qalawūn's abrogation clause reads as follows:

> If I break this oath, I shall be bound to make thirty Pilgrimages to the Holy House of God in Mecca the Ennobled, barefoot and bareheaded, and I am bound to fast the whole time except the forbidden days.[196]

The Frankish equivalent states:

> If I violate it or abrogate it, I shall have abjured my religion, my belief and that which I worship; I shall be disobedient to the Church; I shall be obliged to make thirty pilgrimages to Jerusalem, barefoot and bareheaded; I shall be obliged to release a thousand Muslim prisoners from captivity with the Franks, and to set them free; and I shall have abjured the Divinity which was made man.[197]

Unlike Louis' oath in 1250, this abrogation clause did not involve spitting and trampling on the cross; but instead it included a somewhat straightforward equivalent of thirty barefooted and bareheaded pilgrimages to Jerusalem (versus Mecca). That the Frankish abrogation clause is longer either reflects the power dynamics of these negotiations (that the Mamluks could demand more) or simply that the text we have for the Muslim oath is abbreviated.[198] Though several

---

[196] Quoted in Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, 90.
[197] Quoted in Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, 91.
[198] This is implied by the parenthetical text: "He cites the rest of the oath to its end; then says…" Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, 90.

examples of these peculiar products of translation have survived the period (often in the appendices of the diplomatic treaties), these fascinating textual survivals of oral practices have not received the scholarly attention they are due.[199]

Written Treaties

Oaths of ratification were inextricably linked to written treaties. In 1268, Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir came to Acre with a "letter" presumably containing the written terms of the truce to be discussed and ratified with Hugh. This particular document, which no longer survives, raises several tantalizing questions about translation. For example, did the Mamluks send an Arabic document to Hugh in Acre and assume it would be translated by his chancery—or did they send a Latin translation of the Arabic original (or perhaps both documents)? Also, who would have been tasked to read and translate the written treaty? Should we imagine court interpreters or interpreter-envoys in this role—or should we imagine an entirely different cast of characters (those unnamed polyglot scribes) involved in this fateful work of textual translation? In this specific case, we do not know who translated (and read) the text of the treaty for Hugh, but we do know that in general both Frankish and Muslim courts kept a cadre of polyglot scribes who could translate both outgoing and incoming diplomatic correspondence.[200] This would certainly

---

[199] For an example of what can be done with bilingual diplomatic treaties in the medieval Mediterranean, see Robert Ignatius Burns, Paul Edward Chevedden, and Mikel de Epalza, *Negotiating Cultures: Bilingual Surrender Treaties in Muslim-Crusader Spain Under James the Conqueror* (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

[200] For example, according to Ibn al-Furāt, Baybars traveled with a translator who knew "the Frankish script [*qalam al-faranjī*]." And on the Frankish side, even the military orders employed Arabic scribes to translate diplomatic correspondence and treaties. See Ibn al-Furāt, *Ayyubids, Mamlukes and Crusaders: Selections from the Tārīkh al-duwal wa'l-Mulūk of Ibn al-Furāt in Two Volumes: The text*. 2 Vols., eds. and trans. U. Lyons, M.C. Lyons, and Jonathan Riley-Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), I, 139

mean that Frankish courts had translators of Arabic and Muslim courts had translators of Latin; but considering the wide variety of languages in play in the medieval eastern Mediterranean, it seems likely that both Frankish and Muslim chanceries would have employed translators of Greek and Persian too. For example, in 1248, an envoy of the Mongols delivered a letter to King Henry of Cyprus that was written in Persian. According to Eudes de Chateauroux, the Frankish king "had a translation made word for word."[201]

Vital as they were in eastern Mediterranean diplomacy, we have very little evidence about who these scribes were and how they functioned. Our best evidence comes from a handful of treaties surviving from the Mamluk period, helpfully edited and analyzed by Peter Holt.[202] In a treaty between the Mamluks and Genoa in 1290, we find some interesting clues about both the who and the how. After the main body of the treaty, we read, "An interlinear version in Frankish was written [*kutiba bayna al-suṭūr bil-faranjī*], line for line and word for word… The writer in Frankish between the lines is known as Giudice the Genoese Pilgrim, the clerk of the envoy and Commune of Genoa."[203] In this case, a few things are clear. First, the treaty was originally drafted in Arabic, then translated into "Frankish" between the lines. Second, the interlinear translation from Arabic to Frankish (likely Old French) was done by a Genoese clerk, employed by the Commune of Genoa (more on this interesting figure in Chapter 3). While this example is

---

and II, 110; and Ibn Nazif al-Ḥamawī, *Al-ta'rikh al-Mansurī*, ed. Abū-'l-'Īd Dūdū (Damascus, 1982), 203 and 261.

[201] Letter from Eudes de Chateauroux to Pope Innocent IV in *The Seventh Crusade, 1244-1254: Sources and Documents*, ed. and trans. Peter Jackson (Aldershot, Asghate, 2009)*,* 76. It is difficult to know for certain if twelfth-century Frankish courts also employed translators of Persian, but at least by the middle of the thirteenth century (and the arrival of the Mongols), it seems that translators of Persian had become a necessity.

[202] See Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*.

[203] Ibn 'Abd az-Ẓahir, *Tashrīf al-aiyām wa-'l-'uṣūr fī sīrat al-Malik al-Manṣūr* (Cairo: Wizārat at-Ṯaqāfa wa-'l-Iršād al-Qaumī, 1961), 167. Translation in Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, 149. Henceforth, all references to Ibn 'Abd al-Ẓahir's *Tashrīf* will be abbreviated, "*Tashrīf*" followed by the page number.

interesting, it is difficult to know if this was the standard procedure for translating diplomatic treaties. For example, in the same year, in a treaty between the Mamluks and King Alfonso III of Aragon, we find that Alfonso's ambassadors "wrote with their own hands the draft in Arabic and Frankish to take with them to their master."[204] In the same period, we find two different procedures in play—one where a treaty is drafted in Arabic, then translated between the lines; and another where a Frankish version and an Arabic version are produced by the same scribe(s) and sent to the two parties for approval.[205]

To these variant practices of treaty-drafting and translation, al-Qalqashandi offers another. In an attempt to explain the lack of eloquence in early Mamluk treaties with the Franks, al-Qalqashani writes:

> They are vulgarly expressed, not clearly arranged… Perhaps that happened only because in those days the Franks were neighbors to the Muslims; and agreement and mutual consent would be reached between the two parties clause by clause [*'ala faṣlin faṣlin*]. So a clerk [*kātib*] from each of the two parties, the Muslims and the Franks, would write it in vulgar, foul words for reasons of speed, until they concluded in agreement and mutual consent down to the last clauses of the truce.[206]

According to al-Qalqashandi, at least some treaties between Franks and Muslims were drafted simultaneously—clause by clause—with a scribe from each contingent working together. Presumably, both scribes knew both languages and could agree upon the equivalency of words and phrases as the treaty was being drafted. It is difficult to know which of the three processes of treaty-drafting and translation was dominant in Muslim-Frankish diplomacy. It is tempting to privilege al-Qalqashandi's description as the general mode of treaty-making, but considering his historical distance from the period about which he writes (he wrote in the late fourteenth/early

---

[204] *Tashrīf*, 156. Translation in Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, 131.
[205] Even in the case of the interlinear translation, we find that Muslim scribes read and verified the translation from Arabic to Frankish. See Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, 149.
[206] Al-Qalqashandi, *Kitab subh al-a'shá* (Cairo: al-Matba'ah al-Amryah, 1913) XIV, 70-71. Translation in Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy,* 7.

fifteenth century), it is difficult to take his descriptions at face value. How much of his fascinating description of diplomatic translation practice is rooted in historical fact and how much was speculation is difficult to know. But what is clear from this late thirteenth-century evidence about treaty-making and diplomacy is that scribes—functioning as diplomatic translators—were absolutely crucial to the process. Without these shadowy figures, Franks and Muslims simply could not have come to terms.

Conclusion: From the Periphery to the Center

This purpose of this chapter was to move the translator from the periphery of crusader diplomacy (and historiography) to his rightful place at the center. It was an attempt to uncover the identities of interpreters and translators and highlight their agency in war and diplomacy in the medieval eastern Mediterranean. From peacetime contacts (as courtiers and envoys) to wartime preparations (as spies and guides), and from open military conflict (as soldiers and interrogators) to peace negotiations (as negotiators and propagandists), interpreters fulfilled a wide variety of important roles and responsibilities. That they are often absent (or at least buried) in the medieval sources should not deter us from asking questions about their identity and their agency in this period. Whether they were interpreting for two rulers who were face to face or negotiating on behalf of one ruler before another, these seemingly peripheral figures were literally at the center of the action in Muslim-Frankish diplomacy in the age of the crusades. Not only were interpreters vital intermediaries, but they were themselves agents—significant historical actors who have been overlooked by historians because we have assumed that their work was peripheral, predictable, and mechanical. But the evidence reveals something different. Whether functioning as envoys or spies, interrogators or negotiators, their work was central,

highly contingent, and thoroughly human. The role of nameless interpreters in warfare and diplomacy in the crusader period reminds us of the insight of modern social history—that history is not always made by great men. And at the same time, it echoes the insight of ancient wisdom literature—that life and death are in the power of the tongue.

CHAPTER 2

DEATH AND TAXES: LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

Introduction: From the Battlefield to the Wheat Fields

When the crusading Franks conquered and settled Syria-Palestine in the late eleventh and early

twelfth century, they suddenly found themselves ruling over a diverse population of Muslims,

local Christians, and Jews that represented an even more diverse subset of linguistic groups,

including native speakers of Arabic, Greek, Syriac, Armenian, and Turkish. As the Franks

moved from sporadic interaction with foreign armies to daily interaction with local populations,

the problems of language and communication became even more acute. One of the central

challenges to establishing and maintaining Frankish rule in Syria was overcoming the language

barrier(s) with the indigenous population. This was particularly important in the collection of

taxes and the administration of justice. Indeed, if interpreters were vital on the battlefield and in

the cosmopolitan courts of rulers, then they were equally, if not more, important, in the wheat

fields and in the local courts of law. While the previous chapter focused on the role of translators

in warfare and diplomacy, this chapter focuses on the role of translators and translation in local

administration.

When looking for these often-invisible intermediary figures in local administration,

scholars have pointed traditionally to three "lesser officers" in the Frankish administration: the

rays, the *dragoman*, and the *scriba*.[207] It is clear that each of these offices was borrowed to some

extent from the prior Islamic (Fatimid or Seljuk) administration. For example, the word *rays*

---

[207] The label "lesser officials" comes from Jonathan Riley-Smith's seminal study on these
intermediary figures. See Riley-Smith, "Some Lesser Officials in Latin Syria," *The
English Historical Review* 87, (1972): 1-26.

(sometimes also spelled *raiz*) comes from the Arabic *ra'īs*, a term that denotes a village headman

or even the mayor of a town.[208] In rural estates, this officer was recognized as the head of a

village, and as a result was responsible for tax collection and the administration of justice in the

village. In the city, the *rays* seems to have been the leader of the local non-Latin Christian

community and was responsible for the administration of justice in local non-Latin (often

confessional) courts.[209] Next, there was the dragoman, a title clearly adopted from *tarjumān*, the

Arabic word for translator. Sometimes this title refers to a generic translator, but often, this title

denotes an official who was the overseer of several villages and, according to some scholars,

mediated between the Latin lord and the village *ra'īs*.[210] Finally, there was the *scriba*.

Sometimes these figures appear in the sources as generic clerks tasked with drafting (and

translating) documents. But other times, it seems that the *scriba* had a more specialized role that

involved collecting revenues on behalf of their lord, sometimes in relation to the cadastral office

of the Kingdom, the *Grant Secrete*.[211] According to Riley-Smith, "the title of *scriba* was merely

a translation of the Arabic *kātib*, used of officials in Muslim cadastral offices."[212] To these three

intermediary officials, who are relatively well attested in the sources, one might also add the

mathessep. This officer was a city market inspector and was responsible for patrolling the city at

---

[208] See A. Havemann, C.E. Bosworth, S. Soucek, "Ra'īs," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, eds. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs (Leiden: Brill, 2006). Henceforth, all references to the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* will be abbreviated, "*EI²*" followed by the article title and author.

[209] Riley-Smith, "Some Lesser Officials," 2-3, 9-10; Prawer, *Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 153-56, 367-69. On the *raiz* as the head of the *Cour des Syriens*, see Jean d'Ibelin, *John of Ibelin: Le Livre Des Assises*, ed. Peter W. Edbury (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 55. For an older edition of the Assises still relied on by many, see *RHC Lois I, 26.*

[210] See Riley-Smith, "Some Lesser Officials," 15-16; Prawer, *Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 157, 369; and more recently, Ellenblum, *Frankish Rural Settlement*, 195-98.

[211] See Riley-Smith, "Some Lesser Officials," 22; *RHC Lois*, II, 220.

[212] Jonathan Riley-Smith, "The survival in Latin Palestine of Muslim administration," in *Eastern Mediterranean Lands in the Period of the Crusades,* ed. P.M. Holt (Warminster: Aris & Phillips LTD, 1977), 12.

night, much like his Islamic predecessor, the *muḥtasib*. Though the apparent continuity of the

hisba in Frankish Syria is intriguing, scholars have not explored the *mathessep* in great depth

because these officers rarely appear in the sources—a problem to which we will return shortly.[213]

Our most valuable sources for these lesser officials are found in the cartularies of Latin

monastic houses and military orders in the Holy Land.[214] In these rich collections of documents,

often recording the most mundane of transactions, we frequently find the names of *rayses*,

dragomans, and *scribae* in witness lists; and on some rare occasions, we are given clues about

their specific roles in Frankish administration. These intermediary officials can also be found in

the extant legal sources from Frankish Syria, the *Assizes of Jerusalem* and the *Assizes de

Bourgeois*, which in some cases discuss the roles of these officials in greater detail.[215] While it is

tempting to read these rich source bases straightforwardly, allowing the documentary sources to

provide us with the *who* and the legal sources to provide us with the *how*, two dangers must be

flagged. First, monastic cartularies and legal treatises represent very different kinds of sources—

---

[213] See Riley-Smith, "Some Lesser Officials," 3 fn. 2; Prawer, *Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 147, 153.

[214] See for example, Joseph Delaville Le Roulx, *Cartulaire général de l'ordre des Hospitaliers de Saint-Jean de Jérusalem (1100-1310),* 4 vols. (Paris: Leroux, 1894); Eugène de Rozière, *Cartulaire de l'église du Saint Sépulcre de Jérusalem; publié d'après les manuscrits du Vatican* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1849); "Chartes de l'abbaye de Notre-Dame de la vallée de Josaphat en Terre Sainte," *Revue de l'orient Latin*, vii, ed. C. Kohler (Paris: Leroux, 1899); *Regesta Regni Hiersolymitani (MXCVII-MCCXCI)*, 2 vols., ed. Reinhold Röhricht (Oeniponti: Libraria Academica Wagneriana, 1893-1904). Delaborde, Henri François. *Chartes de Terre Sainte provenant de l'Abbaye de N.-D. de Josaphat*. Paris: E. Thorin, 1880; "Fragment d'un cartularie de l'ordre de Saint-Lazare, en Terre Sainte," *Archives de l'Orient latin*, ii, ed. P. Riant (Paris: E. Leroux, 1884). *Tabulae Ordinis Theutonici*, ed. E. Strehlke (Berlin: Weidman, 1869). See Abbreviations page.

[215] The legal codes of the Kingdom of Jerusalem composed in this period have been edited and compiled in the *Recueil des historiens des croisades: les Assises de Jérusalem*. 2 Vols. (Paris: Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, 1841-43). Henceforth, these texts will be abbreviated "*RHC Lois*" followed by the volume and page number. Additionally, Peter Edbury has made a new edition of John of Ibelin's *Le Livre Des Assises*. See Jean d'Ibelin, *John of Ibelin: Le Livre Des Assises*, ed. Peter W. Edbury (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

the former being primarily descriptive and the latter prescriptive. Therefore, while the cartularies

help us identify a good number of intermediary officials, we cannot be entirely sure that the roles

laid out for them in the legal treatises represent what they actually did on a particular estate in

Syria. Second, though our documentary sources evenly cover the twelfth and thirteenth centuries,

our legal treatises for Frankish Syria are exclusively thirteenth-century texts—thus heightening

the complexity of using them to discern (or speculate) how these intermediary officials operated

in the twelfth century. To get a sense of change over time, one must also supplement these

sources with Latin and Arabic narrative and biographical sources—which, on some occassions,

shed light on the roles of these lesser officials and place these often-nameless figures within the

larger political, economic, and social context of the medieval eastern Mediterranean.

Most of the above-mentioned sources have been collected and edited in printed editions

since the late nineteenth century. As a result, many scholars, especially those interested in the

institutional and social history of Frankish Syria, have written at least a few paragraphs on the

role of these lesser officials as intermediaries between the ruling Franks and subjected Syrians.[216]

Though these intermediary figures have been discussed in recent scholarship, the most

substantial scholarship still comes from the middle of the twentieth century, from the social

histories of Claude Cahen, Joshua Prawer, and Jonathan Riley-Smith.[217] For all of the important

---

[216] Some important early treatments on these intermediary figures include E.G. Rey, *Les colonies franques de Syrie aux XIIme et XIIIme siècles* (Paris: Picard, 1883), 59-68; Charles Clermont-Ganneau, "Deux chartes des croisés retrouvées dans une chronique arabe manuscrite," *Recueil d'Archéologie Orientale*, ed. C. Clermont-Ganneau (Paris: Leroux, 1905), 15-16; La Monte, *Feudal Monarchy*, 106-08.

[217] See Claude Cahen, "La Féodalité et les institutions politiques de l'Orient Latin," in *Orient et Occident au temps des Croisades*, ed. C. Cahen (Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1983); Prawer, *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*; and most importantly, Riley-Smith, "Some Lesser Officials." More recent scholarship, which is largey based on Cahen, Prawer, and Riley-Smith's work, includes Ellenblum, *Frankish Rural Settlement,* (1998) 194-204; Marwan Nader, *Burgesses and Burgess Law in the Latin Kingdoms of Jerusalem and Cyprus*

work that has been done so far on these crucial intermediary figures, the practical problems of language and translation have not sufficiently been attended to. Even in the case of dragomans, whose role in linguistic mediation is explicit from their very title, scholars have deemphasized their linguistic role.[218] Or in some cases, they have argued that dragomans, as they became more important officials in the Frankish system, relinquished their translator function—passing that role on to an (even more) invisible historical actor.[219]

In this chapter, I will reexamine the linguistic role not only of the dragoman, but also of the *rays*, *scriba*, and *mathessep*—all of whom, I will argue, ought to be seen as translators. Furthermore, while the social histories of the 1960s and '70s were useful in helping us get a sense of the roles and functions of these intermediary figures, the scholars from this period were too rigid in the way they circumscribed the roles of these lesser officials. If the work of previous scholars served to carefully distinguish the activities and identities of the *rays,* dragoman, *scriba*, and *mathessep*, the purpose of this study is, to some extent, to blur those lines—to demonstrate that the frequent overlap in their roles was often due to their important secondary function as linguistic intermediaries. In order to illustrate the vital need for these intermediary officials in local administration, in the first section I will discuss the problem of governance and communication with the local population. Highlighting three specific examples from the period, I will flesh out the diverse contexts in which we might expect to find a *rays*, a dragoman, a *scriba*, or a *mathessep* functioning as linguistic intermediaries. After unpacking *why* these officials were so crucial, I will turn to the documentary and legal sources to discuss the question of *who* and

---

(1099-1325) (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 159-170; and Lewis, "Medieval Diglossia," 126-31.
[218] See Ellenblum, *Frankish Rural Settlement* (1998) 194-204.
[219] See Prawer, *The Latin Kingdom of Jeruslam*, 369.

(with caution) *how* by investigating the identities and roles of these overlooked yet crucial intermediary officials.

Governance and Communication with the Subjected Population

On his way home from pilgrimage in Mecca in 1184, Ibn Jubayr passed briefly through Frankish Syria and commented on the condition of rural Muslims under Frankish rule:

> Our way lay through continuous farms and ordered settlements, whose inhabitants were all Muslims, living comfortably with the Franks... They surrender half their crops to the Franks at harvest time, and pay as well a poll-tax [*jizya*] of one dinar and five qirat for each person. Other than that, they are not interfered with, save for a light tax on the fruits of trees. All of the coastal cities occupied by the Franks are managed in this fashion, their rural districts, the villages and farms belonging to the Muslims.[220]

As is often the case, Ibn Jubayr's brief yet detailed description is our most valuable eyewitness account and our most debated piece of evidence concerning Frankish rural administration. The point of scholarly contention lies in Ibn Jubayr's claim (coming just after the passage quoted above) that rural Muslims under Frankish rule fared better than rural Muslims under neighboring Muslim dynasties. Some scholars have taken Ibn Jubayr's words at face value while others have been highly skeptical of this claim and have argued the opposite—that Frankish rule was deeply oppressive for both Syrian Muslims and Christians.[221] While questions about the ethics of local administration are interesting (if somewhat unanswerable), perhaps more productive are questions about the practicalities of local administration.

---

[220] Ibn Jubayr, ed. Wright, 301-02; trans. Broadhurst, 316.
[221] For a helpful summary of this debate, see Kedar, "The Subjected Muslims of the Frankish Levant," 166-68.

Tax Collection

For example, assuming we accept Ibn Jubayr's claim that the Franks were largely hands off in their administration of the countryside (an assumption that many modern scholars hold),[222] there is still at least one point of contact we must account for—tax collection. How did the Franks collect taxes in the countryside? Ibn Jubayr tells us how much was levied, but he doesn't really tell us how exactly the taxes were collected.[223] Who would have been tasked to gather a share of the Muslim peasants' crops at harvest time and collect the annual head tax of one dīnār and five qirat? Who mediated between the French-speaking lords and the Arabic-speaking villagers? Ibn Jubayr himself gives us two candidates: the village "headman" (AR: *ra'īs;* pl. *ru'asa'*), who was "appointed by the Franks to oversee the Muslim workers" in the countryside; and the "Christian clerks of the Customs" (*kuttāb al-dīwān min al-naṣārā*), who levied taxes on Ibn Jubayr's caravan upon its entrance into the city of Acre.

If we assume that the Muslim *ra'īs* whom Ibn Jubayr mentions was responsible for collecting taxes in his village then can we assume that he was able to communicate with the Frankish lord in French—or would there have been another figure mediating linguistically between lord and *ra'īs*?[224] On the other hand, if we assume that the Christian scribes of the dīwān were tasked with tax collection in the countryside (as well as taxing caravans), can we assume that these figures, who Ibn Jubayr claims were able to speak and write in Arabic, were also conversant in French and were therefore able to mediate linguistically between the villagers

---

[222] See for example, Cahen, "La Féodalité et les institutions politiques de l'Orient Latin," 158-59; and Riley-Smith, "The Survival in Latin Palestine of Muslim Administration."

[223] Ibn Jubayr does discuss briefly the tax farming system in the city of Acre. See Ibn Jubayr, ed. Wright, 302; trans. Broadhurst, 317.

[224] Another possibility rarely even acknowledged by scholars is that some Frankish lords would have known Arabic and thus would not have needed linguistic mediation. As we saw in Chapter 2, for example, the lords of Toron and Sidon (the lands through which Usama's caravan was passing en route to Acre) were fluent Arabic speakers and even functioned as interpreter-envoys in Third Crusade diplomacy.

and the lord?[225] Or perhaps were both the *ra'īs* and the scribe working together in the task of tax

collection, with the *ra'īs* gathering the lord's share of the crops and the scribe collecting the head

tax from individuals? Unfortunately, Usama does not say. After providing a tantalizing glimpse

at a well-developed system of urban and rural taxation (and translation), he ends his discussion

with the comment, "All this was done with civility and respect, and without harshness and

unfairness."[226]

Administration of Justice

Another aspect of local administration where linguistic mediation was vital was in the

administration of justice. While justice among the Franks was settled in the *Haute Cour* and local

feudal courts (in the case of nobles and knights) and the *Cour des Bourgeois* (in the case of

burgesses), for the local Syrian population most legal cases were adjudicated in either the *Cour*

des Syriens (at least in the case of local Christians) or in their respective ecclesiastical courts,

presided over by a *qādī*, rabbi, or bishop.[227] However, for cases that cut across sectarian

boundaries, there was the *Cour de la Fonde*—an inter-communal market court that dealt with

---

[225] Ibn Jubayr, ed. Wright, 302; trans. Broadhurst, 317.

[226] Ibn Jubayr, ed. Wright, 302; trans. Broadhurst, 318. While Ibn Jubayr's praise of the Frankish customs administration may be genuine, it should be read in light of his very negative experience with the Ayyubid customs administration in Alexandria en route to Mecca. See Ibn Jubayr, ed. Wright, 40-45; trans. Broadhurst, 31-32.

[227] Though we have little evidence about these ecclesiastical courts in the crusader period, most scholars assume that they were in operation, especially for cases that were typically seen as falling under ecclesiastical jurisdiction, such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, etc. For a rare example of a document from a Jewish court in Frankish Tyre (found in the Cairo Geniza), see Brendan Goldman, "Neither *Servi* nor *Dhimmī*: Jews and the State in the Latin Levant, 1098-1187," PhD diss., Johns Hopkins University, 2018, 123-24. For more on the Frankish legal system, see Prawer, *Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 145-57; and Nader, *Burgesses and Burgess Law*, 158-63.

small claims and financial disputes between Muslims, Christians, and Jews.[228] If the Frankish courts can be seen as imports from feudal Western Europe and the *Cour des Syriens* and ecclesiastical courts can be seen as the sanctioning of a well-established legal pluralism in Syria, the *Cour de la Fonde* might be seen as something of a Franco-Syrian innovation, a response to a critical need on the ground. This court, which was presided over by a *bailli*, was composed of six jurors—four Syrian Christians and two Latin Christians—who made judgements on cases that arose from disputes between Muslims, Christians, and Jews over sales, leases, and debts, and pledges made in the market.[229]

Many scholars of the period have looked upon the *Cour de la Fonde* with some fascination, reflecting on its obscure origins, its ambiguous relationship with the *Cour des Syriens*, and its implications for justice among religious minorities. Yet no scholar, to my knowledge, has asked the more basic question of language.[230] How was language mediated in a court that was by definition religiously, ethnically, and linguistically diverse? If we can assume that the *Haute Cour* and the *Cour des Bourgeois* operated in French/Latin and that the *Cour des Syriens* operated in Arabic,[231] then what would have been the official language of the *Cour de la Fonde*? The *bailli* and two of the jurors presumably would been French-speaking Franks, but

---

[228] As discussed above, our understanding of the Frankish court system comes primarily from thirteenth-century legal treatises; thus, we cannot necessarily assume that the system, as described in these sources, was fully developed in the twelfth century. These thirteenth-century institutions certainly have their origins in the twelfth century, but we have few sources that allow us to trace institutional change over time. That said, even if the court system of the twelfth century differed greatly from the thirteenth century, the fundamental problem of language in the administration of justice remains.

[229] See Nader, *Burgesses and Burgess Law*, 160; and *RHC Lois*, II, 172.

[230] See Rey, *Les colonies franques*, 59-60; La Monte, *Feudal Monarchy*, 108-09; Prawer, *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 153-55; Riley-Smith, *The Feudal Nobility*, 95-96; Nader, *Burgesses and Burgess Law*, 158-61.

[231] Considering that we know so little about ecclesiastical courts, it is difficult to comment on what language(s) they operated in, though an obvious set of options would include: Arabic, Greek, Armenian, Syriac, and Hebrew—depending on the religious community.

four of the jurors would have been Arabic-speaking Syrian Christians. Should we assume that the three Franks involved in the *Cour de la Fonde* would have been Arabic speakers—or should we assume that the four Syrian jurors would have been French speakers? Should we imagine an unnamed interpreter present at every court proceeding, mediating between the jurors and the *bailli*? Even if we grant a functional bilingualism among the jurors and the *bailli*, linguistic mediation would certainly be needed if the plantiff and the defendant did not share a common language (whether it was French or Arabic).

Interestingly, the *Livre des Assises de la Cour des Bourgeois*, our principal source for the *Cour de la Fonde*, makes no comment about the potential language complications of this mixed court. In fact, religion is the only category of difference that the *Livre des Assises* acknowledges.[232] The closest we get to a potential acknowledgment of language difference is in a fascinating passage about oath-taking in the *Cour da la Fonde*. Here we learn, perhaps unsurprisingly, that "the Jew must swear on the Torah according to his law, the Muslim must swear on the Qur'an according to his law, and the Armenian, and the Jacobite, and the Greek must swear on the holy cross and on the books of the gospels written in their letters…" (Armenian, Syriac, and Greek, respectively).[233] Apart from this acknowledgement that the written liturgical languages of these various religious communities were different, we get no discussion of potential barriers in spoken language. As is often the case with oaths from this period, it is difficult to know with any certainty in which language(s) these oaths were uttered. Questions also abound concerning record-keeping and documents produced by the *Cour de la Fonde*. Brendan Goldman has argued that these courts probably produced Arabic documents so

---

[232] That said, "religious" labels in this period, such as *Surien*, *Sarasin*, *Jude*, *Ermine*, often have ethno-linguistic connotations as well.

[233] "… *le Jude deit jurer sur la Tore de sa lei; et le Sarasin deit jurer auci sur le Coran de sa lei; et le Ermine et le Surien et le Grifon deivent jurer la Sainte Cruis et sure les livres des Evangiles escrites de leur lettres…*" *RHC Lois*, II, 172.

that Muslim and particularly Jewish litigants could use these documents in "other Arabophone courts for adjudication."[234] In a world of legal pluralism and forum shopping, the ruling Franks needed to offer legal forums that were fair (hence the majority of Syrian jurors) and produced legal documents that were compatible in an Islamicate eastern Mediterranean society (hence the Arabic documents).

Even if the language problem seems particularly acute in an inter-communal market court like the *Cour de la Fonde*, it is not the only place where language barriers presented a problem to the administration of justice. In fact, one might argue that the need for linguistic mediation existed, at least occasionally, at every level of justice. For example, any inter-communal case that involved murder, larceny, or treason, was beyond the jurisdiction of the *Cour de la Fonde* and was pushed up to the *Cour des Bourgeois* where the case would be heard by the viscount and twelve Latin jurors.[235] This court would have certainly operated in French/Latin, so one must assume that any non-French speaking plantiff or defendant would have had to be accompanied by an interpreter. The question is who. Would these sorts of arrangements have been made *ad hoc*, or did the Franks have a designated pool of interpeters for this very situation? Even at the highest level of justice, the *Haute Cour*, we occasionally find non-French speakers. As discussed in the introduction, Usama ibn Munqidh once appealed to the *Haute Cour* over the issue of stolen sheep in a border region between Damasacus and Banias.[236] It is unlikely that a Muslim Syrian nobleman's presence in the *Haute Cour* was a usual occurrence, but considering that Usama was representing the grievance of the ruler of Damascus against the Frankish lord of

---

[234] Goldman, "Neither *Servi* nor *Dhimmī*," 122.
[235] *RHC Lois*, II, 172.
[236] Usama, ed. Hitti, 64-65; trans. Cobb, 76-77.

Banyas, it is unsurprising that this case was heard in the highest Frankish court.[237] Again, Usama gives no indication of how language was mediated in this court. Considering his avowed ignorance of the "Frankish" language, one must assume that he made his case to King Fulk and the jurors in Arabic and through a translator. Whether on account of the skill of the (unnamed) translator making Usama's appeal or the undeniable culpability of the lord of Banias, the jury of the *Haute Cour* decided in Usama's favor and required the lord of Banias to provide full restitution for the stolen sheep.[238]

Deeds of Sale and Notarial Services

If taxes and justice are perhaps the most consequential of administrative functions requiring linguistic mediation, they are certainly not the only points of contact with the local population that required the services of a translator. In fact, any substantial financial transaction between parties of different tongues required the skills of a multilingual scribe who could produce (and/or translate) official documents in the languages of both parties. For example, in 1213, a Frank named John the deacon leased a property in Antioch in perpetuity to a Melkite (Arabic-speaking Greek Orthodox) priest named al-Mawadd li-llāh.[239] Our evidence of this transaction is an Arabic document found in the archives of the abbey of St. Mary of Josaphat that

---

[237] Usama's appearance before the *Haute Cour* must have occurred in the late 1130s or the early 1140s while he was working in Damascus for the Burid atabeg of Damascus, Muʻin al-Dīn.

[238] Usama, ed. Hitti, 64-65; trans. Cobb, 76-77.

[239] On the property was a dilapidated chapel belonging to the abbey of St. Mary of Josaphat. In 1207, John the deacon had been granted the estate on the condition that he would repair the chapel so that the brothers of St. Mary of Josaphat might celebrate mass whenever they were in Antioch. John was unable to hold up his end of the bargain, so he sought to sell/lease the property. For more on the background of this document, see N. Jamil and J. Johns, "An Original Arabic Document from Crusader Antioch (1213 AD)," in *Texts, Documents, and Artefacts: Islamic Studies in Honour of D.S. Richards*, ed. C. F. Robinson (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 160-61.

purports to be an official copy of the original document that was drawn up for al-Mawadd li-llāh.

The original document, which has not survived, appears to have been drafted in Arabic—though

this itself is not entirely clear from the text.[240] Despite the relative insignificance of the actual

transaction, this document is significant because it is one of only three extant Arabic archival

documents from Frankish Syria.[241] The fact that an Arabic document (and not a Latin

translation/copy) ended up in the archives of Josaphat is itself worth noting, but what is most

interesting about the document (for the purposes of this study) is the unique window we are

given into the process of translation.

Toward the end of the document, we find an intriguing passage narrated in the first

person by John the deacon (as is the entire document):

> … this document has been written for you as a proof in your hand, and a means of
> verification for you, after it was read to me [*ba'da an quri'a 'alayya*], Paganus the prior,
> and to me, John the deacon, and it was translated for us [*wa turjima 'alaynā*], and we had
> understood it, and set down our crosses with our own hands at the top of it.[242]

This brief passage gives us a few clues about the process of translation; and yet it seems to raise

more questions than it answers. For example, we read that the document was read (aloud?) to

Paganus the prior and John the deacon—and that it was translated. So, which came first? Did the

---

[240] Claude Cahen assumes that the original document was drafted in Latin, then translated into
Arabic; but the internal evidence of the text suggests that the original document was
drafted in Arabic. This view is held by Jean Richard and Nadia Jamil/Jeremy Johns. See
C. Cahen, "Un document concernant les Melkites et les Latins d'Antioche au temps des
Croisades," *Revue Des Études Byzantines* 29 (1971): 285-92; J. Richard, "Église latine et
églises orientales dans les états des croisés: la destinée d'un prieuré de Josaphat," in
Mélanges offerts à Jean Dauvillier (Toulouse, 1979), 745; and N. Jamil and J. Johns, "An
Original Arabic Document," 161 fn17.

[241] Though it is certain that many such documents were drafted in the crusader period, only three
have survived: this document, which has been newly edited and translated by Jeremy
Johns and Nadia Jamil, and two others, which are edited and translated by C. Clermont-
Ganneau in "Deux chartes des croisés," 1-30. For a more recent edition of the original
texts, see Ṣāliḥ ibn Yaḥyá, *Tārīkh Bayrūt, wa-huwa akhbār al-salaf min dhurriyat Buḥtur
ibn 'Alī Amīr al-Gharb bi-Bayrūt*, eds. Kamal S. Salibi, and Francis Hours (Beirut: Dār
al-Mashraf, 1969), 47-48, 73-74.

[242] Translation by N. Jamil and J. Johns, "An Original Arabic Document," 174-75/178.

scribe(s) translate the document from Arabic to Latin (or French) and then read the translated document aloud to John and Paganus? Or did someone read the Arabic document aloud, while an interpreter translated the document orally? It is unclear from the Arabic whether the reading and the translating were simultaneous or if one came before the other. Considering the unusual length of the document (Jamil and Johns' English translation fills three pages single-spaced), one might speculate that the document was first translated into Latin (or French), and then the translation was read aloud. This makes the most sense practically, and yet it does not fit so neatly with the actual wording of the account (which seems to suggest that the document was translated orally). Furthermore, one would expect that the Latin copy of the document would have ended up in the archive of Josaphat along with (or instead of?) the Arabic copy.

Setting aside momentarily the question of *how*, we also must consider *who* was responsible for the translation(s)—whether written, oral, or both. While the text does not identify a translator (or translators), it does name the men who were tasked with comparing the "copy [*al-nuskha*] with the original document [*al-kitāb al-'aṣlī*]"—Stephen, George the priest, another George, and Samuel.[243] From their names, all four appear to be Arabic-speaking Melkite clerics or scribes. Jamil and Johns suggest that these figures were tasked with ensuring the accuracy of the translation (from Arabic to Latin). Once again, this makes sense practically but does not accord with the actual text, which says that these men compared "this copy [*hadhihī al-nuskha*]"—presumably the Arabic text that ended up in the archives of Josaphat—with the (now lost) Arabic original that presumably went to al-Mawadd li-llāh. So, which is it? Were they comparing an original Arabic text with an Arabic copy—or were they comparing an original

---

[243] Unfortunately, the name of the scribe is totally obscured in the original manuscript, as can be seen by the photo provided by Jamil and Johns, "An Original Arabic Document," 175, 178, and 189.

Arabic text with a Latin translation?[244] As with many aspects of this enigmatic document, it is difficult to say with any certainty. What is certain is that in 1213, John the deacon leased a property to al-Mawadd li-llāh. The surviving documentation attesting to this transaction is in Arabic, yet the text suggests that this document was translated (textually or orally) so that John (a non-Arabic speaker/reader) could understand it and sign it. And finally, we know that four Melkite clerics or scribes were tasked with verifying that the documents were copied/translated accurately.

Complex as this process sounds (especially for a small lease that only brought in two dīnārs a year!), this likely would have been the norm for any transaction made across linguistic lines: drafting documents, making copies/translations, reading them aloud in the language of each party, and verifying the accuracy of copies/translations. For all that it does not tell us, this enigmatic document does tell us that the language barrier between John the deacon and al-Mawadd li-llāh was real but not significant enough to spill much ink over. In thirteenth-century Antioch, reliable translation processes had been established (even if it is unclear to us what exactly they were), and translators were available (even it if is unclear to us who exactly they were) to ensure that people like John and al-Mawadd li-llāh could come to terms. The same could be said for taxes and justice. Though Ibn Jubayr is careful to note that the poll-tax for Muslim peasants is "one dīnār and five qirat," neither he nor the extant Latin sources comment on how exactly the Franks communicated these tax expectations to the local populations and collected them year after year for nearly two centuries. Likewise, while the author of the *Livre des Assises* is very careful to comment on which holy books different confessional communities must swear over, he makes no comment on what language these oaths must be uttered in and more generally, how language barriers would be bridged in the intercommunal *Cour de la*

---

[244] Or, à la Cahen, were they comparing an original Latin text with an Arabic translation?

Fonde. In short, if the lack of commentary on *how* the Franks navigated the problem of language in local administration is vexing for modern scholars, it is also telling. The problem of language in local administration was real, but the conquering Franks and the subjected Syrian Muslims and Christians found ways to bridge the barrier of language. The remainder of this chapter will examine the people tasked to bridge these barriers and analyze the processes of translating not only words and texts but institutions of local administration.

Intermediary Officials as Translators

The Rays/Ra'īs: *Conversion and Language Learning*

When discussing the survival of Islamic institutions in thirteenth-century Valencia, the historian Robert Burns warns that local rulers often "hide behind a shifting screen of titles that [are] imprecise, modestly ambiguous, or generic." The implication: titles and offices, like *ra'īs* or *wazīr*, "require clarification for a given time and place."[245] The same, I would argue, goes for medieval Syria. Therefore, in order to lay a foundation for our study of the *rays/ra'īs*, I will discuss three examples of *ru'asā'* in Islamic Syria on the eve of the First Crusade. First, in Ibn al-Athīr, we read about the *qādī* of Jabala, Ibn Sulayha, who was the semi-autonomous ruler of Jabala when the Franks besieged the city in 1101. His father, Manṣūr, according to Ibn al-Athīr, was the "headman [*ra'īs*] of Jabala" when the city was under Byzantine rule and "acted as their qādī [*yaqḍī baynahum*]." When the Seljuks conquered the city from the Byzantines, Mansur "retained his position as judge there" and when he died, his son "succeeded him."[246] Here already, we see the slippage in terminology. Though Ibn Sulayha succeeded Manṣūr as the semi-autonomous ruler of Jabala, the son is called a *qādī*, but his father is called a *ra'īs*. However, it is

---

[245] Robert Burns, *Islam Under the Crusaders, Colonial Survival in the Thirteenth-Century Kingdom of Valencia* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1973), 353.

[246] Ibn al-Athīr, X, 310-11; trans. Richards, I, 38-39.

clear from the text that both father and son held the judicial functions of a *qādī* and the administrative and political functions of a *ra'īs*.[247] Further east, in the city of Saruj, Ibn al-Athīr speaks of another *ra'īs* whose role and authority were far inferior to those of the *ra'īs/qādī* of Jabala. This unnamed *ra'īs* led a small community of "three hundred indigent Muslims" in the majority Armenian city of Saruj. Little detail is given about this *ra'īs* except that he apostatized sometime after the Franks conquered the city in 1100/01. Though it is unclear exactly when he apostatized, it seems that he remained the *ra'īs* of the Muslim community of Saruj until 1108.[248] If the term *ra'īs* could denote the semi-autonomous ruler of a city, as well as the leader of a tiny urban Muslim minority, it could also denote a rural village chief. For example, William of Tyre records that when the Franks marched through Samaria in 1100, "certain petty chiefs from the surrounding country came down to the siege, bringing with them gifts of bread and wine, figs and raisins."[249] These rural village headmen, called *reguli* in Latin by William of Tyre, are similar to the *ra'īs* that Ibn Jubayr encountered in 1184 in the rural hinterland of Acre.[250]

In our exploration of the Frankish institution of the *rays*, we will pursue three related questions clustered around the ideas of continuity and conversion. First, did the Franks usually appoint a new *rays/ra'īs*, or did they merely sanction existing community leaders (who often claimed a hereditary right to the office)? Second, how common was conversion, especially as a strategy to retain one's position of power in the midst of a regime change? And finally, what are the linguistic implications for the work of *rayses* as local administrators?

---

[247] In Syria in the 10th through 12th centuries, the *ra'īs* of a large town often functioned as the mayor/governor and was responsible for the town militia (*ahdath*). See Axel Havemann, "The Vizier and the Rais in Saljuq Syria: The Struggle for Urban Self-Representation." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 21, no. 2 (1989): 233.
[248] Ibn al-Athīr X, 462; trans. Richards, I, 138-39.
[249] WT IX.20 [I, 410].
[250] The Arabic *ra'īs* was often translated as *regulus* in Latin. See Ibn Jubayr, ed. Wright, 302; trans. Broadhurst, 317.

Regarding the question of the continuity of the pre-Frankish office of the *ra'īs*, let us return to our three examples in the early twelfth century. One can assume that powerful *ru'asā'* who resisted the Franks and made alliances with Seljuk or Fatimid armies, such as the *ra'īs* of Jabala, were unlikely to keep their office in a post-conquest Frankish administration.[251] However, for those who were willing to cooperate with the Frankish invaders—either through conversion to Latin Christianity (as was the case with the *ra'īs* of Saruj) or through gestures of homage and loyalty (as was the case with the rural *ru'asā'* in Samaria)—it appears that many such *ru'asā'* retained their offices. How many? It is impossible to tell, but it is significant that most of the *rayses* whom we find in Frankish Syria in the period seem to have been local Syrian Christians (or Muslims). Riley-Smith claims that of the sixteen urban *rayses* we find in the sources, at least ten were "certainly indigenous." Only one, Guy of Nablus, according to Riley-Smith, appears to have been "indubitably a Frank."[252] To Riley-Smith's sixteen urban *rayses* (culled primarily from Latin documentary sources), one could add two more from the Arabic sources: the Muslim (turned Christian) *ra'īs* of Saruj mentioned by Ibn al-Athīr and *ra'īs* Yunan of Tripoli mentioned by Usama ibn Munqidh.[253] Though Ibn al-Athīr and Usama are explicit about the ethno-religious identity of these urban *ru'asā'* (the former being Muslim and the latter being a local Christian), things are less clear in the documentary sources in which usually all the information we have on a *rays* is a name and title.

As a result, the only way to guess at the ethno-religious identity of a *rays* in the documentary sources is to make educated guesses based on the onomastic evidence and the

---

[251] The *qadi/ra'īs* of Jabala, who strongly resisted the invading Franks in 1101, eventually fled the city and sought refuge in Baghdad. Ibn al-Athīr X, 311; trans. Richards, I, 39.

[252] Riley-Smith assumes Guy to be a Frank because of the Frankish/Latin names of his family members: Amicus (brother) and Henry (son). Riley-Smith, "Some Lesser Officials," 6.

[253] See Ibn al-Athīr, X, 462; trans. Richards, I, 138-39; and Usama, ed. Hitti, 79-80; trans. Cobb, 91-92. For more on *ra'īs* Yunan, see Lewis, "Medieval Diglossia," 128.

historical context. Some names are rather straightforward: *Abdelmessie* ('Abd al-Maṣih =

"servant of Christ") and *Bolos* (Paul) were likely Arabic-speaking local Christians.[254] *Guido*

Raicius of Nablus, with a brother named Amicus and a son named Henry, was likely a Frank.[255]

Other names, such as *Georgius* and *Johannis,* clearly suggest that the *rays* was Christian, but it is

unclear if he was a Latin Christian or a local Syrian Christian. Still other names, such as

Escandar or *Sadé*, are clearly not Latin, but it is unclear if these individuals were Muslims or

local Christians.[256] Though it is difficult to assign ethno-linguistic labels based merely on names

and titles, I would agree with Riley-Smith's claim that most of the urban *rayses* in our sources

are local Syrians—and predominantly Christians.[257] In fact, though I have identified five names

of urban *rayses* who could be either Muslim or local Christian, I have found no urban *rays* who

is indisputably Muslim.[258] Our only clear cases of Muslim *rayses* are in the countryside where

we find names like *Abet* (Abed), *Brahym* (Ibrahīm)*, Gemeredi* (Jamal ad-Dīn?), *Meged* (Majid?)*,*

and *Sereg*.[259] Of the fifteen rural *rayses* in the documentary sources, a few are clearly Syrian

Christians, and only one (*Thome*) might be a Frank. The large majority of this set are either

Muslim or Eastern Christian, and in some cases, the context of the text (or region) strongly

suggests that the *rays* was a Muslim.[260]

---

[254] "*Abdelmessie, raiz de Margat…*" *CGOH*, no. 467; and "*raiz Bolos…*" *CGOH*, no. 2915.
[255] See Delaborde, *Chartes*, no. 43; and *CGOH,* nos. 530-32.
[256] For a recent example of a scholar grappling with similar onomastic evidence, see Lewis
      "Medieval Diglossia," 128-29.
[257] Riley-Smith, "Some Lesser Officials," 6.
[258] The names of potential Muslim *rayses* include: *Morage* (1140s), *Melegano/Mozzageth*
      (1150)*, Escandar* (1163), and *Sadé* (1181). See Rozière, *Cart.*, no. 116; "Fragment d'un
      cartulaire de l'ordre de Saint-Lazare, en Terre Sainte," *AOL*, ii, nos. 7-8; *CGOH*, App.
      no. XIII; J. Delaville Le Roulx, "Inventaire de pièces de Terre-Sainte de l'ordre de
      l'Hôpital," *ROL*, iii, no. 140.
[259] See *CGOH*, no. 2747; and Tafel & Thomas, II, nos. 299, 374 and 378.
[260] For example, we find *Sade, Haindoule,* and *Meged* listed as rayses over what appears to have
      been a predominantly Muslim village with people named *Mohamet* and *Nor el doule* (Nur
      ad-Dawla?). See Tafel & Thomas, II, no. 299, (p. 374).

The tedious, albeit important, parsing out of ethno-linguistic identities is complicated

further when we broach the topic of conversion. Did many among the already established urban

and village *ru'asā'* convert to Latin Christianity in order to secure their position in the

transitioning administration? If our example of the *ra'īs* of Saruj opens up the possibility, the

names in our documentary sources offer a few clues but no definite answers. There are two ways

to look for potential converts among the thirty-three names we have of urban and rural *rayses*.

First, and perhaps the most straightforward, we must look for *rayses* who function as witnesses

in Latin charters. As Riley-Smith points out, in Frankish law, the testimony of non-Latins was

inadmissible in cases involving Latins.[261] This legal principle of "peerage" extended to cases

involving non-Latins as well, as we read in the *Assizes de Bourgeois*:

> … a Saracen cannot be a guarantor against a Jew, nor a Jew against a Saracen, nor a Saracen against a Jacobite, nor a Jacobite against a Syrian, for a debt, or for an inheritance, or for any other business… for the law decrees that concerning this rule, the guarantor must be of the same nationality as the one who makes the claim…[262]

Therefore, any *rays* we find in a witness list in a transaction involving a Latin suggests that the

listed *rays* must be either a Frank or a Syrian (whether Christian or Muslim) who converted to

the Latin rite. Though none of our fifteen rural *rayses* appear as witnesses in documents, nine of

our eighteen urban *rayses* appear as witnesses in these documents (with the other nine being

mentioned in different ways, often as buyers/sellers or recipients of property). These nine *rayses*

are not necessarily converts. Some of them may have been Franks, like Guy of Nablus, but

witnesses with (non-Latin) names like *Mafe*, *Johan Semes* (*Shams?*), and *Escandar*, would

certainly be candidates as converts to Latin Christianity.[263]

---

[261] Riley-Smith, "Some Lesser Officials," 6 fn 7.

[262] *RHC Lois II*, 55-56. English translation from S. J. Allen and Emilie Amt, *The Crusades: A Reader* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 95.

[263] See *CGOH*, nos. 467, 2748; and *CGOH*, App. no. XIII.

Another, perhaps more oblique, way of looking for potential converts is to look for families of *rayses* in which one member has a Latin name and the other has a local Syrian name. For example, we find in the documentary evidence that *Sadé* (Sa'īd?) and his brother Guillaume sold a garden to King Baldwin IV in 1181.[264] The name *Sadé* certainly suggests a Syrian/non-Frank, and the fact that he is labeled *rays des Sarrazins de Tyre* suggests that he was the *rays* of the Muslim community of Tyre—pointing to a Muslim identity.[265] So how do we explain this *Sadé*, who presumably functioned as a leader and judge of the Muslim community in Tyre, having a brother named Guillaume? There are two (maybe three) plausible explanations. First, *Sadé* and Guillaume are members of a family of relatively recent converts to Latin Christianity; hence, one son received a typically Syrian name and the other received (or adopted) a Latin name. Second, *Sadé* and Guillaume are members of a Syrian Muslim family whose parents did not convert but to some extent participated in the Frankish culture of Tyre by naming one of their sons a typically Latin Christian name.[266] Another mixed family that adds to our list of potential converts are two brothers who functioned as rural *rayses* of the village of Batūratish, *Raiz Bolos* (Paul) and *Raiz Guillaume*.[267] Analyzed in isolation, one might assume that *Raiz Bolos* was an Eastern Christian, but when one considers that his brother was named Guillaume, it seems likely that *Bolos* and *Guillaume* were members of a family that converted to the Latin rite. If we

---

[264] Delaville Le Roulx, "Inventaire de pièces de Terre-Sainte de l'ordre de l'Hôpital," *ROL*, iii, no. 140.

[265] The tragic difficulty with this particular source (cited above) is that we only have an eighteenth-century inventory (in French) of a now lost Latin document. Thus, it is impossible to discern if the phrase "*rays des Sarrazins de Tyre*" was a close translation of the original Latin document or merely a loose interpretation (particularly of the word "Sarrazins"). If it is the former, then that would suggest that Sadé and his family were converts from Islam. If it is the latter, then Sadé may have been from a Syrian Christian family that transferred to the Latin rite.

[266] A third explanation that tells us little about *Sadé* is that Guillaume converted to Latin Christianity as an adult and perhaps changed his name.

[267] *CGOH* no. 2915. Riley-Smith also argues that *Raiz Bolos* and *Raiz Guillaume* were Latin Christians. Riley-Smith, "Some Lesser Officials," 11.

interpret these mixed families as converts, then that raises our total number of potential converts to twelve (out of eighteen) urban *rayses* and adds at least two potential converts to the list of fifteen rural *rayses*.[268] Though we are dealing with a degree of source bias, it is still noteworthy that two-thirds of our urban *rayses* in the extant sources appear to have been converts to Latin Christianity.[269]

If our sources give us the impression that urban *rayses* converted at a much higher rate than rural *rayses*, perhaps this can be explained by the different roles of the urban and rural *rayses* and their frequency of contact with Frankish administrators. For example, a village *ra'īs*, who according to one document was charged to "hold, guard, and work" his village, may have only been in contact with a Frankish lord (or his representative) seasonally when crops and taxes were due.[270] An urban *rays*, on the other hand, as the head of the *Cour des Syriens* in Frankish cities, would have certainly had regular contact with his Frankish counterpart, the viscount—who presided over the *Cour des Bourgeois* and functioned as mayor or governor of the city.[271] Though it is clear that the Franks were willing to employ (non-Latin) Syrians in administrative posts, it is also clear that there were concrete career benefits to converting to the Latin rite— especially for an important urban official like a *rays*. Why? Because conversion to Latin

---

[268] How do we get to 12 potential converts? Take the nine *rayses* who acted as witnesses, subtract Guy of Nablus (since we believe him to be a Frank), add the *ra'īs* of Saruj (whom we find in the narrative sources), add *Sadé* and *Guillaume*, and add *Abdelmessie*, whose son, *Georgius,* also listed as *raiz de Margat*, appears as a witness in 1174.

[269] Obviously, we must be careful with this quantatative data, since our sources will certainly privilege *rayses* who converted to Latin Christianity. In fact, the only way for non-Latin/non-convert Syrian *rayses* to show up in Latin documents is to be an owner/buyer/seller of property (usually, involved in a transaction with a monastic house or military order).

[270] *Quod casale concessit tenendum, custodiendum et laborandum raiciis Messor, Brahym et Bennor, quamdiu placuerit magistro et fratribus dicte domus.* See *CGOH*, no. 2747.

[271] Though one court dealt with local Syrians and the other dealt with Frankish burgesses, these courts were not hermtically sealed from one another. As with the *Cour de la Fonde*, any cases involving life and limb in the *Cour des Syriens* was pushed up to the *Cour des Bourgeois*. Riley-Smith, *Feudal Nobility*, 90; *RHC Lois* I, 26.

Christianity not only changed one's religious status, but it changed one's legal status—and this change in legal status opened up possibilities for participation in Frankish urban society that were otherwise closed to non-Latins.[272]

Regarding the conversion of a Syrian *ra'īs*, does such a careerist move make sense if the convert in question does not speak the language of the elite class he is trying to enter? I would argue no. If we see a substantial number of *rayses* making the decision to convert to Latin Christianity (presumably based on careerist motives), these same people would have certainly made an effort to learn the language of the new ruling urban elite in order to further solidify their importance in Frankish urban administration. Though the relationship between conversion and language change is a complex one that evades simplistic explanations, I would argue that in the case of the urban *rayses* in Frankish Syria (and perhaps to a lesser extent the rural *rayses*), converts should be seen as likely polyglots. Even if a local urban *rays* chose not to convert to Latin Christianity, it still makes sense that he would learn the language of the ruling elite in order to function effectively as an intermediary between the local Syrian population and the Frankish ruling elite. In fact, one might argue that a local *rays'* usefulness to the new Frankish regime was contingent on his taking initiative to bridge the language gap between ruler and ruled—whether he learned the language himself or he identified and patronized interpreters.

The Tarjumān/Dragoman: *Feudalization and Continuity*

Though it seems that many urban *rayses* and even some rural *rayses* learned French, there were certainly some instances where linguistic mediation would be needed between a

---

[272] See "Assizes de la Cour des Bourgeois," *RHC Lois* II, CCIV-CCXII, 138-44; and Prawer, *Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 507-08.

Syrian *rays* and a Frankish lord or urban official.[273] Traditionally, scholars have argued that the officer tasked with mediating between *rays* and lord was the dragoman (though this hypothesis will be reevaluated below).[274] Unlike the office of the *rays*, which has clear links with its analogous institution (*ra'īs*) in Islamic Syria, the origins of the office of the dragoman are much more obscure. Riley-Smith suggests that the office of the dragoman in Frankish Syria is a continuation of the office of the *mutarjim*, who was "an assistant of the *qadi* in his dealings with the many peoples under Muslim rule."[275] The only problem with this attractive thesis is that we have no evidence of such an office in eleventh- or twelfth-century Syria. Riley-Smith's knowledge of the office of the *mutarjim* comes solely from Emile Tyan's *Histoire de l'organisation judiciaire en pays d'Islam* (1938). Tyan's discussion of the "*mutarjim*" as an auxiliary of the *qadi* amounts to one paragraph and is based entirely on juristic literature—namely Shafi'i, Ghazali, and Ibn Farhun.[276] While it is possible that this office (as defined classically by the jurists) existed in Islamic Syria on the eve of the crusade, we have no evidence that this was the case. Despite Riley-Smith's confident assertion of institutional continuity, it is wholly unclear whether the Franks were adopting a specific local institution wholesale or merely adopting a local term denoting the rather generic function of linguistic mediation. Furthermore, it is unclear how an officer whose most prominent function was linguistic mediation (in juridical contexts) came to have significant responsibilities in Frankish rural administration.

What further complicates (even undermines) the argument for institutional continuity with Islamic precedents is that most of the dragomans in the Latin sources appear to have been Franks, or least Latin Christians (potentially converts from Islam or Eastern Christianity).

---

[273] See, for example, *CGOH*, no. 2693.
[274] See Riley-Smith, "Some Lesser Officials," 16.
[275] Riley-Smith, "Some Lesser Officials," 15.
[276] Emile Tyan, *Histoire de l'organisation judiciaire en pays d'Islam* (Paris: Librairie du Recueil Sirey, 1938), I, 381.

Whereas our rural *rayses* have names like *Abet, Brahym, Sadé,* and *Meged*,[277] our dragomans have names like *Martinus*, *Samuel*, *Bernardus*, and *Radulfus*.[278] Furthermore, of the sixteen dragomans[279] we find in the Latin documentary sources, only two appear to be of Syrian origin—*Johannes* of Haifa and *Brain*.[280] Though it may be that other dragomans of Syrian origin are hiding behind Latin names, our current evidence suggests that very few local Syrians occupied the office of the dragoman in the Frankish period.[281] This striking absence of local dragomans in the sources, especially when compared with the relative abundance of local *rayses*, suggests one of two things. Either the Franks replaced preexisting Syrian officers (if such an analogous office existed) with Frankish dragomans—or there was never an established administrative office (with accompanying local officers) to begin with, so the Franks created the institution, filled its ranks with Frankish officers, and merely borrowed a rather generic Arabic title. I would tentatively argue the latter, for if the office of the *mutarjim*/*tarjumān* was already functioning in Syria, it would make sense for the Franks to sanction those local officers already functioning in the role (just as they appear to have done with the office of the *rays*).

---

[277] See *CGOH*, no. 2747; Tafel & Thomas II, 374.

[278] See Kohler, "Chartes de l'abbaye de Notre-Dame," nos. 3, 5; *CGOH*, no 450; *Codice Diplomatico Del Sacro Militare Ordine Gerosolimitano*, ed. Sebastiano Paoli (Lucca, 1733) I, 39.

[279] Of these sixteen, five are identified by the Latin title *interpres* (not dragoman), which Riley-Smith has argued is merely a Latin translation (rather than the usual transliteration) of both the word and the office—a point to which I will turn shortly. See Riley-Smith, "Some Lesser Officials," 15-16.

[280] *Johannes* is the son of a man named *Gambre*, suggesting non-Latin origins—perhaps a convert family. See *Tab. Ord. Theut.* no. 2; Rozière, *Cart.*, nos. 125 & 127. Alternative spellings for the name *Brain* are *Brahin* and *Brahyn*, which seems to be a Latin transliteration of the name *Brahim (Ibrahim?)*. See Rozière, *Cart.*, no. 185 (and no. 55 for a similar name). For more on *Johannes* and *Brain*, see also Riley-Smith, "Lesser Officials," 16-17.

[281] Even *Johannes* of Haifa, though presumably of Syrian origins, must have converted to Latin Christianity, as he appears as a witness in 1165, see Rozière, *Cart.*, no. 127.

Does this predominance of Latin names (fourteen out of sixteen) among dragomans in the documentary sources suggest that Franks (who learned Arabic) were doing a good deal of the work of linguistic mediation in local administration in this period? Prawer argues the negative, claiming, "… it is clear that their later functions had very little in common with their original titles. The *drugoman* probably began his career as an interpreter between the Arabic-speaking natives and the Frankish overlord, and became an important official with a high income." In short, it is "doubtful," according to Prawer, that the dragoman retained his original linguistic function as the office became feudalized and consequently held by Franks rather than local Syrians. Though most dragomans in the sources are Franks, Prawer assumes that they passed the actual work of linguistic mediation on to local Syrian Christians who were "more suited to the technical task."[282] While this is one possible explanation for the surprisingly high number of Franks holding a title that literally means "interpreter," this widely-held theory is completely unsupported in the sources.

For example, there is no evidence to support this trajectory of (polyglot) Syrian dragomans in the early period, followed by (monoglot) Frankish dragomans in the latter periods. In fact, all of our dragomans from the early decades of the twelfth century are Franks (or at least Latins), with our two Syrian dragomans appearing only in the 1160s.[283] Additionally, though it is clear that by the middle of the twelfth century the office of the dragoman developed responsibilities that went beyond the basic function of linguistic mediation and included the administration of villages,[284] one might argue that by their very nature these expanded responsibilities required an officer with the requisite language skills to bridge the communication

---

[282] Prawer, *Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 369.

[283] *Johannes* of Haifa, attested in 1160 and 1165; and *Brain*, attested in a charter in 1165. See
    Tab. Ord. Theut. no. 2; Rozière, *Cart.*, nos. 125, 127, &185.

[284] See *CGOH*, no. 480; Riley-Smith, "Lesser Officials," 16; and Prawer, *Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 369.

gap between the Frankish lord and the Syrian villagers and/or village *rays*. Like the polyglot

interpreter-envoy whose roles in diplomacy and linguistic mediation were very often intertwined

(even inseparable), in the case of the dragoman rural administration and linguistic mediation

went hand in hand. It is possible that some dragomans traveled with auxiliary interpreters, but

again, there is no evidence suggesting that this was the case.[285] It seems that Prawer's impulse to

add another mediating figure in the equation comes less from the evidence and more from his

dogged insistence that incredibly few Franks in the Levant bothered to learn Arabic.[286] The final

piece of evidence that suggests a continued linguistic role for the office of the dragoman comes

from the consistent usage of this term in Latin and Old French narrative sources in the thirteenth

century. For example, writing of his captivity in Egypt in 1250, Joinville observes, "There were

people called dragomans (*drugemens*) who knew the Saracen language and French, and they

translated the Saracen into French for Count Peter."[287] This is just one of many examples of the

term retaining its linguistic connotations into the thirteenth century.[288] In fact, in the long history

of the term dragoman in Western history (which appears to have its earliest origins in Frankish

Syria), the term usually denotes more than merely a linguistic mediator, but never (or rarely)

less.[289]

---

[285] Even monolingual dragomans (if such a figure existed) were still translators broadly defined because they occupied a link in the chain of cross-cultural/cross-linguistic communication.

[286] Put crudely, the circularity of Prawer's argument is as follows: if a Frank is called a dragoman, it can't mean that he actually did any translation work because we all know that no Franks learned Arabic. See Prawer, *Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 522.

[287] "Il avoit gens illec qui savoient le Sarrazinnois et le françois, que l'on appele drugemens, qui enromançoient le sarrazinnois au cone Perron." Joinville, ed. de Wailly, 182 [335]; trans. Smith, 228.

[288] For other examples, see Villehardouin, ed. de Wailly, 106 [186]; Ambroise, ln. 1686; *RHC Occ, II*, 522.

[289] See Lewis, Bernard. *From Babel to Dragomans: Interpreting the Middle East* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

This question of the expanded administrative role of the dragoman in local administration raises another important question. What exactly was their role in local administration? While the range of functions of the urban and rural *rayses* seems clear enough, the exact role of the dragoman in Frankish administration in not entirely clear. In fact, besides their title (which denotes a generic function of linguistic mediation), we only have two sources that give us any clues about the role of the dragoman as a rural administrator. The first source comes from a charter of 1175, which confirms the transfer of the rights of the *drugomanagiam* of the villages of Turon, Cabor, and Coket to a man named Barutus.[290] In this document, we learn that the office of the dragoman (at least in this instance) was a hereditary fief and that the dragoman was entitled to a certain portion of the agricultural produce of the villages.[291] The only clue that we have about his role as an administrator is the guarantee to the dragoman that "when you are in one of these villages, the villagers will provide you and your horse with food."[292] This privilege, as well as the right to a share of the agricultural produce, suggests that as a dragoman Barutus functioned as an overseer of these three villages and that he divided his time between them.

At this point, it is unclear how a dragoman differed from a rural *rays*, some of whom were also responsible with the administration of multiple villages.[293] Though Riley-Smith concedes that some rural *rayses* had authority over multiple villages (similar to a dragoman), he argues for a clear distinction between the roles of the *rays* and the dragoman in rural

---

[290] *CGOH*, no. 480. For more on this document see Ellenblum, *Frankish Rural Settlement*, 194-98.

[291] For the particularities of the arrangement, see Ellenblum, *Frankish Rural Settlement*, 195.

[292] *Preterea cum fueris in uno istorum casalium, villani providebunt tibi et equitature tue victualia. CGOH*, no. 480.

[293] See, for example, *raicus Abet* in 1255, who was given charge over several rural villages/estates. *CGOH*, no. 2747.

administration.[294] His primary evidence for a distinct role of the dragoman is an intriguing

document from 1254, which describes a transfer of land from Julian of Sidon to the

Hospitallers—and the oath of fealty taken by the local *rayses* and villagers to their new lords.

The charter describes this event as follows:

> Over a naked sword, they [the *rayses* and men of the village] swore according to their
> custom an oath prescribed to them by an interpreter and they made fealty and homage to
> the master, who received it for himself and the brothers of the house (order).[295]

As we have seen in the case of diplomatic oaths, this oath of fealty was mediated by an

interpreter, which is why Riley-Smith argues that the dragoman was the "intermediary between

the lord and the rays."[296] There's only one problem. The linguistic mediator in this document is

not called a dragoman but rather an *interpres*.[297] Riley-Smith argues elsewhere that the term

interpres in the documentary sources is synonymous with the term dragoman, but it is simply too

difficult to discern in this particular case whether or not the term *interpres* is denoting a generic

translator or the more narrowly defined (polyglot) rural administrator that clearly came to be

associated with the term dragoman in Frankish Syria. With this document as our only evidence

for the dragoman's role as an intermediary between lord and *rays*, it seems just as likely (if not

more so) that the roles of the *rays* and the dragoman had a good deal of overlap. Perhaps there

were some lordships where one dragoman oversaw multiple villages that were each individually

---

[294] Riley-Smith on the authority of the rural *rays*: "The evidence seems to suggest that one can
make no generalizations, for in some cases one rays was governing a single village, in
others he would be responsible for several and in others still his authority would be
shared with a colleague." Riley-Smith, "Lesser Officials," 10.

[295] *CGOH*, no. 2693. Translated in Prawer, *Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem,* 368.

[296] Riley-Smith, "Lesser Officials," 16.

[297] *Raycius vero et homines predicti incontinenti, asserentes ea libenter facere, super ensem
nudum, computato eis per interpretem juramento juxta eorum consuetudinem, juraverunt,
et fidelitatem ac homagium fecerunt dicto magistro, recipienti pro se et fratribus dicte
domus.* CGOH, no. 2693.

supervised by a local *rays*.[298] But it is also just as possible that there were some rural estates

administrated by an intermediary officer called a dragoman and other rural estates administered

by an intermediary officer called a *rays*. One might even speculate that villages where there were

already a local *rays* and established institutions retained them under the Franks; and other

villages—either newly settled or those whose institutions and leadership structures were

devasted by war—were administrated by a (Frankish) dragoman.

The enigma of the dragoman's role is further complicated by the vexing fact that this

officer seems to disappear from the documentary sources in the thirteenth century.[299] Of the

sixteen dragomans we find in the Latin documentary sources, fifteen come from before 1184.[300]

Thus, our only named dragoman in the thirteenth century is Guy of Arsuf, attested in one

document from 1261.[301] So where did all the dragomans go in the thirteenth century? At present,

there are two explanations (that are not necessary mutually exclusive). The first, espoused by

Riley-Smith, is that the officers who did the administrative and linguistic work of the dragoman

adopted other titles that "concealed their functions."[302] One such title suggested (tentatively) by

Riley-Smith is *casalier*, an officer found in rural estates governed by the Templars and

Hospitallers. The evidence for these officers is sparse, but it seems that these figures had

---

[298] We have no evidence for this, as *rayses* and dragomans rarely appear in the same documents. And on the rare occasions that they do, it is clear that they are not officers in the same lordship. See Kohler, "Chartes de l'abbaye de Notre-Dame," no. 10.

[299] As mentioned earlier, the term dragoman does not disappear from usage in the period. On the contrary, the term—in its most generic sense—seems to have gained greater prevalence in the Latin/French-speaking world in the thirteenth century. However, as the generic term dragoman begins to emerge in (Old French) narrative sources, the local administrator seems to disappear altogether from Latin documentary sources.

[300] This number (16) includes five officers referred to in the documents as *interpres*.

[301] See *CGOH*, no. 2985. The only other potential "dragoman" from the thirteenth century is the unnamed interpeter (*interpres*) who mediated between the Hospitallers and the rural *rayses* as they took their oath of fealty. *CGOH*, no. 2693.

[302] Riley-Smith, "Lesser Officials," 16.

administrative responsibility over the rural estates of the military orders.[303] Though the role of

the *casalier* also seems analogous to that of the rural *rays*, Riley-Smith links the *casalier* with

the dragoman because there is one instance in the narrative sources (to be discussed shortly)

where a Templar *casalier* functions as an interpreter.[304]

Another theory for the disappearance of the dragoman is that the office of the dragoman

was eventually combined with the office of the *scriba.* The issue of overlap in function will be

discussed in the next section, but one interesting trend that lends some weight to this theory is the

fact that *scribae* begin showing up in the documentary sources just before dragomans begin to

disappear. For example, of our thirty-two named scribes in the documentary sources, twelve are

from the late twelfth century (1150-93) and twenty are from the thirteenth century (1200-

1286).[305] We have no evidence of this office in the documentary sources before 1150.[306]

Therefore, when one considers that fifteen of sixteen dragomans appear in documents before

1184 and all thirty-two scribes appear in documents after 1150 (nearly two-thirds of them after

1200), it is tempting to see a trajectory of dragomans eventually being replaced by *scribae* in

their role as interpreters-administrators.[307] We even have evidence from 1160 of one official

holding both a dragomanate and a scribanage. But this must be considered alongside other

---

[303] Compare *CGOH*, no. 480 with *La Règle du Temple*, ed. Henri de Curzon (Paris: Librairie de Renouard, 1886), nos. 135 and 181.

[304] *Les Gestes des Chiprôis*, ed. Gaston Raynaud (Geneva: Jules-Guillaume Fick, 1887), 180; and Riley-Smith, "Lesser Officials," 16.

[305] Riley-Smith counts only twenty-four scribes in the documentary sources, but this may be because his total count (of 24) does not include scribes employed by the military orders. See Riley-Smith, "Lesser Officials," 22 fn 2 and 23.

[306] Of course, scribes—generically defined—operated in both Latin and Islamic administrations prior to 1150. But what we are discussing is a particular official in Frankish local administration which only appears in the sources after 1150.

[307] Riley-Smith rejects this theory outright, while Prawer and Ellenblum implicitly accept the possibility of the conflation of the roles of the dragoman and the *scriba*. See Riley-Smith, "Lesser Officials," 24; Prawer, *Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 369; Ellenblum, *Frankish Rural Settlement*, 202.

evidence (from 1183 and 1261) of these offices being held by two different men in the same lordship.[308] Perhaps in some lordships, one man held both titles (and fulfilled both functions), while in others the offices and functions were filled by different people. If such an institutional evolution was the general trend in the thirteenth century, what would this suggest about the evolving linguistic needs of the Frankish rural administration? This is a question to which we will return shortly.

The Scriba: *Continuity and Diversity*

Setting aside for a moment the possibility that the offices of the dragoman and the *scriba* merged in the thirteenth century, let us first consider pre-Frankish precedents for this important lesser official. Arguments for continuity with both Byzantine and Fatimid precedents are supported by the apparent survival of two similar institutions: the Byzantine *sekreta* and the Islamic *dīwān*. In the *Assizes of Jerusalem*, we read about the *Grant Secret*, the central cadastral office of the Kingdom of Jerusalem,[309] which was responsible for land registration and revenue collection and was led by the *seneschal* who oversaw a large staff of scribes.[310] In Ibn Jubayr's *Rihla*, he writes of his experience at the customs house (*dīwān*) of Acre, which was staffed by Arabic-speaking Christian scribes (*kuttāb*) and led by an official Ibn Jubayr calls the *Saḥib al-Dīwān*.[311] Despite these promising examples, it is difficult to establish clear lines of

---

[308] See *Tab. Ord. Theut.,* nos. 2 and 16; and *CGOH*, no. 2985.
[309] There is some evidence for local *secretes* in certain major cities and lordships. See Riley-Smith, *Feudal Nobility,* 58-61.
[310] *John of Ibelin: Le Livre des Assises*, ed. Edbury, 585/ *RHC, Lois, I,* 412. See Prawer, *Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 123, 144, 371; Riley-Smith, *Feudal Nobility,* 58-61.
[311] See Ibn Jubayr, ed. Wright, 302; trans. Broadhurst, 317. While this is our only mention of an official of this name, the *saḥib al-diwān* is a well-attested official in the Islamicate world. See H.L. Gottschalk, "Dīwān," *EI*².

administrative continuity.[312] For example, Ibn Jubayr's mention of the dīwān of Acre is from the late twelfth century (1184) and is our sole evidence of this institution (at least by its Arabic name) in Frankish Syria. Similarly, we have no explicit evidence of the *Grant Secrete* before the thirteenth century.[313] Moreover, it is unclear how these two institutions were related. Was the dīwān of Acre separate from the *Grant Secrete*—or were these merely two names (one Arabic, the other Greek/French) for the same institution? Perhaps more importantly, who were the scribes who carried out the functions of these adminstrative offices? Should we assume that they retained their roles when the Franks conquered the region (like many *ru'asā'*)—or did the Franks appoint new officers to these administrative posts (as seems to have been the case with many dragomans)? And why, unlike the *ra'īs/rays* and *tarjumān/dragoman*, did the Franks choose not to adopt indigenous terms (AR: *kātib* or GK: *nūmīkūs*) for this officer?

Before addressing the question of *who*, let us first consider *how* scribes functioned in Frankish administration. Riley-Smith cautions us that when we see *scribae* or *scribani* in the sources, we should be aware that the term can refer either to a generic clerk, tasked with drafting documents, or to a specialized officer, tasked with collecting a lord's revenue and often employed by a cadastral office (whether central or local).[314] Although this distinction is helpful initially, its utility diminishes when one takes a look at the wide variety of functions filled by scribes in the sources. For example, in the documentary sources (which mention many scribes but rarely give us clues about their role), we have one valuable document from 1200 that

---

[312] Riley-Smith makes an argument for administrative continuity with the Fatimid dīwān and its various branches, but it is unconvincing and wholly lacking in evidence. See Riley-Smith, "Lesser Officials," 20.

[313] See Riley-Smith, "Lesser Officials," 19 fn 5. In an Antiochene charter from the 1140s, we find "*Georgius, magister secrete*" in a witness list, which some scholars have taken as evidence that, as early as the 1140s, the Principality of Antioch did have a cadastral office with administrative links to the Byzantine *sekreta*. See Claude Cahen, *La Syrie du nord à l'époque des croisades* (Paris: Geuthner, 1940), 465-66.

[314] Riley-Smith, "Lesser Officials," 23.

suggests that scribes in rural estates were administrators over several villages and were entitled to a share of the produce (similar to the dragoman).[315] In the *Livre des Assises de la Cour des Bourgeois*, we learn that scribes were tasked with collecting revenues for their lords, whether in the urban courts (the *Fonde* and the *Chaine*) or in rural estates (*casalia*).[316] In the same text, we find that the scribes employed by the *Cour des Bourgeois* were responsible for recording the proceedings of the court, keeping the accounting books of the court, drafting all charters for the viscount, and carrying the trunk that contained the records and books of the court.[317] In the *Livre des Assises* of John of Ibelin, we learn the scribes of the *Grant Secrete* not only had a role in land registration and finance, but also assisted the *seneschal* in the coronation ceremony of the king of Jerusalem.[318] In Ibn Jubayr, as mentioned above, scribes at the dīwān of Acre were tasked with collecting taxes from caravans travelling to (and through) the city. And finally, in the 1213 document from Antioch (discussed earlier), we learn that scribes were tasked not only with drafting documents of sale, but also with verifying copies and perhaps more importantly making translations of documents.[319]

Though none of these individual tasks seems beyond the scope of a "scribe" broadly defined, it is clear from these sources that a given scribe's functions depend largely on his administrative context (the *secret*, the *Cour des Bourgeois*, the rural estate, the customs house, etc.). The problem is that it is not always clear from the sources (especially the documentary sources) what that context is. This problem is further complicated by the fact that the small handful of sources that help us map out the diverse functions of the "scribe" are in different languages and thus use different terms for this figure. In the Latin document from 1200

---

[315] See *Cod. Dipl. Geros. i,* 288-89.
[316] "Livre des Assises de la Cour des Bourgeois," *RHC Lois,* II, 219-20.
[317] "Livre des Assises de la Cour des Bourgeois," *RHC Lois,* II, 242-43.
[318] *John of Ibelin: Le Livre des Assises*, ed. Edbury, 578-79 and 670-71.
[319] N. Jamil and J. Johns, "An Original Arabic Document from Crusader Antioch," 175/178.

describing the role (or at least jurisdiction) of the rural scribe, we find the term *scribano*.[320] In

the Old French legal texts outlining the roles of scribes in the *Grant Secret* and in the courts,

scribes are called *escrivains*.[321] In Ibn Jubayr, the scribes of the dīwān of Acre are referred to by

the Arabic term for scribe, *kuttāb* (pl. for *kātib*).[322] And in the 1213 Arabic document from

Antioch, the scribe who drafted the document and the scribes who verified the copies were

designated by an Arabic transliteration of the Greek term for scribe *nūmīkūs*. *Scribano, escrivain,*

kātib, nūmīkūs—should we assume the basic equivalence of these terms and assume that all four

usually refer to the same official? Or could we hypothesize that at least some of these terms

referred to different types of scribes in different administrative contexts (and perhaps in different

regions)? Unfortunately, definite answers to these questions are elusive. However, besides the

most basic role(s) of drafting documents (and perhaps collecting revenues), one additional (and

overlooked) function that ties together this heterogeneous group of literate administrative

officials is their role as translators.

If their role as translators is not always made explicit in the texts, the contexts of their

administrative tasks strongly suggest that most scribes had to be polyglots. For example, in 1213,

it clear that both the scribe (*nūmīkūs*) who translated the original document from Arabic to Latin

and the scribe(s) who verified the copies/translation needed to know both Arabic and Latin (and

possibly French) to do their job.[323] The scribes (*kuttāb*) of the customs house at Acre, according

to Ibn Jubayr, wrote and spoke Arabic. It is possible that these individuals were monoglot Syrian

Christians, but considering that they were employees of the Frankish administration and working

in the cosmopolitan trading-port Acre, it seems more likely that they were both literate in Latin

---

[320] *Cod. Dipl. Geros. i,* 288-89.
[321] *John of Ibelin: Le Livre des Assises*, ed. Edbury, 578-79.
[322] Ibn Jubayr, ed. Wright, 302; trans. Broadhurst, 317.
[323] Perhaps not every scribe involved in this transaction knew both languages, but at least two (or
three) must have known both languages.

and conversant in French. When considering the diverse roles of scribes outlined in the *Assises de Jerusalem* and *Assises des Bourgeois*, two administrative contexts are worth highlighting. First, though one might imagine that a scribe in the *Cour des Bourgeois* would not necessarily need to be multilingual, it is difficult to imagine a monoglot scribe in the intercommunal *Cour de la Fonde*—where both French and Arabic must have played a role. In fact, one might wonder if the scribe of this court functioned not only as a record-keeper and revenue collector but also as an interpreter (whether or not he was not the primary or sole linguistic mediator in the court). Second, in the context of land registration, we learn that by Frankish law, the division of land (sales/leases) had to be facilitated by a scribe (presumably of the *secret*) and a sergeant.[324] Though it is clear that the primary role of the scribe in this context was to record the new boundaries of the land (and perhaps to draft documents for the buyer and seller), it is also possible that these officials were needed to bridge the language barrier between buyers and sellers of different ethno-linguistic backgrounds.[325] Finally, in the case of the Latin document from 1200, which outlines the role of rural scribes in administrating several villages, it is important to point out that the scribe (*scribano*) being granted these privileges and responsibilities was a man named *Soquerio*—an enigmatic but clearly non-Latin name. As a Syrian Christian,[326] his mother tongue would have likely been Arabic, and as *scribano* of Frankish Caesarea, one might also assume that he was literate in Latin and conversant in French. As an officer tasked with collecting rents and administering rural villages on behalf of his

---

[324] *John of Ibelin: Le Livre des Assises*, ed. Edbury, 670-71.

[325] The possibility of buying and selling property across ethno-linguistic boundaries is implied in the text when it discusses the task (presumably of the scribe) of gathering together the elders of the countryside (whether they be Franks, Syrians, Greeks, Muslims) to attest to the original boundaries of the land being divided. See *John of Ibelin: Le Livre des Assises*, ed. Edbury, 671.

[326] The fact that *Soquerio* had relatives named *Johannes* and *Georgius* indicates that he was a Christian (and not a Muslim). See *Cod. Dipl. Geros. i*, 288-89.

Frankish lord, it is difficult to imagine a monoglot scribe (whether Frankish or Syrian) fulfilling these crucial tasks.

The hypothesis that most scribes were bilingual and often filled the dual role of scribe and translator is supported by our knowledge of *who* filled these offices in Frankish Syria. Of our thirty-two named scribes in the documentary sources, at least twenty were Syrian Christians (or Muslims), with another seven having names that could either be Latin or Eastern Christian.[327] Moreover, as was the case with many urban *rayses*, almost half (eight out of twenty) of our Syrian scribes appear as witnesses in documents, suggesting that they were converts to Latin Christianity. Considering the range of functions they were required to fulfill in local administration, it is difficult to imagine that many of these Arabic-speaking Syrian scribes would have been unable to communicate with their French-speaking lord and his other officers. It is possible that interpreters were employed as intermediaries between Frankish lords and their Syrian scribes, but these additional mediating figures are never mentioned in the sources. It is also possible that some Arabic-speaking Frankish lords, such as Reynald of Sidon, may have communicated with the scribe(s) of their lordship in Arabic. However, one cannot assume that this was the case in all lordships throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. What seems most likely is that most of the scribes employed by the Franks were bilingual and that they relied on their linguistic skills to effectively mediate between their Frankish lords and the local population—whether they were drafting multilingual documents, collecting revenues from locals, or keeping records at intercommunal courts.

---

[327] Scribes named *Georgio Suriano* and *Boteros* are clearly Syrian Christians; scribes named *Seit* [*Sa'īd*] or *Nasser* could be either Syrian Christians or Muslims; and scribes named *Johannes* and *Petros* could either be Latin Christians or Syrian Christians. In my tally of twenty Syrian/non-Frankish scribes, I only considered names in the first two categories.

If the evidence suggests that most of our scribes in the period were polyglot Syrian Christians (or Muslims), how does this correspond with the theory that the office of the dragoman—staffed primarily by Franks—was subsumed by the office of the scribe in the thirteenth century? This is not an easy question to answer definitively, as we are potentially dealing with both an evolution of title (dragoman to *scriba*) and an evolution of personnel (Franks to Syrians). Prawer speculated that the office of the dragoman was initially filled by (polyglot) Syrians who were then replaced by (monoglot) Franks as the office became feudalized, but I would suggest nearly the opposite. The evidence seems to suggest a movement from (polyglot) Frankish dragomans in the twelfth century to (polyglot) Syrian scribes in the thirteenth century. Why this would be the case is not entirely clear, but I would venture that literacy may have played a role in this development. As far as we know, the role(s) of the dragoman required competence in spoken languages (colloquial Arabic and French), but not necessarily written languages (classical Arabic and Latin). The office of the scribe, on the other hand, seemed to require competency in both written and spoken languages. Thus, considering their overlap in function and their common need for linguistic mediation, it makes sense that the office of the dragoman might be subsumed by the office of the *scriba*, which offered a similar set of services and more. It also makes sense that scribes were primarily Syrians, for though we have ample evidence of Franks who *spoke* Arabic in this period, we have very little evidence of Franks who *read* and *wrote* Arabic in this period—and these few examples come in the context of cross-cultural trade (to be discuss in the next chapter), not local administration.

The Mathessep: *The Survival of the Hisba in Frankish Syria/Cities?*

If we have identified lesser officials who mediated between Franks and Syrians in tax collection (rural *rayses* and scribes), the courts (urban *rayses* and scribes), agricultural administration (rural *rayses*, dragomans, and/or scribes), and financial transactions (scribes), perhaps the one contact zone left in need of translators is the urban market or *sūq*. It appears that in Frankish Syria this mediation was provided in part by the *mathessep*, the Frankish heir of the Islamicate office of the *muḥtasib*—or market inspector. However, one of the most intriguing things about the Frankish office of the *mathessep* is its conspicuous absence in the sources. Whereas *rayses*, dragomans, and *scribae* appear frequently in the documentary sources and occasionally in the narrative and legal sources, the office of the *mathessep* appears only twice in the sources—once in a thirteenth-century Venetian document from Tyre and once in a fourteenth-century legal text from Frankish Cyprus.[328] Considering the prominence of the office of the *muḥtasib* in Islamicate cities, the near total absence of the *mathessep* in the Latin sources suggests one of three explanations: first, that the *mathessep* had a real presence in many Frankish cities but may have been staffed primarily by local Syrians who had little opportunity to appear in the Latin documentary sources; second, that the office of the *mathessep* was adopted only in a few cities (such as Tyre and Nicosia); or third, that the title *mathessep* was interchangeable with another more common title denoting a similar function (perhaps *bailli* or *justicarius*). Whether this officer was widespread in Frankish Syria or only found in Tyre, and whether this officer had a unique role or was interchangeable with other urban officials, the *mathessep* should be considered—along with the *rays*, dragoman, and *scriba*—as a type of translator.

---

[328] Tafel & Thomas, II, 359-60; and "Abrégé du Livre des Assises," *RHC Lois,* II, 237-38, 243-44.

Though our earliest evidence for the *mathessep* in Frankish Syria comes from the early thirteenth century—making direct lines of continuity from pre-Frankish administrations difficult to draw—it is still worth considering the Islamic roots and precedents of the office. In its classical formulation, the *muḥtasib* had a unique combination of roles that implicated him in matters of trade and commerce (as a market inspector and regulator of professions), public order and justice (as a police chief of sorts and associate of the *qāḍī*), and religion and morality (as an enforcer of public morals and keeper of the mosque).[329] Of these three broad jurisdictions of the Islamic *muḥtasib*, it seems that the Frankish *mathessep* retained the first two. In the Venetian document from 1243, we see that the "*matasep*" (at least in the Venetian quarter) of Tyre was responsible for collecting what appears to have been a market tax.[330] In the *Abrégé du Livre des Assises* from Cyprus, we have a more detailed description of the *mathessep's* role (at least in Cyprus), which included regulating professions at the market, policing the streets of the city (accompanied by a band of armed sergeants), and collecting revenues on behalf of the viscount.[331] The real methodological question, of course, is whether or not we can read back a fourteenth-century description of an official in Cyprus onto a thirteenth-century officer of the same title in Tyre. While the possibility for significant institutional evolution (or even disjuncture) is real, there are two inducements to assuming continuity. First, there is the fact that, in general, Frankish Cyprus showed strong institutional and legal continuity with Frankish

---

[329] See R.P. Buckley, "The Muhtasib," *Arabica*, 39 (1992): 75-117.

[330] See Tafel & Thomas, II, 359-60; and Riley-Smith, *Feudal Nobility*, 86-7.

[331] "L'office dou mathessep est que il doit dou matin aler as places, c'est assavoir, à la boucherie et là où vende le pain et les vins et autre chozes, et prendre ce garde que aucune fraude ne se face des vendours et des regratiers, et que pain ne faille à la place, selon l'ordenement de la court, et le pois dou pain…" See "Abrégé du Livre des Assises," *RHC Lois,* II, 243-44.

Syria.[332] Second, both the *mathessep* of Tyre and that of Nicosia were based, at least in part, on an Islamic prototype. So, considering the general institutional continuity of Cyprus and Syria and the specific institutional borrowing from the Islamic precedent, one might conjecture that the description of the *mathessep* in the fourteenth-century *Abrégé du Livre des Assises* gives us some clues as to the responsibilities of the *mathessep* in thirteenth-century Tyre.

So, if we move forward with the assumption that the *mathessep* of Frankish Syria (or at least Tyre) had a similar set of roles to the *mathessep* in Cyprus, what are the linguistic implications of his work? In the *Abrégé du Livre des Assises*, we learn that the *mathessep* worked closely with the viscount of the city as his second in command. During the day, he inspected the markets and collected revenues for the viscount, and during the night, he alternated with the viscount in patrolling the city with an armed band of sergeants.[333] Considering that many of the vendors in the market were Arabic-speaking Syrians, the official charged with inspecting food prices and the accuracy of weights and measures needed to be bilingual; he needed to communicate with local vendors at the market and communicate with his Frankish superior (the viscount) and his colleagues in the Frankish administration. Similarly, as an officer who had the power to arrest those breaking the law and present them before the viscount, his ability to effectively police the entire population of the city (Frankish and non-Frankish) was contingent on his ability to communicate with both Arabic-speaking and French-speaking offenders (and victims). Once the apprehended persons were brought before the viscount, they were sent to the appropriate court—Franks to the *Cour des Bourgeois*, Syrians to the *Cour des*

---

[332] On the question of continuity between Frankish Cyprus and Syria, see Nader, *Burgesses and Burgess Law*, 35-70.

[333] "Encores doit il aler o gait de nuyt et en sa compaingnie des sergans ordenés, c'est assaver, il une nuyt, et le visconte l'autre." See "Abrégé du Livre des Assises," *RHC Lois,* II, 244.

Syriens, and mixed cases to the *Cour de la Fonde*.[334] This would mean that in addition to working closely with the viscount, the *mathessep* would also work with the urban *rays* (who was usually a Syrian) and the *bailli* (who was usually a Frank). Once again, it is difficult to imagine the *mathessep* fulfilling all these functions if he was unable to operate in both Arabic and French, for implicit in his various roles was the work of linguistic mediation between Franks and Syrians.

Unfortunately, we have little evidence about *who* typically filled the office of the *mathessep* in Frankish Syria; however, there are two clues that suggest it was probably a local Syrian. First, there is the borrowed/transliterated title from the Arabic. Though it is not always the case, an explicitly borrowed title suggests that the Franks sanctioned local officers to keep doing what they were doing. This was clearly the case with the *rays*/*ra'īs* but perhaps was not the case with *dragoman*/*tarjumān*. Second, there is the fact that the *mathessep* only once appears in the documentary evidence. As stated earlier, this curious absence suggests one of two explanations: either the *mathessep* was not a common official and was perhaps limited to Tyre— or the *mathessep* was widespread but was a thoroughly local (perhaps Muslim?) official who was employed by the Frankish urban administration but who was not integrated into the Frankish feudal system in the way that the *rays*, dragoman, and *scriba* all became (often by means of conversion). This theory is complicated by the fact that our only known *mathessep* in Frankish Syria was a Venetian (or perhaps Sicilian?) named *Johanne Palami*.[335] Though a Venetian *mathessep* certainly complicates matters, it is important to point out that *Johanne* was granted the rights and responsibilities of the *mathessep* only in the Venetian quarter of Tyre, which was governed largely outside of the jurisdiction of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. Nonetheless, whether the *mathessep* was Venetian or Syrian and whether the office was widespread or unique

---

[334] See "Abrégé du Livre des Assises," *RHC Lois,* II, 243-44.
[335] Tafel & Thomas, II, 360.

to Tyre, it seems that the crucial tasks of market inspection and urban policing required a polyglot individual who acted, at least in a secondary capacity, as a translator.

Conclusion: From the Wheat Fields to the Battlefield

In July of 1266, Baybars besieged the fortified city of Safed—a Templar stronghold a day's journey east of Acre. With defeat inevitable, the Franks requested a momentary cessation of hostilities in order to send an envoy to Baybars to negotiate their surrender (and to secure safe passage out of the city). In the *Gestes des Chiprois*, the Templar of Tyre writes, "Those in the castle held a council and decided to send a Templar sergeant-brother to the sultan, a man whose name was Brother Leo, casalier of the Safad estates, who was very fluent in the Saracen language."[336] As discussed above, *casalier* was a title for a rural administrator in estates held by the military orders. Riley-Smith speculates that this official was synonymous with a dragoman while I have argued that the role of the *casalier*, as outlined in *La Règle du Temple*, also has significant parallels to that of the rural *rays*. One wonders how Leo chose to introduce himself to Baybars. Though the Old French *Gestes des Chiprois* text labels Leo a *casalier*, it is doubtful that he used this French title to describe himself to Baybars. So what title did Leo use? How did he translate his office and title into Arabic? Did he call himself the *ra'īs* of Safed—denoting his administrative authority in the region? Did he call himself a *tarjumān*—referring to his general role as a linguistic mediator? Or did he call himself a *rasūl*—pointing to his *ad hoc* diplomatic role? If he was literate and engaged in scribal work as a *casalier*, might he have referred to himself as the *kātib* of Safed? The plurality of plausible options (and translations) for Leo points once again to the reality that local administrators in medieval Syria—whether they were called a

---

[336] *Les Gestes des Chiprois*, 180. For English translation, see *The Templar of Tyre: The Deeds of the Cypriots*, trans. Paul Crawford (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 51.

133

rays/ra'īs, dragoman/tarjumān, scriba/kātib, or *mathessep/muḥtasib*—were always translators. They were the people who worked to bridge the gap between the ruling Franks and the subjected Syrian population.

In 1266, Frankish rule was in serious jeopardy, and what was needed was someone to bridge the gap between the local Franks (and Syrians) of Safed and the invading Mamluk army. It is significant that, in a moment of military crisis, the Franks of Safed called upon a *casalier* to function as an interpreter-envoy to Baybars. How common it was for translators in local administration to function as translators in diplomacy is unclear, but our limited prosopographical evidence suggests that overlap was rare. However, in a moment where Franks beat their plowshares into swords and their pruning hooks into spears, it should not surprise us that a *casalier* would be called from the wheat field to the battlefield. That Leo had military experience (as a Templar) may have factored into the council's decision to send him as an envoy. But even more important than his military experience was his linguistic expertise and his experience in mediating between Franks and Muslims as a *casalier*. Whether he was collecting revenues from Syrian peasants in peacetime or negotiating with the Mamluk sultan in war, Leo's greatest asset was language—an asset that had been leveraged by the Templars in local administration but would soon be leveraged by Baybars in war.

In his public negotiations with Leo, Baybars appeared to agree to Leo's offer of surrender in exchange for safe-passage. However, afterwards, Baybars spoke with Leo in private and revealed his real intentions—namely that the safe-passage was a ploy and that he intended to kill the Franks of Safed once they left the stronghold en route to Acre. Baybars, in order not to perjure himself, planned to send an emir who looked like him to pledge safe-passage to the Franks; and Baybars needed Leo to facilitate the ruse. Given the choice of death or treason, Leo

chose treason. Returning to Safed, Leo assured the Franks of Baybars' pledge of safe-conduct.

The next day, an emir who pretended to be Baybars gave an oath to the Franks (presumably administered and translated by Leo). According the Templar of Tyre, all the Franks of Safed were beheaded on a hill outside of the castle—except Leo who "apostatized and became a Saracen."[337]

---

[337] *Les Gestes des Chiprois*, 180; *The Templar of Tyre*, 51.

CHAPTER 3

COINS AND CUSTOMS HOUSES: CROSS-CULTURAL TRADE

Introduction: Cross-Cultural Trade and the Problem of Language

When Symon Semeonis traveled from Clonmel (Ireland) to Jerusalem on pilgrimage in 1323, his

first stop in the Islamic eastern Mediterranean was the port of Alexandria. Of the experience, he

writes,

> On our arrival in the port, the vessel, as is the custom, was immediately boarded by a
> number of Saracen harbour officials [*Saraceni portus custodes*], who hauled down the
> sail, and wrote down the names of everybody on board. Having examined all the
> merchandise and goods in the ship, and having made a careful list of everything, they
> returned to the city taking the passengers with them, and leaving two guards on board to
> investigate.[338]

The Irish pilgrim goes on to describe the anxious hours they spent sequestered at the gates of the

port while waiting on the "Admiral" of the Mamluk customs house. Though Symon recounts

being "spat upon, stoned, and abused" by the Muslim inhabitants who passed by, the long wait

had little to do with religious persecution and everything to do with economic concerns. Symon

and his fellow travelers (many of whom were Latin merchants) were sequestered until the ship

was entirely unloaded and the customs officials could verify the inventory of the merchandise on

the ship and calculate accurate customs fees.[339] This practice of boarding and recording an

inventory of people and goods on incoming ships predates the Mamluk administration. For

example, in 1183, Ibn Jubayr describes a very similar encounter with the Ayyubid customs

---

[338] *Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis*, ed. and trans. Mario Esposito, 46-47.
[339] *Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis*, 46-47.

officials of Alexandria when he stopped in the city en route to Mecca.[340] Like Symon, Ibn Jubayr

was traveling on a vessel whose primary purpose in Alexandria was trade. There is no doubt that

the Genoese merchants aboard that ship were thoroughly questioned by the Ayyubid customs

officials concerning the merchandise they were carrying into the port. This common practice

immediately raises the problem of language. How were these routine yet economically vital

interactions between Latin merchants and Mamluk customs officials mediated linguistically?

Should we assume that Latin merchants traveled with an Arabic translator who could help them

navigate the ports of Alexandria and mediate with customs officials? Or should we assume that

the Mamluks employed their own French or Italian translators in order to accommodate the

influx of foreign merchants (and pilgrims) in their ports?

Though Italian maritime states were engaged in trade with Fatimid Egypt in the tenth and

eleventh centuries, the crusades of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries greatly intensified

commercial contacts between Muslims and Latin Christians in the eastern Mediterranean.[341] The

same Genoese, Pisan, and Venetian ships that transported pilgrims and crusader armies to the

eastern Mediterranean also transported spices and commercial goods to the western

Mediterranean. These intensified commercial relations between Italian maritime states and the

Islamic world gave rise to new institutions and commercial practices to accommodate the

increased volume of both goods and merchants in the ports of the eastern Mediterranean. Olivia

---

[340] Ibn Jubayr writes, "The day of our landing, one of the first things we saw was the coming on
board of the agents [*umana'*] of the Sultan to record all that had been brought in the ship.
All the Muslims in it were brought forward one by one, and their names and descriptions,
together with the names of their countries, recorded. Each was questioned as to what
merchandise or money he had, that he might pay *zakat*." Ibn Jubayr, ed. Wright, 39;
trans. Broadhurst, 31.

[341] For a helpful overview of these developments, see David Jacoby, "Les Italiens en Egypte aux
XIIe et XIIIe siècles," in *Coloniser au Moyen âge*, eds. M. Balard and A. Ducellier
(Paris: A. Colin, 1995); and David Abulafia, "The Role of Trade in Muslim-Christian
Contact during the Middle Ages," repr. in D. Abulafia, *Mediterranean Encounters,
Economic, Religious, Political, 1100-1550* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000).

Remie Constable's important work on the development of the *funduq/fondaco* in the medieval Mediterranean has greatly advanced our understanding of the spatial contexts of cross-cultural trade and the legal and social conventions that sustained and constrained trade between Muslims and Latin Christians in this period.[342] However, one related question that remains largely unanswered is that of language. If we know more than ever about how particular institutions (like *fondacos*) helped merchants negotiate the religious and cultural barriers to trade, we still know very little about how these same merchants negotiated the ever-persistent language barrier between Muslim and Christian merchants.

How was language mediated in this moment of intensified trade between East and West? Who was tasked to bridge the language barrier between Italian merchants, Muslim merchants, and customs officials? And where did these interactions typically occur? On these questions, Constable speculates,

> Virtually all of the business conducted between European and Mamluk traders must have been conducted with the aid of interpreters, and even westerners who knew some Arabic (or Egyptians who spoke a western language) were probably under pressure to engage the services of middlemen or brokers.[343]

Constable provides a few examples of dragomans mentioned in Western travelogues but stops well short of a substantive examination of the role of the translator in Mediterranean trade. In

---

[342] See Olivia R. Constable, *Housing the Stranger in the Mediterranean World: Lodging, Trade, and Travel in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); and on the crusader period specifically, see O.R. Constable, "*Funduq, Fondaco,* and *Khan*, in the Wake of Christian Commerce and Crusade," in eds. A.E. Laiou and R.P. Mottahedeh, *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2001).

[343] Constable, *Housing the Stranger*, 289.

fact, the crucial question of translation in trade is left unanswered (and often unasked!) by most

studies of eastern Mediterranean trade in the crusader period.[344]

Recently, scholars of the medieval western Mediterranean have begun asking questions

about the problem of language in cross-cultural trade and the role of translators. Dominique

Valérian, using extant commercial treaties between Italian maritime states and Maghribi

dynasties, outlines the diverse roles and responsibilities of intermediary officials in western

Mediterranean trade. He argues that translators were absolutely central to the innerworkings of

economic institutions, like the dīwān and the *fondaco*, in port cities like Tunis.[345] Travis Bruce,

focusing on a specific corpus of letters between a particular Pisan merchant and his Muslim

dragoman of the dīwān in Tunis, takes a micro-historical approach to the role of translators and

demonstrates that dragomans, beyond their linguistic skills and cultural knowledge, "relied on a

kind of trust capital similar to that which bound commercial relations in far-flung business

networks."[346] Here, Bruce is invoking a larger scholarly discussion about the roles of trust and

reputation as informal mechanisms for contract enforcement in long-distance trade in the

medieval Mediterranean.[347] While scholars like Avner Greif and Jessica Goldberg are concerned

---

[344] For example, in his often-cited article, "The Role of trade in Muslim-Christian Contact,"
David Abulafia makes only a passing reference to Jews as "intermediaries" in western
Mediterranean cities. Though he writes in some detail about the Latin merchant
community in Tunis, the problem of language and the need for linguistic intermediaries
never comes up in Abulafia's analysis. See Abulafia, "The Role of Trade in Muslim-
Christian Contact during the Middle Ages," 12.

[345] See Dominique Valérian, "Marchands latins et sociétés portuaires dan le Maghreb médiéval:
Le rôle central des intermédiaires," in *"Arriver" en Ville: Les Migrants en Milieu Urbain
au Moyen Âge*, eds. Cédric Quertier, Roxane Chilà, and Nicolas Pluchot (Paris:
Sorbonne, 2013), 213-23.

[346] Travis Bruce, "Translating the Divide: Dragomans as Cultural Mediators in the Thirteenth-
Century Mediterranean" (forthcoming).

[347] See Avner Greif, "Reputation and Coalitions in Medieval Trade: Evidence on the Maghribi
Traders," *The Journal of Economic History* 49, no. 4 (1989): 857-82; and more recently,
Jessica Goldberg, "Choosing and Enforcing Business Relationships in the Eleventh-

primarily with the role of "trust" in intracommunal commercial relationships between (Jewish) agents and (Jewish) merchants in the eleventh century, Bruce argues that trust and reputation were also essential features of intercommunal commercial relationships between local (Muslim) dragomans and foreign (Christian) merchants.[348]

This study of translation and trade in the medieval eastern Mediterranean will build upon (or at least alongside) this recent work on translators in western Mediterranean trade by Valérian and Bruce. While the eastern Mediterranean lacks (epistolary) sources to conduct proper microhistorical studies on the relationship between translators and their dragomans, it does have a relative abundance of commercial treaties from which we can reconstruct the essential economic institutions of cross-cultural trade and the roles that translators played in these institutions. Even though we are limited to "prescriptive" sources like treaties, a close reading of these texts often offers insights into both formal and informal mechanisms of contract enforcement. Perhaps unsurprisingly, merchant-translator relationships in eastern Mediterranean port cities were dependent on both public laws and private reputations, similar to the findings of Goldberg and Bruce in their case studies.

If this study is concerned with the role of translators in central economic institutions—asking *where* and *how* exactly cross-cultural trade occurred and *who* was implicated in the process of translation, it is also concerned with the role of translation in economic transactions—asking *what* was traded and *what happened* when these objects were translated from one culture to another. Therefore, in addition to uncovering the people who frequently bridged the language barrier, I will examine what Finbar Flood has termed "objects of translation"—objects that

---

Century Mediterranean: Reassessing the 'Maghribī Traders'," *Past and Present*, no. 216 (2012): 3-40.

[348] Bruce, "Translating the Divide," 16-20.

acquired transcultural identities in the process of circulation.[349] In particular, I will consider the

Latins' longstanding practice of minting pseudo-Fatimid dīnārs and argue that these curious

coins are best understood not as imitations but rather as translations—coins that began as a

foreign (Arabic-Islamic) commodity and over time became a local (Arabic-Christian) currency.

This emphasis on material culture is also inspired by the work of Leor Halevi and his insistence

on analyzing cross-cultural trade on the level of individual commodities. Rather than assuming

that all commodities crossed religious, cultural, and linguistic barriers with the same degree of

ease (or difficulty), Halevi encourages scholars to consider the legal, theological, and cultural

significance of particular trade commodities as they traveled from one culture to another.[350] In

the end, whether we are examining the role of dīwānī translators in facilitating the movement of

trade commodities or the process by which these commodities moved from one culturo-linguistic

sphere to another, the central contention of this chapter is that cross-cultural trade in the

medieval eastern Mediterranean was both dependent upon and constituted by translation.

The *Dīwān* as a Site of Translation

On May 13, 1290, the Genoese signed a truce with the Mamluk sultan, al-Mansur

Qalawūn. While the treaty is typical of commercial agreements between Italian maritime states

and Islamic sultans in the period, two things are striking about this particular agreement. First,

this is one of the rare occasions in the eastern Mediterranean context where we have both Latin

---

[349] Flood, *Objects of Translation*.

[350] See Leor Halevi, "Religion and Cross-Cultural Trade: A Framework for Interdisciplinary
Inquiry," in *Religion and Trade: Cross-Cultural Exchanges in World History, 1000-
1900*, eds. Francesca Trivellato, Leor Halevi, and Cátia Antunes (Oxford: Oxford
University Press, 2014), 26.

and Arabic documents from the same diplomatic negotiations.[351] Second, this truce was made

just one year before the fall of Acre (1291), which ended nearly two centuries of Frankish

settlement in the Levant. As such, this treaty represents not only the forward-looking economic

policies of the Genoese (who planned to continue trading in the eastern Mediterranean with or

without the presence of Latin states), but it also represents the culmination of crusader-era

developments in trade between Muslims and Latin Christians. Most importantly, these

documents tell us about the development of institutional translation services in the eastern

Mediteranean and the crucial role of translators in facilitating cross-cultural trade between

Franks and Muslims in the crusader period.

The Latin document in the Genoese archives outlines the conventional commercial

privileges granted by the Mamluks—the rights and immunities of Genoese merchants in the

sultan's lands, trade concessions on particular goods, and the officials and procedures of the

Mamluk dīwān (or customs administration).[352] In this document, we find three officials who

acted as intermediaries between the Genoese and the Mamluks, and all three of them were

affiliated with the dīwān: the *scriba*, the *torcimannus duganae*, and the *censarii duganae*. We

will consider the roles and linguistic competencies of these officials at greater length shortly, but

from this document alone, we find some very helpful initial details about these intermediary

figures. One of the first privileges granted to the Genoese by the sultan was the right to have a

---

[351] The Latin document is found in the Genoese archives and was edited and published by
Silvestre de Sacy in *Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque nationale et
autres bibliothèques*, IX (Paris, 1827), 33-46; and the Arabic document is found in Ibn
'Abd al-Ẓahir's *Tashrīf*, 166-69. A helpful introduction and English translation of the
Arabic document can be found in Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, 141-51. For a study of
parallel diplomatic documents (in Arabic and in Latin) in the western Mediterranean
context, see P. Buresi, "Traduttore Traditore: À propos d'une correspondance entre
l'empire Almohade et la cité de Pise (début XIIIe siècle)," *Oriente Moderno,* 88 no. 2
(2008): 297-309.

[352] For a helpful summary and analysis of these agreements, see Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*,
143-46.

Genoese scribe housed in the Mamluk dīwān in Alexandria. His role was to draft documents for Genoese merchants in accordance with Mamluk administrative standards and to oversee their accounting, as Genoese merchandise was typically processed, taxed, and even sold in the customs house.[353] Another interesting clause from the Latin document outlines the vital role of the dragoman (*torcimannus duganae*) who, unlike the scribe, was an employee of the Mamluk dīwān. His role was to ratify and confirm all sales and purchases between Genoese merchants and local buyers and sellers. So important were these officials to the business of cross-cultural trade that Genoese goods were not permitted to leave the customs house unless the transaction had been approved by a dragoman or official witnesses.[354] The final intermediary figure we find in this document is the *censarii duganae*, whose role, at least in this document, seems to have been very similar to that of the dragoman—witnessing and ratifying sales between Genoese and local merchants.[355] Though Peter Holt argues that the Latin *censarii duganae* is referring to an Arabic tax official, called a *jabi*,[356] the Latin term is more likely referring to the Arabic *simsar*, a common term for a broker or middleman with a long history in the Islamic Mediterranean.[357]

---

[353] *Item, quod Januenses habeant scribam unum in dugana, pro scribendis rationibus Januensium, quae sint in concordia in dugana, ut consuetum est.* Silvestre de Sacy, *Notices et extraits,* IX, 35.

[354] *… quod si aliquis Januensis fecerit aliquod mercatum vendendi seu emendi, et fuerit factum in praesentia testium, vel torcimani duganae vel duchellae, dictum mercatum sit ratum et firmum, et teneri debeat.* Silvestre de Sacy, *Notices et extraits,* IX, 36.

[355] *Item, quod si aliqui Januenses vendent aliquam mercantiam cum testibus vel cum censariis duganae, dugana teneatur pro emptore…* Silvestre de Sacy, *Notices et extraits,* IX, 37. Note: It is unclear if the similar roles of the *torcimannus* and the *censarii* represent interchangeable functions (or even titles); or if the redundancy points to multiple stages of ratification.

[356] Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, 145 fn 14.

[357] See C.H. Becker, "Dallal," *EI²*. See also M. Talbi, "Les courtiers en vêtements en Ifriqiya au IXe-Xe Siècle, d'après les Masā'il al-samāsira d'al-Ibyānī," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 5, no. 2 (1962): 160-194; and J.A. Van Houtte, "Les courtiers au Moyen Age" *Revue historique de droit français et étranger* (1936): 105-41.

Though there is some overlapping text, it is clear that the Arabic document from the 1290 treaty (found in Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir) is not a translation of the Latin document from the Genoese archives. The Latin document outlines commercial privileges granted to the Genoese with a sworn undertaking by the sultan's vice-regent (Amir Husam al-Din Turuntay), while the Arabic document contains the sworn undertaking of the Genoese envoy (Albert Spinola) and the textual evidence of ratification—a certification of the envoy's oath by a Melkite bishop, a list of Egyptian and Genoese witnesses, and a signed verification of the translation(s). If the Latin document outlines the roles and responsibilites of intermediary officials in cross-cultural trade, then the Arabic document gives us concrete examples of these officials at work. For example, in the Arabic document, we learn that "an interlinear version in Frankish was written, line for line and word for word." We also learn that the scribe responsible for the interlinear translation was a Genoese man known as "*hākim al-blnkīr*… the clerk [*kātib*] of the envoy and the Commune of Genoa."[358] The Genoese scribe's name has been something of mystery for nearly two centuries, as the interpretation of the name hinges on three issues: first, whether the Arabic word *hākim* should be taken literally to mean "judge" or if it is a transliteration (or even translation) of a Latin name; second, what the mysterious word (probably a transliteration) *al-blnkīr* stands for; and third, whether the phrase *hākim al-blnkīr* is an *iḍāfa* construct or a simple noun-adjective phrase.[359]

---

[358] Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir, *Tashrīf*, 167. For English translation, see Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, 149.

[359] In 1827, Antoine Isaac Silvestre de Sacy rendered this name "le juge Bélanger." (Silvestre de Sacy, *Notices et extraits,* IX, 50.) In 1863, Michele Amari translated the name, "Giacomo Pellegrino," aruging that the *h* in *hākim* was probably a *j/g* (as *h* and *j* in Arabic are only distinguished by a single diacritic mark underneath the letter) and that *blnkīr* was an Arabic transliteration of *pellegrino*—or pilgrim. A few decades later, Joseph von Karabacek retained *pellegrino*, but argued that *hākim* was a translation of the name *Giudice*—which literally means judge but was also used as a first name. (See J. Karabacek, "Arabische Beiträge zur genuesischen Geschichte," *Weiner Zeitschrift für die*

While the identity of the Genoese translator-scribe is mired in translation issues, the

identities of the Mamluk dragomans are not. In the document, we find at least two translators

who were tasked with verifying the process of translation from Latin to Arabic:

> Their contents as rendered from the Frankish script into Arabic were read by Shams al-
> Din 'Abdallah al-Mansuri. The interpreter [*al-tarjumān*] Sabiq al-Din and the interpreter
> [*al-tarjumān*] 'Izz al-Din Aybak al-Kabaki translated [*tarjama*] for him in order to verify
> the Arabic rendering, and to certify its correctness on the said date.[360]

The mystery with these dragomans is that it is not entirely clear what translation they are

verifying. We know that the Genoese scribe (*hākim al-blnkīr*) made an interlinear translation in

"Frankish" (Latin?) of the original Arabic treaty, but this portion of the treaty claims that these

translators were verifying a translation from Frankish to Arabic. Perhaps this is referring to the

transcript of Albert Spinola's oath which he probably uttered in Latin, or perhaps the signed

testimonies of the Genoese witnesses—which also would have needed to be translated from

Latin to Arabic.

The names of the witnesses, which only appear in the Arabic document, are significant

because they give us a clue into what kinds of people acted as witnesses in cross-cultural trade

between Muslims and Latins in the eastern Mediterranean. The Arabic document lists eight

official witnesses—three Melkite priests and monks and five Genoese officials and merchants.[361]

Kunde des Morgenlandes, I/1, (Vienna, 1887), 51.) It is this interpretation that one finds
in the modern English translation by Holt, who renders the scribe's name, "Giudice the
Genoese Pilgrim." (Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, 149) To add to the confusion, if this
phrase is a construct rather than a noun-adjective phrase, then another plausible rendering
of *hākim al-blnkīr* would be "judge of the pilgrims." I would like to thank Professors
David Wasserstein and Bill Caferro for helping me think through the wide variety of
interpretations for this curious name.

[360] *Tashrīf*, 168; and Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, 149-50.

[361] The Melkite witnesses: Arsenius, abbot of the monastery of al-Qusayr, Menas the deacon,
Michael the monk of the monastery of Mount Sinai. Additionally, though he was not a
witness, the actual oath was administered by Peter, the Melkite bishop of Old Cairo. The
Genoese witnesses are the following: "Boniface, the Genoese consul; Angelino, the

The fact that we have, as witnesses, speakers of both Arabic and "Frankish" (French or Italian) points to the importance of both parties having witnesses who shared their language and could verify the content of their respective oaths.[362]

Together the Latin and Arabic documents offer a valuable window into the world of eastern Mediterranean trade and the translation practices and personnel of the dīwān that made this trade possible. These documents also raise a number of important questions. Most importantly, if the 1290 treaty represents the culmination of developments in crusade-era trade, when (and how) did these translation practices develop? While the sources on East-West trade in the eastern Mediterranean are relatively sparse in the twelfth century, there is one valuable Arabic document from the late twelfth century that provides a unique window into the inner-workings of the Ayyubid dīwān in Egypt: al-Makhzūmi's *Kitāb al-Minhāj* (c. 1170s).[363] This detailed fiscal treatise, written during the early years of Saladin's reign, outlines specific customs duties for a variety of transactions with western merchants and specifies how these taxes should be allocated within the customs administration. One of the most interesting things that we find in this treatise is that the Ayyubud customs administration (and presumably the preceding Fatimid one) had built-in fees for intermediary officials. Thus, in al-Makhzumi's detailed tables, we find

---

captain of the ship, the merchant; Daniel Capello, the merchant; Raffo, the consul, and the noble Rainer Boccanegra." *Tashrif*, 168; and Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, 149.

[362] The Latin document, while it does not name any specific witnesses, does also point to the importance of witnesses (*testes*) in cross-cultural trade. In one clause already mentioned above, it states that any commercial transaction between a Genoese merchant and a local must be ratified by either the dragoman of the dīwān or official witnesses. "*... quod si aliquis Januensis fecerit aliquod mercatum vendendi seu emendi, et fuerit factum in praesentia testium, vel torcimani duganae vel duchelllae, dictum mercatum sit ratum et firmum, et teneri debeat.*" Silvestre de Sacy, *Notices et extraits,* IX, 36.

[363] Al-Makhzūmī, Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn ʿUthmān, *Kitāb al-minhāj fī ʿilm kharāj Miṣr,* eds. Claude Cahen and Yūsuf Rāġib (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1986). For a commentary and French translation, see C. Cahen, "Douanes et commerce dans les ports méditerranéens de l'Égypte médiévale d'après le Minhādj d'al-Makhzūmī," *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient* 7 no. 3 (1964): 217-314.

the exact amount that foreign merchants were taxed for the services of the *simsar*, the *tarjumān*, and the *kātib*. For example, for a hypothetical customs fee of one hundred dīnārs, the *simsar* received half a dīnār (or half a percent).[364] In another case discussing taxes in kind for ships carrying certain types of merchandise, al-Makhzumi notes that one percent (out of a twelve percent customs duty) was allocated for the dragoman (*tarjumān*).[365] Similarly, we find scribal fees (*al-kitba*) present in al-Makhzumi's tables that break down the duties on foreign trade.[366]

Thus, in al-Makhzumi's treatise from the late twelfth century, we find all of the intermediary figures mentioned in the 1290 documents: the *censarii*/*simsar,* the *dragoman*/*tarjumān,* and the *scriba*/*kātib*. This suggests, of course, that by the 1170s (and perhaps earlier) Islamic customs administrations in the eastern Mediterranean had institutionalized translation services for western merchants. Before delving into the particularities of these intermediary figures, it is important to point out that these officials all worked in the same place—the dīwān (or customs house) of Alexandria. Though they had different roles, their work as intermediaries was linked to a centralized state institution that facilitated and regulated international trade in the eastern Mediterranean. This is important to keep in mind because just as cross-cultural trade occurred in specific spatial contexts (the dīwān and to a lesser extent the *fondaco* and the *suq*), so did the translation work that facilitated that trade.[367] In contrast to the translation needs of war and diplomacy—where translation occurred in a wide variety of spatial contexts—most translation activity in trade can be pinpointed to a specific spatial and institutional context. Even if, as Constable speculates, some Italian

---

[364] Al-Makhzūmi, Kita*b al-minhāj*, f. 102r, 9 and f. 162r, 55; Cahen, "Douanes," 282, 308.

[365] Al-Makhzūmi, *Kitāb al-minhāj*, f. 109v, 13; Cahen, "Douanes," 286.

[366] Al-Makhzūmi, *Kitāb al-minhāj*, f. 106r, 11; Cahen, "Douanes," 284.

[367] On the importance of considering the spatial contexts of cross-cultural trade, see Karl Polanyi, "Ports of Trade in Early Societies," *The Journal of Economic History* 23 no. 1 (1963): 30-45; and more recently, Halevi, "Religion and Cross-Cultural Trade: A Framework for Interdisciplinary Inquiry," 51-53.

merchants knew Arabic, their language skills typically did not liberate them from the institutional constraints of the customs administration and from the services of official translators and intermediaries (whose service fees were built in to the customs duties). Though we cannot rule out occasional occurrences of *ad hoc* or even black market commerce between Italian and Muslim merchants in the eastern Mediterranean, the available sources lead us to imagine trade and translation occurring in specific spatial and institutional contexts.[368]

Scribam unum in dugana: *Italian Scribes in the Islamic Dīwān*

The question of location is particularly significant in the case of the scribe. When did Italian maritime states start housing their own scribes in the Islamic customs houses of the eastern Mediterranean? And what was the nature of this arrangement? The answer is not entirely clear, but it seems that the practice emerged during the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. Our earliest direct evidence for the practice comes from a Pisan commercial agreement from 1215, but other evidence suggests that the practice goes back to at least the 1180s.[369] After 1215, the concession becomes a regular feature of commercial agreements between Italian maritime states (Pisa, Genoa, and Venice) and Islamic rulers.[370] Not only was this concession granted to Italian merchant communities in the eastern Mediterranean, but we find ample evidence of this

---

[368] Dominique Valérian speculates that linguistic skills and familiarity with the city could effectively liberate certain exceptional Italian merchants from the institutional constraints of the *dīwān* and the *fondaco*; however, he reasons that they still would have been reliant on local brokers. See Dominique Valérian, "Les marchands latins dans les ports musulmans méditerranéens : une minorité confinée dans des espaces communautaires?" *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée*, 107-110 (2005): 437-58.

[369] Michele Amari, *I Diplomi Arabi Del R. Archivio Fiorentino: Testo Originale Con La Traduzione Letterale E Illustrazione* (Firenze: 1863), no. XXIV, 286. The evidence suggesting that the practice dates back to the 1180s comes from an anecdote in Leonardo of Pisa's *Liber Abaci* and will be discussed shortly.

[370] For examples from Pisa (1215), Venice (1254), and Genoa (1290), see Amari, *I Diplomi Arabi*, no. XXIV, 286; Tafel & Thomas II, 485; and Silvestre de Sacy, *Notices et extraits,* IX, 35.

practice in the Islamic ports of the western Mediterranean as well.[371] Though the particularities

of this arrangment are unclear, it appears that these scribes were employees of Italian maritime

states who worked within the Islamic customs administration in major trade cities like

Alexandria, Tunis, and Aleppo. Their role, as outlined in the documents, was simple yet crucial:

1) facilitate the sales (and taxation) of foreign merchandise in the dīwān;[372] 2) draft documents

for their particular merchant community in accordance with local administrative standards;[373]

and 3) keep records of their community's merchandise housed in the dīwān.[374] On some

occasions, these scribes could also agree to watch over the merchandise of an Italian merchant

who left the city for some time, but this appears to have been an optional service.[375]

Why was this peculiar arrangement so important for Italian merchants in the late twelfth

and early thirteenth century? Or put differently, what kinds of trading conflicts (real or imagined)

were avoided by the Genoese or Venetians having their own employee in the Islamic customs

house? The emphasis in the sources on Italian scribes handling the accounting of Italian

merchants in the dīwān suggests that there were anxieties about trust and transparency in taxation

and record-keeping. Though political, religious, and cultural differences certainly added to the

complexity of cross-cultural trade in the medieval Mediterranean, the fundamental barrier

between Italian and Alexandrian merchants in trade was language. How could an Italian

merchant understand what he was being taxed for if he could not understand the language being

---

[371] For examples from Tunis (1231, 1251, and 1271), see Tafel & Thomas II, 305, 450; III, 120.

[372] *Et abbino scrivano alla dogana, che salvi lo suo havere d'ogni cosa che vende delle sue mercantie alla dogana.* in Amari, *I Diplomi Arabi,* no. XXIV, 286.

[373] *Item, quod Januenses habeant scribam unum in dugana, pro scribendis rationibus Januensium, quae sint in concordia in dugana, ut consuetum est.* Silvestre de Sacy, *Notices et extraits,* IX, 35.

[374] *… unum scribanum… pro facere eurom rationes de eo, quod dare et recipere debuerint ad Doanas, et pro custodire bona ipsorum.* Tafel & Thomas, III, 120.

[375] Silvestre de Sacy, *Notices et extraits,* IX, 35.

spoken in the customs house of Alexandria? And even if a local dragoman explained the tax

breakdown to the merchant orally, he certainly would not have been able to discern the details of

tax receipts or accounting ledgers written in a strange script. And even if a local scribe in the

dīwān translated official tax documents for the merchant, he was still left to wonder if the

translation (and the taxation) were accurate (and fair). The only way to address the issue of trust

and transparency in trade was to have one's own translator working in the dīwān. Italian

fondacos in Islamic port cities employed numerous scribes to provide notarial services to

merchants of their community, but it appears from the documents that Islamic rulers allowed

them to house one (and its seems only one) of their scribes in the dīwān where he could help his

compatriots navigate the foreign world and words of the dīwān.[376]

In addition to the perennial problem of trust there is the practical problem of volume.

Though eastern Mediterranean trade grew in the twelfth century as a result of the crusading

movement, the end of the twelfth century saw an increased intensity in trade as Italian merchants

began trading with Muslim states directly rather than using the greatly diminished Latin

principalities in the Levant as middlemen. For the same reasons, it seems, Italian maritime states

began to ask for their own *fondacos* to house their merchandise and merchants in Islamic port

cities, they also began to ask for their own scribes in the dīwān.[377] This move would have made

---

[376] Many commercial treaties specify that the Genoese or Venetians may have "one Christian
scribe" [*unum scribanum Christianum*] in the dīwān. See Tafel & Thomas, II, 488; III,
120; and Silvestre de Sacy, *Notices et extraits,* IX, 35.

[377] In 1154, the Pisans made an agreement with the Fatimids to establish a *fondaco* in Alexandria
which served as a warehouse for Pisan goods as well as a residential space for Pisan
merchants. The Venetians made a similar agreement with Saladin and gained their first of
several *fondacos* in Ayyubid Egypt in 1172. While economic insitutions similar to the
fondaco existed before 1154 and trade relations between Muslim Egypt and Christian
Italy date back to at least the ninth century, what was unique about this moment,
according to David Jacoby, was that the establishment of Pisan and Venetian *fondacos* in
Alexandria represented the first permanent residential settlement of Latin Christians in
Muslim lands. See Jacoby, "Les Italiens en Egypte aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles," 77-78.

little sense in the twelfth century when individual Italian merchants conducted business in foreign ports. However, when trade volume reached a certain threshold and Islamic rulers began granting trade concessions to specific city-states, it made sense for representatives of the Venetians or Pisans or Genoese to request to have their own scribes in the dīwān. Through these representatives, they could conduct all of their business in the customs houses of Alexandria or Tunis in accordance with the commercial privileges granted to their particular community.[378]

Latin Scribes and Arabic Literacy

So far, I have been operating under two assumptions: first, that Italian maritime states typically placed Italian—or at least Latin Christian—scribes in the dīwāns of the eastern Mediterranean; and second, that these Italian scribes must have been literate in Arabic. Evidence to support the first assumption is available but admittedly sparse. While the surviving sources yield very few names of scribes assigned to the dīwān, a Venetian-Mamluk commercial treaty from 1254 reveals that the Venetians were entitled to "one Christian scribe [*unum scribanum Christianum*]" in the dīwān of Alexandria.[379] Other commercial treaties have similar language that suggests that Italian merchant communities sent one of their own to the dīwān.[380] It is, of

---

[378] In al-Makhzumi's treatise from the 1170s, we find scribal fees (*al-kitba*) built in to the customs duties on foreign trade. Could it be that placing one's own scribe in the dīwān exempted a merchant community from this additional tax? There is an interesting parenthetical note in one of al-Makhzumi's tax tables, which says after the scribal fee (*al-kitba*): "this is a fee that in the past was taken by the scribe but is now collected by the dīwān." There are two ways to interpret this. If the practice of placing Italian scribes in Islamic customs houses began around this time, this parenthetical remark could represent the efforts of the dīwān to retain the scribal fees that Italian merchants would have certainly been trying to avoid. Or perhaps this parenthetical remark is referring to the (recent) centralization of the customs administration—a move from scribes as "private-contractors" in the early twelth century to scribes as employees of the dīwān. See al-Makhzumi, *Kitāb al-minhāj*, f. 106r, 11; Cahen, "Douanes," 284.

[379] Tafel & Thomas, II, 488.

[380] See, for example, Tafel & Thomas, II, 305.

course, possible that Italian merchants sought the services of local (Coptic or Jacobite) Christian scribes, but we have no evidence that this was the case in the context of international trade. The few names that do emerge in the sources all point to scribes of Italian (or at least Latin) origins, such as *Vivianus*, *Gabrielis Teruixani, Pietro Battifoglio*, and even *hākim al-blnkīr*—who is unambiguously referred to as Genoese (*al-genowī*).[381]

There is one curious reference in 1180 to a scribe working on a Venetian commercial venture in Alexandria who appears to be not of Italian but rather of Franco-Syrian origin— *Guilielmo Scribano de Zebeleto*.[382] Though we cannot be certain that Guilielmo was a Syrian-born Frank, the *Zebeleto* (elsewhere written *Çebeleto*) in his name is certainly referring to the Frankish city of Jubayl in the county of Tripoli (ruled by the lords of Jubayl/Gibilet). Either he was born there, or he lived and worked in the region of Jubayl long enough to inherit the place-name. His work as the *scribano* of Jubayl, as we have seen in the previous chapter, very likely involved drafting documents in Latin and Arabic, and these language skills would have served him well in Alexandria as he conducted trade and drafted documents on behalf of his commercial partners in Venice. The timing of Guilielmo's travels is interesting as well, as this case offers potential clues into the translation practices of Italian merchants just before they were permitted to have their own scribes in the dīwān. Rather than operating as a state-sponsored scribe for an entire merchant communiy, Guiliemo played the intermediary in a private capacity. Though we know very little about translation practices in twelfth-century trade, the use of private scribes and translators (often clerics) in international trade was probably the norm before the significant developments of the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries when Italian merchant

---

[381] Tafel & Thomas, II, 187-91, 488, 490; P. Battifoglio, *Notai genovesi in Oltremare*; and Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir, *Tashrif*, 167.

[382] See Morozzo della Rocca, Raimondo, and Antonino Lombardo, *Documenti del commercio veneziano nei secoli XI-XIII* (Torino: Libraria italiana, 1940), vol. 19, nos. 318, 321, 323.

communities (and their bureaucracies) acquired a more permanent status in Islamic trade cities. Whether Guiliemo is exceptional or represents a larger pool of Franco-Syrian scribes in eastern Mediterranean trade is an intriguing question that requires further study.

Though we have little direct evidence of their linguistic abilities, the Arabic text of the Genoese commercial treaty of 1290 provides concrete evidence of the linguistic abilities of at least one Italian scribe—our mysterious *ḥākim al-blnkīr* who provided a Frankish interlinear translation of the original Arabic document.[383] While it is possible that auxiliary translators were employed to assist Italian scribes in drafting Arabic documents and keeping records, it is difficult to imagine that the Genoese or Pisans would have selected someone who could not read and write Arabic as their official representative in the dīwān. Literacy in Arabic would have been a necessity for the post, as the scribe would have been required not only to negotiate on behalf of Italian merchants but to read and draft documents, records, and receipts in at least two languages. Such an administrative post demanded an official with a unique set of language skills that were not easy to acquire.

If it is relatively easy to imagine an Italian merchant living in Alexandria gaining some facility in colloquial spoken Arabic, it is more difficult to figure out how an Italian scribe would have acquired formal written Arabic. Though we have very few clues on language learning and literacy in this period, the story of one Pisan scribe in Bugis (in modern-day Algeria) offers us at least one way of answering the language acquisition question:

> After my father's appointment by his homeland as state official in the customs house of Bugia [*publicus scriba in duana bugee*] for the Pisan merchants who thronged to it, he took charge; and, in view of its future usefulness and convenience, had me in my boyhood come to him and there wanted me to devote myself to and be instructed in the study of calculation for some days. There, following my introduction, as a consequence

---

[383] Though it is unclear if *ḥākim al-blnkīr* was posted in the dīwān in Alexandria or if he had a diplomatic post, it is clear that the Genoese employed scribes as intermediaries with the Mamluks who were literate in Arabic.

of marvelous instruction in the art, to the nine digits of the Hindus, the knowledge of the art very much appealed to me before all others, for I realized that all its aspects were studied in Egypt, Syria, Greece, Sicily, and Provence, with their varying methods; and at these places thereafter, while on business, I pursued my study in depth and learned the give-and-take of disputation. [384]

These are the opening words of Leonardo Fibonacci's famous *Liber Abbaci* (1202/28), a book that introduced the Hindu-Arabic numeral system to the Latin world and revolutionized commercial accounting, as well as the entire practice of arithmetic, in western Europe. While most scholars examine Fibonacci's brief autobiographical paragraph in order to reconstruct young Fibonacci's education in mathematics, this passage also gives us clues about language learning in the dīwān. It is important to point out that Fibonacci's education in Bugis was not a scholarly endeavor intended to produce a math genius, but rather it was an apprenticeship arranged by his father for Fibonacci to learn the practical accounting methods of the dīwān in Bugis. This would have prepared him to function, like his father, as a Pisan scribe in the customs houses of Islamic port cities. It is difficult to imagine that this education in Arabic accounting methods would have excluded a basic education in Arabic literacy.[385] That the budding math genius Fibonacci became obsessed with the practical and theoretical potential of Hindu-Arabic numerals in some ways distracts from the more mundane, yet historically significant, fact that Islamic customs houses probably served as sites of apprenticeship and language learning for

---

[384] Fibonacci, Leonardo, and Baldassarre Boncompagni, *Scritti di Leonardo Pisano* (Roma: Tipografia delle scienze matematiche e fisiche, 1857), I, 1. English translation in R. E. Grimm, "The Autobiography of Leonardo Pisano," *Fibonacci Quarterly* 11, no. 1 (Febuary 1973), 100.

[385] Fibonacci's correspondence with Arab-Christian philosopher and translator, Theodore of Antioch, also points to Fibonacci's Arabic literacy. See Charles Burnett, "Master Theodore, Frederick II's Philosopher," reprnt. in C.Burnett, *Arabic into Latin in the Middle Ages: The Translators and Their Intellectual and Social Context* (Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate/Variorum, 2009), 226-27.

young Italians desiring a career in international trade.[386] Though I have not yet uncovered evidence of other Italian scribes being apprenticed in Islamic customs houses, there is no reason to believe that Fibonacci's experience was exceptional—aside from his decision to become a mathematician rather than a scribe (like his father).

In praesentia torcimani duganae: *Local Dragomans and Foreign Merchants*

Another official in the dīwān who required excellent language skills was the *dragoman/tarjumān*—or *torcimannus duganae* as he is referred to in the 1290 Genoese treaty. As with the scribe, the institutional origins of the *dragoman/tarjumān* in eastern Mediterranean trade are obscure, but we know that at least by the 1170s, the role of the *tarjumān* in the customs administration was well established. In the early thirteenth century, we begin to find the roles and responsibilities of the dragoman of the dīwān described in Italian commercial treaties with language similar to that of the Latin version of the 1290 Genoese agreement with the Mamluks.[387] As we saw in the 1290 agreement, the dragoman of the dīwān had one chief role: to facilitate and ratify transactions between foreign merchants and local buyers and sellers.[388] Thus, not only did the dragomans in the customs house have a linguistic function in trade, but they also had a legal function. As employees of the state, they were granted (nearly) exclusive authority to ratify commercial transactions between Western merchants and Muslims. This is made

---

[386] Valérian makes a similar argument in Valérian, "Les marchands latins dans les ports musulmans méditerranéens."

[387] For examples from the eastern Mediterranean (1217, 1254, 1290), see Tafel & Thomas II, 193, 485; and Silvestre de Sacy, *Notices et extraits, IX*, 36, 39. For examples from the western Mediterranean (1231, 1251, 1288), see Tafel & Thomas II, 304, 306, 452-53; and Pietro Battifoglio, *Notai genovesi in oltremare: atti rogati a Tunisi da Pietro Battifoglio : (1288-1289)*, ed. Geo Pistarino (Genova: Istituto di Medievistica, 1986), nos. 1, 68, 124.

[388] Silvestre de Sacy, *Notices et extraits, IX*, 36. This seems to also have been the case in western Mediterranean trade. On the (similar) role of dragomans in the western Mediterranean context, see Bruce, "Translating the Divide," 4; and Valérian, "Marchands latins et sociétés portuaires dan le Maghreb médiéval," 221.

particularly clear in a Venetian commercial treaty from 1254 (also quoted in the Introduction), which states: "if any Venetian or Saracen buy anything from one another or sell one to another … the dragoman is the arbiter [*Turcimannus sit iudex*] in their sales and their purchases…"[389]

Not only did the office of the dragoman require a knowledge of commercial law and a facility in spoken Arabic and French or Italian, it also required, at least in some instances, literacy in both Arabic and Latin. For example, in the archives of a Genoese scribe in Tunis, Pietro Battifoglio, we find a dragoman of the dīwān, *Sarracinus Asem*, translating a treaty from Arabic into Latin ("*retrasit de arabico in latinno*") in 1288.[390] Additional evidence for the literacy of dragomans in the dīwān comes from the Arabic version of the 1290 Genoese treaty, which describes the process by which two Mamluk dragomans, Sabiq al-Dīn and 'Izz al-Dīn Aybak al-Kabaki, translated a portion of the treaty from Latin into Arabic so that the text could be verified by another reviewer.[391]

Whether dragomans were tasked with drafting original documents or merely making translations, the literacy of at least some dragomans raises the issue of redundancy. Why does there seem to be so much overlap in the roles of the Italian scribe and the local dragoman in the dīwān? The sources are not explicit, but the redundancy seems to have been intentional. If Italian maritime states housed their own scribes in the dīwān in order to ensure transparency in cross-cultural trade, Islamic rulers provided dragomans in order to regulate cross-cultural trade. Not only did they want to build institutional trust with foreign traders, Islamic sovereigns also wanted a mechanism to limit trading conflicts (and the resulting litigation) between foreign merchants and local buyers and sellers. As an employee of the dīwān, the dragoman's role was to ensure that linguistic barriers—or at least claims of misunderstanding—did not inhibit trade between

---

[389] Tafel & Thomas II, 485. Translation mine.
[390] Battifoglio, *Notai genovesi in Oltremare*, no. 1.
[391] Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir, *Tashrif*, 168; and Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, 149-50.

Western merchants and Muslims in the customs houses of Islamic port cities. Their presence in the dīwān ensured that trade between Italian merchants and Muslims was carefully regulated and that transactions conducted in the dīwān were unlikely to result in retroactive lawsuits.

In addition to formal commercial agreements outlining the translation personnel and procedures of the dīwān, trust and reputation were important factors in economic relations between local dragomans and foreign merchants. Bruce and Valérian have observed that Italian merchant communities in Islamic port cities of the western Mediterranean were granted the right to choose (or at least request) which dīwānī dragoman they would work with. Additionally, they point out that the commercial treaties seem to speak about the dragomans of a given dīwān as a corporate body—"sharing the payments they received and collectively upholding their responsibilities as an extension of the state."[392] This practice, of course, hints at the crucial role of personal reputation in merchant-dragoman relationships. For example, if a merchant of a particular Italian community had a bad experience with a particular dragoman of the dīwān of a given city, he could warn other merchants of his community of the infidelity (or incompetence) of a given dragoman. These merchants, in turn, could refuse to work with this dragoman in the future. On the flip side, these corporate bodies—or coalitions(?)—of dragomans must have been keenly aware of the vital importance of reputation, and how the unscrupulous actions of one dragoman could affect the entire group. Though we do not have clear evidence in the eastern Mediterranean of merchant communities having the right to request a particular dragoman, we do have evidence that dīwānī dragomans formed some sort of corporate body or coalition.[393]

---

[392] Bruce, "Translating the Divide," 14; and Valérian, "Marchands latins et sociétés portuaires dan le Maghreb médiéval," 221.

[393] See, for example, Tafel & Thomas II, 488, which makes reference to an agreement made with the "dragomans of the dīwān" [*Trucimannis de doana*]. In the context of western Mediterranean practices, this clearly seems to be a reference to the dragomans of the dīwān in Alexandria as a corporate body.

The Identity of the Dragomans of the Dīwān

Who typically filled the crucial role of the *tarjumān al-dīwān* or the *torcimannus duganae*? If we can tentatively conclude that most scribes who were placed in Islamic customs houses by Italian cities states were of Italian origin, and that at least some of them learned spoken and written Arabic in apprenticeships in the dīwān, what can we say about the identities of dragomans working in the dīwān? And what can be known about their language education? As with scribes, most of the dragomans we find in the commercial treaties from the period are nameless. However, the little evidence we do have suggests that the dragomans of the dīwān were often local Muslims, or at least native Arabic speakers.[394] For example, in a Venetian commercial treaty from 1231, we find the typical clause granting the Venetians a "*scribanum Christianum*" in the dīwān of Tunis, which one might contrast with a later clause in the same document that outlines the roles of the "*turcimanum Saracenorum*."[395] More evidence is needed to prove that this pattern was the norm. But the practice of Italian scribes and Muslim dragomans working together (or at least in parallel) in Islamic customs houses as the chief intermediaries (and translators) for cross-cultural trade seems to fit the available evidence. As mentioned earlier, the few dragomans we do know by name all appear to be Muslim, such as Sabiq al-Dīn, ʿIzz al-Dīn Aybak al-Kabaki, and Sarracinus Asem.[396] In each of these cases, the dragomans are literate in both Arabic and Latin. Perhaps it should not surprise us that both Italian merchants and Muslim rulers wanted officials on their payroll who were literate in both languages, as

---

[394] Bruce makes a similar observation based on the limited onomastic evidence from the western Mediterranean—that most dragomans of the dīwān seem to have been literate (non-elite) Muslims. See Bruce, "Translating the Divide," 12-13.

[395] Tafel and Thomas II, 305, 306.

[396] Ibn ʿAbd az-Ẓāhir, *Tashrīf*, 168; and Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, 149-50; and Battifoglio, *Notai genovesi in Oltremare*, no. 1.

international trade not only involved oral negotiations but also written contracts. Still, how the aforementioned dragomans learned to read and write (and translate!) Latin is something of a mystery. They may have benefited from apprenticeships with Italian scribes in the Italian *fondacos* of Alexandria or Tunis, but more evidence is needed to make this claim.

Though eastern Christians are never mentioned in the commercial treaties as scribes or dragomans, this does not necessarily mean that they did not have roles as intermediaries in cross-cultural trade. In fact, there are a few subtle clues in the sources that point to their involvement. For example, in his analysis of al-Makhzumi's treatise, Cahen notes that the page numbers of the manuscript were written in Coptic characters, pointing, of course, to the important role of Coptic functionaries in the Fatimid and later Ayyubid administrations.[397] More direct evidence of eastern Christian involvement in cross-cultural trade can be found in the Arabic text of the 1290 Genoese treaty, which mentions three Melkite priests and monks who acted as witnesses to Albert Spinola's oath ratification.[398] Additionally, it should not be forgotten that it was an Egyptian Melkite bishop named Peter who administered the oath to Albert—presumably in Latin (or Italian?). Thus, while it is difficult to see how eastern Christians fit into the tidy institutional categories of translators (*scriba*, *dragoman*, *simsar*), it is clear that they were sometimes involved as linguistic intermediaries in trade.

The emerging picture of Italian scribes and local Muslim dragomans working side by side in the dīwān as translators and intermediaries in cross-cultural trade does not seamlessly fit the common assumption, popularized by Philip Curtin, that cross-cultural trade was reliant on cross-cultural brokers arising from "trade diasporas" (like the Jews or Armenians).[399] Though at first

---

[397] Cahen, "Douanes," 272.
[398] Ibn 'Abd az-Ẓāhir, *Tashrīf*, 168; and Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, 149.
[399] See Philip Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 2.

glance resident Italian merchant communities in Islamic port cities seem to fit Curtin's model, these merchant communities began placing scribes in Islamic dīwāns at roughly the same time they gained a residential presence in the port cities of the Islamic Mediterranean (the late twelfth century). Thus, the Italian scribes—or cross-cultural brokers—we are finding in the thirteenth-century sources are not arising organically from a robust trade diaspora in cities like Alexandria. Like Leonardo of Pisa, these particular cross-cultural brokers appear to have been made rather than simply born. The same could be said of the local dragomans of the dīwān. Though there is no doubt that these figures must have had unique cross-cultural experiences (perhaps as sailors or captives) to prepare them for their role as intermediaries in cross-cultural trade, they are certainly not arising from a "trade diaspora" as it is classically understood. What appears to be happening on the ground is something much more mundane—even predictable. It appears that individuals—whether Italian or Muslim—engaged in intentional, even institutional, language training in order to fulfill the crucial function of translators in trade.

Cum censariis duganae: *Translation and Brokerage*

While there was overlap in the roles and responsibilities of the scribe and the dragoman in the dīwān, it is clear from the sources that their offices remained distinct throughout the thirteenth century—unlike in the cases we discussed in Frankish rural administration (Chapter Two) where the office of the dragoman seems to have been subsumed under the office of the scribe in the thirteenth century. Where the distinctions remain blurry is between the roles of the dragoman of the dīwān and the *simsar* or *censarii duganae.* In the 1290 Genoese agreement, we find mentions of both officials, but their roles seem virtually interchangeable—as both appear to

160

be tasked with ratifying sales between Genoese merchants and locals.[400] It is unclear whether this apparent overlap in roles represents intentional redundancy—as in the case of the scribe and dragoman—or an interchangeability of roles and even titles. In al-Makhzumi's treatise from the late twelfth century, we find separate fees for the *simsar* and the *tarjumān*, which suggests that these officials had distinct offices even if there was some overlap in function.[401] The question is whether this distinction remained throughout the thirteenth century in the context of trade between Latin and Muslim merchants. Prior to the crusades, the *simsar* was not exclusively associated with international trade but also functioned as a broker or middleman in domestic trade typically between coreligionists (or at least speakers of the same language).[402] Their role, classically defined, was to play the intermediary between buyers and sellers in the *suq* or the auction. This usually meant helping buyers find particular goods and/or helping sellers set their prices.[403]

In the context of cross-cultural trade, it is easy to see how the roles of the dragoman and the *simsar* might be conflated or combined. In order to function as a middleman in trade between Italian merchants and local buyers/sellers, the *simsar* would either need a facility in Western languages (typically French and/or Italian)—or he would need an auxiliary interpreter. Additionally, though it is possible that the *simsar* and the *tarjumān* might have worked side by side in facilitating transactions in Muslim port cities, the process of mediation would have been

---

[400] Compare: … *quod si aliquis Januensis fecerit aliquod mercatum vendendi seu emendi, et fuerit factum in praesentia testium, vel torcimani duganae vel duchelllae, dictum mercatum sit ratum et firmum, et teneri debeat.* Silvestre de Sacy, *Notices et extraits,* IX, 36. And *Item, quod si aliqui Januenses vendent aliquam mercantiam cum testibus vel cum censariis duganae, dugana teneatur pro emptore…* Silvestre de Sacy, *Notices et extraits*, IX, 37.

[401] See al-Makhzumi, *Kitāb al-minhāj*, f. 102r, 9; f. 162r, 55; and f. 109v, 13.

[402] For a discussion on the *simsar* in ninth and tenth century north Africa, see Talbi, "Les courtiers en vêtements en Ifriqiya au IXe-Xe Siècle."

[403] See Talbi, "Les courtiers en vêtements en Ifriqiya au IXe-Xe Siècle," 181; and C.H. Becker, "Dallal," *EI*[2].

greatly simplified if the *simsar* was bilingual or if the *tarjumān* was authorized to function as the broker. A tentative argument for the convergence of the offices can be made from the fact that the dragoman is a constant feature in Western sources on trade in the late twelfth and throughout the thirteenth century while the *simsar* is rarely mentioned.[404]

On the other hand, a rare mention in a Venetian treaty from 1254 complicates the seemingly straightforward argument for convergence. In this document, we discover a distinction in roles in the context of what must have been a recurring trade conflict. The clause reads: "The dragoman of the dīwān must not take any of the merchandise that has entered the dīwān because we have made an agreement with the dragomans of the dīwān. The emir and the head of the customs must receive the simsar [*Sansarijs*] so that he might serve the men of Venice."[405] This interesting clause in the 1254 Venetian-Mamluk commercial treaty points to a practical, yet persistent, problem in cross-cultural trade between Muslims and Latin Christians: who has the authority to move or transport merchandise in and out of the customs house?[406] That dragomans of the dīwān were specifically prohibited from handling merchandise in this agreement suggests that, at least in some cases, dragomans were involved in the movement of merchandise from ship to customs house and even to the market or auction. However, in this case, the Mamluk dīwān had agreed to allow what appear to be independent *simsars* or brokers to serve in this capacity.

---

[404] Though evidence of the *simsar* is nearly non-existent in the crusader period, this figure does reemerge in the context of cross-cultural trade in the eastern Mediterranean in the centuries following the crusades. The survival or reemergence of the office—or at least the function—in the context of Mediterranean trade is attested linguistically in the medieval (and modern) Italian word *sensale*, meaning broker or middleman. See entries on "*sènsa*" & "*sensale*" in Salvatore Battaglia, *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana* (Torino: Unione tipografico-editrice Torinese, 1961), XVIII, 628-29.

[405] *Item Trucimani duane non debeant tollere aliquid de mercimoniis, que intrant in doanam, quia tullimus appaltum desuper Trucimannis de doana. Et Mirus et Sabadoanus precipere debeant Sansarijs, ut faciant servitia hominibus Venecie.* Tafel and Thomas, II, 488.

[406] This issue is also addressed in the 1290 Mamluk-Genoese treaty. See Silvestre de Sacy, *Notices et extraits,* IX, 37.

How exactly independent (or unofficial) *simsars* differ from official *simsars* of the dīwān [*censariis duganae*] is unclear. One might speculate that official *simsars* presided over auctions and cross-cultural trade that occurred in the confines of the customs house while unofficial *simsars* facilitated trade between Italians and local merchants in the *suq* and perhaps even in Italian *fondacos*.[407]

Dominique Valérian argues that although the Mamluk authorities preferred that cross-cultural trade be conducted in the dīwān under the supervision of customs officials, it was not required. Thus, for most Italian merchants (unfamiliar with the language and conventions of trade in Alexandria), selling one's merchandise at the auctions in the dīwān made a lot of sense. Institutional translation services—from the Italian scribe to the local dragoman or *simsar*—were available, and all transactions were guaranteed by the customs authorities. However, for Italian merchants with an intimate knowledge of the language and the city—or for those in possession of a good *simsar*/dragoman—trade outside of the dīwān, whether in the *fondacos* or in the *sūq*, was also a viable option. In either case, the *simsars*, whether official or unofficial, must have been functionally bilingual, for their role was not only to broker commercial transactions but to bridge linguistic and cultural barriers. The fact that *simsars* seem to have been interchangeable with dragomans—at least in their roles as official witnesses of cross-cultural transactions—strongly suggests that most simsars in the medieval eastern Mediterranean operated as both broker and translator.

---

[407] For a helpful discussion on the various spatial contexts of cross-cultural trade in Alexandria (namely the *dīwān*, the *fondaco*, and the *sūq*), see Valérian, "Les marchands latins dans les ports musulmans méditerranéens."

Transactions and Translations

Though many questions remain unanswered about the innerworkings of the dīwān in the context of cross-cultural trade in the medieval eastern Mediterranean, this exploration of the extant sources has yielded a number of insights concerning translators and translation services in the dīwān. First, by the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, Islamic rulers began allowing prominent Italian maritime states to house one of their own scribes in the dīwān. Second, in addition to the translation services these scribes offered to their compatriots trading in the dīwān, the dīwān also employed a cadre of skilled dragomans who offered translation services to foreign merchants and regulated cross-cultural transactions occurring in the dīwān. Finally, it seems that in the process of brokering commercial transactions between foreign and local merchants in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, *simsars* often acquired linguistic proficiency in French or Italian and functionally operated as both broker and translator. Though each of these officials had slightly different roles and represented different interests in cross-cultural trade, each official ought to be seen as a translator. Whether we consider the *simsar* who connected foreign (French-speaking) merchants with local (Arabic-speaking) clients, the dragoman who witnessed and approved cross-cultural transactions, or the scribe who drafted bilingual deeds of sale—each of these intermediary figures acted as a linguistic bridge over which commerce could flow.

The *Bezant* as an Object of Translation

If the Mamluk-Genoese treaty of 1290 gives us valuable information on the translation practices and personnel of the Mamluk dīwān, it also gives us valuable information on the products that were traded there. In the Arabic document, we find mentions of sugar, linen, and pepper; and in the Latin document, we find mentions of squirrel, ermine, beaver, and otter pelts

and precious stones, which could all be imported duty-free.[408] In the same clause we find the tax rates for importing gold (6.67%) and silver (4.5%) bullion as well as gold and silver coins (4.5%).[409] This mention of taxes on gold and silver reminds us that perhaps the most ubiquitous trading commodity in the eastern Mediterranean was not silks or spices but rather gold and silver bullion and coinage. Unlike western Europe (with its barter economy), the medieval eastern Mediterranean was a money economy that, above all, privileged gold coins—a commercial practice that Italian merchants and Frankish principalities in the Levant quickly adopted. Not only were gold coins objects of *geographical* translation in the eastern Mediterranean and beyond, they were also objects of *cultural* and *linguistic* translation.

For example, in the Mamluk-Genoese treaty of 1290, gold coins are referred to in the Arabic document as *dīnārs* and in the Latin document as *bezants* [*bisantiis*].[410] If the well-known Arabic term for gold coins (which was originally borrowed from the Latin *denarius*, via Greek and Syriac) is somewhat stable in the period, its Latin translation is not. In the 1090s, on the eve of the First Crusade, the Latin term, *bisantius*, referred generically to gold coinage with the implicit assumption that the coin was probably a Byzantine issue (hence the name *bisantius/bezant*).[411] But just decades after the First Crusade, the term, *bisantius*—often with the qualifier *sarracenatus*—began to refer to Fatimid gold dīnārs.[412] By 1142, the term *bisantius sarracenatus* referred also (and perhaps most frequently) to Frankish imitations of Fatimid

---

[408] *... et non possent nec debeant Januenses compelli ad solvendum aliquem drictum, dacitam nec colletam, de penis variis, et de penis ermerin, de bevaris, de luciis, et de omni pellisaria, nec de lapidibus pretiosis.* Silvestre de Sacy, *Notices et extraits*, IX, 35.

[409] Silvestre de Sacy, *Notices et extraits,* IX, 35.

[410] See Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir, *Tashrif*, 169; and Silvestre de Sacy, *Notices et extraits,* IX, 35, 36.

[411] For example, see *Gesta Francorum* IX, xxvi, 62.

[412] See Tafel & Thomas, I, 86.

dīnārs.[413] Though it is unclear when exactly the Franks started minting counterfeit Islamic

coinage, the first concrete evidence of the practice comes from Ibn Khallikan who writes,

"During the three years which followed the conquest of Tyre [1124], the Franks continued to

beat money in the name of al-Aâmir, but then they discontinued the practise."[414] Contrary to Ibn

Khallikan's claim that Frankish counterfeiting only lasted three years, it turns out that the Franks

continued this practice for more than a century.

While Frankish issues of the Saracen bezant are typically understood in modern

scholarship as "counterfeits" or "imitations," it is perhaps more productive to think about these

enigmatic gold coins as "translations"— objects that were repeatedly "carried across"

[*translatus*] the geographic, cultural, and linguistic boundaries of Islam and Christendom and in

the process became cultural artifacts of both. Taking a cue from the work of Finbarr Flood, I will

analyze the Saracen bezant as an "object of translation."[415] In order to analyze the Saracen bezant

as an "object of translation," I will first examine the *texts on the coins*—tracing the curious

evolution of the epigraphic content of the Saracen bezant over the twelfth and the thirteenth

centuries (as well as the elaborate periodization efforts of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries).

Next, I will examine the *coins in the texts*—following the use and development of the term

bisantius sarracenatus in Latin and old French texts (as well as its counterpart, the *dīnār ṣūrī*, in

Arabic sources) during the crusader period. Following these interrelated plot lines, I will tell the

---

[413] See Della Rocca and Lombardo, *Documenti del commercio veneziano,* vol. 19, no. 81. For
more on the *dīnār ṣūrī* in Arabic sources, see Robert Irwin, "The Supply of Money and
the Direction of Trade," in *Coinage in the Latin East*, eds. P. W. Edbury and D. M.
Metcalf (Oxford: B.A.R., 1980), 91.

[414] Ibn Khallikan, *Biographical Dictionary*, trans.William McGuckin de Slane (Paris: 1842), III,
456. It turns out that not only did the Franks continue this practice of minting gold
coinage in the name of the current Fatimid caliph, al-Amir (1101-1130), but they also
minted imitation dīnārs based on an earlier prototype from the reign of caliph al-
Mustansir (1036-94). See Paul Balog and Jacques Yvon, "Monnaies à légendes arabes de
l'Orient latin," *Revue numismatique* 6, no. 1 (1958) 135-36.

[415] See Flood, *Objects of Translation*.

story of how the Fatimid dīnār became the Frankish bezant and how this ubiquitous gold coin was translated from a foreign commodity to a local currency in Frankish Syria in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Texts on the Coins

In 1250, Pope Innocent IV sent a letter to Acre condemning the problematic monetary practices of the Frankish principalities in Syria. The offense: minting counterfeit Islamic gold (*bisanciis*) and silver (*drachmis*) coins bearing the name of Muhammad and the *Hijri* date.[416] The pope's letter was a response to a report from a papal legate in Louis IX's crusade entourage, Odo of Châteauroux, who had uncovered the longstanding Frankish practice of minting "Islamic" coinage. While the idea of crusaders minting Islamic coins may seem odd at first glance, the early Latin rulers recognized that in order to participate economically in a region that was based on gold coinage, they had two choices: create their own gold coinage, or imitate the coins already in circulation. They opted for the latter.[417] If it is somewhat amusing that it took the medieval papacy over a century to uncover this counterfeiting scheme in the Levant, then it should be humbling to note that it took the modern academy over several centuries to (re)discover the same practice. For it was only in the 1870s when numismatists began to realize

---

[416] *Transmissa nobis insinuatione monstrati, quod, cum tibi liquido constitisset quod in bisanciis et drachmis quae in Acconensi et Tripolitana civitatibus fiebant à christianis nomen Machomethi atque annorum a nativitate ipsius numerus sculpebantur, tu in omnes illos qui nomen et numerum ipsa in eisdem bisanciis et dragmis, sive in auro sive in argento, sculperent de cetero vel sculpi facerent in regno Jerosolymitano, principatu Antiocheno ac comitatu Tripolitano, excommunicationis sententiam promulgasti…*
Letter quoted in Henri Lavoix, *Monnaies à légendes arabes frappées en Syrie par les croisés* (Paris: J. Baer et cie, 1877), 52-53.

[417] Andrew Ehrenkreutz argues that the Franks opted to imitate Fatimid dīnārs rather than Byzantine *nomisma* probably because dīnārs had a reputation as being the highest quality gold coinage in the eastern Mediterranean. See A. S. Ehrenkreutz, "Arabic Dinars Struck By the Crusaders," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* (1964) 7:1, 168-69.

that their collections of Fatimid and Ayyubid coins contained Frankish imitations.[418] Prior to this

discovery, numismatists had assumed that mentions of *bisantii sarracenatii* in the Latin sources

always referred to genuine Fatimid dīnārs being traded and circulated in the Frankish Levant.

But now the picture had muddied, as a new corpus of Franco-Islamic coins emerged.[419]

After nearly a century and a half of scholarly investigation, the coins are still something

of a mystery. Much of the difficultly lies in the fact that most Frankish imitation dīnārs are

undated, and even those that are dated display dates that have no historical significance. Henri

Lavoix, the French numismatist who first discovered the imitation coins, speculated that the most

primitive imitations—those with faulty epigraphy and even pseudo-Arabic script—came first,

with the better imitations coming later, as Frankish engravers learned Arabic and became more

comfortable with the script.[420] However, more recent numismatic studies, which have focused on

hoard finds and metal fineness, have concluded the opposite—that the best imitations (some of

which are virtually indistinguishable from their prototype) come first and the worst imitations

come in the thirteenth century.[421]

To date, the best effort at periodization comes from D.M. Metcalf who—based on hoard

finds and metallurgical analysis—proposes four distinct phases of the Saracen bezant. In the first

phase, which falls in the first half of the twelfth century, Metcalf places bezants of a high

---

[418] See Henri Lavoix, *Monnaies à légendes arabes frappées en Syrie par les croisés* (Paris: Joseph Baer, 1877).

[419] For an early study of the *bisantius sarracenatus* in the Latin and French sources, see Louis Blancard, *Le Besant d'or Sarrazinas pendant les croisades* (Marseille: impr. de Barlatier-Feissat père et fils, 1880).

[420] Lavoix, *Monnaies à légendes arabes,* 34-40.

[421] See Andrew S. Ehrenkreutz, "Arabic Dinars Struck By the Crusaders: A Case of Ignorance or of Economic Subversion," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 7, no. 2 (1964): 167-82; and M.L. Bates and D.M. Metcalf, "Crusader Coinage with Arabic Inscriptions," in *The Impact of the Crusades on Europe*, eds. H.W. Hazard and N.P. Zacour (Madison, Wis: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989).

intrinsic quality (usually around ninety percent) and excellent epigraphy.[422] In the second phase, roughly 1165 to 1188, belong coins of eighty percent fineness, which typically contain error-filled and occasionally illegible epigraphic content. To the third phase, roughly 1188 to 1250, Metcalf assigns coins of sixty-eight percent fineness, which are "markedly more barbarous in execution" and often contain legends entirely of pseudo-Arabic script. In the fourth phase (1251-58), we find coins of sixty-five percent fineness, but these coins, responding to Rome's demands in 1250, contain Christian (rather than Islamic) inscriptions in clear, error-free Arabic script, invoking the name of the Trinity and including for the first time the symbol of the cross at its center.[423]

In short, the conventional story of the Saracen bezant is one of gradual decline—both in intrinsic value and in epigraphic content. It's a story of technical and linguistic ignorance, as the Franks tried and ultimately failed to imitate the pure gold coinage of the Fatimids.[424] It's a story of unintended consequences, as the flooding of the market with debased Saracen bezants irreparably damaged the international reputation of the Fatimid dīnār.[425] These well-established declensionist narratives are useful to the extent that they help us understand the economic and political significance of the Saracen bezant. But they are less helpful in helping us understand the cultural significance of the coins in question. Beyond the banal (and increasingly implausible) observation that Frankish society as a whole, and Frankish engravers in particular, were illiterate in Arabic, historians and numismatists have seldom speculated on what these coins might tell us

---

[422] Compared to the Fatimid standard of 98%.

[423] Bates and Metcalf, "Crusader Coinage with Arabic Inscriptions," 446.

[424] See Prawer, *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem,* 385-86.

[425] Ehrenkreutz argues that the "subversive minting activities of the Crusaders" led to the "collapse of the Muslim dīnār" and prepared the way for a new international currency in the Eastern Mediterranean—the soon-to-come gold coins of the Italian maritime republics. See Ehrenkreutz, "Arabic Dinars Struck By the Crusaders," 178-80.

about intercultural contacts between Franks and Muslims in the crusader period.[426] Why?

Because when we think about Saracen bezants as "counterfeits" or "imitations" of Fatimid dīnārs

we are in effect limiting our analysis to their economic and political functions.[427] If we are

interested in how the bezant was *spent*, then the current model serves us well. But if we

interested in how the bezant was *read*, then we need a new way of framing the Saracen bezant.

This shift from economic to cultural analysis requires that we bracket our notion of bezants as

"imitations" and begin thinking about them as "translations."

Among the many theoretical insights that have emerged as linguists and translators have

studied the practice of translation is the simple, yet powerful, idea that the priorities of the

translator greatly affect the process and the product. André Lefevere and Susan Bassnett outline

several models of translation that explain how this works, two of which are particularly useful

for our purposes. First, there is the "Jerome" model of translation, named after the translator of

the Latin Vulgate, Saint Jerome. As a translator of sacred scripture, Jerome's chief priority was

fidelity to the text. Though it was readily acknowledged that true linguistic fidelity—or

equivalence—was nearly impossible, this ideal became the gold standard for not only Bible

translation but all literary translation in the Latin west for centuries.[428] The second model comes

from the Roman poet Horace (65-8 B.C.). He argued that the aim of the "faithful interpreter"

---

[426] Interestingly, French numismatists of the nineteenth century were much more willing to speculate on the potential cultural meanings of these coins than modern scholars have been. See Lavoix, *Monnaies à légendes arabes,* 46; and Gustave Schlumberger, *Numismatique de l'Orient Latin* (Paris: Leroux, 1878), 131-32.

[427] Every study of the Saracen bezant that I have read frames the coins as "imitations" or "counterfeits." For just a few examples from the last few centuries, see Lavoix, *Monnaies à légendes arabes* (1877)*,* 34 ["imitation", "contrefaçon"]; Ehrenkreutz, "Arabic Dinars Struck By the Crusaders" (1964), 167 ["imitation"]; Bates and Metcalf, "Crusader Coinage with Arabic Inscriptions," (1989) 442 ["crusader imitations"].

[428] André Lefevere and Susan Bassnett, "Where are we in Translation Studies?" in *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation*, eds. S. Bassnett and A. Lefevere, (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1998), 2-3.

(*interpres fidus*) was not necessarily faithfulness to a text but rather faithfulness to his audience. Emphasizing the contingent nature of translation, Horace argued that all translations were in fact *negotiations* between two parties and two languages—with the translator functioning as the intermediary.[429] Whereas Jerome's model prioritized the text, the Horatian model prioritized the language and expectations of the audience. The Horatian notion of translation as negotiation is particularly helpful when thinking about cross-cultural trade in general and Saracen bezants in particular. It offers us a new framework for analyzing the numismatic evidence that helps us get at the cultural significance of the Saracen bezant. This new framework pushes us to think about how the priorities of the minting authorities affected both the process and the product, as Fatimid dīnārs were "translated" into (Frankish) Saracen bezants.

Consider, for example, the early decades of Frankish minting—phase one in Metcalf's periodization (1103/24 – 1148/65). In this period, the Franks minted high quality pseudo-dīnārs with a gold fineness of around ninety percent (compared to the original's ninety-eight percent) and with Arabic inscriptions that were either perfect or had very minor errors.[430] Very few of these coins survive today—either because they were minted in small quantities or because they so closely followed their Fatimid prototype that they have been classified as genuine Fatimid dīnārs.[431] During this period, those minting the bezant followed the Jerome model of translation—prioritizing *fidelity* to the original "text." Perhaps this phase, and only this phase, should be seen a period of genuine counterfeiting on the part of the Franks. Because the Franks

---

[429] Bassnett and Lefevere, "Where are we in Translation Studies?" 3-7.

[430] Bates and Metcalf, "Crusader Coinage with Arabic Inscriptions," 442.

[431] Even today, with all of our modern tools of numismatic analysis, mistaken classification is not uncommon, as archeologists and numismatists are often divided over whether a particular coin should classified as a "genuine" Fatimid dīnār or a "counterfeit" Frankish bezant. See, for example, Robert Kool, "The Circulation and Use of Coins in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem 1099-1291 CE," PhD Diss (Jerusalem: Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2013), 289-90 fn 9.

wanted the coins they were minting to pass as genuine Fatimid dīnārs, they made a great effort to be faithful to the original coin—in both epigraphic content and intrinsic quality.

According to Metcalf's periodization, sometime between 1148 and 1165, the Franks introduced a new eighty percent standard for the bezant. These coins from phase two not only have a lower intrinsic quality than the earlier bezants, but they also tend to have more errors and omissions in the inscriptions. The texts are generally legible if you know what you are looking for, but the marginal inscriptions often omit text or, in some cases, add random words or even pseudo-Kufic characters. Numismatists often see coins from phase two as the first step in the decline of the bezant, a decline that would reached its nadir in phase three. Coins from phase three (dated 1188 to 1250) show a marked decline in fineness (from eighty to sixty-eight percent) and also display what appears to be an utter ignorance of Arabic on the part of the engravers.[432] Save the central inscriptions, the legends of these coins are completely illegible. Sometimes even the pseudo-Kufic script is suspect, with lines and circles that don't resemble any letters in the Arabic alphabet. Are these simply poor imitations, the final stage in a narrative of decline, or is something else going on here? One piece of evidence that undermines the conventional narrative of decline (and linguistic ignorance) is the fact that in 1251, at the urging of the Innocent IV and Louis IX, the Franks started minting new bezants with Christian inscriptions in flawless Arabic. Additionally, it turns out that for much of the early thirteenth century, at the same time that the Franks were minting low quality dīnārs, they were also minting high-quality (imitation) Ayyubid silver *dirhams*. These coins show a remarkable fidelity to their prototype, which suggests that at

---

[432] For this common interpretation, see Prawer, *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 385-86.

least some engravers in the Frankish mints knew Arabic and that perhaps something else was going on with the bezant.[433]

If the first phase of the Saracen bezant was characterized by a commitment to *fidelity*, the coins in the second and third phases might be best described as products of *negotiation*. By the middle of the twelfth century, it seems that the Fatimids had caught on to the deceitful minting practices of the Franks. One clue in the contemporary Arabic sources is the frequent mention of the *dīnār ṣūrī*, or "Tyrean dīnār," in transactions involving the Franks.[434] It also seems that by this time, the Franks no longer tried to hide their counterfeiting efforts, as we find references as early as 1142 to the Saracen bezant as the quasi-official gold coinage of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem.[435] This change in circumstances coincided with a change in audience for the bezant. It no longer functioned as an international currency (or at least a counterfeit of an international currency). Its new purpose was more modest—namely circulating around Frankish Syria and in the Muslim-ruled Syrian hinterland.[436] Because of its diminished economic role in the latter half of the twelfth century, the Frankish bezant did not need to be a perfect copy of the Fatimid dīnār; it just needed to replicate its general look. However, it could not stray too far from the prototype because both its Frankish and its Muslim users had certain expectations.

---

[433] On Frankish issues of Ayyubid *dirhams*, see Bates and Metcalf, "Crusader Coinage with Arabic Inscriptions," 457-73.

[434] Though it is possible that some mentions of the *dīnār ṣūrī* were merely referring to genuine Fatimid dīnārs that were minted before the fall of Tyre in 1124, mentions of the *dīnār ṣūrī* in the Arabic sources almost always occur in transactions (usually tribute or ransom payments) with the Franks. For early examples, see Ibn al-Qalanisi, *Dhayl tarikh Dimishq*, 336; and Ibn al-Athīr, XI, 419. For more on the *dīnār ṣūrī* in Arabic sources, see Irwin, "The Supply of Money and the Direction of Trade," 91.

[435] In a charter from 1142 we find: "…bizancios saracenatos bonos auri de rege illius terrae de pesa secundum consuetudinem illius terrae..." *Regesta chartarum italiae*, vol. 28, eds. Pietro Guidi and Oreste Parenti (Rome: Loescher, 1940), no. 81.

[436] For differing views on the circulation of the bezant, see Bates and Metcalf, "Crusader Coinage with Arabic Inscriptions," 440; and Balog and Yvon, "Monnaies à légendes arabes de l'Orient latin," 136-38.

On the Frankish side, the general expectation of the *bisantius sarracenatus* was that the coin would look like the Fatimid dīnār and, most importantly, would have the "Saracen" script. In a society that was largely illiterate, the accuracy and intelligibility of the Arabic inscriptions were irrelevant.[437] What mattered was that the central legends were recognizable and that the marginal inscriptions looked like Arabic. On the Muslim side, what mattered most was that the *dīnār ṣūrī* was distinguishable from other types of dīnārs—especially those of higher fineness (such as the *dīnār misrī* from Egypt). In phase two, the need for distinction was often fulfilled by small but noticeable decorative dots on the coins. However, in phase three, we find more explicit markers of difference—the most noticeable being the introduction of the Latin characters "B" and "T" to certain issues from the thirteenth century.[438] If we analyze the "B" + "T" bezants as imitations of dīnārs then what we have are simply the "worst" imitations ever minted by the Franks. But if we see these coins as translations, in the Horatian sense, then what we see is a free (rather than literal) translation of the Fatimid dīnār (which by this point was probably no longer in circulation). Leaning heavily toward a Frankish audience, the "B" + "T" bezants not only obscured the Islamic content of these coins with pseudo-Kufic inscriptions, but they acknowledged for the first time Frankish political power—ironically at a time when Frankish power in Syria was in serious decline. Rather than a testament to Frankish ignorance, these coins were a testament to intercultural dialogue and negotiation. For the aim of these coins, I suggest, was not fidelity to the original, but rather negotiation between Islamic prototypes and Frankish needs and expectations.

---

[437] On the function of pseudo-Arabic in another context, see Jeremy Johns, "Arabic Inscriptions in the Cappella Palatina: Performativity, Audience, Legibility and Illegibility," in *Viewing Inscriptions in the Late Antique and Medieval World*, ed. A. Eastmond (New York, NY: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2015).

[438] Most scholars believe that "B" stands "Bohemond" and "T" for "Tripoli." See Balog and Yvon, "Monnaies à légendes arabes de l'Orient latin," 139-40.

Perhaps the most intriguing development in the history of the Saracen bezant occurred in 1251 when the Franks finally "converted" their gold coins to Christianity—at the strong urging of the pope. Instead of the *shahada*, or Islamic confession of faith, these coins invoked the Trinity; instead of the *Hijri* date, these coins displayed the Christian year; and instead of Muhammad, we find the name "Jesus" featured prominently on the coins. And while retaining the prototypical Fatimid "bulls-eye" design, these new Christian bezants had a cross at their center.[439] If the shift from Islamic to Christian content makes sense in light of the pressure from Rome, what makes less sense is the decision to keep the coins in Arabic. Why didn't the Franks simply mint gold coins with Christian content in Latin as they had done for over a century with their copper coinage? Put another way, why did the Franks finally opt to translate the theological content (from Islamic to Christian) on the coins but stop short of translating the actual language of the coins? Why did they seek conceptual equivalence but not linguistic equivalence?

Could the answer be simply that the minting authorities were once again engaged in a complex process of negotiation—this time between the expectations of the pope in Rome and those of the Franks in Syria? Could it be that the minting authorities, while departing significantly (perhaps permanently) from the original Fatimid dīnār, desired to preserve the most recognizable feature of the coin—the Arabic script? In other words, if the pope insisted that the *bisantius sarracenatus* display Christianized content, then perhaps its Frankish (and Muslim) users insisted that the coin retain its Arabized form. With the complete removal of Islamic content and the addition of the cross to the new bezant, perhaps the only way to remind the "reader" of the original or source "text" (the Fatimid dīnār) was to retain the original language.

---

[439] For a full transcription of the text, see Balog and Yvon, "Monnaies à légendes arabes de l'Orient latin," 160.

Just as its Muslim users valued the *familiarity* of the Arabic inscriptions,[440] its Frankish users

valued the *alterity* of the inscriptions. The very fact that these coins were in a strange and

unintelligible script signaled to the Franks—both locals and visitors—that they were no longer in

France or England but rather they were in *Outremer* – the land "overseas."

Coins in the Texts

　　With this material history of the Saracen bezant in mind, let us now turn to its literary

history. The earliest mentions of bezants in the crusader period come from early crusade

chronicles and documents. For example, in the *Gesta Francorum*, the anonymous author notes

that during the siege of Antioch, the price of a small loaf of bread was "one bezant [*uno*

bisantio]"—an outrageous up charge that symbolized the privations and hardships of the

prolonged siege.[441] In this passage, it is likely that the author of the *Gesta* is referring to either

gold coins generically or the Byzantine *nomisma* specifically, as Antioch, though occupied by

Seljuk warlords in 1098, had been a Byzantine city for most of the eleventh century. Also, it

seems that early Latin sources do not use the term *bezant* to refer to Arab-Islamic gold coins they

encountered on crusade. Raymond d'Aguilers refers to tribute payments from the King of Tripoli

in the First Crusade as "gold pieces of Saracen money [*aureos Sarracenae monetae*]."[442] The

first time we see the adjective "*sarracenatus*" attached to the noun "*bisantius*" is in the 1123

Pactum Warmundi, which granted privileges to the Venetians in exchange for their military help

in the impending siege of Tyre. One of the many privileges promised to the doge was the right to

---

[440] An awareness of the Muslim audience is apparent even in these thoroughly Christianized
　　bezants of phase four, as can be seen by the prominent central inscription on the obverse
　　of the coin: *allahu wahīd* [God is One]—a nod to the common monotheism shared by
　　Christians, Muslims, and Jews.
[441] GF, IX, xxvi, 62.
[442] Raymond d'Aguilers, *RHC* III, 278; trans. Hill & Hill, 91.

three hundred "Saracen bezants" [*Bizantios Sarracenatos*] annually from the revenues of the city.[443] By specifying that he would pay the doge in "Saracen" gold bezants, the king was assuring the doge that he would be paid in high-quality Fatimid gold dīnārs rather than the debased Byzantine *nomismata*. The problem of Frankish counterfeiting is not unrelated to this moment, for according to Ibn Khallikan, it was immediately after the siege of Tyre in 1124 that the Franks started counterfeiting Fatimid dīnārs. One is left to wonder—what kind of "Saracen bezants" were paid to the doge after the siege of Tyre? Were they genuine Fatimid dīnārs or were they Frankish counterfeits minted in Tyre in the years following the conquest?

If in the early decades of the twelfth century (Metcalf's Phase 1), we see a shift in usage of the term bezant—from Byzantine gold *nomismata* to Fatimid gold dīnārs (often marked by the qualifier *sarracenatus*), in the middle decades of the twelfth century we see another shift in usage. In this transitional period, the term Saracen bezant begins to refer not only to the official gold coin of Fatimid Egypt but also to the quasi-official gold coin of the Kingdom of Jerusalem—which, of course, looked a lot like Fatimid dīnārs. Our earliest evidence of the term *bisantius sarracenatus* referring unambiguously to Frankish issues of the "Fatimid" dīnār comes from a Venetian document from 1142 where we find mention of "good Saracen bezants of gold of the king of that country (*bizancios saracenatos bonos auri de rege illius terrae*)."[444] In 1165, we find a similar reference to Saracen bezants as the gold coinage of the king of Jerusalem:

---

[443] Tafel & Thomas I, 86. Though the *Pactum Warmundi* only survives in William of Tyre's *Historia*, which was written in the 1170s and '80s, we can be confident that the mention of *Bizantios Sarracenatos* was not a later addition by William because he himself never uses the term *Bizantios Sarracenatos* elsewhere in his work. When he refers to Byzantine gold coins, he calls them *michelois* (see WT XI, 11; XIII, 15); and when he refers to Fatimid dīnārs, he simply calls them "gold pieces" [*aureorum*] (see WT XVIII, 9). The only other time that William of Tyre refers to bezants in his work is when he is quoting a tax proclamation from 1183, which mentions *bezants* without any adjective (WT XXII, 23). By this point, this term is likely referring unambiguously to Frankish issues.

[444] Della Rocca and Lombardo, *Documenti del commercio veneziano*, vol. 19, no. 81.

"*bisancios auri saracenatos novos de moneta regis Ierusalem.*"[445] In a Genoese charter from

1156, we find a unique reference to "bisancios… sarracenicos de Sur."[446] Though in this case we

see no reference to the Latin king of Jerusalem, the mention of *Sur* (Arabic for Tyre) as the place

of origin unambiguously distinguishes these Saracen bezants as Frankish and not Fatimid issues.

Additionally, this reference to Saracen bezants from Tyre should be contrasted with references in

the same documents to "bisancios alexandrie."[447]

This distinction between Alexandrian bezants (no doubt referring to genuine Fatimid

dīnārs) and Tyrian bezants (Frankish issues) mirrors distinctions that were arising in Arabic

sources at the same time. In Ibn al-Qalanisi, we find mention of a tribute payment being made in

1156 between Damascus and Jerusalem in "Tyrian dīnārs (*dīnār ṣūrīa*)."[448] Though it is possible

that Ibn al-Qalanisi was referring to Fatimid dīnārs minted in Tyre (pre-1124) that were still in

circulation, it seems more likely that he was referring to Frankish issues that had become the

local gold currency for Frankish Syria and its Muslim hinterland. The need to distinguish

between a Frankish *dīnār ṣūrī* and a Fatimid *dīnār misrī* arose from the debasement of Frankish

issues, which became pronounced in the middle of twelfth century (Metcalf's Phase 2).[449] In the

1160s through the 1190s, we find attempts in both Arabic and Latin sources to distinguish not

only between Fatimid and Frankish issues but also between Frankish issues of varying quality.

For example, in a Latin document from 1165, we find references to "old" and "new"

Saracen bezants, which Metcalf argues may have been a distinction between "new" Frankish

bezants of eighty percent fineness (issued after 1142/65) and old Frankish bezants (from Phase 1)

---

[445] Della Rocca and Lombardo, *Documenti del commercio veneziano*, vol. 19, no. 167.
[446] *Historiae Patriae Monumenta*, *Chartes* II*,* ed. Charles Albert (Taurinorum, 1857), 350.
[447] *Historiae Patriae Monumenta*, *Chartes* II*,* 346.
[448] Ibn al-Qalanisi, *Dhayl tarikh Dimishq*, 336.
[449] Bates and Metcalf, "Crusader Coinage with Arabic Inscriptions," 443.

of ninety percent fineness or higher.[450] Similarly, in Ibn al-Athīr, we find an interesting reference

to "old Tyrian dīnārs (*dīnārān ṣūriatān ʿutqān*)" when he notes the elevated price of wheat in

Damascus during the famine of 1178/79.[451] What is unclear from this passage is if the mention of

"old Tyrian dīnārs" refers to higher quality Frankish (or even Fatimid) issues from before 1142

(Phase 1); or if, viewing the situation from the early thirteenth century, he is referring to Frankish

issues of eighty percent fineness (Phase 2). By the time Ibn al-Athīr was writing in the 1220s, the

dīnār ṣūrī was a highly debased Frankish gold coin (of sixty-eight percent fineness) that was

easily distinguishable from Ayyubid dīnārs. In fact, by the end of the twelfth century, it is clear

that references to Saracen bezants in the Latin sources (and references to Tyrian dīnārs in the

Arabic sources) are primarily, perhaps even exclusively, referring to a debased and thoroughly

local gold currency issued by the Franks and no longer the high-quality international gold

coinage issued by the Fatimids (and later the Ayyubids).

    The second half of the twelfth century was a period of transition for the Saracen bezant,

where both its Christian and Muslim users attempted to distinguish it (terminologically) from

Fatimid (and later Ayyubid) dīnārs; and by the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, we find

these distinctions solidifying. Nowhere is this more evident than in Arabic and old French

sources which discuss practical guidelines for trade and currency exchange. For example, in al-

Shayzari's hisba manual from the 1180s/90s, we find a prohibition against selling "pure coinage

for that which is adulterated… such as selling Egyptian dīnārs for those from Tyre [*danānīr al-

ṣūria*]… because of ignorance as to their value and the lack of similarity between them."[452] Half

---

[450] Bates and Metcalf, "Crusader Coinage with Arabic Inscriptions," 442.
[451] Ibn al-Athīr, XI, 451.
[452] ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Naṣr al-Shayzari, *Kitāb nihāyat al-rutbah fī ṭalab al-ḥisbah*, ed. al-Bāz ʿArīnī (Beruit: Dār al-Thaqāfah, 1969), 74-75. For English tranlsation, see *The Book of the Islamic Market Inspector : Nihāyat Al-Rutba Fī Ṭalab Al-Hisba*, trans. Ronald Paul Buckley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 94.

a century later in 1242, al-Nabulsi comments on the diversity of dīnārs that come through the

Ayyubid dīwān and provides a concrete exchange rate for Tyrian dīnārs:

> And one of a number of practices on the part of the Mint officials is that the brokers collect gold of different kinds, which vary in value; for example, Tyrian gold, which assays 60 per cent (14.4 karats) fine, and… Egyptian gold, and other sorts which assay 80 per cent (19.2 karats) fine…[453]

It is worth noting that the value al-Nablusi assigns Tyrian gold coins corresponds rather closely

with modern metallurgical analysis of Saracen bezants believed to be from the early thirteenth

century (Metcalf's Phase 3).[454]

In Frankish legal sources from the thirteenth-century, we find similar attempts to regulate

currency exchanges in response to the diversity and debasement of the Saracen bezant. In the

Assises de la cour des bourgeois, we find a prohibition against exchanging gold bezants for

silver sols because there are times when a "bezant is worth five sols and times when a bezant is

worth ten sols."[455] Though this prohibition is certainly gesturing towards market fluctuations in

the relative values of gold and silver, it is also pointing to the fluctuating intrinsic value of the

bezant itself. For example, in the *Assizes of Antioch*, we find a curious mention of "Antiochene

gold (*d'or antiochiennes*)" which is worth half the value of "Syrian pieces (*pièces syriennes*)."[456]

It is clear that "Antiochene gold" is referring to Antiochene bezants; and "Syrian pieces" seems

to be a reference to higher quality Ayyubid dīnārs that were also circulating in the thirteenth

century. Whatever the case, by this point, it is clear that the Saracen bezant—as well as its

---

[453] Owen, Charles A., and C. C. Torrey. "Scandal in the Egyptian Treasury: A Portion of the Lumaʿ Al-Qawānīn of ʿUthman Ibn Ibrāhīm Al-Nābulusī: Introductory Statement". *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*. 14, no. 2 (1955): 76.

[454] Bates and Metcalf, "Crusader Coinage with Arabic Inscriptions," 446.

[455] "Assises de la cour des bourgeois," *RHC Lois* II, 48.

[456] Since the Assises d'Antioche only survive in an Old Armenian translation (which I have read in a modern French translation) we do not know what the Latin original terms were for these coins. *Assises d'Antioche*, ed. and trans. Léon Alishan (Venice: Imprimerie Arménienne Médaillée, 1876) no. x, 30.

Arabic counterpart, the *dīnār ṣūrī* —was understood by both Christian and Muslim traders as a Frankish gold currency, not to be confused with other types of gold coins issued by Islamic rulers.

Not only was the Saracen bezant becoming an unambiguous Frankish economic (and cultural) product, but after 1251, it became a Christian one as well. The most obvious transformation, of course, was the move from explicitly Islamic Arabic inscriptions to explicitly Christian Arabic inscriptions. This indigenization, or Christianization, of the Saracen bezant in Frankish Syria can also be seen in changes in the terminology we find in the sources. While the qualifier *sarracenatus* remains throughout the thirteenth century, we also find new adjectives for the bezant that pointed to a coin that was thoroughly in the cultural domain of Latin Christian Syria. For example, after 1251, we begin to find in the documentary sources mentions of "gold Saracen bezants of the Acre standard weight [*Bisantiorum Saracenatorum auri ad pondus Accon*]."[457] As the political and economic capital of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem (after 1187) and a major node of transportation for western pilgrims and merchants, the city of Acre represented to both Christians and Muslims in the region a Latin Christian city *par excellence*. Though it is likely that Saracen bezants had been minted in Acre prior to 1251, it is only after this date that the coins minted there were acknowledged as a product of this Christian city.

Certainly, the qualifier was practical, signaling both the (low) intrinsic quality of this issue of bezants (sixty-five percent) and the somewhat novel epigraphic innovations. However, this acknowledgement of unambiguous Frankish (and by extension, Latin Christian) origins also tells us something about how these coins were perceived in their time. Perhaps one could argue that this acknowledgement of Frankish Christian origins began earlier in Arabic sources with the *dīnār ṣūrī*—or Tyrian dīnārs. However, for much of the twelfth century, Muslim traders could

---

[457] *Cod. Dipl. Geros.*, 297-98, no. XIX; see also 141-42, no. CXXIII.

indulge the notion that Tyrian dīnārs circulating in Syria may have been actual Fatimid issues pre-dating the Frankish conquest of the city in 1124. In the case of the Christianized bezants of Acre, the Franks of Syria were themselves claiming the bezant as their own. As stated earlier, by 1251, the Saracen bezant was "Saracen" in script only. This final transformation, or translation, of the Saracen bezant occurred not only in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem but also in the northern Frankish principalities of Tripoli and Antioch—as one can find references to *bisantios Tripolitanos* and *bisantios Antiochenos* in documents from the mid to late thirteenth century.[458]

Conclusion

The Saracen bezant was an "object of translation" in at least three respects. First, it was an object of geographical translation. Whether through international trade, ransom payments in war, taxation in rural estates, or gifts to religious institutions, these enigmatic gold coins were in a process of constant circulation—repeatedly being "carried across" [*translatus*] the political and geographical boundaries of Latin and Islamic Syria in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Second, these coins were objects of linguistic translation. The ubiquitous physical presence of these objects among the Franks demanded linguistic translation. What would this foreign (Arabic) gold coin be called in the language of the Franks? The Latin *bisantius saracenatus* suggests that the Franks saw themselves as occupying an economic and cultural zone that had been dominated by the Byzantines (whose gold coins were the first ones most Franks had ever encountered) and the Fatimids (whose gold coins were the dominant currency of the eastern

---

[458] The earliest mention of Tripolitan and Antiochene bezants actually occurs quite early (1231), but these mentions very well may be referring to the "B + T" issues of the bezant which, as we discussed earlier were quite a departure—or loose translation—of the Fatimid dīnār. *Cod. Dipl. Geros.*, 120, no. CXII. For more mentions of these coins, see *Cod. Dipl. Geros.*, 183, no. CLXV; 262, no. CCXXI; *AOL* I, 457, no. 26; Delaborde, *Chartes*, no. 57.

Mediterranean). However, rather than borrowing (or transliterating) the Greek (*nomisma*) or Arabic (*dīnār*) terms for the gold currencies they encountered in the eastern Mediterranean, the Franks opted to translate the name for these gold coins into Latin. Like all translations, the term *bisantius saracenatus* was something new that somehow still pointed back to a prior "source text." And while this new term was meant to signify (at least initially) the same object as the Arabic *dīnār*, the very act of translation opened up new ways to read and interpret these gold coins.

Through the repeated processes of circulation and translation, the Saracen bezant also became an object of cultural translation. It began as something foreign to the Franks of Syria and became something local. It began as an import and became an export. It began as something Islamic and became something Christian. For the average Frank, the significance of the *bisantius saracenatus* had less to do with regional economics and more to do with conceptions of place and cultural identity. Though scholars like Prawer balk at terms like "orientalization," it seems as though many Franks who settled in the Levant felt that they were in fact becoming "orientalized" through a process of divinely-inspired cultural translation.[459] The most explicit articulation of this idea can be found in the chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres, who settled in the Levant after the First Crusade:

> Consider, I pray, and reflect how in our time God has transferred the West into the East. For we who were Occidentals now have been made Orientals. He who was a Roman or a Frank is now a Galilaean, or an inhabitant of Palestine… The one and the other use mutually the speech and the idioms of the different languages. Different languages, now made common, become known to both races, and faith unites those whose forefathers were strangers… Those who were strangers are now natives; and he who was a sojourner now has become a resident… For those who were poor there, here God makes rich. Those who had few coins, here possess *countless besants*...[460]

---

[459] "No propensity to 'orientalization' prepared Arabic dies or moulds in the royal mint, but sober commercial considerations aimed at making crusader money acceptable in the East." Prawer, *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 383.

[460] FC, III, XXXVIII, 3-7; trans Ryan and Fink, 272.

Among the numerous indicators of this process of cultural translation, Fulcher mentions possessing "countless besants." While Fulcher's mention of bezants is intended to communicate a general increase in wealth for the average Frankish settler, his very mention of the bezant by name suggests that the Arabic-inscribed gold coins (whether Fatimid dīnārs or early Frankish issues) evoked for Fulcher a tangible sense of place.

For Franks in the eastern Mediterranean, possessing (and eventually producing) the *bisantius saracenatus* was one of the many ways that they engaged in this process of cultural translation—becoming "Orientals." The fact that the redesigned and Christianized bezant of 1251 remained an Arabic coin suggests that the Franks of Syria saw the eastern Mediterranean as a realm of Arabic culture and language in which they were legitimate participants. Decades after 1251, the Christianized bezant of Acre was still called a *bisantius sarracenatus* in the Latin sources and a *dīnār ṣūrī* in the Arabic sources.[461] Perhaps this is because our medieval actors did not see these curious gold coins—as modern scholars so often do—as counterfeits or inauthentic imitations of a Fatimid prototype. Rather they saw them as legitimate, legible, and even valuable translations.

Conclusion: Coins and Customs Houses

It would only be a slight exaggeration to argue that the entire enterprise of cross-cultural trade in the medieval eastern Mediterranean hinged on two things: coins and customs houses. The dīwān, with its staff of intermediary officials, became a center for cross-cultural trade *par-excellence* because it provided robust institutional translation services that guaranteed language

---

[461] For late examples of the *bisantius saracenatus* (from 1279 & 1295, respectively), see *AOL*, I, 498-500, no. 11; and Tafel & Thomas, III, 375. For late example of the *dīnār ṣūrī* (1285 & 1302, respectively), see Ibn 'Abd az-Ẓahir, *Baybars I of Egypt*, ed. Fatima Sadeque, 282; and Ṣāliḥ ibn Yaḥyá. *Tārīkh Bayrūt*, 156.

barriers between Latin Christians and Muslims would not inhibit trade. If dīwānī officials (scribes, dragomans, *simsars*) functioned as the primary *mediators* of cross-cultural trade; then the Saracen bezant served as the primary *medium* of cross-cultural trade. The curious history of this ubiquitous gold coin reminds us that processes of translation did not stop at the customs house. If the initial encounters between foreign and local merchants could be confined to the dīwān, the second-order encounters between foreign objects and local communities could not. This much slower process of cultural translation—where Fatimid dīnārs become Frankish bezants—makes legible the residual effects of cross-cultural trade in the medieval eastern Mediterranean. Foreign objects entered into new communities (and languages) through trade and then were translated from the realm of the foreign, and even exotic, to that of the local and familiar.

CHAPTER 4

HOLY MEN AND HOLY FOOTPRINTS: RELIGIOUS PILGRIMAGE

Introduction: Footprints at the Dome of the Rock

One of John of Würzburg's explicit purposes in writing a detailed account of his

pilgrimage to Frankish Jerusalem in the 1160s was preservation. He explains, "… since this city

has often been captured and destroyed" and its holy places "pulled down" or "changed," great

attention has been "paid to their location."[462] Among the sacred spaces he described with great

detail was the Temple Mount—a palimpsest of sacred history for Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

Remarking on its New Testament history, John writes, "From the Temple Jesus Christ drove out

the people selling and buying. And as a testimony to this fact there is a stone shown on the right

side of the Temple. It is reverently decorated and well lit, and the Lord's footprint [*pede domini*]

is still visible there…"[463] Alluding to a nearby inscription and illustration at the site, John

remarks that this rock was also the location of Jesus' presentation to Simeon and Jacob's dream

---

[462] John of Würzburg, *Descriptio Locorum Terrae Sanctae*, ed. R.B.C. Huygens, *Peregrinationes Tres*, *CCCM* 139 (Turnholt: Brepols, 1994), 79-80, lns 30-36. In English translation, *Jerusalem Pilgrimage, 1099-1185*, eds. and trans. John Wilkinson, Joyce Hill, and W. F. Ryan (London: Hakluyt Society, 1988), 244-45. Henceforth, all references to this pilgrimage account will be abbreviated "John of Würzburg" followed by the page and line numbers from Huygen's edition and (when necessary) the page number from Wilkinson's translation.

[463] John of Würzburg, ed. Huygens, 90, lns 283-86; trans. Wilkinson, 246.

of a ladder to heaven.[464] Finally, John notes that Christians (and Jews) are not alone in venerating

this site, as "very many Saracens even today come to this altar to pray."[465]

One Muslim pilgrim who came there to pray just a few years later was ʿAlī al-Harawī (d.

1215), an Iraqi pilgrim, scholar, and diplomat who traveled to Jerusalem in 1173.[466] However,

the structure that John identified as the *Templum Domini* (the Temple of the Lord) al-Harawī

identified as the *Qubbat al-Ṣakhra* (the Dome of the Rock). And the footprint that John

associated with Jesus al-Harawī attributed to a different prophet. Al-Harawī writes, "Jerusalem

contains the Dome of the Rock, the site where the Prophet, MPBUH, ascended to heaven and the

rock from which he ascended containing his footprint [*qadamuhū*]. I saw this rock during the

time of the Franks to the north of this Dome."[467] Though visiting the Temple Mount just a few

years after John, al-Harawī made a radically different claim about the footprint found on the

sacred rock. Furthermore, he argued that the defining event of this site was not Jesus' cleansing

of the Temple or Jacob's dream but rather Muhammad's ascension.

Less than two decades later, al-Harawī's rival claim about the footprint would become

the authoritative view. After Saladin's recovery of Jerusalem in 1187, the sultan sponsored a

wholesale restoration of Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem, including the Temple Mount. Of the

need for renovations, ʿImād ad-Dīn writes, "As for the Rock, the Franks built over it a church

---

[464] While acknowledging the tradition, John argues that the tradition of the Jacob's dream
occuring at the Temple Mount is false: "It happened a long way away, as Jacob was
going to Mesopotamia…" See John of Würzburg, ed. Huygens, 90, lns 290-315; trans.
Wilkinson, 246-47.

[465] John of Würzburg, ed. Huygens, 90, lns 318-21; trans. Wilkinson, 247.

[466] For biographical information on ʿAlī al-Harawī, see Josef Meri's introduction to *A Lonely
Wayfarer's Guide to Pilgrimage: ʿAlī Ibn Abī Bakr Al-Harawī's Kitāb Al-Ishārāt Ilā
Maʿrifat Al-Ziyārāt* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 2004). Henceforth, all references to this
pilgrimage guide will be abbreviated "Al-Harawī" followed by the page numbers in
Meri's edition. Note: Meri's edition has the Arabic text and the English translation on
opposite pages.

[467] Al-Harawī, 70-71.

and an altar… Over the place of the (Prophet's holy) foot they set an ornamented tabernacle with columns of marble, marking it as the place where the Messiah had set his foot…"[468] 'Imād ad-Dīn is not the only Muslim author to acknowledge the contested nature of this relic. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Ibn Taymiyya and al-Suyuti both refer to the competing Christian and Muslim claims about the Noble Footprint (al-Qadam al-Sharīf), as the relic came to be called in Muslim tradition.[469]

If it is not surprising that the Muslim conquerors zealously promoted their own claims about the footprint on the rock, it is surprising that the Franks did not. In fact, the Latin tradition does not appear to have lasted even into the thirteenth century. The absence of the footprint from thirteenth-century Latin pilgrimage accounts may reflect no more than a lack of access on the part of Latin pilgrims to the Temple Mount. Yet even in the fifteen-year window when Latin pilgrims had access to the Temple Mount (1229-44), we find no claims that the footprint on the rock belonged to Jesus. Curiously, what we do find in several anonymous Latin and Old French pilgrimage guides is the claim that the footprint on the rock belonged to Jacob.[470]

The case of the mysterious footprints on the Temple Mount offers us an opportunity to consider the relationship between translation and pilgrimage in at least two ways. First, we will

---

[468] 'Imād al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Kātib al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Fatḥ al-Qussī fī al-fatḥ al-Qudsī*, ed. Carlo Landberg (Leiden: Brill, 1888), 65. For English translation, see Francesco Gabrieli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades,* trans. from Italian by E.J. Costello, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), 168-69.

[469] See Ibn Taymiyya, quoted in F.E. Peters, *Jerusalem: The Holy City in the Eyes of Chroniclers, Visitors, Pilgrims, and Prophets from the Days of Abraham to the Beginnings of Modern Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 377; and al-Suyuti, quoted in Guy Le Strange, *Palestine Under the Muslims* (New York: Houghton, 1890), 136. For a helpful introduction to the Noble Footprints in the Islamic tradition, see Brannon Wheeler, *Mecca and Eden: Ritual, Relics, and Territory in Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 78-81.

[470] See, for example, "Holy Pilgrimages," in *Itinera Hierosolymitana crucesignatorum (saec. XII-XIII)*, vol. 3, ed. Sabino De Sandoli (Jerusalem: Franciscan Print. Press, 1983), 465-77; "Anonymous IX," *IHC* III, 92. Henceforth, all references to this edition of pilgrimage accounts will be abbreviated "*IHC*" followed by the volume and page number.

examine processes of translation—how pilgrimage sites, and in particular holy relics, were adopted and translated from one religious community to another (and from one language to another). In other words, how does the *pede domini* (footprint of the Lord) become the *qadam al-rasūl* (footprint of the Messenger)? And how do these parallel traditions, both oral and textual, interact with one another and change over time? Second, we will consider questions of identity and agency: who, or what, is driving this process? Who was responsible for mediating the foreign pilgrims' experiences of the Holy Land—whether they were paying a head tax at the customs house or gazing at a footprint on the Temple Mount? And how exactly did these individuals serve as bridges across geographic, linguistic, and even confessional boundaries? Rather than focusing on how interpreter-guides facilitated logistics (which they did), I will focus on how interpreter-guides mediated experiences of the holy. And rather than focusing on how interpreter-guides served as translators of mundane conversations and sacred texts (which they did), I will focus on how interpreter-guides served as translators of oral traditions and relic objects. This narrow focus arises partially from the limitations of my sources and partially from a sustained methodological interest in the relationship between translation and material culture. While in the last chapter I looked at a coin that was translated geographically and linguistically between Islam and Christendom, in this chapter, I will examine another curious object of translation that was visited, venerated, and translated by Christian and Muslim pilgrims alike.

Following the Noble Footprints

Pre-Crusade Origins of the Footprint Tradition

John of Würzburg may have been the last Latin Christian to make a written statement identifying the footprint at the Temple Mount with Jesus, but he was far from the first. Saewulf,

189

an Anglo-Saxon pilgrim who traveled to Jerusalem in 1102 (just three years after the capture of

Jerusalem), observes that in the *Templum Domini* "the footprints of the Lord [*vestigia domini*]

still appear in the rock when he hid himself and left the Temple, as we read in the Gospel…"[471]

What is remarkable about Saewulf's early identification of Jesus' footprint on the Temple Mount

is that prior to the First Crusade, the Temple Mount had not been a significant site for Christian

pilgrimage. During the Islamic period, 638-1099, it had largely been off-limits to Christian

pilgrims; and during the Byzantine centuries before that, the Temple Mount had been left in ruins

as a deliberate symbol of the victory of Christianity over Judaism.[472] Thus, Saewulf's

identification of Jesus' footprint on a site that had been an exclusively Islamic holy place for

over four centuries is a puzzle. It is also a perfect example of what Sylvia Schein has described

as the near "overnight" transformation of the Temple Mount from a peripheral Christian

pilgrimage site to "one of the most conspicuous holy places" in the holy geography of crusader

Jerusalem.[473] Even if much of this overnight transformation of the holy geography of Jerusalem

simply involved migrating biblical stories to their "original" geographical locations, the

identification of a significant imprint relic on the Temple Mount (and in a former Islamic shrine)

requires a bit more explanation.

---

[471] Saewulf in *Peregrinationes Tres*, *CCCM* 139, ed. R.B.C. Huygens (Turnholt: Brepols, 1994), 68, lns 305-07. For English translation, see *Jerusalem Pilgrimage,* ed. Wilkinson, 105. Henceforth, all references to this pilgrimage account will be abbreviated "Saewulf" followed by the page number from Huygens' edition and (when necessary) the page number from Wilkinson's translation.

[472] According to Sylvia Schein, the ruined site stood as a vivid reminder of Jesus' prophecy of the destruction of the Temple (see Matthew 24:1-2). As a result of this reluctance to venerate the former site of the Jewish Temple, many of the biblical events that occurred on Mount Moriah were transferred to the Church of the Sepulchre in the Byzantine period. Sylvia Schein, "Between Mount Moriah and the Holy Sepulchre: Changing Traditions of the Temple Mount in the Central Middle Ages," *Traditio* 40 (1984), 176-77.

[473] Schein, "Between Mount Moriah and the Holy Sepulchre," 175.

In the mid 1090s, just before the fall of Jerusalem to the crusaders, Ibn al-'Arabī, a Maliki jurist from Seville, wrote, "On the elevated part of the southern side there is the footprint of the Prophet… while he rode on *Buraq* and the rock was inclined in that direction in awe [of the Prophet]."[474] Gülru Necipoğlu argues that Ibn al-'Arabī represents our earliest account of this relic in the Islamic tradition.[475] However, the association with Muhammad's ascension and his footprint was not the only Islamic tradition attached to this site in the eleventh century. Half a century earlier, in 1047, the Persian pilgrim Nāsir Khusraw gave a rather different account of the footprints: "On the kiblah side is a depression that looks as though someone's foot had sunk in, as into soft clay, for even the imprint of the toes remains… What I heard is that Abraham was here, and when Isaac was a small child he walked there, and these are his footprints."[476] Nāsir Khusraw's claim is interesting for at least two reasons: first, he does not associate the Dome of the Rock with Muhammad's ascension but rather with Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac; and second, he seems unsure about the credibility of the claim—almost as though he were repeating an unauthenticated oral tradition. Necipoğlu argues that Nāsir Khusraw and Ibn al-'Arabī represent two coexistent (and perhaps competing) narratives about the Dome of the Rock in the eleventh century. And she suggests that it was only after the recovery of Jerusalem in 1187 that Ibn al-'Arabī's tradition became the dominant one.[477]

---

[474] Ibn al-'Arabī of Seville quoted in Mujīr al-Dīn, *al-Uns al-Jalīl* (Amman, 1973), 2:17. For English translation, see Joseph Drory, "Some observations during a vist to Palestine by Ibn al-'Arabī of Seville in 1092-1095," *Crusades* 3 (2004): 111.

[475] Gulru Necipoğlu, "The Dome of the Rock as Palimpsest: 'Abd al-Malik's Grand Narrative and Sultan Süleyman's Glosses," *Muqarnas* 25, no. 1 (2008): 29.

[476] Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Nasir-I Khusraw's Book of Travels = Safarnāmah*, ed. and trans. W. M. Thackston (Costa Mesa, Calif: Mazda Publishers, 2001), 40. Henceforth, all references to this travelogue will be abbreviated "Nāṣir-i Khusraw" followed by the page numbers in Thackston's translation.

[477] Necipoglu, "The Dome of the Rock as Palimpsest," 69.

Though it is unclear how or even if the Franks engaged with the competing Islamic

traditions associated with the footprint at the Dome of the Rock, there is one piece of pre-Islamic

evidence that deserves consideration. Even though the Temple Mount was not a significant site

of Christian pilgrimage in the Byzantine period, we do have one account from the late sixth

century from the so-called "Piacenza Pilgrim" who writes:

> In the front of the ruins of the Temple of Solomon, under the street, water runs down to the fountain of Siloam. Near the porch of Solomon, in the church itself, is the seat upon which Pilate sat when he tried our Lord. There is also a square stone, which used to stand in the midst of the Praetorium… Upon it our Lord was placed when He was tried by Pilate, and there the marks of His feet [*vestigia illius*] still remain.[478]

Though it is unique in late antique pilgrimage accounts, the claim of the Piacenza Pilgrim

certainly points to the existence of a pre-Islamic Christian tradition of footprints on the Temple

Mount. The difficulty of linking Saewulf with the Piacenza Pilgrim (besides the five centuries

between them) is that their frame stories are different. The Piacenza Pilgrim links the imprint

relic with Jesus' trial before Pilate (John 18:28-40) while Saewulf claims that the footprint came

in the context of Jesus teaching at the Temple (John 8:59).[479] John of Würzburg associated the

site and the footprints with Jesus' cleansing of the Temple (Matthew 21:12-13), while Peter the

Deacon, in 1137, claimed that Jesus made the footprint as a baby when he was presented to

---

[478] The account continues: "The portrait, which during His lifetime was painted and placed in the Praetorium, shows a beautiful, small, delicate foot, a person of ordinary height, a handsome face, hair inclined to curl, a beautiful hand with long fingers. And many are the virtues of the stone upon which He stood; for men take the measure of His footprints, and bind them upon their bodies for various diseases, and are healed. The stone itself is adorned with gold and silver." Piacenza Pilgrim, *Itinera hierosolymitana et descriptiones Terrae Sanctae*, eds. T. Tobler and A. Molinier (Geneva: J.G. Fick, 1877), 104. For English translation, see *Of the Holy Places Visited*, Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society, trans. Aubrey Stewart (London: Adelphi, 1887), 20. Henceforth, all referenes to the Piacenza Pilgrim will be abbreviated "Piacenza Pilgrim" followed by the page number in the Tobler edition and (when necessary) the page number in the Stewart translation. Additionally, all English translations coming from the *Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society* series will be abbreviated *PPTS* followed by the publication year.

[479] Saewulf, ed. Huygens, 68, lns 305-07; trans. Wilkinson, 105.

Simeon at the Temple (Luke 2:22-35).[480] The wide variation in the frame stories and the lack of a consistent explanation for the footprint make it difficult to draw any clear connections between the sixth- and the twelfth-century Christian traditions. The inconsistent frame narrative also suggests that the footprints may have been a relatively fluid oral tradition that was often attached *ad hoc* to one of several New Testament narratives of Jesus' activities at the Temple in Jerusalem.

Developments after 1187

Even if the footprint of Jesus at the Temple Mount was in fact a malleable oral tradition with an unstable textual tradition in the twelfth century, this alone does not explain its total disappearance in the thirteenth century. What happened after 1187? Why did the Latins so easily abandon their claim on the footprint, and how were the Muslims able to assert so vigorously their claim over and against the Christian tradition? The enthusiastic recovery of Islamic holy sites must be understood within the context of the *jihād*, or counter-crusade, begun by Zangī and Nur ad-Dīn in the mid-twelfth century. Before then, the cult of Jerusalem in the Islamic tradition had been a largely local phenomenon, and the traditions surrounding its holy sites had been contested or at least fluid—as we can see with the stark discrepancy between Nāsir Khusraw and Ibn al-ʿArabī's identification of the footprints on the Dome of the Rock in the eleventh century. Emmanuel Sivan has argued that a central feature of jihad preaching and propaganda in the mid-to-late twelfth century was the importance of Jerusalem. This "reminder" of its sanctity not only

---

[480] John of Würzburg, ed. Huygens, 90, lns 318-21; trans. Wilkinson, 247. Peter the Deacon, *Itineraria et Alia Geographica*, *CCSL*, ed. R. Weber (Turnholt: Brepols, 1965), 95, lns 28-32.

motivated warriors to fight vigorously for its recovery, but it also motivated rulers, like Saladin, to reclaim and renovate its holy sites after the reconquest of 1187.[481]

It is no coincidence that the first two Muslim authors to claim the footprint at the Dome of the Rock as Muhammad's were Ayyubid functionaries and close associates of Saladin—al-Harawī and 'Imad ad-Dīn. Al-Harawī, who served as a diplomat for the Ayyubids in the late twelfth century, visited Frankish Jerusalem and the Dome of the Rock in 1173, but he did not write the account of his travels until after the capture of Jerusalem in 1187. Therefore, it is difficult to know if al-Harawī's claim about Muhammad's footprints represents an Islamic tradition that was already active in the 1170s or if it represents a retroactive attribution in the context of Saladin's restoration of Islamic Jerusalem.[482] 'Imad ad-Dīn, Saladin's secretary and biographer, provides another early attribution of the footprint to Muhammad, and he also acknowledges the "erroneous" crusader tradition that had emerged in the twelfth century—perhaps as a way of demonstrating the significance of Saladin's recovery and subsequent restoration of Jerusalem and its holy sites.[483]

If the zealous Islamic retrieval of the footprint at the Dome of the Rock should be understood within the larger context of the twelfth century jihad and the centrality of Jerusalem in jihad rhetoric, how then should we understand the absence of a Latin response? Why did the Franks, who greatly lamented the loss of Jerusalem and made repeated attempts after 1187 to recover the holy city, abandon the tradition of the footprints at the Temple Mount? And why did the attribution shift to Jacob when the Franks regained access to the site in the 1230s? The primary sources are silent. However, just as the Latin pilgrimage texts go silent on Jesus'

---

[481] Emmanuel Sivan, "Le Caractère Sacré De Jérusalem Dans L'Islam Aux XIIe-XIIIe Siècles," *Studia Islamica*, no. 27 (1967): 152.

[482] Al-Harawī, 70-71.

[483] 'Imād al-Dīn, 65.

footprint at the Temple Mount after 1187, we begin to find mentions of another imprint relic just across the Kidron Valley at the Mount of Olives. In 1217, the German pilgrim Thietmar writes, "Near the Holy City to the east is the Mount of Olives and the place from which the Lord ascended to the Father, where the Saviour's footprints [*vestigia Saluatoris*] are still to be seen."[484] Thietmar is joined by many Latin pilgrims from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries claiming to have visited the footprint(s) of Jesus at the Chapel of the Ascension on the Mount of Olives.[485]

Could it be that the Franks' sudden abandonment of the footprints on the Temple Mount is related to the revival of another set of footprints just across the valley? Like the Temple Mount footprint, the tradition of the Mount of Olives footprints has roots in the pre-Islamic period. Our earliest mention comes from 403, when Paulinus of Nola writes about the footprints and the recent construction of a church commemorating the site of Jesus' ascension.[486] After this date, we find numerous Latin pilgrims from both the Byzantine and early Islamic periods writing about Jesus' footprints at the site of the ascension.[487] While the tradition of Jesus' footprints at

---

[484] Thietmar, *Magestri Thietmari Peregrinatio*, ed. J.C.M. Laurent, (Hamburg: Nolte & Köhler, 1857), 27 lns 17-18. For English translation, see *Pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the Holy Land, 1187-1291*, ed. and trans. Denys Pringle (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 113. Henceforth, all references to Thietmar's pilgrimage account will be abbreviated "Thietmar" followed by the page number in Laurent's edition and (when necessary) the page number in Pringle's translation.

[485] For more on the Church of the Ascension, see Denys Pringle, *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem: A Corpus. Vol. 3* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 72-88.

[486] Paulinus of Nola, *Enchiridion Locorum Sanctorum*, ed. Donato Baldi (Jerusalem: Typis PP. Franciscanorum, 1955), 390, no. 610.

[487] For example, Arculf, a seventh-century pilgrim from Gaul, describes the site: "The interior of the church, without roof or vault, lies open to heaven under the open air… in order that from the place where the Divine footprints are last seen, when the Lord was carried up into heaven in a cloud, the way may be always open and free to the eyes of those who pray towards heaven… and although the faith of such as gather daily at the spot snatches away some of what was trodden by the Lord, yet the area perceives no loss, and the ground still retains that same appearance of being marked by the impress of footsteps.

the Mount of Olives is persistent from the fifth through eighth centuries, it seems to disappear from pilgrimage accounts in the ninth century. It reemerges only in the middle of the twelfth century—coinciding with a major crusader reconstruction of the Chapel of the Ascension.[488] Though many Latin pilgrims visited the Mount of Olives in the early twelfth century and associated that site with Jesus' ascension (among other things), it is only in the 1150s, and even more prominently after 1187, that we find mentions of Jesus' footprints at the site of the ascension.

What is intriguing about the twelfth-century accounts is that no pilgrim who mentions Jesus' footprints at the Mount of Olives mentions His footprints at the Temple Mount. In fact, there is not one pilgrimage account in the twelfth or thirteenth centuries that mentions both footprints—except for a handful of anonymous pilgrimage accounts that claim that the Temple Mount footprints belonged to Jacob.[489] This suggests that though the Temple Mount footprints seem to have been the only significant imprint relic of the early twelfth century, by the middle of that century it was coexisting (perhaps even competing) with a well established and revitalized tradition that had a richer textual tradition and a more stable frame narrative. The loss of Jerusalem (and with it access to the Temple Mount) in 1187 ensured that the footprints on the Mount of Olives would become the most prominent imprint relic in Christian pilgrimage circuits, one which persists to the present day. Indeed, the loss of the Temple Mount in 1187 and the reemergence of the Mount of Olives footprints as a pilgrimage site are hardly coincidental. Rather than contest the Temple Mount footprints with the Muslims, who at this point had a firm hold on Jerusalem and its holy places, it seems that the Franks chose to endorse an alternative

Arculf, *PPTS* (1895), 22-23; Latin edition in *Itinera hierosolymitana et descriptiones Terrae Sanctae*, eds. Tobler and Molinier, 163.

[488] Pringle, *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem* III, 73. "Icelandic Guide," *Jerusalem Pilgrimage*, trans. Wilkinson, 221-22; and Belard of Ascoli, *IHC* II, 48.

[489] See, for example, "Holy Pilgrimages," *IHC* III, 465-77; "Anonymous IX," *IHC* III, 92.

site that was accessible to Western pilgrims and had unambiguous (and even exclusive) Christian roots. Thus, after 1187, instead of a contest over whose footprints were on the Temple Mount, what we find are two sets of footprints on adjacent mountains, one marking the ascension of Jesus and the other that of Muhammad.

Translating Pilgrimage: The Agency of Interpreter-Guides

If the turning point of this story is 1187, with the Ayyubids' vigorous reclamation of the Temple Mount footprints and the Franks' revival of an alternative imprint relic on the Mount of Olives, there is still the question of agency. Who was responsible for translating and transmitting the tradition of the footprints? How does the *qadam al-rasūl* become the *pede domini* (and vice versa)?

In the 1876 edition of Baedeker's guide to Palestine and Syria, travelers are cautioned against touring the Holy Land on their own without the "indispensable" services of a dragoman.[490] The crucial and multifaceted role of the dragoman in facilitating travel and pilgrimage to the Holy Land is not only a modern Ottoman phenomenon but has precedents, as we have seen, in the medieval period. In 1323, the Irish pilgrim Symon Semeonis found his dragomans equally indispensable, as they not only served as his interpreters but also obtained a travel permit from the sultan in Cairo and arranged Symon's transport to Jerusalem.[491] Whether traveling to the Holy Land in the nineteenth or the twelfth century, pilgrims were dependent on the services of dragomans. These figures typically functioned as both an interpreter and a guide—whether they were negotiating taxes at the port of Alexandria, reading inscriptions at the Mount of Olives, or relating unofficial oral traditions associated with holy sites. The functional

---

[490] *Palestine & Syria: Handbook for Travelers*, ed. K. Baedeker (Leipzig: Karl Baedeker, 1876), 15.

[491] *Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis*, ed. and trans. Mario Esposito, 96-99 [77-81].

overlap between an "interpreter" [L: *interpres*; A: *tarjumān*] and a "guide" [L: *ductor*; A: *dalīl*]
is also observable in Islamic travel and pilgrimage in the medieval period. For example, when
Ibn Battuta visited monasteries and churches in Byzantium in the early 1330s, he was given a
Greek guide "whom the king had designated to accompany [him] on [his] rides." This guide,
"who knew the Arabic tongue," also served as his interpreter before the king.[492] The vital role of
pilgrimage guides, who facilitated the crossing of geographic and linguistic boundaries in the
medieval eastern Mediterranean, is attested from the earliest years of Christian pilgrimage after
the First Crusade. For example, in 1106 the Russian pilgrim Abbot Daniel remarked, "It is not
possible without a good guide and interpreter to explore and see all the holy places."[493]

The dual roles of guiding and translating were often inextricably linked. One ubiquitous
example of the intersection of these roles was in the need for guides to translate inscriptions at
holy sites. For example, when the German pilgrim Theodoric went to the Church of the Lord's
Prayer at the Mount of Olives in 1172, he observed,

> There is a church of great sanctity… where the Saviour… taught them to pray, saying,
> 'Our Father which are in heaven.' This He wrote for them with His own hand. This
> writing is under the altar itself so that pilgrims may kiss it.[494]

Numerous Latin pilgrims from the ninth through the fifteenth centuries mention this "original"
inscription of the Lord's Prayer, but very few comment on the language of the inscription. What
language did Theodoric think he was "reading"? Saewulf claims that the inscription was in
Hebrew.[495] In 1170, an anonymous Latin pilgrimage guide claims that the Lord's Prayer

---

[492] Ibn Battuta, *Rihlat Ibn Battuta*, ed. K. Bustani (Beruit: Dar Beirut, 1980), 353-55. For English
    translation, see H.A.R. Gibb, *The Travels of Ibn Battuta* II, (Cambridge: Cambridge
    University Press, 1958), 511-12.
[493] Abbot Daniel, *Jerusalem Pilgrimage*, trans. Wilkinson, 121.
[494] Theodoric, *Libellus de Locis Sanctis*, in *Peregrinationes Tres*, ed. Huygens, 174, lns. 985-
    990; trans. A. Stewart, *PPTS* (1891), 44.
[495] Saewulf, ed. Huygens, 70, lns 372-75.

inscription was in "Greek letters."[496] Setting aside the possibility of multilingual inscriptions

(which at this particular site seems unlikely), or the possibility of actual material change to the

site between 1102 and 1170, how are we to make sense of Saewulf's and the anonymous Latin

pilgrim's competing claims about the language of the inscription?[497] Beyond contextual clues,

how did these western pilgrims know that the inscription was the Lord's Prayer, and how did

they identify foreign alphabets? Saewulf gives us a surprisingly straightforward answer: "the

Lord wrote the Lord's Prayer with his own hands upon the rock, in Hebrew, so the Assyrians

state."[498] His "Assyrian" guides (likely local Jacobite monks) translated the inscription for him.

We can imagine that a local guide did not necessarily have to be literate (let alone know Hebrew)

to be a "translator" of inscriptions and holy sites. He just needed to claim local knowledge. In

this instance, knowing that a particular inscription (even in a language or script unknown to

traveler and guide alike) contained the Lord's Prayer constituted local knowledge of a special

kind. The commonplace quality of such a prayer, combined with the incomprehensibility of

language and/or script, made the dragoman the key to unlocking local mysteries.

As most pilgrims in this period were illiterate, they were heavily reliant on guides to

mediate their experiences at holy sites and explain to them what they were seeing. John of

Würzburg mentions that next to Jesus' footprint at the Temple Mount, there was a picture

[*pictura*] of Jesus' presentation to Simeon. That image was accompanied by an inscription,

claiming the rock as the site of Jesus' presentation as well as that of Jacob's dream.[499] John, as a

---

[496] Second Guide, *Jerusalem Pilgrimage*, trans. Wilkinson, 241.

[497] And to make matters more complicated, recent archeological work at the site has unearthed an inscription of the Lord's Prayer in Latin, which Denys Pringle suggests was the inscription that Theodoric was referring to. See Pringle, *Churches* III, 122.

[498] *Ibi prope quantum est iactus lapidis dominus noster scripsit orationem dominicam propriis digitis in marmore hebraice, Assyriis testantibus.* Saewulf, ed. Huygens, 70, lns 372-75; trans. Wilkinson, 107.

[499] John of Würzburg, ed. Huygens, 90.

literate pilgrim deeply knowledgeable about the layers of sacred history at the Temple Mount, could read and interpret the image and the inscription (and even disagree with the claim that Jacob's dream occurred in Jerusalem). But how would an illiterate, or simply less knowledgeable, pilgrim have read the image and the inscription? And how might he or she have related it to the adjacent footprints? Could it be that other pilgrims, and more importantly their guides, used this image and inscription as a key to the mysterious footprints on the rock? Perhaps this explains why Peter the Deacon, in 1137, associated the site with Jesus' presentation and claimed that the footprint was made by a Jesus as a baby;[500] and why later pilgrims claimed that the footprints belonged to Jacob.[501] Though it is possible that some pilgrims might have made the link between image and relic on their own, it seems more likely that interpreter-guides would have suggested (or at least confirmed) the link between events depicted in mosaics (and inscriptions) and adjacent sacred spaces and relics.

Even literate pilgrims, who traveled with pilgrimage texts, still relied heavily on local guides for local knowledge and translations of foreign inscriptions—in Hebrew, Greek, Syriac, or Arabic. In the case of the footprint on the Temple Mount, a relic with an unstable textual tradition in both Christian and Islamic texts prior to 1187, one can imagine how important guides were in promoting oral traditions about the holy footprint. This brings us back to Saewulf in 1102 and the problem of how an Anglo-Saxon pilgrim learned about Jesus' footprints on a site that had been a Muslim shrine for four centuries. Did he (or someone else) read the Piacenza Pilgrim's account from four hundred and fifty years earlier—or did the Latin authorities quickly co-opt a contested eleventh-century Islamic tradition? Or is it more likely that Saewulf's local Christian guides (whom he refers to as "Assyrians") served as his informants on the ground?

---

[500] Peter the Deacon, *Itineraria et Alia Geographica*, ed. R. Weber, 95, lns 28-32.
[501] See "Holy Pilgrimages," *IHC* III, 465-77; "Anonymous IX," *IHC* III, 92.

These local guides would have been familiar with local Christian and Islamic traditions surrounding the holy sites and would have been able to translate these traditions for a new stream of Latin pilgrims from western Europe after the First Crusade. Just as Saewulf's Assyrian guides had helped him identify the "exact" location of Jesus' prison and the site where Mary stood during the crucifixion, they also helped him identify the footprints of Jesus on the Temple Mount—probably borrowing from (and adapting) the eleventh-century Islamic tradition of the footprints.[502]

Though Saewulf does not explicitly credit the Assyrians in his identification of the footprints, he does cite their help in his identification of a nearby Temple Mount relic: "to its east is a small sanctuary which, the Assyrians say, contains the Cradle and the Bath of Christ Jesus and the Bed of his Blessed Mother."[503] Here one can discern much more easily the ways in which his local guides translated a local Islamic tradition for Latin pilgrims. Saewulf is the first Latin pilgrim to identify the cradle of Christ [*cunabulum Christi*] at the Temple Mount. There is no evidence in Latin sources of such a relic at the Temple Mount in the Byzantine or early Islamic periods, and it seems to have its origins in the Islamic tradition of the cradle of Jesus—or *Mahd ʿĪsā*. Our earliest mentions in the Islamic sources come from the tenth century with Ibn ʿAbd al-Rabbihi and al-Muqaddisi,[504] and our most detailed description comes from Nāsir Khusraw in the eleventh century:

> In the south corner of the east wall is an underground mosque… It contains Jesus' cradle [*mahd ʿīsā*], which is made of stone and is large enough for men to pray in… This is the cradle the Child Jesus was placed in when he spoke to people. In this mosque the cradle takes the place of the mihrab. On the east side is the mihrab of Mary and another is said

---

[502] Saewulf, ed. Huygens, 65-66. It is also possible that Saewulf's guides were drawing from a local Christian tradition, but we have no textual evidence of such a tradition.

[503] Saewulf, ed. Huygens, 68, lns 320-23; trans. Wilkinson*, 105.

[504] Le Strange, *Palestine Under the Muslims*, 166-67.

to be that of Zacharias. The Koranic verses concerning Zacharias and Mary are inscribed in these mihrabs, and it is said that this was Jesus' birthplace.[505]

Several things are worth pointing out in Nāsir Khusraw's description of the cradle of Jesus. First, he links this site and relic with the Qur'anic account (19:29) of the miracle of Jesus speaking as an infant from his cradle. Second, he links the site and relic with Jesus' birth. And finally, he observes that the *mihrab* of Mary and the *mihrab* of Zacharias were adjacent to the cradle of Jesus in the underground mosque.[506]

That this was already a site of New Testament history (albeit Islamicized) made it relatively easy for local Christian guides to translate the tradition for Latin pilgrims. The cradle of Jesus [*mahd 'īsā*] remained just that, the cradle of Jesus [*cunabulum Christi*]. The *mihrab* of Mary [*mihrab maryam*] became the "bed" of Mary [*lectum beatae matris eius*]. And the *mihrab* of Zacharias seems to have become the "bath" [*balneum*] of Jesus.[507] Rather than frame this site within the Islamic narrative of Mary's dependence on her relative Zacharias during her pregnancy (Qur'an 3:35-38) and Jesus' birth and early miracles (Qur'an 19:29),[508] the local Christian guides associated this site and relic with Jesus' presentation to Simeon (Luke 2:34) and the Christian tradition that Jesus and Mary stayed for some time with Simeon in Jerusalem.[509] This is how pilgrimage guides translated holy sites and relics from the Arabic-Islamic tradition into the Latin-Christian tradition—whether translating the *mahd 'īsā* into the *cunabulum Christi*

---

[505] Nasir Khusraw, 33.

[506] For a nineteenth-century archeological description, see Charles Clermont-Ganneau, *Archaeological Researches in Palestine*, Vol. 1, trans. Aubrey Stewart (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1899), 139-40.

[507] Other Latin texts refer to it as the bed of Jesus. See "De Situ," *Jerusalem Pilgrimage*, trans. Wilkinson, 178; "Pilgrimages and Pardons of Acre," *Pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the Holy Land*, trans. Pringle, 231.

[508] On the early Islamic traditions surrounding the cradle of Jesus and the *mihrab* of Mary, see Amikam Elad, *Medieval Jerusalem and Islamic Worship* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 93-97.

[509] "From there can be seen the place where the Manger and the Bath and the Sepulchre of Simeon are, and where Christ is said to have stayed with Simon [sic?] for a year and a half." See "Second Guide," *Jerusalem Pilgrimage*, 240.

or the *qadam al-rasūl* into the *pede domini*. Of course, it is possible that there were local

Christian oral traditions that ran parallel with Islamic traditions of the cradle and the footprints

(or even predated them), but more evidence is needed to make this claim.

Finding Dragomans: The Identity of Interpreter-Guides

Who filled this crucial role in medieval pilgrimage? Whom should we imagine as our

(often) nameless, yet essential, mediators of pilgrimage to the Holy Land? Symon Semeonis in

1323 notes that his dragomans were Franks who had converted to Islam.[510] One was a former

Fransciscan friar, Brother Assedinus, and the other a former Templar, Brother Peter.[511] Two

unnamed others were "Italians by nation and of the Jacobite religion [*Italici natione et ritu*

Jacobite]."[512] In Constantinople, Ibn Battuta mentions "Greek" [*rūmī*] interpreter-guides as well

as Syrian Jews who interpreted for him in the Byzantine court.[513] Abbot Daniel describes in

some detail his search and the value he placed on finding a good guide:

> And whatever of my meagre wealth I had by me I would give to those who were well
> acquainted with all the holy places in the city and outside the city so that they should
> show me everything thoroughly, and thus it was. And by God's favour I found in the
> Laura a man holy and old in days and very learned.[514]

Daniel also claims that this guide "had spent thirty years in Galilee and twenty in the Laura of St.

Sabbas…"[515] That Daniel's guide was from the Greek Orthodox Laura (or monastery) of St.

Sabbas suggests, of course, that the mode of communication between Daniel and his guide was

Greek. However, this does not tell us much about the interpreter-guide himself. Should we

---

[510] Symon claims that his dragomans were "outwardly renegades" but secretly crypto-Christians.
    Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis, 96-97.
[511] This name, *Assedinus,* appears to have been the Arabic *Asad* with a Latinized ending—or
    perhaps *Asad al-Dīn.*
[512] *Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis*, 96-99.
[513] Ibn Battuta, *Rihlat Ibn Battuta*, 353-55.
[514] Abbot Daniel, *Jerusalem Pilgrimage*, 121.
[515] Abbot Daniel, *Jerusalem Pilgrimage*, 158.

imagine that Daniel's guide was an ethnically Greek monk who learned Arabic during his fifty

years living in the Holy Land? Or should we imagine a Melkite (confessionally Greek yet

Arabic-speaking) Syrian who learned Greek in his time at the monastery?[516] Or might we

imagine that Daniel found a fellow Russian (Greek Orthodox) monk who had settled in the Holy

Land and presumably spoke Greek and possibly Arabic? The *who* question in this case is

intriguing because it raises an interesting hypothetical question: Would it make a difference if

Daniel's guide was a transplanted Greek (or Russian) monk as opposed to a Syrian-born

Melkite? How might the ethno-linguistic and religio-cultural identity of the pilgrimage guide

have influenced the pilgrim's experience of the Holy Land?

I have argued strongly in previous chapters against the common assumption that local

Christians exclusively filled the role of the translator in the contexts of diplomacy (Chapter 1),

local administration (Chapter 2), and trade (Chapter 3). Nevertheless, it seems that in pilgrimage

(and perhaps only in pilgrimage), this assumption may be largely accurate. Additionally, unlike

in other areas of contact—where we see the *who* change over time—it seems that it was local

Christians, especially monks and hermits, who filled this role consistently not only in the twelfth

and thirteenth centuries, but in the centuries before and after. That said, it is worth looking at the

available evidence (pilgrimage guides in Latin, Old French, and Arabic) to clarify (and perhaps

complicate) whom exactly I mean when I talk about "local" or "Syrian" Christians. After

considering the important role of local Christians as interpreter-guides in pilgrimage, I will

consider the role of Muslim and Frankish guides in the Holy Land.

---

[516] For the difficulties in discerning ethno-linguist and confessional identities based on medieval labels, see MacEvitt, *The Crusades and the Christian World of the East*, 102-03.

Local Christians as Interpreter-Guides

The notion that it was typically local Christians (usually monks and hermits) who served Latin Christians as pilgrimage guides and interpreters comes from a thin, but long trail of pilgrimage accounts that certainly give the impression that most Latin pilgrims hired local Christian guides to show them around the Holy Land. This practice of hiring local Christian guides and interpreters seems as old as Latin pilgrimage itself. In the late fourth century, Egeria refered to her guides as "holy guides [*deductores sancti*]" or "holy monks [*monachi sancti*]" from local Syrian monasteries.[517] Perhaps it should not surprise us that Latin Christian pilgrims would hire local Christian monks (as opposed to Muslims or Jews) to show them Christian holy sites. But this of course raises the question, what kinds of "local" Christians were involved in the pilgrimage industry? We can begin by looking at two early examples already mentioned— Saewulf and Abbot Daniel.

Though he only mentions them in passing, Saewulf's "Assyrian" guides clearly played an important role in mediating his pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1102/03. While he was familiar with Latin pilgrimage texts of centuries long past (like those of Jerome and Bede) Saewulf also relied on the local knowledge of the "Assyrians" to pinpoint the location of particular holy sites and to identify sacred relics. For example, Saewulf cites explicitly the authority of the Assyrians when talking about the location of Jesus' prison, the place where Mary stood during the crucifixion, the identification of the cradle of Jesus, and the language of the original inscription of the Lord's Prayer.[518] When talking about the history of Jerusalem in the murky centuries between the New Testament and Jerome, Saewulf once again refers to the knowledge of the

---

[517] See Egeria, *Itinera Hiersolymitana: Saeculi IIII-VIII*, ed. Paul Geyer (Leipsig: G. Fraytag, 1898), 37, 40.

[518] See Saewulf, ed. Huygens, 65-66, 68, 70.

Assyrians "whose fathers were inhabitants of this country from the first persecution."[519] Who were Saewulf's "Assyrian" [*Assirii*] guides?[520] Who were these Christians who had been inhabitants of the Holy Land since the days of Jesus? It seems most likely that Saewulf was referring to Jacobite (or Syrian Orthodox) Christians, who spoke Arabic in daily life and used Syriac in literature and liturgy.[521] Though Saewulf does not mention if his guides were monks or priests, we do know that the Jacobite monastery of St. Mary Magdalen was just north of the city walls of Jerusalem and might have served as a source of pilgrimage guides.[522] As non-Chalcedonian (monophysite) Christians who had been separated for many centuries from both Rome and Constantinople, Jacobite Christians and their churches were largely left alone by Frankish authorities. As a result, the Jacobites typically saw the Franks as allies, and—for the right price—were happy to serve as pilgrimage guides for the new stream of pilgrims coming from the western Mediterranean.

As we have seen, Abbot Daniel found his guide in the Greek Orthodox Laura of St. Sabbas. Whether Daniel's guide was a transplanted Greek or a Syrian-born Melkite is difficult to tell from the text. Our only indication that Daniel's guide may have been a transplant is that Daniel talks about how long he had lived in Galilee (thirty years) and St. Sabbas (twenty years), perhaps suggesting that he was not born in Syria.[523] For Daniel, the authority of his Greek/Melkite interpreter-guide came from his half century of living in the Holy Land, while for

---

[519] Saewulf, ed. Huygens, 65; trans. Wilkinson, 102.

[520] *Assirii* could of course be a realization/reflection not of "Assyrian" but of "Syrian" plus an Arabic definite article.

[521] For a helpful description of local/eastern Christian groups, as well as a discussion of medieval Latin terminology used to describe those groups, see MacEvitt, *The Crusades and the Christian World of the East*, 7-10, 102-06.

[522] Benjamin Kedar, "Latins and Oriental Christians in the Frankish Levant," rprnt B. Kedar, *Franks, Muslims, and Oriental Christians in the Latin Levant: Studies in Frontier Acculturation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 210.

[523] Abbot Daniel, *Jerusalem Pilgrimage,* 158.

Saewulf, the authority of his Jacobite guides came from their people's thousand-year roots in the land. Though Greek Orthodox monks (whether ethnically Greek or Syrian) certainly served pilgrims from the Byzantine and broader Greek Orthodox world, they also served as interpreter-guides for Frankish pilgrims. In an anonymous Latin pilgrimage guide from the first decade of the twelfth century, the author mentions his reliance on "wise men among the Greeks who live in Jerusalem."[524] In another anonymous Latin pilgrimage guide, *The Work on Geography*, we find mention of "very holy hermits and monks" guiding and informing the author. That these particular monks were Greek Orthodox can be gleaned from the context, since they were monks from Saint Catherine's, an ancient Greek Orthodox monastery on Mount Sinai that had served as a place of pilgrimage for both Greek Orthodox and Latin pilgrims since it was built in the sixth century.

This Frankish reliance on both Greek Orthodox and Syrian Orthodox (or Jacobite) monks as interpreters and guides in pilgrimage continues into the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. For example, John of Würzburg, though heavily steeped in the Latin textual tradition, still needed to rely on local "Jacobite monks" [*monachie Iacobitae*] who lived in Jerusalem to help him identify the site of Simon the Leper's house. In this case, the Jacobite monks who were informing John were from the Jacobite monastery of St. Mary Magdalen, which claimed to occupy the former site of Simon the Leper's house.[525] It is unclear whether these particular monks traveled longer distances with Latin pilgrims as guides or merely served as "tour guides" to the local sites around their monastery. That pilgrims might have hired different local guides as they moved from place to place is suggested in the pilgrimage account of the German pilgrim Thietmar in 1217. Thietmar mentions at least three different guides on his travels: one during his

---

[524] Guide, *Jerusalem Pilgrimage,* 117.
[525] John of Würzburg, ed. Huygens, 111.

time in Damascus; another during his time in Sinai; and another during his journey south through

the Jordan Valley.[526] When Thietmar arrived at St. Catherine's in Sinai, he "asked the bishop to

give [him] a guide [*ductorem*] to take [him] to the summit of Mount Sinai…"[527] Though

Thietmar gives no information about this guide, we can assume that he was one of the monks in

the monastery. It is difficult here to narrow our search any further, for according to Thietmar, the

monastery had both Greek [*Grecos*] and Syrian [*Surianos*] monks and holy men.[528]

Jacques de Vitry, who also benefitted from the guidance of a "Syrian monk" on his

journey through the Jordan Valley in the second or third decade of the thirteenth century,

explains that "the Syrians use the Saracen language in their common speech… and all other

writing, except for the Holy Scriptures and other religious books, in which they use the Greek

letters."[529] Despite Jacques de Vitry's tidy typology of non-Latin Christians, the Latin term

Surianos without contextual clues is not always so straightforward. According to MacEvitt, the

term in contemporary texts can refer to any Arabic-speaking Christian (or even Syriac-speaking

Christian), whether he or she was Melkite, Jacobite, Nestorian, or Maronite.[530]

In the late thirteenth century, we continue to find references to local Christians serving as

guides to pilgrims in the Holy Land. Burchard of Mt. Zion, a German pilgrim and Dominican

monk in the 1270s/80s, claims to have conversed with "Syrians, Saracens, and other inhabitants

of the land, diligently questioning them."[531] He also mentions being hosted by "Greek monks" in

Sebaste; and Armenian monks in Armenian Cilicia.[532] Burchard's claims to have read the Qur'an

and to have conversed with so many local Christians (and even Muslims) suggests that he may

[526] Thietmar, ed. Laurent, III.56-57, 13; trans. Wilkinson, 102, 125-31, 117.
[527] Thietmar, ed. Laurent, XXI.4-5, 45; trans. Wilkinson, 127.
[528] Thietmar, ed. Laurent, XVIII.13-14, 41; trans. Wilkinson, 124.
[529] Jacques de Vitry, *PPTS*, 28, 68.
[530] MacEvitt, *The Crusades and the Christian World of the East*, 102-03.
[531] Burchard of Mt. Zion, *Pilgrimage to Jerusalem*, 242.
[532] Burchard of Mt. Zion, *Pilgrimage to Jerusalem*, 276, 319,

have known Arabic. If this was case, then his pilgrimage would have been unique in some ways. Still, he seems to have been heavily reliant on local guides and monks in each place he stopped during his pilgrimage.[533] In 1288/89, Riccoldo of Monte Croce refers to local hermits at the Mount of Temptation (or Mount Quarantana) who showed them the places linked to Jesus' life.[534] Though he does not specify the identity of these hermits, they may have been from the same monastery in the Jordan Valley where Jacques de Vitry's Syrian (Melkite) guide came from.

If the evidence suggests that local Christians, especially monks and hermits, served as the primary pilgrimage guides and interpreters in twelfth- and thirteenth-century pilgrimage, how are we to account for their language learning? How did Greek-, Arabic-, Syriac-, and Armenian-speaking monks learn Latin, French, and even German? First, it must be acknowledged that the language skills required to be an interpreter-guide for pilgrims are different than the language skills required to be an interpreter-envoy in diplomacy or a dragoman in the dīwān. Of all the arenas of translation discussed within this study, guiding pilgrims called for the least linguistic skill. In order to be an interpreter-guide for pilgrims, one needed only a rudimentary knowledge of Latin, French, or German—enough to communicate basic information and enough to explain the holy sites and answer questions. The practical language and translation needs of pilgrimage were far less complex—and, in some ways at least, less important—than those of diplomacy or trade. That said, it is clear that some local Christian monks in the Holy Land became literate and very skilled in Western languages. For example, Nerses of Lampron (1153-98), an Armenian scholar, translator, and churchman, translated the *Rule of Saint Benedict* from Latin to Armenian in the 1170s. Nerses likely learned Latin (as well as Greek and possibly Syriac) while studying at

---

[533] For a few examples, see Burchard of Mt. Zion, *Pilgrimage to Jerusalem*, 276, 283, 313, 319.
[534] Riccoldo of Monte Croce, *Pilgrimage to Jerusalem*, 368.

209

an Armenian monastery in the Black Mountain (just north of Antioch). For centuries, these mountains housed diverse groups of monks and hermits, including Greeks, Armenians, Jacobites, Georgians, and (after 1098) Latins.[535] Frankish Antioch and the nearby monasteries of the Black Mountain appear to have been multicultural spaces where languages were acquired, texts were translated, and scholars of diverse backgrounds collaborated. It is in contexts like these that one can imagine local Christian monks learning some Latin and French. The dynamics of language learning and translation in monastic contexts will be explored further in Chapter Five.

Franks as Interpreter-Guides

In addition to bilingual Greek and Syrian monks, we should also imagine the possibility that some (perhaps many) of the "local" monks we find serving as interpreters and guides to pilgrims were in fact Latin monks who had settled in the Holy Land after 1099. Though Greek and Syrian Orthodox monasteries were more widespread and well-established, Latin monasticism in Syria flourished under Frankish rule in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. According to Andrew Jotischky, Latin monks and hermits sometimes founded new monasteries on "new" holy sites (most notably Mount Carmel) while in other instances Latin monks joined their Greek and Syrian brothers in houses at well-established monastic hubs, like the Black Mountain.[536] For example, the Greek pilgrim John Phocas mentions that on Mount Tabor (the site of Christ's Transfiguration) "there is a company of Latin monks" as well as "Nazirites belonging to us."[537] At sites like Mount Tabor then, one can imagine that Latin pilgrims would

---

[535] J.J.S. Weitenberg, "The Armenian Monasteries in the Black Mountain," in *East and West in the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean*, eds. K. Ciggaar and M. Metcalf (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 79.

[536] Andrew Jotischky, *The Perfection of Solitude: Hermits and Monks in the Crusader States* (University Park: Pennsylania State University Press, 1995), 7, 49.

[537] John Phocas, *Jerusalem Pilgrimage*, 320-21.

be hosted and guided by Latin monks while Greek pilgrims, like John Phocas, would be hosted and guided by Greek monks. This may have also been the case at numerous pilgrimage sites where we know Latin monasticism took root. Riccoldo of Monte Croce refers to local hermits guiding him at the Mount of Temptation (Mount Quarantana). As I mentioned above, these guides may have been Melkite monks from a monastery in the Jordan Valley; but they also may have been Latin hermits, who, according to Jotischky, had occupied monastic cells in the caves of Mount Quarantana since before 1116.[538] While we have little explicit evidence of Latin monks serving as interpreter-guides to pilgrims in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, it is difficult to imagine Latin monks not serving as guides. For western pilgrims often journeyed to pilgrimage sites where Latin monasticism was present, such as Mount Carmel, Mount Tabor, Mount Quarantana, the Sea of Galilee, and the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, we do find explicit mentions of Latin monks serving as interpreter-guides for Latin pilgrims, such as Symon Semeonis and Felix Fabri.[539]

While one might imagine that Latin monks and hermits would have served primarily as guides to Latin pilgrims, it seems that in some cases the life experience or sanctity of a particular holy man or hermit was more important than his ethno-linguistic identity. For example, when al-Harawī was in Hebron in 1173, he encountered an aged Frankish knight turned local holy man, named *Bīran*, who claimed to have entered the Cave of the Patriarchs over half a century earlier (in 1119) and seen the enshrouded bodies (and bare faces) of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. According to al-Harawī, *Bīran* was known among the Franks (and apparently among some Muslims as well) "for his moral qualities and his advanced age."[540] Whether he was an actual guide for hire or a simply a local Frankish holy man who recounted to pilgrims his mystical

---

[538] On Latin monasticism at Mount Quaratana, see Jotischky, *The Perfection of Solitude*, 78-9.
[539] *Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis* 99; and Felix Fabri, *PPTS* I.II, 478.
[540] Al-Harawī, 80-81.

experiences at the Cave of the Patriarchs, *Bīran* served al-Harawī (and probably countless other pilgrims) as a guide to this site that bore great significance for Christians, Muslims, and Jews. Al-Harawī reports that *Bīran* claimed that he was thirteen when he entered the cave in 1119.[541] If this is accurate and *Bīran* was indeed living in the Holy Land when he was thirteen, it seems likely that he was among the first generation of Syrian-born Franks, whose parents settled Syria in 1099. It is Franks like *Bīran*—whether he was born in Syria or brought there as a child—who complicate our understanding of "local" Christians functioning as pilgrimage guides.

Burchard of Mt. Zion also suggests that Syrian Franks were involved in the pilgrimage industry: "They [Syrian Franks] receive pilgrims of their own nation in their lodgings; and these people, if they do not know how to look after themselves, put their trust in them and lose their possessions and honor."[542] Burchard's comment reflects a western Latin mistrust of eastern Latins that was typical of the thirteenth century, one that has many echoes down the centuries.[543] Though Burchard's comments reveal Western attitudes, they also hint at Eastern practices. It seems clear that (at least in the late thirteenth century) local German-speaking Franks hosted German pilgrims in their homes; and French-speaking Franks hosted French pilgrims in their homes; and Provençal-speaking Franks hosted Provençals in their homes. What's more, Burchard's comments suggest that local Franks served in some way as contractors to pilgrims. The text gives little detail, but it appears that some local Franks served as interpreter-guides while others provided provisions for trips and connected pilgrims with "professional" pilgrimage guides. For example, when Thietmar was traveling south through Shawbak (in Transjordan) in

---

[541] Al-Harawī, 80-81.

[542] Burchard, *Pilgrimage to Jerusalem,* 314.

[543] Perhaps the most famous articulation of western Latins' disdain of eastern Latins comes from Jacques de Vitry. See Jacques de Vitry, *Lettres de Jacques de Vitry, 1160/1170-1240*, ed. R. B. C. Huygens (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960), II, 165-180 (86).

1217/18, he was hosted by a "certain French widow [*uidua Gallica*] who gave [him] information about the journey and the way of traveling through the desert to Mount Sinai." As a Frankish resident of a town en route to Sinai, this French widow seems to have turned her home into an inn or hostel for Latin pilgrims. Not only did this French woman provide Thietmar with food and lodging, she connected the German pilgrim with Bedouin guides [*Boidewinos*] who would provide camels and accompany him to Mount Sinai.[544]

Muslims as Interpreter-Guides

Thietmar's Bedouin guides raise the issue of Muslims serving as guides to Latin pilgrims. We know that these Bedouins accompanied Thietmar (and countless other Latin pilgrims) through the desert from Shawbak to Sinai, but we know little else. Thietmar explains that his use of Muslim Bedouin guides arose from necessity, for "[n]o one can find the way except the Bedouin, who know the region and are accustomed to pass along that route."[545] That Bedouin guides frequently accompanied Latin Christian pilgrims across the desert is also suggested by Thietmar's mention of an oath the Bedouins swore to him: "they swore and bound themselves by their religion and law to bring me back alive or dead."[546] The existence of a practice of oath-taking between Latin pilgrim and Bedouin guide suggests that the arrangement was neither novel nor *ad hoc*. This was simply the way pilgrims travelled to Mount Sinai. Since Bedouin guides were essential for Latin pilgrims wanting to cross the desert, it seems that a solemn oath was one way of mitigating the risk of dealing across confessional lines. But how did the Thietmar know the content of the Bedouins' oath? Did he understand what they said? Did they pronounce it in German or French? Or did the French widow serve as the interpreter and perhaps even

---

[544] Thietmar, ed. Laurent, XV, 4-8, 37; trans. Wilkinson, 120-21.
[545] Thietmar, ed. Laurent, XV, 8, 37; trans. Wilkinson, 121.
[546] Thietmar, ed. Laurent, XVI, 10-11, 39; trans. Wilkinson, 122.

administer the oath? Considering that her town had been ruled by Muslims for several decades, this Frankish widow probably spoke Arabic and served as Thietmar's translator and negotiator when he hired the Bedouin guides to accompany him across the desert.[547]

Even if the French widow served as Thietmar's interpreter with the Bedouin guides, this does not necessarily mean that none of the guides could speak some German or French. As mentioned earlier, less linguistic competence is needed to guide foreign pilgrims to holy sites than for diplomatic negotiation and international trade. That Thietmar had some degree of open communication with his Bedouin guides is suggested by his inclusion of Arabic terminology in his discussion of his desert passage: "I entered the desert of Babylonia, which is called the *Birrie*, a land without roads or water, a vast wilderness… which in former times the children of Israel crossed."[548] Though Thietmar could possibly have mapped Old Testament history onto this desert by simply reading Latin pilgrimage guides, he would not have known from his Latin sources the Arabic word for "steppe" or "desert," *barriya*. This unusual knowledge of Arabic toponyms suggests that Thietmar probably learned from his Bedouin guides.[549]

Thietmar's discussion of his Bedouin guides is the most detailed in a Latin pilgrimage account, but it is not the only one. Other accounts provide evidence of Muslims functioning as interpreter-guides for Latin pilgrims. For example, when Burchard talks about his sources for his account of the holy places, he mentions "diligently questioning" "Syrians, Saracens and other inhabitants of the land." Whether the "Saracens" that Burchard refers to served as his guides in a more formal sense or merely served as sources of local knowledge in particular places, it is

---

[547] If this was in fact the case, then this would be a rare example in the primary sources of a female functioning as a translator.

[548] Thietmar, ed. Laurent, XVI, 6-7, 38; trans. Wilkinson, 122.

[549] Other Arabic toponyms Thietmar mentions include: *Thursin* [Tur Sina], *Scobach* [al-Shawbak], and *Mec* [Mecca]. Thietmar, ed. Laurent, XVII, XX, XXIV; trans. Wilkinson, 123, 126, 130.

important to recognize that local Muslims were indeed involved in mediating Frankish pilgrimage, even if local Christians played a more prominent role.

Translating and Transporting the Noble Footprints

After 1187, and even more so after the Mamluk conquests in the latter half of the thirteenth century, Muslims played a prominent (if unwelcome) role in mediating Christian pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Burchard, who traveled to Syria in the early 1280s, noted one acute example of the immediate effects of Muslim control over Christian pilgrimage sites. On the shore of the Sea of Galilee he observes, "There moreover I saw on a stone three of the Lord Jesus' footmarks imprinted into the stone when I was there on the feast of St Augustine (28 August), but when I returned later on the feast of the Annunciation (25 March) the Saracens had removed the stone from that place."[550] Though it is unclear why the Mamluks moved this particular imprint relic (and what became of it), this instance reminds us that important as pilgrimage guides are to this story, they are not without accomplices (and rivals). If interpreter-guides can be seen as the primary translators of the oral traditions surrounding the footprints (and other relics), then the custodians of the holy sites can be seen as the primary translators of the footprints themselves. We must not forget that in the medieval period, the Latin verb *translatio* often referred to the physical movement of relics from one site to another, and it seems that our footprints were indeed objects of translation in this sense as well. While there is no explicit evidence of their removal from the Temple Mount (or the Mount of Olives) in this period, there are numerous clues that undermine any argument for material continuity with this sacred relic over the centuries. Take, for example, the discrepancies in the physical descriptions of the footprint. In 1047, Nāsir Khusraw saw seven footprints on the south side of the rock; in 1095,

---

[550] Burchard, *Pilgrimage to Jerusalem,* 259.

Ibn al-'Arabī saw one footprint.[551] In 1102, Saewulf claims to have seen footprints (plural) made by Jesus as an adult, while, in 1137, Peter the Deacon claims to have seen one footprint made by Jesus as an infant.[552] While Ibn al-'Arabī (and most other pilgrims) locate Muhammad's footprint on the southern end of the sacred rock, al-Harawī claims to have seen the footprint on the northern end.[553]

This disparity can be explained by two common features of pilgrimage in medieval Jerusalem: the constant renovation of holy sites (often after instances of war and destruction) and the constant flow of pilgrims in the market for souvenirs. Regarding renovations, there are several significant dates that serve as potential windows for substantial material transformation of the footprints: the original Umayyad construction of 691; the substantial Fatimid renovations of the 1020s; the Frankish renovations of the 1110s; and the Ayyubid restorations in the 1180s and 1190s. Of the Frankish renovations, Fulcher of Chartres writes, "In the middle of the Temple, when we first entered it and for fifteen years thereafter, was a certain native rock… Moreover, this rock, because it disfigured the Temple of the Lord was afterwards covered over and paved with marble. Now an altar is placed above it…"[554] What is interesting about Fulcher's account (written in the 1120s) is that he says nothing about the footprints and how the renovations to the *Templum Domini* might have affected the relic. 'Imād ad-Dīn, writing in the 1190s, claims that in addition to putting an altar over the top of the rock, they also "set an ornamented tabernacle with columns of marble" over the holy footprints.[555] Whether this particular renovation occurred in the 1110s as well is unclear, but this Frankish innovation is

---

[551] Nasir Khusraw, 40; Ibn al-'Arabī of Seville quoted in Mujīr al-Dīn, *al-Uns al-Jalīl*, 2:17.
[552] Saewulf, ed. Huygens, 68, lns 305-07; trans. Wilkinson, 105; Peter the Deacon, *Itineraria et Alia Geographica*, *CCSL*, ed. R Weber, 95, lns 28-32.
[553] Al-Harawī, 70-71.
[554] FC I, XXVI, 5-9; trans. Ryan and Fink, 117-18.
[555] 'Imād al-Dīn, 65; trans Gabrieli, 168-69.

important for two reasons. First, the structure marked off the exact location of the footprints, separating it from the rest of the stone that had been paved over and covered with an altar. Second, the Frankish innovation does not appear to have been destroyed by subsequent Islamic rulers. It merely was renovated or rebuilt by later dynasties (the Ottoman version exists to this day). By physically marking off the site of the footprints, the Franks at once created a degree of material stability and manipulability. The physical site itself became stable. The footprints were on the southern corner of the stone. However, because the footprints were set off from the main stone and contained in a covered reliquary, it was much easier to alter, sell, replace, or "restore" the relic.

Ibn al-Athīr, who also writes about the Frankish renovations of the 1110s, adds an interesting take on why the Franks paved over the rock:

> The Franks had laid a marble pavement above the rock and covered it over. The reason why it had been paved over was that the priests sold much of it to the Franks who came to them from overseas on pilgrimage. They would buy it for its weight in gold, hoping to benefit from its sanctity… One of their kings feared that it would be all lost, so he ordered it to be paved over to preserve it.[556]

Though Ibn al-Athīr is unique in linking the sale of relics with the rationale for covering the rock, he is not unique among Islamic or Christian sources in claiming that pieces of this rock were sold as relics.[557] The trade and theft of relics was a constant feature of pilgrimage that should not be ignored when thinking about changes to the footprint site over time. For example, al-Harawī reports that in Basra he was able to purchase an alleged footprint of the Prophet for twenty-four dīnārs.[558] Similarly, in 1204, Gunther of Pairis writes that Abbot Martin brought back from the East "a relic from the spot of the Lord's Ascension" and "a relic from the stone on

---

[556] Ibn al-Athīr, XI, 365; trans. Richards, 334.
[557] See 'Imād al-Dīn, 66-67; Gunther of Pairis, *The Capture of Constantinople: The "Hystoria Constantinopolitana" of Gunther of Pairis*, trans. Alfred J. Andrea (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 126.
[558] Al-Harawī, 208-09.

which Christ was presented in the Temple."[559] Though this account is most likely referring to

stones chipped away from the site of the footprints (and not the footprints themselves), it is not

difficult to imagine a scenario in which one or both of the footprints may have been stolen, sold,

or moved at some point in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In fact, in 1577, Boniface of

Ragusa, a Franciscan living in Jerusalem, claims that the Muslims had taken one of the footprints

from the ascension site at the Mount of Olives and kept it at the Dome of the Rock.[560] Boniface

is likely referring to an event that happened in the sixteenth century, but it is not improbable that

these imprint relics moved more than once across the Kidron Valley in moments of political

tumult and religious conflict.

Who were these priests whom Ibn al-Athīr is referring to, the custodians of the *Templum*

Domini who profited from the sale of relics and who would have had a keen interest in

promoting (and protecting) the tradition of the holy footprint(s)? Though the Templars are

famously associated with the Temple Mount, they were only given rights to al-Aqsa Mosque

(which they knew as the Temple of Solomon). The Dome of the Rock, on the other hand, was

occupied by Augustinian canons who had been installed there by King Godfrey in the early days

of the Kingdom of Jerusalem.[561] We know precious little about these Augustinian canons besides

the names of a few abbots over the twelfth century. But the scraps that we can glean from the

documentary sources confirm the general picture that Ibn al-Athīr paints of priests who not only

protected the holy rock at the *Templum Domini* but also profited from it. For example, when

---

[559] Gunther of Pairis, trans. Andrea, 126.

[560] Boniface of Ragusa, *ELS*, 421, no. 651.9. This sensational accusation is echoed fifty years
later by Bernardino Amico, *Trattato delle piante et immagini de sacre difizi de Terra
Santa* (Firenze: 1620), 46-47.

[561] See WT, IX, 9 [I, 391-92]; Jotischky, *The Perfection of Solitude*, 57. Note: Canons, as
distinguished from monks, were priests who lived together under a rule (usually that of
St. Augustine), and whose primary purpose was to administer the sacraments to those
who visited their churches.

Maurice, lord of Craon, returned home from crusade in 1169, he brought back with him authenticated relics from the site of Jesus' presentation (i.e. the holy rock) that had been "given" to him by Raymond, abbot of the *Templum Domini*.[562] Whether from religious or economic motives, the canons of the *Templum Domini* must have worked in cooperation with pilgrimage guides to promote the oral tradition(s) surrounding the footprints at the Temple Mount. Though the much-venerated rock was associated with a number of biblical stories about Jesus and the Patriarchs, it was in the best interest of the custodians of this holy site to diversify their claim to sacred history in the event that a particular relic was lost, stolen, or sold. In addition to the potential sale of the footprints, it is also worth considering the possibility that the canons of the *Templum Domini* may have moved (and/or hidden) the footprints upon the fall of Jerusalem in 1187.

After 1187, Saladin not only restored the *Qubbat as-Sakhra*, but he established a pious endowment (*waqf*) and appointed new custodians of the holy site. 'Imād ad-Dīn writes:

> The Rock was to be brought to light again for visitors and revealed to observers, stripped of its covering and brought forward like a young bride… The Sultan appointed an imām for the Dome of the Rock… He gave him money and satisfaction and the benefit of his favour in the office assigned to him. He gave him a house and a garden as a pious endowment to his office… What is more he set up for the Rock in particular and Jerusalem in general custodians to keep it all in good condition. He nominated only men of piety and devotion, dedicated to the worship of God.[563]

Though the historical details of the early days of this *waqf* are obscure, one can be sure that the imām, as well as the custodians appointed by Saladin, were aware of their role in (re)establishing the Islamic character of this revered pilgrimage site. Among other things, this would have involved promoting the tradition of the *qadam al-rasūl* in the place where the *pede domini* once

---

[562] See Pringle, *Churches* III, 402; Arthur Bertrand de Broussillon, *La maison de Craon, 1050-1480: étude historique accompagnée du cartulaire de Craon (*Paris: A. Picard et fils, 1893), I, 104, no. 143.

[563] 'Imād al-Dīn, 65-66; trans. Gabrieli, 169-70.

lay. Whether or not the Augustinian canons had sold or moved the "original" footprints, Saladin's newly appointed custodians of the *Qubbat as-Sakhra* had a keen interest in preserving (even restoring) the physical site of the footprints and publicizing—or inventing—(pre-Frankish) Islamic oral traditions. This is one way of understanding the early Ayyubid descriptions of the footprints written by ʿAlī al-Harawī and ʿImād al-Dīn. This concerted reclamation (or translation) effort is also attested in thirteenth-century illustrated *hajj* certificates, which among other pilgrimage sites in Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem, clearly depict the footprints of the prophet at the *Qubbat as-Sakhra*.[564]

Conclusion: *Qadam al-Rasūl* to *Pede Domini*

The custodians of these holy sites had a great deal to gain by preserving and promoting (and occasionally commodifying) the imprint relics on their respective mountains. Though theft and pillage also played a role in the geographical translation of the footprints, the custodians of these sites were the chief keepers and movers of the footprints at the Temple Mount and the Mount of Olives. If these custodians were responsible for the translation of the relics themselves, local pilgrimage guides were responsible for the translation of the traditions surrounding these relics. If custodians translated a set of footprints from one shrine to another, it was the local guides who translated the stories from an Arabic-Islamic tradition to a Latin-Christian one in 1098—and vice versa in 1187. This is how the *qadam al-rasūl* (footprint of the Messenger) became the *pede domini* (footprint of the Lord). When we focus our attention on these nameless actors, we are reminded that neither imprint relics nor the traditions surrounding them were static

---

[564] See Şule Aksoy and Rachel Milstein, "A Collection of Thirteenth-Century Illustrated Hajj Certificates," in *M. Uğur Derman Festschrift : Papers Presented on the Occasion of his Sixty-fifth Birthday*, ed. İrvin Cemil Schick (Istanbul: Sabancı Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2000), 113-14, 126.

in this period. The dynamic and unstable quality of these relics points to a peculiar kind of sacred knowledge production that was reliant on constant translation—whether across geographical boundaries, like the Kidron Valley, or across the cultural and linguistic boundaries that separated pilgrims like John of Würzburg and ʿAli al-Harawī.

CHAPTER 5

PHILOSOPHERS AND TREASURERS: SCIENTIFIC SCHOLARSHIP

Introduction: "Dim and Shadowy Figures"

In 1924, Charles Homer Haskins wrote this about Adelard of Bath: "… the pioneer student of Arabic science and philosophy in the twelfth century… still remains in many ways a dim and shadowy figure in the history of European learning."[565] Almost a century later little has changed. Concrete biographical detail for this prolific translator of Arabic science is lacking, including information on his travels to the eastern Mediterranean where he claimed, in *Questiones naturales*, to have engaged in "Arabic studies" [*Arabicorum studiorum*] over a period of seven years.[566] Elsewhere in the same work he refers to his "Arab masters" [*magistris Arabicis*] and the "opinions of the Saracens" [*Sarracenorum sententias*], yet he provides little detail aside from an anecdote about "an old man in Tarsus" and his claim to have experienced an earthquake while crossing a bridge in "Mamistra in the region of Antioch."[567] While scholars are willing to grant that Adelard traveled as far east as Sicily and Salerno, some are skeptical that Adelard actually made it to Syria—arguing that Adelard's "travels" to Syria could be a mere literary device.[568]

---

[565] Charles Haskins, *Studies in the History of Medieval Science* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1960), 20.

[566] Adelard of Bath, *Questiones naturales*, in *Adelard of Bath: Conversations with His Nephew*: On the Same and the Different, Questions on Natural Science *and* On Birds, ed. and trans. Charles Burnett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 90-91. See also pages 82-83 for a similar claim.

[567] Adelard of Bath, *Questiones naturales*, 123, 185.

[568] For example, Marie-Thérèse d'Alverny refers to "Adelard's alleged experience" in Syria. See Marie-Thérèse d'Alverny, "Translations and Translators," in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, eds. Robert Benson, Giles Constable, and Carol Lanham (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 438, 440-41. Louise Cochrane, a biographer of Adelard, makes a strong case for the credibility of Adelard's claims to have

This scholarly suspicion is rooted in more than merely a lack of concrete evidence linking this particular translator to Syria. It is rooted in two long-held yet mistaken assumptions about cultural and intellectual life in the crusader eastern Mediterranean. The first assumption is that the Frankish Levant was fundamentally a segregated society with social structures that precluded any meaningful cultural exchange, scholarly or otherwise, between Franks, Muslims and local Christians. This perspective stems from post-World War II crusade scholarship, particularly the work of R.C. Smail and Joshua Prawer, which paints Frankish Syria as a colonial society, composed of a small and isolated military aristocracy ruling over a hostile native population of Muslims and local Christians.[569] Depicting a society that was shaped by constant military insecurity and a situation of economic exploitation, Prawer went so far as to claim that this policy of non-integration between Franks and locals could be best described as "apartheid."[570] While the colonial segregationist model has been debated and revised in recent decades, its general premise—that Franks and locals simply did not mix—has become firmly established orthodoxy. The narrative of Frankish cultural intolerance and non-receptivity has found its way into numerous general histories and comparative works—most of them citing Prawer as their authority on Frankish society.[571]

---

traveled to Syria. See Louise Cochrane, *Adelard of Bath: The First English Scientist* (London: British Museum Press, 1994), 32-33.

[569] Smail, *Crusading Warfare*, 40. As discussed in the introduction, both Smail and Prawer were responding to nineteenth- and early twentieth-century French historiography which painted the Frankish Levant as an integrated colonial society in which Franks, Muslims, and local Christians lived in harmonious coexistence and shared in meaningful cultural exchange under the tolerant rule of the Franks. See Rey, *Les colonies franques,* v; and Grousset, *Histoire des croisades*, I, 287.

[570] Prawer, *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 524.

[571] See Norman Daniel, *The Arabs and Medieval Europe* (London: Longman, 1979), 114; Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 240. Both Daniel and Bartlett cite Prawer as their principal source on Frankish Levantine society.

The second mistaken assumption is that western scholars simply did not travel to the Frankish Levant, as access to Greek and Arabic learning could be more easily obtained in nearby Spain or Sicily. Therefore, even if Syria had been an ideal place for intellectual exchange, the opportunity was likely wasted by illiterate knights, peasant pilgrims, and lowbrow clerics. Haskins, who pioneered studies of textual transmission in the early twentieth century, argued convincingly that Spain and Sicily ought to be seen as the principal channels of Greek and Arabic learning to Latin Christendom in the twelfth century. However, he overstated the case when he said, "Plainly the Crusaders were men of action rather than men of learning, and there was little occasion for western scholars to seek by long journeys to Syria that which they could find nearer home in Spain."[572] This assumption has contributed to the neglect of Levantine intellectual culture by modern scholars who, in the process of shifting their focus towards Spain and Sicily, seem to have forgotten the other Latin-Arabic frontier of the twelfth century, tacitly assuming that Syria did not have any texts that could not be found elsewhere and that even if it did, the "crusaders" were incapable of engaging with the sophisticated intellectual culture of the eastern Mediterranean. As we will soon see, the same ships that carried "men of action" to crusade in the eastern Mediterranean also carried men of learning. As a result of these mistaken assumptions, the Frankish Levant has been portrayed, until very recently, as an intellectual backwater with no scholars, no texts, no mixing, and therefore, virtually no translation activity.

Since the 1980s, however, this bleak picture has undergone a subtle yet mounting revision. Concerning the larger framework of cultural interaction in the Levant, scholars such as Ronnie Ellenblum and Christopher MacEvitt have challenged the segregationist model of Smail and Prawer and worked toward a more nuanced model of cultural interaction that allows more

---

[572] Haskins, *Studies in the History of Mediaeval Science*, 130.

space for intercultural contact and exchange.[573] Overturning the assumption that there were no

Latin scholars in the Frankish Levant, Benjamin Kedar and Bernard Hamilton have uncovered

several neglected Levantine intellectuals, such as Gerard of Nazareth, Aimery of Limoges, and

Theodore of Antioch.[574] In 1994, Rudolf Hiestand was the first to propose Frankish Antioch as

an intellectual hub and center of translation in northern Syria and the eastern Mediterranean.[575]

This thesis was followed up a few years later by Charles Burnett, who reinforced Hiestand's

argument, providing new manuscript evidence of textual transmission in Antioch and arguing

that "contrary to the impression one gets reading Haskins, the level of intellectual exchange

between Arabic and Latin culture in Antioch was high."[576] Most recently, Susan Edgington,

building off the work of Hiestand, Burnett, and others over the past few decades, casts Antioch

as a culturally and linguistically diverse city with a "cosmopolitan intellectual life" that did not

cease in 1098 with the Frankish siege of Antioch but rather continued into the thirteenth

century.[577] Therefore, we can no longer treat translators like Adelard and Stephen as isolated,

exceptional figures. According to Burnett, these scholars (and many others) were part of a

---

[573] See Ellenblum, *Frankish Rural Settlement*; idem, *Crusader Castles and Modern Histories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); and MacEvitt, *The Crusades and the Christian World of the East*.

[574] See Benjamin Z. Kedar, "Gerard of Nazareth: A Neglected Twelfth-Century Writer in the Latin East. A Contribution to the Intellectual and Monastic History of the Crusader States," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 37 (1983): 55-77; idem, "The Intercultural Career of Theodore of Antioch" (with Etan Kohlberg), *Mediterranean Historical Review* 10 (1995): 164-76; and Bernard Hamilton, "Aimery of Limoges, Patriarch of Antioch: Ecumenist, Scholar, and Patron of Hermits" in *The Joy of Learning and the Love of God: Studies in Honor of Jean Leclercq*, ed. E.R. Elder (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publishing, 1995), 270-85.

[575] Rudolf Hiestand, "Un centre intellectuel en Syrie du Nord? Notes sur la personnalité d'Aimery d'Antioche, Albert de Tarse et *Rorgo Fretellus*," *Le Moyen Age* 100 (1994): 7-36.

[576] Charles Burnett, "Antioch as a Link between Arabic and Latin Culture in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries," in *Occident et Proche-Orient: Contacts scientifiques au temps des Croisades*, eds. I. Draelants, A. Tihon, et al. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 17.

[577] Susan Edgington, "Antioch: Medieval City of Culture," in *East and West in the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean*, eds. K. Ciggaar and M. Metcalf (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 247-59.

"larger movement of transmission of learning" centered in Antioch in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[578]

Though the work of Hiestand, Burnett, Edgington, and others has effectively overturned the old argument that Latins were neither able nor interested in engaging Arabic and Greek learning in cosmopolitan cities like Antioch, most of these emerging actors remain like Adelard—"dim and shadowy figure[s]" in the history of translation in the eastern Mediterranean. While translators like Stephen of Antioch, Theodore of Antioch, and Philip of Tripoli have received greater attention from scholars, evidence and explanations of their ties to Syria remain absent—with the effect that their presence in Antioch seems ghostlike as they float into the city, translate a text here or learn a language there, and then float out leaving little trace of their presence.[579] For example, in recent articles on Stephen of Antioch, Burnett expands the list of translations attributable to Stephen, but he does not ask where in Antioch Stephen found these texts.[580] He identifies Stephen's imagined readers (students in Sicily and Salerno), but he only comments briefly on Stephen's collaborators in Antioch. He highlights the monasteries in western Europe where Stephen's work was transmitted, but he does not investigate the monastery (or monasteries) in Syria where Stephen may have made his translations.[581] In his pioneering work on Stephen, Burnett has unearthed and compiled some helpful biographical data, but his primary interest lies in the translations themselves and less in the translator and his

---

[578] Charles Burnett, "Stephen, the Disciple of Philosophy, and the Exchange of Medical Learning in Antioch," *Crusades* 5 (2006): 114.

[579] Burnett, "Stephen, the Disciple of Philosophy;" Kedar, "The Intercultural Career of Theodore of Antioch;" and Steven J. Williams, "Philip of Tripoli's Translation of the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Secretum secretorum,*" in *Occident et Proche-Orient: Contacts scientifiques au temps des Croisades*, eds. I. Draelants, A. Tihon, et al. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 79-94.

[580] Burnett, "Stephen, the Disciple of Philosophy," 115-16; Burnett, "Antioch as a Link," 8-13.

[581] Burnett, "Stephen, the Disciple of Philosophy," 123.

social context.[582] The unintended result is a portrait of a man who, though he may have spent his entire life in Antioch, seems as transient and rootless as an itinerant scholar like Adelard.

Contrary to the impression one gets in the scholarly literature, figures like Stephen, and even Adelard, were not rootless but rather were deeply embedded in the city of Antioch and its institutions. Translators like Stephen came to Antioch at a particular political and cultural moment in the history of the eastern Mediterranean; and they did their translations in particular places, supported by particular patrons and institutions. It is not an accident that a tri-lingual (Greek-Arabic-Latin) medical glossary was composed in a historically Greek city with a large Arab-Christian population and Latin rulers. Nor is it an accident that Latin translations of the Greek Fathers (as well as Greek translations of Latin Fathers) were made in a region where Orthodox and Latin monks lived in adjacent monasteries and shared access to famous pilgrimage sites. Beyond grounding figures like Stephen and Adelard in a particular time and place, my broader goal is to ground the "translation movement" described by Burnett and Hiestand in a larger moment of intercultural encounter. As we have seen, the eastern Mediterranean in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was a place where translation was a daily necessity—vital to the success, indeed the very existence, of diplomacy, local administration, international trade, and pilgrimage. We should not view these more quotidian translation efforts as separate from the work of scholarly translation being done in the same time and place. What we think of as "scientific translation" in the medieval eastern Mediterranean was not an independent scholarly endeavor but rather was dependent upon institutions and personnel whose primary translation tasks were not oriented toward science but rather diplomacy, local administration, trade, or religion.

---

[582] Burnett, "Stephen, the Disciple of Philosophy," 116-17; Burnett, "Antioch as a Link," 9-10.

In order to ground these works of scholarly translation in the mundane and the pragmatic and in order to see our translators as embedded and embodied historical actors (and not merely itinerant minds), I will pursue three related lines of inquiry. First, I will explore *biographies of translators*, paying particular attention to the ways in which particular Antiochene translators were connected to the city of Antioch and Syria more broadly. It is no surprise that such a line of inquiry runs into immediate problems of evidence. Scholars since Haskins have had little more to contribute to the biographies of these translators because little more evidence has surfaced. In order to expand our biographical understanding of these figures, I will use the enigmatic biography of Stephen of Antioch as a lens through which to examine (and imagine) the biographies of other translators who shared similar links with the city of Antioch and its institutions. The second line of inquiry will be an investigation of the *geography of translation* in Antioch. Though the identification of Antioch as a center of translation has been a major breakthrough in the last few decades, further work needs to be done to identify particular sites of translation (and language learning) as well as important repositories of texts in the city. Finally, after considering the people and places involved in the translation movement in Antioch, I will analyze the *products of translation*. In particular, I will compare two multilingual medical glossaries produced in Antioch in this period and consider the complex aims and audiences for so-called scientific translations.

Biographies of Translators

In a recent article devoted to Stephen of Antioch and his work as a translator, Burnett examines Stephen's *Regalis dispositio*, a translation of ʿAlī ibn al-ʿAbbās al-Majūsī's medical treatise, *kitāb al-malakī*, and attempts to expand Stephen's corpus with other contemporary

translations (from Arabic to Latin) whose translators are unknown. In particular, Burnett examines translations of Ibn al-Haytham's *Maqala fi hay'at al-'alam* (*Liber Mamonis*), Ptolemy's *Algamest*, and Aristotle's *Physics* (as well as a Latin manuscript of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* which was copied in Antioch in 1121) and argues that these texts—though they do not name Stephen as the translator—can be attributed either to Stephen or to a collaborator of Stephen's in Antioch. Burnett makes this complex (and ultimately convincing) argument by identifying a few peculiar features common to all or most of these texts: idiosyncratic astronomical terminology, an unusual dating formula (*anno a passione Domini*), and a unique alphanumerical notation system where Latin letters represent numerals (e.g. a = 1, b = 2, c = 3, etc.).[583] After making the argument to link these texts with Stephen and Antioch, Burnett broaches an issue of far greater ambiguity—Stephen's biography:

> Who was this Stephen? The manuscripts and early printed editions call him simply "Stephen the disciple of philosophy" (*Stephanus philosophie discipulus*). Later authors who refer to Stephen's version of the *Royal Book* call him "*Stephanon quidam Pisanus*"… and "Stephen the nephew of the patriarch of Antioch" (*Stephanus nepos patriarche Antiochene*). If we identify him with the "Stephen the Treasurer" for whom the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* was copied, then we might be able to go further and recognize him as the treasurer of the church of St. Paul, who had been supplied with a house by Bernard, patriarch of Antioch (his uncle?), sometime between 1126 and 1130. Stephen's residence in Antioch seems to be assured. What is less clear is what connection he had with Pisa.[584]

I quote this passage in full because in just a few (heavily-footnoted) sentences Burnett effectively summarizes all of the biographical evidence we have concerning Stephen and raises three key points of ambiguity about his biography.

---

[583] Burnett, "Stephen, the Disciple of Philosophy," 114-16. See also Burnett, "Antioch as a Link," 10-15. Though Burnett makes the definitive case for linking these texts, nearly a century ago, Haskins speculated that the translator of the *Liber Mamonis* might very well be Stephen of Antioch. Haskins, *Studies in the History of Mediaeval Science*, 135.
[584] Burnett, "Stephen, the Disciple of Philosophy," 116.

The first point of ambiguity is of provenance. Was Stephen from Pisa? Or was he the nephew of the patriarch, Bernard of Valence (and thus presumably a first- or second-generation settler whose ancestors had come from France during or after the First Crusade)? The second point of ambiguity concerns occupation. Was Stephen a "philosopher" as he styles himself in the *Regalis dispositio,* or was he a treasurer as he is referred to in the documentary sources (assuming, of course, that it is the same Stephen)? The final point of ambiguity in Stephen's biography is institutional affiliation. Was Stephen a philosopher (or treasurer) in a secular court, or was he affiliated with ecclesiastical or monastic institutions—like the church and monastery of St. Paul in Antioch? Of course, it is possible that Stephen was both a Pisan and the nephew of Bernard of Valence; it is also possible that he was both a philosopher and a treasurer (or perhaps was one then later another); and it is even possible that Stephen was affiliated with both secular and monastic institutions (whether sequentially or concurrently). However, rather than try to harmonize or resolve these points of ambiguity, I want to use the ambiguities to explore alternative biographies for Stephen. While none of these biographical ambiguities is necessarily self-contradictory, when explored as alternative biographies they not only offer several plausible narratives of Stephen's life, but they also provide a framework for thinking about the diverse ways in which other translators and scholars might have been embedded in a city like Antioch in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Thus, this extended exploration of Stephen's biography is as much about Philip of Tripoli and Theodore of Antioch as it is about Stephen. Though this biographical exploration will not provide definite answers about provenance, occupation, and institutional affiliation, it will provide new (and historically plausible) ways of imagining how translators like Stephen or Philip might have lived, worked, and been supported in Frankish Antioch.

Stephen of Pisa or Stephen of Antioch?

Though he is typically referred to as "Stephen of Pisa" or "Stephen of Antioch" in modern scholarship, we never find this appellation in the texts attributed to Stephen. In the earliest manuscripts of the *Regalis dispositio*, as Burnett points out, our translator is referred to as "Stephen the disciple of philosophy [*Stephani philosophi discipuli*];"[585] and in the sole manuscript of the *Liber Mamonis*, Stephen is referred to in the title as "Stephen the philosopher [*Stephano philosopho*]."[586] It is for this reason that Burnett, in recent work, refers to Stephen simply as "Stephen the Philosopher."[587] The notion of Stephen as a Pisan comes from a thirteenth-century Salernitan manuscript that refers to the translator of the *Regalis dispositio* as "*Stephanon quidam Pisanus.*"[588] However, in a manuscript dated to the early decades of the fourteenth century, Stephen is referred to as "*Stephanus nepos patriarche antiochensis.*"[589] Neither identification of Stephen comes from a manuscript of his work. Rather, in both cases, Stephen is mentioned incidentally in passages discussing the biography and work of Constantine the African, an earlier translator of al-Majusī's medical work. While it is possible that Stephen

---

[585] Stephen of Antioch, *Regalis dispositio*, quoted in Burnett, "Antioch as a Link," 22. For examples of variation in Stephen's name, see D'Alverney, "Translations and Translators," 438; and C. Burnett, "Arabic into Latin: the Reception of Arabic philosophy into Western Europe," in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, eds. P. Adamson and R. Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 370.

[586] See Burnett, "Antioch as a Link," 10; and Haskins, *Studies in the History of Mediaeval Science*, 135.

[587] See Burnett, "Stephen, the Disciple of Philosophy;" and Burnett, "Translation and Transmission of Greek and Islamic Science to Latin Christendom," in *The Cambridge History of Science, Vol. 2*, eds. David Charles Lindberg and Michael H. Shank (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 342.

[588] Edited and published in Rudolf Creutz, "Die Ehrenrettung Konstantins von Afrika," *Studien und Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Benediktiner-Ordens und seiner Zweige* 49 (1931): 25-44 (see p. 41).

[589] Edited and published in Charles Singer, "A Legend of Salerno: How Constantine the African Brought the Art of Medicine to the Christians," *The Johns Hopkins Hospital Bulletin* 28, no. 311 (1917): 64-69.

was both a Pisan and the nephew of the patriarch of Antioch, rather than attempting to harmonize these two accounts, we will explore them as two alternative origin stories.

It would not be surprising if "Stephen of Antioch" was originally from Pisa, as the powerful Italian maritime state was deeply involved in early crusading efforts to conquer Syria-Palenstine. In 1108, Tancred granted the Pisans privileges in the port of Latakia as well as a quarter in the city of Antioch in exchange for their naval support in securing the port of Latakia from the Byzantines.[590] Considering that Stephen was active in Antioch in the 1120s, he may have come to Antioch during or shortly after the initial Pisan settlement granted by Tancred. In this period, Pisans were at the forefront of efforts to translate Greek and Arabic science into Latin. For example, Burgundio of Pisa, Hugh Etheranius, and Leo Tuscus were all prolific translators from Greek to Latin. Hugh and Leo focused primarily on translating Greek theological works into Latin while Burgundio translated both theological and medical and scientific texts, including John of Damascus, John Chrysostom, Galen, and Hippocrates.[591] What is interesting about these Pisan translators is that though they spent most of their time in Constantinople, they also had strong connections with Antioch. For example, in the preface of Burgundio's translation of John Chrysostom's commentary on Matthew, he claims that the original Greek text had been sent from Antioch by the patriarch Aimery of Limoges (c. 1140-1193/6).[592]

This same patriarch also corresponded with Hugh Etheranius, a Pisan scholar and translator who worked in Emperor Manuel's court in Constantinople as an advisor on Latin

---

[590] Asbridge, *The Creation of the Principality of Antioch*, 64.
[591] Haskins, *Mediaeval Science*, 206-07.
[592] *Veterum Scriptorum et Monumentorum amplissima Collectio*, Vol. 1, eds. E. Martène and U. Durand (Paris: Montalant, 1724), 818.

theology.[593] In a series of letters exchanged in the 1170s, Hugh sends Aimery copies of his

treatise on the dual procession of the Holy Spirit, *De Sancto et immortali Deo*, in Greek and

Latin, and Aimery requests three additional sets of Greek texts: a copy of John Chrysostom's

commentaries on St. Paul, Greek chronicles from the time of the schism, and the acts of the

council of Nicaea.[594] Beyond the request for Greek texts, what is also of significance is Aimery's

allusion to having frequently invited Hugh to move to Antioch, perhaps to do what he had been

doing in Constantinople—advise on Latin-Orthodox theological disputes and translate Greek

texts.[595] In another set of recently discovered letters between the Pisan translator and the

Antiochene patriarch, Aimery informs Hugh that the Pisan clergy (presumably in the Pisan

quarter) in Antioch had received his work, *De regressu animarum ab inferis*.[596] This detail once

again underscores the centrality of Pisan scholars and networks in the intellectual life of Antioch.

Although the surviving evidence on Stephen gives us no concrete detail on his Pisan

---

[593] Hugh's brother, Leo Tuscus, also worked in Manuel's court as a translator in the imperial chancery. See Haskins, *Mediaeval Science,* 214.

[594] *Thesaurus Novus Anecdotorum* I, eds. E. Martène and U. Durand (Paris: Delaulne, 1717), 479-80; see also *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series latina*, ed. J.P. Migne, vol. 202 (Paris, 1855). [Henceforth abbreviated *PL*.] While it has often been assumed that a knowledge of Greek was rare amongst Franks in the Levant, Bernard Hamilton has seen this letter as an indication that Aimery, who at this point had been in Antioch for several decades, probably had learned Greek. See Hamilton, 'Aimery', p. 283.

[595] "Quare vos… frequenterque optavimus ut veniretis ad nos, et adhuc perseveramus in hoc ipso proposito, sed quemadmodum pro vestro gaudemus adventu: ita bonum est nobis quod remansistis." *Thesaurus Novus*, 480; *PL* 202, col. 231A-B.

[596] See Antoine Dondaine, "Hugues Éthérien et le concile de Constantinople de 1166," *Historisches Jahrbuch* 77 (1958): 473-83. Hamilton and Ciggaar both make reference to these additional letters but neither seems to have consulted the original manuscript, citing only Dondaine's article. See Hamilton "Aimery of Limoges," 282-3; Krijnie N. Ciggaar, *Western Travellers to Constantinople: The West and Byzantium, 962-1204* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 91; and idem, "Manuscripts as Intermediaries: The Crusader States and Literary Cross-Fertilization" in *East and West in the Crusader States: Context, Contacts, and Confrontations*, I, eds. K.N. Ciggaar and H. Teule (Leuven: Peeters, 1996), 134. For more on Hugh's and Aimery's correspondence, see William S. Murrell, "Aimery's Antioch: Reevaluating Intellectual Activity and Exchange in Frankish Northern Syria in the Twelfth and Early Thirteenth Centuries," Masters Thesis (University of Oxford, 2011), 26-34.

connections, Burgundio and Hugh's links with the city give us opporutnities to fill in the blanks. Antioch was a place where Greek (and Arabic) texts flowed in and out; and it was a place where Pisan scholars and translators were welcomed and even sought out.

While Stephen as a Pisan is very plausible in light of the larger history of Pisan intellectual links with Antioch, more evidence is needed to make this claim definitive. In fact, one might argue that there is more concrete evidence for an alternative origins story—that of Stephen as a settler from France during or shortly after the First Crusade. Though the idea of Stephen as the "nephew of the patriarch of Antioch" comes from a fourteenth-century manuscript that mentions Stephen incidentally, there is additional documentary evidence that makes this link plausible. Considering that our firmest date for Stephen in Antioch is 1127 (mentioned in the *Regalis dispositio*), it is more than likely that Stephen's uncle, the unnamed "patriarch of Antioch," was Bernard of Valence (1100-1135). This link between a "Stephen" in Antioch and Bernard of Valence is attested in a document from 1140. Though the parties drafting the document were concerned about a property dispute between the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and the Benedictine Monastery of St. Paul in Antioch, the document refers to a prior transaction where Bernard had secured a house in Antioch for "Stephen the treasurer of the church of St. Paul."[597] Richard Hunt was the first to tentatively link this Stephen with our Stephen, and Burnett has echoed that "it is tempting to identify the two Stephens."[598]

Though Burnett acknowledges this as a plausible origins story for Stephen, he does little to flesh out the implications (unlike what he does with the Pisan connection). If Stephen was in

---

[597] *Le Cartulaire du chapitre du Saint-Sépulcre de Jérusalem*, ed. Geneviève Bresc-Bautier. (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1984), 180, no. 77. For more on the property dispute, see Bernard Hamilton, *The Latin Church in the Crusader States: The Secular Church* (London: Variorum, 1980), 138-40.

[598] See R.W. Hunt, "Stephen of Antioch," *Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 6 (1950): 172-3; Burnett, "Antioch as a Link," 9-10, 60.

fact the nephew of Bernard of Valence, how might that alter our understanding of how he ended up in Antioch and how he became embedded in the intellectual life of the city? His uncle, Bernard of Valence, originally from the Rhone Valley (in southeastern France), joined the First Crusade as a chaplain of the papal legate, Bishop Adhémar of Le Puy. After the First Crusade, Bernard settled in northern Syria, serving as bishop of Artah for a brief time before being appointed as patriarch of Antioch in 1100. Though relatively inexperienced when appointed, Bernard proved to be a successful patriarch and remained in his position for thirty-five years.[599] Supposing for a moment that Bernard is Stephen's chief link to Antioch, there are three ways that Stephen might have ended up in Antioch. First, Stephen might have accompanied his uncle on the First Crusade and decided to settle in Antioch as a young man. Second, Stephen might have settled in Antioch sometime after his uncle's appointment as patriarch, perhaps at the request of his uncle. Third, Stephen's father might have joined Bernard on the First Crusade, settled in northern Syria, married, and had a son (Stephen) in the early years of the twelfth century. Whether Stephen was Syrian-born or settled there at a relatively young age, this origins story places Stephen less in the mold of Hugh Etheranius and Burgundio of Pisa and more in that of Humphrey of Toron and Reynald of Sidon.

Perhaps an even better analogue, however, than either of these is Philip of Tripoli, the translator of the pseudo-Aristotelian *Secretum secretorum*—which would become one of the most read texts in the Middle Ages. Born in Umbria in 1195, Philip moved to Antioch in 1219 with his uncle, Ranerius, who had recently been appointed patriarch (1219-25). In 1227, Philip was granted a canonry by the pope in Tripoli where it is believed he spent much of the remainder of his career. However, it is significant that when Philip sought to make the first full translation

---

[599] For more on Bernard of Valence, see Hamilton, *The Latin Church*, 21-22.

of the *Secretum,* he returned to Antioch in search of the text.[600] Philip claims, in his preface, to

have translated the *Secretum* directly from Arabic, a departure from the conventional process of

translation which involved translating from Arabic into the vernacular (French), and then from

the vernacular into Latin.[601] This suggests not only that Philip himself was proficient in Arabic

but also that thirteenth-century Frankish northern Syria still offered western scholars the

opportunity to acquire eastern languages and to find manuscripts written in them. A final

observation on Philip's career is that he had a patron, one whom he identifies in the dedication of

the *Secretum* as Bishop Guido.[602] Steven J. Williams, who has worked extensively on the

Secretum, argues from textual evidence that Guido was probably highly educated and closely

involved in Philip's project. This, of course, raises the possibility that there might have been

other erudite figures in the Latin hierarchy in northern Syria patronizing scholars and translators

in the decades after Aimery's death (d. 1193/96).[603] In Philip's biography, as a scholar who

comes to Syria as a young man with close kinship connections to the patriarch and patronage ties

to other leading ecclesiastical figures, we see another possible way to root Stephen in the

intellectual culture of Antioch. Like Philip, he was closely connected with the patriarch. Like

Philip, he seems to have learned Arabic in Antioch. And like Philip, he seems to have found

support in ecclesiastical institutions—Philip as a canon in Tripoli and Stephen as a treasurer in

St. Paul's.

---

[600] See Williams, "Philip of Tripoli's Translation of the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Secretum secretorum*," 81. For an earlier discussion of Philip's career, see Haskins, *Mediaeval Science*, 137-8.

[601] Williams, "Philip of Tripoli's Translation of the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Secretum secretorum*," 85.

[602] Haskins has speculated that Guido was the bishop of Tripoli, or perhaps the archbishop of Naples. See Haskins, *Mediaeval Science*, 137.

[603] Williams, "Philip of Tripoli's Translation of the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Secretum secretorum*," 90.

Philosopher or Treasurer?

This raises the question of Stephen's occupation. Was he a "philosopher" as he refers to himself in the *Regalis dispositio* and the *Liber Mamonis*, or was he a "treasurer," as attested in a charter of 1140? The evidence for Stephen "the philosopher" is straightforward. The evidence for Stephen the "treasurer" is not. The first scholar to make this connection was Richard Hunt in 1950. He pointed out that a twelfth-century manuscript of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* had a subscription which stated, "The scribe [name missing] wrote this book of rhetoric for Stephen the treasurer [*thesaurario*] at Antioch in the year from the Passion of the Lord 1121."[604] Beyond the obvious similarities in name, period, and location, Hunt observed that this manuscript shared two unique features with other texts attributed to Stephen of Antioch. First, the manuscript of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* shares with the *Regalis dispositio* the unique dating formula, "the year from the passion of the Lord."[605] Second, like the *Regalis dispositio* and the *Liber Mamonis*, the text of *Rhetorica ad Herennium* uses the same idiosyncratic alphanumeric system where Latin numerals represent numbers (e.g. a = 1, b = 2, etc.).

With the explicit of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* manuscript reading "scriptusque eius manu Antiochenie," it is difficult not identify this copy of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and more importantly "Stephen the treasurer" with the translator of the *Regalis dispositio*.[606] From here, as Hunt and Burnett point out, it is very tempting to see "Stephen the treasurer [*thesaurarii*] of the church of St. Paul" in the 1140 charter as the same "Stephen the treasurer" mentioned in *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (especially when we factor in Stephen's supposed links with Bernard of

---

[604] *Scribsit hunc rethoricorum librum* […] *scriba Stephano thesaurario Antiochenie anno a passione domini millesimo centesimo vicesimo primo.* Original text published in Hunt, "Stephen of Antioch," 172-3. Translation by Burnett, in "Antioch as a Link," 10.

[605] Burnett argues that this unusual dating formula "indicates the starting date of the year (Easter) rather than 33 years after the 'year of the nativity.'" Burnett, "Stephen, the Disciple of Philosophy," 116.

[606] Hunt, "Stephen of Antioch," 172-3.

Valence).[607] Though Stephen very well could have been both a "philosopher" and a "treasurer" (whether sequentially or concurrently), it is worth exploring both roles separately to see what they would have entailed and how these roles might have related to the work of scholarly translation.

When Stephen calls himself a "disciple of philosophy" and elsewhere a "philospher," what exactly does he mean? What position, official or unofficial, is he claiming? Burnett observes that part of the difficulty with defining this role is that very few scholars in medieval Latin courts claim it. Among the small handful of examples he knows of are Philip of Tripoli and Theodore of Antioch. Philip claimed to be the "philosopher" of Bishop Guido de Vere in the preface to the *Secretum Secretorum*, and Theodore of Antioch is called the "philosopher" of Frederick II in a variety of imperial documents as well as epistolary sources.[608] Burnett argues that the difficulty in defining the role of the "*philosophus*" in Latin courts of the central and eastern Mediterranean (whether in Sicily or Tripoli) is that the rank or title is not western in its origins but rather has "its precedents and parallels in Islamic society."[609] In particular, Burnett argues that the Latin title *philosophus* in this context was meant as an equivalent to the role of the ḥakīm in Islamic societies. Citing examples of these figures in Islamic courts, such as 'Umar Suhrawardī and Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, Burnett identifies the essential qualities of the ḥakīm. First, he must be learned in Hellenistic philosophy; and second he must be learned in medicine and astrology.[610] Though we know little of Philip of Tripoli's biography, the very subject matter of

---

[607] *Le Cartulaire du chapitre de Saint-Sépulchre de Jérusalem*, ed. G. Bresc-Bautier, 180, no. 77.
        Burnett, "Antioch as a Link," 10.
[608] Charles Burnett, "Master Theodore: Frederick II's Philosopher," rprntd in C. Burnett, *Arabic into Latin in the Middle Ages: The Translators and Their Intellectual and Social Context* (Farnham: Ashgate/Variorum, 2009), 249.
[609] Burnett, "Master Theodore, Frederick II's Philosopher," 248.
[610] Burnett, "Master Theodore, Frederick II's Philosopher," 249-50.

the *Secretum Secretorum*—ethics, statecraft, medicine, astrology, and occult sciences—suggests

that Philip fit the mold of the *ḥakīm* in the court of Guido.

While the evidence is fragmentary, we know that Theodore was a Jacobite Christian and

native of Antioch who ended up a court philosopher, translator, and physician for Emperor

Frederick II in Sicily.[611] Only one of his works, a short letter to Frederick II on regimen, is

extant, but he is also attested in other documentary and literary sources from Sicily.[612]

Additionally, he appears in the historical work of Barhebraeus, a fellow Jacobite Christian who

lived in Antioch only a few decades after Theodore. If the Latin sources give us details about

Theodore's career in Sicily, Barhebaeus' account gives a helpful outline of Theodore's education

and early career.[613] From his account, we learn that in Antioch Theodore studied Latin and

Syriac as well as Greek philosophy and science before moving to Mosul to study under the

renowned Islamic philosopher and mathematician, Kamal al-Dīn Ibn Yūnus (1156-1242).[614]

Then, after a brief return to Antioch and another season of study in Mosul, Theodore travelled to

Baghdad where he studied medicine. Kedar suggests that Theodore began looking for a patron

when he completed his studies around 1220, working first in the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia

and then for Frederick II in Sicily.[615] Theodore's work in Sicily is largely unknown apart from

the scattered yet stunning highlights, which include translating Arabic science and philosophy in

---

[611] Two modern scholars who have contributed to a clearer picture of Theodore's career are Benjamin Kedar and Charles Burnett. See Kedar, "The Intercultural Career of Theodore of Antioch;" and Burnett, "Master Theodore: Frederick II's Philosopher."

[612] *Epistola Theodori philosophi ad imperatorem Fridericum*, see Kedar, "The Intercultural Career of Theodore of Antioch," 168; and D.N. Hasse, "Mosul and Frederick II Hohenstaufen," in *Occident et Proche-Orient: Contacts scientifiques au temps des Croisades*, eds. I. Draelants, A. Tihon, et al. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 149.

[613] See Kedar, "The Intercultural Career of Theodore of Antioch," 165.

[614] Hasse, "Mosul and Frederick II Hohenstaufen," 146.

[615] Kedar, "The Intercultural Career of Theodore of Antioch," 166.

Frederick's court with Michael Scot,[616] teaching medicine to a future pope, working as

Frederick's personal physician,[617] and corresponding with Leonardo of Pisa (Fibonacci), the

greatest European mathematician of the Middle Ages.[618] These brief glimpses of his career

suggest that Theodore was indeed an eminent scholar and translator and well connected with

prominent western European intellectuals. Furthermore, it seems that he retained contacts with

the Islamic intellectual centers and may have facilitated an exchange between his former teacher,

Kamal al-Dīn, and Frederick II.[619]

If Stephen was in fact a *philosophus* in the sense that Philip and Theodore were, then

what would that suggest about his occupation in Antioch? First, it would suggest that he, like

Philip and Theodore, probably sought patronage under a powerful secular ruler or important

ecclesiastical leader, such as the prince of Antioch (Bohemond II or one of his regents) or

patriarch of Antioch (Bernard of Valence). Second, it would suggest that, like Philip and

Theodore, he was a remarkable linguist who was literate in Arabic, Latin, and as we shall see,

Greek as well. Third, it would suggest that he not only served his patron as a court scholar and

translator, but also as a personal physician and advisor. Although we have no external evidence

to link Stephen with a patron in Antioch (besides perhaps his uncle) and though we have no

evidence that his knowledge of medicine was more than theoretical, Stephen's claim to being a

philosophus considered alongside the texts he translated (Arabic medical texts and Greek

---

[616] Theodore's known translations include works of Averroës and Aristotle's *De animalibus*.

[617] In a medical treatise, Petrus Hispanus (later Pope John XXI), calls Theodore his master and "the emperor's physician." See Kedar, "The Intercultural Career of Theodore of Antioch," 168.

[618] Fibonacci twice addresses Theodore in his works, referring to him as 'reverende pater domine Theodore, imperialis aule sume phylosophe'. See Kedar, "The Intercultural Career of Theodore of Antioch," 167.

[619] See Hasse, "Mosul and Frederick II Hohenstaufen," 146.

philosophy and astronomy) points to an individual who fits the mold of the Islamic *ḥakīm* and his

fellow Antiochene "philosophers" and translators, Philip and Theodore.

What if Stephen was also a treasurer, holding the position prior to (or possibly

concurrently with) his role as court philosopher?[620] How might that change our understanding of

his occupation and his connections in Antioch? Describing the role of the *thesaurarius*, or

treasurer, is difficult because of the paucity of twelfth-century evidence and the variety of roles

treasurers played in different institutions. It makes a difference, for example, whether Stephen

was the treasurer of a secular or an ecclesiastical institution.

The clearest discussion of the role of the treasurer in the twelfth century can be found in

the *Dialogus de Scaccario* ("Dialogue of the Exchequer"), written by Richard Fitz Nigel, the

treasurer of England's Royal Exchequer from 1169 to 1198. The institution of the Exchequer

existed to centralize the accounting of royal revenues and taxes, and it was the role of the

treasurer to oversee this process.[621] In particular, the treasurer was responsible to summon

sheriffs to the Exchequer to give an account of the income of their particular shires and to settle

taxes and accounts with the crown.[622] In Richard's words, the treasurer "receives the accounts…

and dictates what is to be written in the Roll according to the nature of the debts..."[623] That

officials linked with the Exchequer might be involved in scientific translation is not without

precedent. Based on an appearance in the Pipe Roll of 1130, Reginald Poole argues that Adelard

of Bath, a colleague of Stephen's in Antioch, may have been an official of the Exchequer. Other

evidence, while not conclusive, further strengthens Adelard's links with this institution. For

---

[620] This is suggested by the fact that the mention of "Stephen the treasurer" in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* is dated to 1121 while the mention of "Stephen the disciple of philosophy" is dated to 1127.

[621] Richard Fitz Nigel, *Dialogus de Scaccario*, ed. and trans. Charles Johnson (London: Nelson, 1950), 17.

[622] Richard Fitz Nigel, *Dialogus de Scaccario*, 7, 106.

[623] Richard Fitz Nigel, *Dialogus de Scaccario*, 20.

example, prior to traveling to Syria, Adelard taught at Laon, a prominent intellectual center in northern France, where among other things students were taught mathematics and abacus methods—skills required for working in the Exchequer. Moreover, several generations of English treasurers received their training in Laon, including Richard Fitz Nigel.[624] Perhaps it should not surprise us that a scholar who wrote a treatise on the abacus (the *Regule abaci*) and translated (from Arabic) works on Greek mathematics (most notably Euclid) would be linked to an institution like the Exchequer.[625] If such was the case with Adelard, can we imagine a similar role for Stephen in Antioch?

Richard Fitz Nigel's account of the procedures and officials of the Exchequer is important because the norms of this long-lasting financial insitution were adopted by other poltities as well as ecclesiastical institutions.[626] It is unclear whether the financial institutions of Norman England were adopted by the rulers of Norman Antioch (and if Stephen was employed there), but we do find numerous "treasurers" in the extant documentary sources for the Frankish Levant. However, these individuals are usually attached to ecclesiastical institutions—often the military orders.[627] According to Jonathan Riley-Smith, the treasurer of the Knights of St. John (more commonly known as the Hospitallers) was one of eight central officers in the organization. Responsible for the finances of the order, the *thesaurarius* was tasked with accounting for the inflow of money—including income collected from vassals and serfs from lands in Syria, profits

---

[624] For more on Adelard's time in Laon and his potential links with the Exchequer, see Cochrane, *Adelard of Bath*, 24-26.

[625] For more on Adelard's works, see Haskins, *Mediaeval Science*, 20-42; and Burnett, "Adelard of Bath and the Arabs," reprnt in C. Burnett, *Arabic into Latin in the Middle Ages: The Translators and Their Intellectual and Social Context*. Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate/Variorum, 2009.

[626] Alisdair Dobie, *Accounting at Durham Cathedral Priory: Management and Control of a Major Ecclesiastical Corporation, 1083-1539* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 55.

[627] For a few examples, see *RRH* nos. 159, 226, 516, 540. For examples of treasurers in churches and monasteries, see *RRH* nos. 68, 345, 692, 775.

from the sale of booty, gifts from Europe, and the goods of deceased brothers.[628] While the role

of the treasurer of the Hospitallers in Syria has broad similarities to that of the treasurer in the

Exchequer, it also has similarities to local administrative officials in Frankish Syria.[629] Figures

like the dragoman and the *scriba* were also involved in extracting taxes and accounting for the

revenues of their lords on the local level. Like secular Frankish lords in the Levant, the

Hosptitallers were lords over large territories that included significant Arabic-speaking

populations. On a local level, the nature of the work required scribes and dragomans to be literate

in both Arabic and Latin. Could this have been the case as well for the treasurer of a military

order or a Latin monastery? Or was Latin and Arabic literacy only important for financial

officials on the most local level where face-to-face interaction with Arabic-speakers was part of

the job? This question is difficult to answer, but it is worth asking in order to probe the potential

links between Stephen's supposed role as a treasurer and his role as a translator.

Treasurer of Antioch or Treasurer of St. Paul (in Antioch)?

The specific nature of Stephen's role as a treasurer largely depends on whether he was

attached to the treasury of a secular state or to that of a religious institution. The answer to this

question hinges on our reading (or translation) of the reference to Stephen in the *Rhetorica ad*

Herennium: "*Scribsit hunc rethoricorum librum* […] *scriba Stephano thesaurario*

Antiochenie…"[630] When translating this passage, Hunt pointed out that grammatically, "*Stephano*

thesaurario Antiochenie" could mean "Stephen, treasurer *of* Antioch" or " Stephen (the)

---

[628] Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Knights of St. John in Jerusalem and Cyprus* (London: St.
 Martin's Press, 1967), 310-11.
[629] Discussed at length in Chapter Two.
[630] See Hunt, "Stephen of Antioch," 172.

treasurer, *at* Antioch."[631] Hunt opted for the latter interpretation for two reasons.[632] First, we

know of no financial official in the Principality of Antioch under the title *thesaurarius*.[633]

Second, if the contemporaneous "Stephen treasurer of the church of St. Paul" (in Antioch) is in

fact the same person, then it would suggest the latter interpretation as well.[634] To the first point,

though it is tempting to rule out entirely the possibility of Stephen as "treasurer of Antioch"

because no other *thesaurarius* is found in the historical record, it would be prudent to keep this

possibility open. Our knowledge of Antiochene institutional structures is very limited (compared,

for example, to the institutions of the Kingdom of Jerusalem), and we cannot rule out the

possibilities that 1) the title *thesaurarius* was a synonmyn for a better attested financial officer,

like the *camerarius* (chamberlain) or the *magister secrete;*[635] and 2) the financial administration

(and its officials) changed over the history of the principality, leaving little evidence of early

forms and titles.[636] To the second point, Stephen could have been both the treasurer of Antioch

and the treasurer of the monastery of St. Paul (in Antioch) at different points in his career.

Treasurers moving between ecclesiastical and secular institutions are not without precedent.

Riley-Smith observes that in 1273 Joseph Chauncy, the treasurer of the Hospitallers for over

---

[631] Hunt, "Stephen of Antioch," 173.

[632] Burnett, follwing Hunt, opts for this interpretation as well. See Burnett, "Antioch as a Link," 10.

[633] On financial institutions and officers in the Principality of Antioch, see Cahen, *La Syrie du nord*, 454, 465-67.

[634] Hunt, "Stephen of Antioch," 173.

[635] Cahen argues that the princes of Antioch adopted Byzantine financial institutions (and officers). This is plausible, but it is worth pointing out that his argument is built primarily on a single mention of a *magister secrete* in the documentary sources concerning Antioch. See Cahen, *La Syrie du nord*, 454; and Rozière, *Cart.*, 172, no. 88.

[636] On the early development of institutions in the Principality of Antioch and the problem of sources, see Asbridge, *The Creation of the Principality of Antioch*, 181-94.

twenty three years, was appointed by King Edward I as Treasurer of the Royal Exchequer in England.[637]

Like Joseph Chauncy, Stephen might have been a treasurer in both a secular and an ecclesiastical context. Still, it is worth considering the implications of each status separately. If Stephen did hold a post as *thesaurarius* in the financial administration of the Principality of Antioch, such an office would put him in close proximity to the princes of Antioch. This, of course, raises the possibility of patronage. All of the early rulers of the Principality of Antioch began their political careers in Norman Sicily or southern Italy and thus had models of scholarly patronage and multicultural and multilingual courts.[638] Though more evidence is needed to link Stephen with the princes of Antioch, it is clear that Stephen and Adelard were not isolated intellectuals in early twelfth-century Antioch but rather found themselves in a larger Antiochene intellectual community that was fostered and patronized by the likes of Bohemond I (1098-1111), Tancred (regent, 1100-03, 1105-12), Roger of Salerno (regent, 1112-19), and Bohemond II (1111-1130). For example, Ralph of Caen and Walter the Chancellor are relatively well-known for their historical works, the *Gesta Tancredi* and the *Bella Antiochena*, respectively, but they are rarely considered in discussions of Levantine intellectual history. This is surprising considering that both figures produced texts that show considerable erudition and, perhaps more importantly, strong connections with the rulers of Antioch.

Before coming to the Levant as the chaplain of Bohemond (and later becoming the biographer of Tancred), Ralph studied in Caen under Arnulf de Chocques, a famous teacher of

---

[637] Riley-Smith, *The Knights of St. John in Jerusalem and Cyprus*, 312.
[638] For a helpful discussion of patronage in Sicilian courts during this time, see Hubert Houben, *Roger II of Sicily: A Ruler between East and West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 102-112.

liberal arts who later became the patriarch of Jerusalem (1112-18).[639] Of Walter, whose *Bella Antiochena* covers the regency of Roger of Salerno, less is known. However, it is clear from his writing that he was the chancellor of Antioch (1114-1122) and that the *Bella Antiochena* was commissioned by Roger as an official history of the Principality.[640] If Stephen, as an Arabist and student of medicine, science, and philosophy, had also been attached to this court (as a treasurer) in the 1120s, it is not difficult to imagine his scholarly translations being patronized (or even commissioned) by Bohemond II (or his regent Baldwin II).

What if Stephen was instead (or also) a treasurer in the monastery of St. Paul? If so, this would certainly suggest a different patronage network and institutional context for his work. But it is certainly plausible, for monasteries in general, and the monastery of St. Paul in particular, were ideal institutional contexts for the work of scholarly translation in medieval northern Syria. The scholarly career of Nerses of Lampron (1153-98), an Armenian scholar, translator, and churchman, is instructive.[641] While Nerses spent most of his life in Cilicia, some of the most formative years of his intellectual career were spent in Frankish Antioch and the nearby monasteries of the Black Mountain, which for centuries housed diverse groups of monks and hermits, including Greeks, Armenians, Jacobites, Georgians, and (after 1098) Latins.[642] It was probably during this time that he learned Greek, Latin, and Syriac and began his career as a

---

[639] See Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 13; and WT, VII, 18, ln. 11.

[640] On Walter, see the introduction in *Walter the Chancellor's Antiochene Wars: A Translation and Commentary*, trans. with an introduction by Susan B. Edgington and Thomas S. Asbridge (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 1-6.

[641] Nerses also translated the *Dialogues* and *Life* of Gregory the Great, as well as the *Lives* of the Desert Fathers. See E. Dulaurier, "Nerses of Lampron," *RHC Arm.* I, 562; and Robert W. Thomson, "Nersēs of Lambron," in *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. Alexander P. Kazhdan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

[642] J.J.S. Weitenberg, "The Armenian Monasteries in the Black Mountain," in *East and West in the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean*, eds. K. Ciggaar and M. Metcalf (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 79.

translator.[643] In a colophon from 1179, Nerses describes meeting a Greek monk named Basil who introduced him to the *Rule of St. Benedict* (in Greek translation)—a text that Nerses would later translate into Armenian from the original Latin. Later in the same colophon, Nerses discusses a similar instance of monastic collaboration when translating a Greek commentary on Revelation; however, this time he found the manuscript in a Latin monastery.[644]

In the thirteenth century, few scholars exemplify the monastic translator like Gregorious Abul-Faraj Barhebraeus (1226-1286)—a Jacobite monk, churchman, physician, and scholar who is known as the last great writer of Syriac. The Melitene-born intellectual followed an eclectic career path, which included serving as court physician to a Mongol ruler as well as Maphrian of the East in the Jacobite hierarchy. However, Barhebraeus is most known for his prolific and wide-ranging literary output, which includes works of history, canon law, philosophy, grammar, poetry, astronomy, and medicine.[645] Furthermore, Barhebraeus, who composed works in both Syriac and Arabic, translated numerous Arabic works of philosophy into Syriac, including many of the works of Avicenna.[646] His remarkable career as a monk, physician, translator, and churchman would bring him to many Arab intellectual centers throughout the Islamic world, such as Damascus, Mosul, and Baghdad. However, like Nerses, one of the most important cities in Barhebraeus' intellectual development was Antioch, where he moved as a teenager when his family fled the Mongol invasions in 1243. It was in this Frankish city that Barhebraeus began his formal education, studying languages, rhetoric, and theology before moving to Tripoli to study medicine.[647]

---

[643] Dulaurier, "Nerses of Lampron," *RHC Arm. I*, 559.
[644] Weitenberg, "The Armenian Monasteries in the Black Mountain," 90-91.
[645] J.B. Segal, "Ibn al-'Ibrī," *EI²*.
[646] Aziz S. Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity* (London: Methuen, 1968), 207.
[647] Segal, "Ibn al-'Ibrī," *EI²*.

It seems that whether Stephen was the treasurer of Antioch or a monastic treasurer in Antioch (or both) in the 1120s, there were ample institutional resources to support the work of scholarly translation. Furthermore, as has been demonstrated in this exploration of Stephen's biographical ambiguities, there was more than a single way for scholars and translators to be embedded in the intellectual life of Antioch. Some, like Hugh Etheranius, might have been linked with Antioch through Pisan commercial networks. Others, like Philip of Tripoli, might have come to Syria as settlers after the establishment of the Frankish principalities in Syria. Some, like Theodore, might have worked as court "philosophers;" and others, like Adelard of Bath, might have worked in the financial administration. Stephen's biographical ambiguities, though vexing, offer us a window into the diverse ways in which scholars and translators could have been (and were) embedded in Antioch in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Even if a lack of evidence for a particular scholar tempts us to paint translators in this period as itinerant, isolated, and exceptional, a close look at the evidence surrounding Stephen's biography presents Antioch as a place where translators were rooted, well-connected, and perhaps more common than we once imagined.

Geography of Translation

The argument that translators, like Stephen, were deeply embedded in the city of Antioch requires not only discussion of origins, occupation, and insitutional affiliations, it also requires a discussion of place—or places. Where did Stephen learn Arabic? Where did he find a copy of al-Majūsī's medical treatise? Where did he translate the *kitāb al-malakī*? Specific answers to these questions generally elude scholars of the history of translation, but occasionally the extant source material offers a surprisingly clear window into the circumstances surrounding a particular work

of translation. For example, in 1179, Nerses of Lampron describes in some detail how he found

and translated the *Rule of St. Benedict* from Latin into Armenian:

> … at a youthful age out of longing for knowledge and discipline I went around
> monasteries that are close to the large city of Antioch… I asked some wise monk from
> the Greeks [*yunac'*], called Basil: "From where do they [Western monks] have such a
> grace of correctness of institutions by which they nowadays appear to surpass you and
> us?" He answered: "From the blessed Father Benedict, whose life is told by the holy Pope
> Gregory." "And do you have by any chance this book?", I asked. He answered: "Yes."
> And he brought it before me. And as I had a little knowledge of the Greek [*hellenac'i*]
> writing, I read it on the spot. And it inflamed in me the desire to translate this divine
> writing. But because I did not want to complete the work myself, I ceased at that time.
> And I translated the *Statutum* and the *Regula* for the monks by the same Benedictus at the
> same time from Latin [*latin*] in the Frankish Monastery of Saint Paul, in the city of
> Antioch, by means of one of their monks of the same age [as I], named Guillaume
> [*Gilam*].[648]

There is much to unpack from this rich passage, but I will begin with three basic observations on

place. First, when Nerses, a young Armenian monk from Cilicia, wanted to pursue his "longing

for knowledge," he went to the monasteries just outside the city of Antioch in the Black

Mountain. Second, when looking for a specific work (the *Regula*), Nerses found a Greek

translation of it at an unnamed Greek monastery there. Third, when Nerses decided to translate

the *Regula*, he worked in the Benedictine Monastery of St. Paul in Antioch where he found not

only an original Latin version but also a Frankish collaborator named Guillaume.

In this short passage, we find explicit answers to two of our most crucial questions. We

know where Nerses originally found the text, and we know where Nerses translated the text.

While we still do not know where he learned Greek and Latin, the picture he paints of such open

interaction and frequent cooperation between Greek, Latin, and Armenian monks in Antioch and

the Black Mountain region points to this cluster of monasteries as a likely site of language

learning. Nerses' intriguing story raises three related questions concerning the geography of

---

[648] Quoted and translated in Weitenberg, "The Armenian Monasteries in the Black Mountain,"
90.

translation. First, why was northern Syria, in general, and Antioch, in particular, such a productive site of translation in the medieval eastern Mediterranean? Second, where in Antioch did scholars like Stephen and Nerses find the texts they were looking for? Third, what places in and around Antioch served as particularly important sites of collaboration—where languages could be learned and translations could be completed?

Antioch and Northern Syria

Since its founding by Seleucus in 300 B.C., Antioch, which sits at a strategic crossroads between north-south and east-west trade routes, has been a multilingual city and a place of intellectual and cultural exchange. Under the Greeks, it served as a center of Hellenic culture in Syria. Under the Romans, it became an imperial city of culture and trade as well as an early Christian intellectual center, producing in the same century the great pagan man of letters and teacher of rhetoric, Libanius (314-392), as well as his pupil—the eminent eastern theologian and Doctor of the Church, Saint John Chrysostom (349-407). After the Arab conquests of the seventh century, cultural mixing continued in Antioch under the Umayyads and the Abbasids, as local Jacobite and Nestorian Christians began to adopt the language and culture of their rulers while transmitting to them their knowledge of Aristotle and Greek medicine.[649] In the eleventh century, following the Byzantine reconquest in 969, Antioch saw a revival of Greek culture, as teachers of grammar and rhetoric settled in the city, as well as scholars from the east, such as Ibn Butlan (1001-1066). The renowned Nestorian doctor from Baghdad built a hospital in Antioch and wrote treatises in Arabic on Greco-Arabic medicine, eventually retiring to a monastery in the

---

[649] D.S. Wallace-Hadrill, *Christian Antioch: A Study of Early Christian Thought in the East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 96.

city.[650] Another prominent eleventh-century scholar with connections to Antioch is Symeon Seth. As a physician and astrologer in the court of the Byzantine Emperor Michael VII Doukas, Symeon translated the originally Sanskrit animal fables, the *Panchatantra*, from Arabic to Greek around 1080. Maria Mavroudi has argued that at the same time that the ninth- and tenth-century "translation movement" of Greek philosophical and scientific works in Baghdad was waning, a "second translation movement" from Greek to Arabic emerged in the city of Antioch. However, in this case, the priority was on Byzantine legal, liturgical, and patristic texts, rather than science and philosophy.[651] Though the Seljuks ended Byzantine rule in northern Syria in 1084, the ancient city would soon change hands again, less than a generation later, with the Frankish conquests of the First Crusade.

When the crusader armies breached the walls of the city of Antioch in 1098, they found a city that was Greek in culture, Arabic in tongue, and predominantly Christian. It was this complex of influences that prepared it to be a center of translation in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries under the Franks. While scholars often see crusader rule as a period of rupture in the cultural and intellectual history of the eastern Mediterranean, the evidence tells a different story, at least in the case of Antioch. Part of the uniqueness of Antioch and northern Syria stems from its proximity to Greek intellectual centers, like Constantinople, as well as its proximity to Arab-Islamic intellectual centers, like Mosul and Baghdad. While the links with Contantinople were rooted in over a century of Byzantine rule in Antioch (969-1084), to say nothing of the centuries of Byzantine rule that had preceeded the Islamic conquest, the links with Mosul and Baghdad stemmed from Antioch's large eastern Christian population (mainly Jacobites and Nestorians), whose ecclesiastical and intellectual networks spanned across the often tense political boundaries

---

[650] Joseph Schacht, "Ibn Butlan," *EI*². Edgington, "Antioch: Medieval City of Culture," 249-50.
[651] Maria Mavroudi, "Translations from Greek into Latin and Arabic during the Middle Ages: Searching for the Classical Tradition," *Speculum* 90, no. 1 (2015): 50.

251

between Frankish and Muslim Syria. This is how Jacobite scholars, like Theodore of Antioch

and Barhebraeus, were able to study in Antioch and Tripoli as well as Baghdad and Mosul. Like

Ibn Butlan, these Arab Christian scholars leveraged their robust ecclesiastical networks to

transcend political boundaries and absorb the languages and learning of the ruling classes of both

Latin Christian and Arab Muslim cities.

 With the advent of Frankish (specifically Norman) rule in Antioch in 1098, the

intellectual networks of the already cosmopolitan city were enabled to expand westward as well.

We have already touched upon Antioch's commercial and intellectual links with Pisa, as well as

the likelihood that the Norman rulers of Antioch were active patrons of scholarship (in the model

of Norman Sicily and southern Italy). But Antioch's intellectual links with the western

Mediterranean did not stop at Sicily and Pisa. Aimery of Limoges' extant epistolary corpus alone

reveals an extensive intellectual network which included Constantinople, Pisa, Rome, and even

Toledo.[652] In the late 1140s, for example, Aimery exchanged letters with Pope Eugenius III who

requested from him a copy of John Chrysostom's commentary on Matthew. Aimery sent him the

Greek text which would later be translated by Burgundio of Pisa.[653] And earlier, in the 1130s,

Aimery corresponded with Raymond, archbishop of Toledo (1125-52), who asked him for an

itinerary of the Holy Land. Aimery commissioned (or perhaps even composed) and sent to

Toledo a multilingual itinerary that would come to be known as *La Fazienda de Ultra Mar*.

Though there is some debate about the dating of the itinerary and in consequence the authenticity

of the letters, it still says something of twelfth-century Antioch and its intellectual networks that

---

[652] This network can be developed even further if we consider Aimery's political correspondence
with France and England, which included exchanges with Louis VII (1164) and Henry II
(1187). See *Veterum Scriptorum* I, 870; and *Gesta regis Henrici Secundi Benedicti
abbatis: The Chronicle of the Reigns of Henry II and Richard I*, ed. W. Stubbs, *RS*, 49 (I,
II) (London, 1867), 36-7.

[653] This letter is no longer extant but is mentioned in the preface of Burgundio of Pisa's
translation of this work from 1151. *Veterum Scriptorum* I, 818.

a later editor would think to attribute this text to Aimery—perhaps indicating that Antiochene

textual production and translation activity were well-known even in thirteenth-century Spain. [654]

In linking the Arab-Greek-Norman city of Antioch with intellectual centers in the western

Mediterranean, Aimery also linked eastern Christian scholars to these western networks. As the

Latin patriarch of Antioch, Aimery developed a close friendship with the Jacobite patriarch

Michael the Syrian (1166-1199), a theologian, historian, and linguist whose major literary work

was his massive Syriac *Chronicle* that begins with Creation and continues until 1195.[655] Their

first recorded contact was in 1168 when Michael, on his return from pilgrimage in Jerusalem,

visited Aimery at al-Qusair, his castle ten kilometres south of Antioch.[656] However, their next

meeting a decade later was most significant. For Michael claims that Aimery used the occasion

to invite him to the Third Lateran Council (1179)—an extraordinary invitation considering that

---

[654] *La Fazienda de Ultra Mar: Biblia Romanceada et Itinéraire Biblique en prose castillane du XIIe siècle*, ed. Moshe Lazar (Salamanca: University of Salamanca 1965). Benjamin Kedar has questioned the twelfth-century dating of the manuscript and in consequence the authenticity of the letters, pointing out that since the 1960s, Lazar's thesis has been significantly revised by scholars of Castilian language and literature who argue that the *Fazienda* is not an original but rather a thirteenth-century translation of a twelfth-century Latin itinerary. See Benjamin Kedar, "Sobre la génesis de la Fazienda de Ultra Mar," *Anales de Historia Antigua y Medieval*, 28 (1995)—reprinted in *Franks, Muslims, and Oriental Christians in the Latin Levant: Studies in Frontier Acculturation* (Aldershot, 2005), 131-6.

[655] Michael the Syrian, *The Syriac Chronicle of Michael Rabo (the Great): A Universal History from the Creation*, trans. Matti Moosa (Teaneck, NJ: Beth Antioch Press, 2014). In this work, Michael writes of his admiration for the Franks and their acceptance of other Christians, for while the Jacobites were non-Chalcedonian and thus heretical in the eyes of the papacy, the Franks treated them with greater toleration than the Byzantines, allowing them full religious autonomy and requiring no payment of tithes to the Latin hierarchy. See Michael the Syrian, XVI, 1. It is believed that Michael knew Syriac, Greek, Armenian, and Arabic. See Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, 202.

[656] While Michael was a titular patriarch of Antioch, he resided primarily in Mardin and at the monastery of Mar Bar Sauma (near Melitene). This incident was significant because in 1165 Manuel and Bohemond III had unseated Aimery and set up a Greek patriarch in Antioch, Athanasius III; thus, Michael's visiting Aimery at al-Qusair showed not only the historic Jacobite antipathy toward the Greek hierarchy but also his support of Aimery as the true patriarch of Antioch. See Hamilton, "Aimery of Limoges," 276.

Michael was the titular patriarch of Antioch for a branch of the church that had been outside communion with Rome since the fifth century.[657] Michael declined the invitation but instead wrote a treatise (which is no longer extant) on the Cathar heresy to be sent to the council. That Michael wrote a treatise on a heretical sect in southern France suggests that he had an unusual familiarity with western theological and political issues, and it implies that Michael had participated in extensive dialogue with Aimery and perhaps other Latin scholars and theologians in Antioch.[658]

Books and Libraries

Tracing the movement of texts and scholars along Antioch's robust intellectual networks with the Latin west, the Byzantine "north," and the Islamic east, goes a long way to explain why Antioch became a center for translation in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. However, this focus on the macro ultimately leads us to ask a very specific question: where did all these texts come from? Where in the city did Aimery go to find John Chrysostom's commentary on Matthew? And where did Stephen find a copy of al-Majūsī's medical treatise? When we piece together the slim evidence of medieval libraries and collections of Greek and Arabic manuscripts in and around Antioch, two possible sources of texts emerge: 1) Islamic libraries (both institutional and private collections) that were plundered by the crusaders; and 2) Christian monastic or ecclesiastical libraries many of which would have predated the crusades.

While many Muslim intellectuals and cultural elites fled the region during the Frankish invasions in the late eleventh century, they sometimes left behind their institutional and private

---

[657] Michael the Syrian, XX, 7.

[658] While it is likely that Michael used his knowledge of Manichean sects in the eastern tradition, such as the Paulicians and Bogomils, to form his arguments against the Cathars (who may have been influenced by eastern Manicheans), the entire endeavor still suggests a meaningful engagement with Western theological issues.

libraries, which came into Frankish possession nearly overnight. After the fall of Tripoli in 1109, Ibn al-Qalanisi writes, "They [the Franks] plundered all that was in it… the quantities of material that fell into their hands from its merchandise and storehouses, and the books in its college and in the libraries of private owners, exceeded all computation."[659] Though some libraries and collections may have been destroyed in the conquests, visions of barbarous crusaders wantonly destroying Arabic texts are gratuitous caricatures. Marshall Baldwin argues that while some Islamic authors lament the crusaders' destruction of books, these accounts are exaggerated and meant to stir feelings of hatred toward the infidel. It is not insignificant that the accounts of wanton book destruction usually come from later authors who are embellishing more straightforward contemporary accounts of book confiscation, like that of Ibn al-Qalanisi which says nothing of book destruction.[660] It is more probable that some books were destroyed and some books were seized and sold in local markets. Louise Cochrane has even speculated that this singular event—the flooding of the northern Syrian book market with recently plundered Arabic (and possibly Greek) texts—may have been the impetus for Adelard's journey to the eastern Mediterranean.[661]

Though perhaps not on the same scale as the conquests of the First Crusade, the plundering of Muslim book collections continued into the twelfth century. For example, in 1154, as Usama ibn Munqidh's family was en route to Syria from Egypt, Baldwin III, the king of Jerusalem, stopped the ship from entering the port of Acre and plundered the personal wealth of the Syrian noble. Of this event Usama writes:

> The news that my children and my brother's children and our women were safe made it
> easier to take the news about all the wealth that was lost. Except for my books: they totalled

---

[659] Ibn al-Qalanisi, *Dhayl*, 160; trans. Gibb, 89. See also, Ibn al-Athir, X, 476.
[660] M.W. Baldwin, "Ecclesiastical Developments in the Twelfth-Century Crusaders' State of Tripoli." *The Catholic Historical Review*, 22 (1936), 154.
[661] Cochrane, *Adelard of Bath,* 33.

four thousand bound volumes of the most precious tomes. Their loss was for me a heartache that lasted all my life.[662]

What Baldwin did with Usama's four thousand volumes is unknown. August Krey has speculated that Usama's library may have been transferred to the royal library in Jerusalem and provided the Arabic source material for William of Tyre's now lost *Gesta Orientalium Principum*, a history of the Holy Land from Muhammad to 1184.[663] Usama was not the only Syrian noble to have his personal library confiscated. Al-Harawī claimed that in 1192 his books were confiscated by the Franks during the battle of Khuwaylifa. Though Richard I of England promised through messengers to return the books, the proposed meeting never took place and the books were never returned.[664]

What kinds of texts might one expect to find in these private and institutional libraries? Until recently, scholars of the eastern Mediterranean have had few resources to answer a basic question like this. However, Konrad Hirschler's recent work on the catalogue of the Ashrafīya library in Damascus provides us with some invaluable proxy data with which to work.[665] Two key insights from Hirschler's work are relevant to the question of texts and libraries in Antioch and northern Syria. First, Hirschler points out that a large portion of the Ashrafīya collection was plundered from the library of the Fatimids in Cairo after the fall of that dynasty in 1171. Hirschler traces in great detail the movement of this collection (not the entire Fatimid library but a portion of it) over a fifty-year period from Cairo to Damascus—as it went into the private

---

[662] Usama, ed. Hitti, 34-35; trans. Cobb, 43-44.

[663] See Babcock and Krey, "Introduction," in *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, trans. E.A. Babcock and A.C. Krey, Vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943) 16. For a different perpsective, see Alan Murray, "William of Tyre and the Origins of the Turks: of the Gesta orientalium principum," in *Dei gesta per Francos: etudes sur les croisades dédiées à Jean Richard*, eds. Michel Balard, Benjamin Z. Kedar, Jonathan Riley-Smith, and Jean Richard (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001).

[664] See al-Harawī, 78-79.

[665] See Konrad Hirschler, *Medieval Damascus: Plurality and Diversity in an Arabic Library : the Ashrafīya Library Catalogue* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016).

collection of Saladin's secretary, al-Qāḍi al-Fāḍil, and was passed on to his son, al-Ashraf Aḥmad, and eventually was incorporated into the Ashrafīya library.[666] This, of course, gives us a concrete example of the kind of journey that a book collection can take after a conquest or dynasty change and provides an alternative narrative to that of destruction.

Second, according to Hirschler, the Ashrafīya library—which contained over 2000 volumes—was "a run-of-the-mill library of which dozens probably existed in Damascus and hundreds more in the various Syrian and Egyptian cities."[667] Hirschler repeatedly makes this point to emphasize that the Ashrafīya library catalogue (a rare survival from the period) probably gives us a good idea of the kinds of collections that were available in many Islamic cities in medieval Syria. One can only wonder what happened to these more commonplace libraries in the wake of Frankish conquest. Were all libraries and religious endowments plundered and recirculated (or destroyed)—or just the most opulent and most obvious? In other words, is it possible that a library like the Ashrafīya might have existed and even survived in a city like Frankish Antioch or Tripoli? Could some of these more unremarkable libraries have survived and served as sites for Frankish translators, like Stephen and Adelard, to find Arabic medical and philosophical texts for translation? Aside from remarkable anecdotes, like the one from Nerses quoted above, evidence helping us locate the source texts of famous translations is sparse. However, a cross-reference of the Ashrafīya library catalogue with known translations from Antioch is telling. For example, al-Majūsī's medical treatise, *al-kitāb al-malakī*, which was translated by Stephen in Antioch in 1127, is in the Ashrafīya library catalogue.[668] Works by Thābit ibn Qurra—one of which was translated by Adelard of Bath—are also found in the

---

[666] Hirschler, *Medieval Damascus*, 33-35.
[667] Hirschler, *Medieval Damascus*, 1-3.
[668] Hirschler, *Medieval Damascus*, 399 no. 1483.

Ashrafīya library catalogue.[669] Additionally, Hirschler points out that the catalogue lists thirty-four entries of Arabic versions of Euclid, Plato, Galen, Hippocrates, and Aristotle.[670] Of course, I am not arguing that the Ashrafīya library (which was founded in the early thirteenth century) was the library where western scholars found scientific and philosophical texts to translate. Rather, I am suggesting that the Ashrafīya library collection shows us what would probably have been available in a "run-of-the-mill" Islamic library in Tripoli or Antioch or Aleppo. Thus, whether translators acquired books that were plundered and resold on the open market or they simply asked to read (and translate) texts found in Islamic libraries, there were ample opportunities to find the kinds of medical, scientific, and philosophical works we see translated in this period.

Translators could also have found texts in Frankish libraries and educational institutions in Syria, such as the cathedral school in Antioch. Its existence is attested by the appearance of a certain "*Leonardus, magister scholarum*" in the witness list of an Antiochene charter from 1184.[671] Unfortunately, nothing more is known about Leonardus or the cathedral school in which he taught except that the school was still in operation in the early thirteenth century, as is attested in a letter from Innocent III to the patriarch of Antioch in 1212.[672] What would the library of the cathedral school in Antioch have been like? The only Latin book catalogue which survives from the period has been attributed to the shrine church of Nazareth at the end of the twelfth century.[673] This book collection, which Kedar notes is comparable to a medium-sized cathedral library in France or Italy in the period, contains theological works by church fathers (Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, and others) as well as works of classical antiquity (Sallust, Virgil, Ovid,

---

[669] Hirschler, *Medieval Damascus*, 289 no. 1040; and 315 no. 1178a.

[670] Hirschler, *Medieval Damascus*, 118.

[671] *RRH*, 168 no. 636.

[672] 'sibi et… fratri suo mille bisantios Saracenatos dedisset in studiis scholasticis expendendos…' *PL* 216, col. 697D. On Tripoli, see Rey, *Les colonies,* 165-8.

[673] See James S. Beddie, "Notices of Books in the East in the Period of the Crusades," *Speculum* 8, no. 2 (1933): 240-42.

Lucan, and others).[674] No Greek or Arabic texts are listed in the catalogue, but this absence may only tell us something about smaller ecclesiastical libraries in inland cities like Nazareth or Kerak. How we should imagine cathedral libraries in cities like Antioch or Tyre is another question altogether.

If Latin cathedral libraries in major cities like Antioch may have been one site for Greek (and to a lesser extent Arabic) texts, it is certain that monasteries in and around Antioch served as well-established repositories of texts. When discussing his process of translating the *Rule of St. Benedict* into Armenian, Nerses mentions two monasteries where he found texts. First, he found a Greek translation of the *Regula* in a Greek monastery on the Black Mountain; and later he found a Latin copy of the *Regula* in the Frankish monastery of St. Paul in Antioch.[675] In another colophon, Nerses describes his search for John Chrysostom's *Commentary on the Apocalyspe of John*:

> …when reading the Apocalypse of John, I was embarrassed for not knowing the sense of the admirable words; though searching here and there, I could not find the *Commentary* of it in our language. Then I decided to go to great Antioch and I went round the monasteries of Greeks and Franks that are there… And then, searching, I found among the books of the famous Monastery of Saint Paul in that city the *Commentary of the Apocalypse* in the "Lombardic" [*lunpart*] language… Then, going outside of the city to the holy Mountain that is north from there, to one of the monasteries of the Greeks, that is called Pētias, I met an encloistered monk named Basil. I found the required [text] with a property mark in Greek and in correct and nice writing…[676]

In this account, we once again find a situation where Nerses, an Armenian monk and translator, is able to consult the manuscript collections of both Greek and Frankish monasteries in his search for a particular text. That a Latin monastery (St. Paul) had a Lombardic (Latin?) translation of John Chrysostom and a Greek monastery had a Greek translation of the *Rule* of St. Benedict suggests that theological texts (and perhaps other genres) were circulated and translated

---

[674] See Kedar, "Gerard of Nazareth," 64-65.
[675] Quoted in Weitenberg, "The Armenian Monasteries in the Black Mountain," 90.
[676] Quoted in Weitenberg, "The Armenian Monasteries in the Black Mountain," 91.

between neighboring monasteries in northern Syria in this period. Additionally, Nerses' accounts of hunting for manuscripts in Greek and Latin monasteries around Antioch suggest that these monasteries were not only well-known for their libraries but also that these libraries were open to scholars of other confessions.[677]

Sites of Collaboration and Translation

Nerses' detailed discussion of his translation activities in the monasteries of northern Syria makes it clear that monasteries were not only repositories of texts but also sites of collaboration and translation. In order to translate the *Regula* into Armenian, he first needed a Greek monk named Basil to introduce him to the work of St. Benedict and lend him a Greek copy from the monastery—which Nerses "read on the spot." Later, Nerses found an original Latin copy in the monastery of St. Paul, where he also translated it "by means of one of their monks of the same age [as I], named Guillaume [*Gilam*]."[678] The exact nature of their collaboration is unclear, but Nerses' account makes it clear that his translation of the Latin *Regula* into Armenian was not a solo project.[679] In this period, there were three common methods of written translation. First, there was direct translation from one language to another— completed by a translator (or translators) who could read and write both the source and the target language. This was the mode adopted by Philip of Tripoli when he translated the *Secretum*

---

[677] It is possible that Nerses' high rank in the Armenian church afforded him unique access to Greek and Latin monastic libraries (perhaps access that was not afforded to regular monks), but such is the nature of scholarship in most times and places. It is typically people of exceptional education and privilege (and we might add linguistic skill) who find themselves perusing book collections in places where they might otherwise not belong.

[678] Quoted in Weitenberg, "The Armenian Monasteries in the Black Mountain," 90.

[679] This was also the case with Nerses' translation of John Chrysostom's commentary where Nerses worked with Kostand of Hierapolis.

secretorum "from Arabic idiomatically into Latin" as he puts it.[680] However, the more common

procedure was to translate a text into an intermediary vernacular language known by both

translators and then to translate it into the target language. This method is well attested in

accounts of scholarly translation from Arabic into Latin in Iberia, where Mozarabs or Jews

unfamiliar with Latin would translate Arabic texts into a vernacular Romance dialect and a

second translator would then render the Romance version into Latin.[681] The third method of

translation is by dictation, where a literate reader of the source language reads the text aloud to a

collaborator who is fluent (but not literate) in the source language and literate in the target

language. Burnett, citing Adelard's occasional confusion of Arabic words that have aural but not

orthographic similarity, hypothesizes that Adelard may only have been a speaker (and not a

reader) of Arabic and that his translations were completed by a dictation method.[682]

     There is not enough evidence to discern which of these three methods Nerses and

Guillaume used to translate the *Regula*. Did they translate the text directly from Latin into

Armenian or did they use an intermediary language (perhaps Greek or French)? Or did they

adopt some version of the dictation method? Whatever the case may have been, Nerses'

acknowledgment of Guillaume reminds us that translation typically required collaboration.

Furthermore, it seems that monasteries, in general, and the monastery of St. Paul, in particular,

were important sites of translation because of the presence of highly literate polyglot

collaborators. Nerses is, of course, not the only translator from this period with links to the

monastery of St. Paul in Antioch. Stephen of Antioch, if we identify him with "Stephen the

---

[680] Williams, "Philip of Tripoli's Translation of the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Secretum secretorum*," 85-86.

[681] See Charles Burnett, "The Coherence of the Arabic-Latin Translation Program in Toledo in the Twelfth Century," rprnt. in C. Burnett, *Arabic into Latin in the Middle Ages: The Translators and Their Intellectual and Social Context* (Farnham: Ashgate/Variorum, 2009), 252.

[682] Burnett, "Adelard of Bath and the Arabs," 101-105.

treasurer of the church of St. Paul" as Burnett does, also seems to have spent some time in this prominent Benedictine monastery in the 1120s.[683] Beyond his role as treasurer, we know nothing about Stephen's activities at St. Paul. But it is worth considering the possibility that at least some of his translation activity occurred at the same monastery where Nerses collaborated with Guillaume half a century later. In the text of the *Regalis Dispositio*, Stephen mentions two collaborators, the scribes Alduinus and Pancus. Could these collaborators have been monks in the monastery of St. Paul or perhaps, like Nerses, monks from neighboring monasteries who lent linguistic or technical expertise in Stephen's translation projects?

Nerses' account gives us the only explicit reference to translation activity at St. Paul, but there may well have been more. The monastery of St. Paul has a history that pre-dates its Benedictine era. Prior to 1098, it was a Greek Orthodox monastery dating back to at least the middle of the tenth century.[684] How the Greek Orthodox monastery became a Benedictine monastery after the Frankish conquest is unclear, but our first evidence of the monastery as a Benedictine establishment comes from 1108.[685] Though the Franks expelled Orthodox bishops from the cities they conquered and replaced them with Latin bishops, they typically left Orthodox monasteries (and parish churches) intact.[686] Orderic Vitalis claims that Bohemond left Orthodox monasteries in northern Syria undisturbed, only installing Latin monastic communities on ruined or abandoned monastic sites.[687] This would suggest that the Greek Orthodox monastery of St. Paul may have been abandoned or ruined in the Seljuk invasion of Antioch in

---

[683] *Le Cartulaire du chapitre de Saint-Sépulchre de Jérusalem*, ed. G. Bresc-Bautier, 180, no. 77. Burnett, "Antioch as a Link," 10.

[684] In 943, al-Masʿūdi wrote, "There is at Antakiyyah the Church of Paul, which is known also by the name of Dair al-Barāghith (the Convent of Bugs); it stands adjoining the city gate called Bāb al-Fāris (the Knight's Gate)." Le Strange, *Palestine Under the Muslims*, 368.

[685] See witness list in *RRH* no. 53.

[686] Hamilton, *The Latin Church*, 165-66.

[687] Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of Normandy and England III*, trans. Thomas Forester (London, 1854) X, 11, 256.

1084 and that it was renewed and resettled by the Benedictines after 1098. This fourteen-year gap certainly represents a significant rupture. Still one must wonder what potential lines of continuity might have existed between the Orthodox St. Paul of the tenth and eleventh centuries and the Benedictine St. Paul of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. For example, what became of the library of St. Paul in 1084 (or in 1098 if it was not abandoned)—and by what means was the library of the Latin monastery built up during the twelfth century? And finally, what became of the Orthodox monks of St. Paul? If Nerses' account from the late twelfth century tells us anything, it tells us that the Benedictine monastery of St. Paul stayed connected (or perhaps reconnected) to the monastic networks that linked Antioch with the Greek and Armenian monasteries of the Black Mountain.

Not only did the monastery of St. Paul have deep roots in northern Syria and in eastern Christian networks, it also became a very wealthy and prominent Latin monastery in northern Syria. As evidence for its prominence in northern Syria, Cahen notes the frequency with which its abbots are found on witness lists in Latin charters, as well as its very public property disputes with princes and patriarchs of Antioch, some of which required intervention from Rome.[688] In 1211/12, Wilbrand of Oldenburg visited this "rich monastery" where his uncle, Wilbrand of Hallermund, as well as several other German crusaders had been buried.[689] He remarks that in the monastery was a small crypt where "St. Paul, after preaching in the town, used to rest and write letters."[690] Perhaps this ancient association with Paul's literary production gave this monastery a reputation as a place of scholarship and textual translation. Further research is needed not only on the history of the monastery of St. Paul in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but also in the murky tenth and eleventh centuries.

---

[688] Cahen, *La Syrie du nord*, 323-24.
[689] Wilbrand, *IHC* III, 14-15.
[690] Wilbrand, *IHC* III, 14; trans. Pringle, 72.

We know of at least one monastery in northern Syria where we find evidence of textual transmission and translation (usually from Greek to Arabic or Syriac) in both the Byzantine and the Frankish periods—the Monastery of St. Symeon of the Wondrous Mountain.[691] The Monastery of St. Symeon is particularly interesting because of the possibility, raised by Cahen, that in the crusader period the monastery (or monasteries) on the mountain housed Greek, Georgian, and Latin monks. The meager evidence from the period does suggest that monks from each of these groups were present on the Wondrous Mountain in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but the nature of their coexistence on the mountain is unclear.[692] Cahen claims that the Benedictine monastery of St. Symeon was "next to" [*à côté des*] the Orthodox monastery but provides no further elaboration (or evidence) on the actual physical arrangement.[693] According to Andrew Jotischsky, the Orthodox monastery of St. Symeon continued to be a center of scribal activity into the 1250s.[694] Whether the Latin monks on the Wondrous Mountain engaged their neighboring monks (and their texts) in similar ways to that of Nerses at St. Paul is a question that requires further research.

Besides monasteries, the chancery of the prince of Antioch and the fondacos (and quarters) of Italian maritime states were also sites of significant scribal activity—and therefore potential translation activity. Though we have little evidence of scholarly translation activity in northern Syria occurring in these institutional contexts, there is still good reason to suspect that

---

[691] See Paul Van den Ven, *La Vie de Saint Syméon Stylite le Jeune, 521-592*, I (Bruxelles, Société des Bollandistes, 1962), 219; and Sebastian P. Brock, "Syriac Manuscripts Copied on the Black Mountain, near Antioch," in *Lingua restituta orientalis: Festgabe für Julius Assfalg*, eds. Regine Schulz and Manfred Görg (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1990), 59-67.

[692] See Cahen, *La Syrie du nord,* 323-24 n. 8 and 334 n. 18; and Van den Ven, *La Vie de Saint Syméon* I, 220-21.

[693] Cahen, *La Syrie du nord,* 334.

[694] Andrew Jotischsky, Email correspondence discussing his forthcoming work, *Latin and Greek Orthodox Monasticism in the Crusader States*, October 17, 2017.

translation activity probably took place in the chancery and the fondaco. The chancery of

Antioch already employed scribes who were literate in Arabic and Greek and were tasked with

drafting and translating diplomatic correspondence. As we have seen, a court philosopher, or

ḥakīm, like Theodore of Antioch not only acted as a scholarly translator and personal physician

to a ruler but also drafted diplomatic correspondence for the ruler.[695] If Stephen of Antioch, who

calls himself "the philosopher," functioned in the Antiochene court in a manner similar to

Theodore in Sicily, then we might with good reason imagine his scribal and translation activity

taking place in the prince's chancery. Though we have no explicit evidence of scholarly texts

being translated in Italian fondacos in Syria, we do know that fondacos and customs houses in

the eastern Mediterranean employed scribes and translators, some of whom, like Leonardo of

Pisa, were interested not only in commercial exchange but also in intellectual exchange with the

Greco-Arabic world around them.

If it has been proven that Antioch and the nearby Black Mountain were indeed hubs of

translation and transmission, what is now needed are further inquiries into the geography of

translation in this unique region. I have identified two monastic libraries—the Latin monastery of

St. Paul in the city of Antioch and the Greek monastery of Pētias in the Black Mountin—that

served as repositories of texts as well as sites of collaboration and translation. A closer look into

the archeology and institutions of the Frankish city of Antioch may reveal additional sites where

we might ground the timeless intellectual achievements as well as the temporal bodies of

translators like Stephen, Adelard, and Nerses.

---

[695] See Burnett, "Master Theodore: Frederick II's Philosopher," 236.

Products of Translation: Medical Glossaries

In the prologue of Stephen of Antioch's translation of al-Majūsī's *kitāb al-malakī*,

Stephen writes,

> We have then, proposed to devote the effort of our labour first to these books, although
> the Arabic language has, hidden within it, other things more noble than these: namely, all
> the secrets of philosophy, to the translating of which, afterwards, if divine kindness
> permits, we will devote our skill... For we have put these easier subjects first, so that
> there is a path for us to the difficult subjects, and we provide first what is necessary for
> bodies, so that, when healing has been provided for these by the art of medicine, what
> belongs to the excellence of the mind, being much more lofty, should follow.[696]

Here, in 1127, Stephen reveals that the *Regalis Dispositio* was just the beginning of his

ambitious translation program. His strategy, as he described it, was to deal with the "easier

subject" of medicine first before delving into more "lofty" subjects like philosophy. Burnett

argues that Stephen did indeed move on to these more "lofy" subjects with translations of Ibn al-

Haytham's *Maqala fi hay'at al-'alam* (*Liber Mamonis*), Ptolemy's *Algamest*, and Aristotle's

Physics.[697] Though it is difficult to reconstruct a coherent program or "school of translation" in

Antioch in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the growing list of translations and translators

connected to the city indicates without question that Antioch was a hub of translation activity in

the eastern Mediterranean. Some translators, like Adelard of Bath and Philip of Tripoli, found in

Antioch a rich supply of Greek and Arabic scientific and philosophical texts. Other scholars, like

Stephen of Antioch and Nerses of Lampron, found in Antioch supportive institutions and skillful

collaborators. Still others, like Theodore of Antioch and Barhebreaus, found in Antioch

opportunities for language learning that were unique in the eastern Mediterranean, for Antioch

was a Latin-ruled city that was culturally Greek and predominantly Arabic-speaking.

---

[696] Preface to Part 1 of *Regalis Dispositio* quoted in Burnett, "Antioch as a Link," 28-29.
[697] Burnett, "Stephen, the Disciple of Philosophy," 114-16.

Over the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, these translators (and their unnamed collaborators) translated numerous works of Greco-Arabic medicince, astronomy, mathematics, and philosophy as well as works of Greek and Latin theology. While it is tempting to see these timeless works of scholarly translation as fundamentally different from other more ephermal works of pragmatic translation, the evidence itself pushes us to see these different products of translation as inextricably linked. They are linked not only because "scientific" translators, like Stephen or Theodore, were supported by institutions that primarily patronized the production of pragmatic translations (like diplomatic correspondence or deeds of sale), but also because these lofty, scientific translations had more pragmatic and widespread uses than we often assume. One genre that illustrates the interplay between scholarly and pragmatic objectives in translation is the multilingual medical glossary—or medical *synonyma*.

Appended to early manuscripts of Stephen of Antioch's *Regalis Dispositio*, we find Stephen's *Breviarium*, a trilingual glossary of 575 medical simples compiled from a Greek index of Dioscorides' *De Materia Medica*. On the left side of the page are Greek terms and on the right side of the page are synonymous Arabic terms. Both the Greek and the Arabic are transliterated into Latin characters but are listed in Greek alphabetical order. In the middle column, Stephen provides Latin translations of 162 of the 575 medical simples.[698] Burnett notes that though Stephen's *Breviarium* "provided a major source for the most learned and detailed glossary of medical synonmyms of the Middle Ages, that of Simon of Genoa," his glossary appears to have

---

[698] On Stephen's *Breviarium,* see Charles Burnett, "The Synonyma Literature in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries," in *Globalization of Knowledge in the Post-Antique Mediterranean, 700-1500*, eds. Sonja Brentjes and Jürgen Renn (London: Routledge, 2016), 132; and C. Burnett, "Simon of Genoa's Use of the Brevarium of Stephen the Disciple of Philosophy," in *Simon of Genoa's Medical Lexicon*, ed. Barbara Zipser (Berlin: Sciendo Migration, 2013), 70.

had a "very limited diffusion" in the medieval period.[699] Reflecting on the uses of this particular

medical glossary, Burnet argues that Stephen's *Breviarium* was probably not a "living

dictionary" that was used by physicians—as we see, for example, with the contemporaneous

Kitāb al-Mustaʿīnī of Ibn Baklārīsh.[700] According to Burnett, Stephen's glossary represents

"bookish" rather than practical medical knowledge. This is evidenced by the lack of marginal

annotations and supplemental translations (by later readers) in extant manuscripts of the

Breviarium and by the crowded tricolumn format of the tables themselves, which are quite

difficult to read.[701]

At first glance, Stephen's *Breviarium* would appear to be a counter-example to the

argument that scientific translations were more practical than often assumed and more closely

related to other forms and products of translation. Especially when compared with the heavily-

annotated and constantly-evolving manuscripts of Ibn Baklārīsh's medical glossary, Stephen's

Breviarium appears to be a product of narrow scholarly interests with little connection to the real

world of the twelfth-century Levant. However, Burnett's argument is based on the manuscript

history of Stephen's *Breviarium*. This gives us a sense of the diffusion and use of the text but not

necessarily Stephen's intended use and audience. In the preface of the second part of the *Regalis*

Dispositio, Stephen discusses the purpose of the appended medical glossary as well as his

imagined audience:

> But since we are translating this work from the Arabic language, and almost all the names
> of the medications placed here are put forward in the language of the Arabs, and we
> hardly had common Latin words [for them], we put them forward as they are in Arabic,
> sometimes even those which are known to us… But we have not altogether consigned the
> reader to error and worry, but, as was possible for us and as the Orient could provide, at
> the end of the whole work we have added a compendium of all the medications that are in

---

[699] Burnett, "Stephen, the Disciple of Philosophy," 123.

[700] Burnett, "The Synonyma Literature in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries," 132, 135.

[701] Burnett, "The Synonyma Literature in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries," 135-37. For a
facsimile of a page of the *Breviarium*, see Burnett, "Antioch as a Link," 76.

Dioscorides, having on this side the names in Greek, on that side, in Arabic, so that the man into whose hands this work comes can ask what each thing is, if he finds a Greek, or indeed an Arab.[702]

Here Stephen makes it clear that the purpose of the glossary was to offer his readers Greek (and to a lesser extent Latin) equivalents to medical simples that he had transliterated (but not translated) from Arabic. His intended audience was the Latin reader with little or no Greek or Arabic—who nonetheless lived in close proximity to speakers of Greek and Arabic.

In the preface to the *Breviarium*, Stephen mentions Sicily and Salerno as places where the "studious reader" might find people to help him understand the Greek or Arabic medical terms.[703] From this comment, Burnett argues that Stephen's (sole) intended audience was Latin medical students or physicians in Salerno and Sicily. For Burnett, Stephen's brief but explicit reference to Italian readers not only revealed his imagined audience but also precluded the possibility that Stephen's translation was intended for readers (and practioners) in Frankish Syria.[704] However, there is no reason that Stephen's intended audience should have been one and not the other. Like Salerno and Palermo, Antioch was a rare tri-cultural urban space where Latin readers of his glossary could easily find Greek or Arabic-speaking interlocutors. If Stephen's imagined audience included Franks in Antioch and greater Syria, then his Greek-Arabic glossary (with only a handful of Latin translations) was not as unusable as Burnett suggests—especially

---

[702] Quoted in Burnett, "Antioch as a Link," 35-37.

[703] "Having brought to an end, thanks to God, the labour of translation, as remains to do and as we promised at the beginning of the second part, we add a breviary of all medications, which we toiled over by comparing the books of Dioscorides written in Greek and Arabic, and we join it so that, since our competence in the Latin names is not secure, any studious reader who approaches our work has people he can consult about unknown [medications]. For both in Sicily and Salerno, where especially there are students of these matters, there are both Greeks and people who know the Arabic language, whom he who wishes can consult. Preface to the *Brevarium* quoted in Burnett, "Antioch as a Link," 38-39.

[704] Burnett remarks, "Stephen is imagining that his readers are in Italy, not in the Latin East." Burnett, "Stephen, the Disciple of Philosophy," 123. See also Burnett, "The Synonyma Literature in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries," 136.

for the Syrian Frank who could speak (but not read) Arabic. For the Arabophone Frank,

Stephen's transliterations of equivalent Greek and Arabic medical simples would have been

immensely helpful—whether one was a scholar or a practioner. Though Burnett helps us

understand the international diffusion and use (or lack thereof) of the earliest manuscripts of

Stephen's *Breviarium* (in Berlin and Worscester, respectively), he overlooks the potential local

uses of this text—a text that would have been most useful/usable in a multilingual city like

Antioch.

That there was indeed an appetite in Frankish Syria for bilingual medical glossaries is

demonstrated by the survival of another medical glossary produced in Syria in the late thirteenth

century by a Franco-Syrian knight named William.[705] The *Cynonimes* of William contain 565

medical simples with Arabic terms on the left hand side of page followed by their Anglo-

Norman (or Old French) equivalents.[706] Though the Arabic terms are transliterated into Latin

characters, the glossary remains in Arabic alphabetical order—suggesting perhaps that William

used an Arabic index of Dioscorides' *De Materia Medica*. The decision to translate Arabic

medical terms into Old French, the lingua franca of the Latin East, is telling; and it suggests a

larger intended audience than that of Stephen's *Breviarium*. One can easily imagine not only

physicians using this glossary but also merchants who traded in spices and medicines. This

potential use is further implied in the preface when William names his collaborator: "Master

Jacques Saracen, the apothecary and new Christian."[707] The exact nature of William's

---

[705] For a modern edition and commentary, see Gustav Ineichen, "Il Glossario Arabo-Francese de Messer Guglielmo e Maestro Giacomo," *Att. Classe di scienze morali, lettere ed arti* 130 (1972): 353-407.

[706] For example, a typical entry reads: "*Affion* [afiyūn] *dicitur opie* [opium]." Ineichen, "Il Glossario Arabo-Francese de Messer Guglielmo e Maestro Giacomo," 365 no. 36.

[707] *"Ces sunt cynonimes de Mesire Willame li Pulains ch(evalie)r, et Mestre Jaques Sarasin le ypoticaires, noveau crestien, translatés de langue d'arabike en langue & en lectre de*

collaboration with Jacques is unclear; however, Jacques' occupation as an apothecary indicates both the medical and commercial motives behind this product of translation. In addition, it brings us back to the socio-linguistic context assumed by Stephen in the *Breviarium*—one where Latins could work through translation issues related to medicine and medical practice in collaboration with Arabic (and Greek) speakers.

Read together, these medical glossaries reveal the close relationship between scientific translation and other forms of translation. Though Burnett may be right that Stephen's glossary was primarily read and transmitted as a work of scientific scholarship, this product of translation very well may have also been a practical guide for Latin physicians and medical students in places like Antioch and Salerno. Likewise, though William's glossary seems to have been produced with medical practioners in mind, it should not surprise us if this text was also used by Latin merchants trading in spices and medicines in ports around the eastern Mediterranean. Therefore, we might imagine that these products of translation would have been found in monastic libraries and medical schools, in apothecaries' workshops and Italian fondacos. Medical glossaries, like Stephen's *Breviarium* and William's *Cynonimes*, remind us that scientific translation was not merely a scientific endeavor. These products of scholarly translation were often oriented towards other more pragmatic ends—like medical practice and cross-cultural trade. Additionally, these works of scientific translation, even when intended for the most narrow of audiences, were often supported by secular or ecclesiastical institutions whose patrons usually had political and religious motives for supporting works of scientific scholarship and translation.

---

fraunceis." Ineichen, "Il Glossario Arabo-Francese de Messer Guglielmo e Maestro Giacomo," 363.

Conclusion: Embedded and Embodied

The Antiochene translation movement of Greek and Arabic science and philosophy was not an isolated event but rather was part of a larger translation moment—one where the daily necessity of diplomatic, administrative, commercial, and theological translation gave birth to the institutions, practices, and personnel that made scientific translation possible. Stephen of Antioch's enigmatic biography makes this clear. Whether we consider questions of provenance, occupation, or institutional affliliation, it is clear that the story of Stephen's life and work cannot be narrated simply in terms of the intellectual history of the West. On the contrary, Stephen's presence in Antioch and his ambitious translation program cannot be understood apart from local political, economic, religious, and geographical configurations in Antioch and northern Syria in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It is not insignificant that Stephen was not only (even primarily) a translator but may have been a treasurer at the Latin monastery of St. Paul in Antioch, responsible for keeping accounts and issuing documents in multiple languages. And it is not insignificant that other scholars, like Nerses, came to St. Paul in search of manuscripts and collaborators in the work of translation. Likewise, it should not surprise us that the products of translation in this period were both scholarly and pragmatic, timeless and timely—works of exceptional intellectuals who could have never pulled it off had they not found themselves (mind and body) in a peculiar city like Antioch in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

CONCLUSION

SEEING DRAGOMANS

Fulcher of Chartres' *Historia Hierosolymitana* is without question one of the most reliable and valuable eyewitness sources for the First Crusade and the early decades of Frankish settlement. It provides detailed accounts of war and diplomacy between Franks and Muslims, and it offers intimate glimpses into the daily lives of the Franks who settled in Syria in the early decades of the twelfth century. Written over a span of three decades and covering the history of Frankish crusade and settlement from 1095 to 1127, it provides a more comprehensive look at this particular moment of Muslim-Christian encounter than most of our other sources. And yet it has nothing to say about translators and translation. In his sizeable chronicle (that runs 915 pages in its modern Latin edition), Fulcher never once mentions interpreters or translators. He discusses Peter the Hermit's embassy to Kerbogha, but he never mentions Peter's interpreter, Herluin. He observes that Franks who settled in Syria sometimes took local wives and learned new languages, but he never discusses the role of Syrian-born Franks as interpreters. He notes that the Frankish army had a Persian-speaking knight in their ranks, but he never tells us if this bilingual soldier served as a battlefield interpreter in negotiations with the Seljuks. The absence of translators in Fulcher's chronicle is so absolute that if Fulcher's were the only surviving source for the period, we would have no concrete information about translators and translation in medieval Syria in the early twelfth century.

For too long, modern histories of the crusades and the crusader states have read like Fulcher's chronicle. The accounts they offer are detailed, coherent, and more or less reliable, but

one crucial character is always absent. Whatever the reasons behind Fulcher's neglect of the figure of the translator in his medieval chronicle, such neglect is inexcusable in modern histories. We know, for example, from other eyewitness accounts that Herluin served as Peter the Hermit's interpreter. We know from later Arabic sources that second- and third-generation Syrian-born Franks often served as interpreters-envoys in diplomatic negotiations between Franks and Muslims. The conspicuous absence of translators in modern histories stems less from a lack of evidence than from a lack of interest. My aim in this dissertation has been to make the case for seeing and hearing these neglected figures. I have built my case by demonstrating not only the necessity of their presence but also their versatility and agency in the eastern Mediterranean at this time.

The Necessity of Translators

Because of the profound linguistic fragmentation of the eastern Mediterranean, translators were necessary in every arena of intercultural contact. Regardless of the crusade and regardless of the political dynasties involved, warfare and diplomacy between Franks and Muslims in the eastern Mediterranean always required linguistic intermediaries. Whether we are imagining the siege of Antioch in 1098, the back-and-forth negotiations of the Third Crusade, or the process of drafting bilingual peace treaties with the Mamluks in the latter half of the thirteenth century, translators were ubiquitous in every stage of war and diplomacy. Not only do we find translators on the battlefields and in the royal courts of rulers, we find them also in the wheat fields and in the local courts of law. Very soon after establishing principalities and lordships in Syria in the early twelfth century, the ruling Franks recognized that bilingual intermediary officials (such as the *rays,* dragoman*, scriba*, and *mathessep*) were essential to the collection of taxes and the

administration of justice. Taxation was simply not possible without translation; and legal pluralism was only possible if the Franks found ways to navigate the linguistic pluralism of the region.

Moving from local administration in the rural hinterland to cross-cultural trade in major port cities, we find translators once again literally at the center of things. We find local dragomans of the dīwān boarding incoming ships to tally the taxable merchandise; we find Italian scribes in the dīwān drawing up inventory logs and bilingual deeds of sale; and we find bilingual simsars moving between dīwān, fondaco, and *suq* connecting potential buyers and sellers. In these same ports of trade there were also dragomans of a different sort. They were not looking for foreign merchants but seeking out foreign pilgrims. Interpreter-guides were crucial in every stage of pilgrimage, whether they were facilitating logistics in Alexandria or reading (and translating) inscriptions on the Mount of Olives. Finally, it should not surprise us that in some of these same monasteries that housed foreign pilgrims (and provided guides), we also find foreign (and local) scholars and translators. Attracted by the libraries and the potential they offered for patronage and collaboration, translators of Greek theological works as well as Greco-Arabic science and philosophy gravitated towards these monastic institutions. There they engaged in the work of scholarly translation while filling administrative functions and taking official titles that often obscured their roles as translators.

The Versatility of Translators

This reminds us that when we find a translator in the medieval eastern Mediterranean, we always find more than that. Even the most famous translators of Greco-Arabic science and philosophy in the period were embedded in monastic or secular institutions and performed mundane tasks of

administration that required polyglot officials. Stephen of Antioch was probably a treasurer at the Monastery of St. Paul in Antioch—and he may have worked more with multilingual accounting books than he did with manuscripts of Greek and Arabic medicine and philosophy. Theodore of Antioch was a court philosopher and personal physician for Frederick II—and he probably spent more time drafting and translating diplomatic correspondence than he did translating Averroës and Aristotle. In religious pilgrimage, dragomans functioned as tour guides as well as spiritual guides. In cross-cultural trade, bilingual intermediary officials functioned as brokers, scribes, witnesses, and accountants. In local administration, bilingual officials functioned as tax collectors, judges, and market inspectors. And in war and diplomacy, translators functioned as court interpreters, envoys, spies, interrogators, scribes, and propagandists. Wherever we look, these figures were always "more than mere interpreters," as Karl Baedeker so elegantly put it. For in bridging language barriers, translators were, in effect, simultaneously bridging political, administrative, economic, religious, and intellectual barriers.

The Agency of Translators

Because of their indispensability in every arena of intercultural contact and because of their versatility in function, translators ought to be seen for what they are—as agents in and of history. Future accounts of Third Crusade diplomacy should not neglect the agency of Humphrey of Toron and Reynald of Sidon, whose competing negotiation efforts weakened Richard's attempts to capitalize on his victories against Saladin in the 1190s. Not only was the work of translators and interpreters consequential in war and high diplomacy, it was also of great consequence at the lowest levels of governance and administration. We may never know the intimate intricacies of the relations between rural *rayses* and Syrian peasants. But we can be sure that the felt severity

or leniency of Frankish rule, as it was experienced on the ground, was almost entirely a function of how particular rural *rayses* executed their function as linguistic and not merely administrative intermediaries and tax collectors. The agency of translators was also felt in the urban court system. The difference between justice and injustice, restitution and robbery, punishment and pardon rested in the hands (and on the lips) of bilingual advocates, jurors, and judges, whose words and interpretations wielded great power over most city-dwellers in medieval Syria whether Frank or Syrian.

For Italian merchants conducting business in Acre or Alexandria, translators not only ensured transparency in dealings with foreign customs officials, they also connected buyers and sellers who were not only strangers but speakers of different languages. Without the brokerage and linguistic mediation of dragomans and *simsars* and without the institutionalized translation services available in Islamic dīwāns, the intensification of cross-cultural trade in the eastern Mediterranean in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries simply would not have been possible. One could say the same for the pilgrimage industry—for industry it was—in this period. If Italian ships facilitated the movement of western pilgrims to the eastern Mediterranean, it was dragomans who guided these foreign pilgrims from the ports of Alexandria or Acre to the gates of Mount Zion. Interpreter-guides were not only crucial in facilitating the logistics of pilgrimage, they were also vital in shaping the very logic itself of pilgrimage. For it was their words, their stories, and their translations of oral traditions that gave shape to a pilgrim's experience of the holy in the Holy Land. For a foreign pilgrim visiting the Dome of Rock, identification and veneration of the Noble Footprints depended wholly on interpreter-guides. The power of the translator is also apparent in scholarly translation. We do not know if Stephen ever completed his ambitious translation program before his death (as very few of his texts have survived), but his

decision to translate medical texts before moving on to philosophy certainly influenced the history of the transmission of Greco-Arabic science and philosophy to western Europe.

The Agency of Translations

Stephen's role in the history of ideas points not only to the agency of (human) translators but that of (non-human) translations. While the agency of the translator is most often realized in a particular time and place, the agency of translations is often more diffuse spatially and temporally. What is more, the historical consequences of translations are difficult to predict. Stephen's imagined readers of his medical glossary were medical students in Salerno and Sicily (and possibly Antioch), but our earliest explicit reference to Stephen's *Breviarium* comes in 1140 from Northungus of Hildesheim, a monk in northern Germany. It is also possible that Stephen's medical glossary and texts derived from it were used by apothecaries and merchants in the spice trade, as was most certainly the case with the *Cynonimes* of William. As we have seen, sacred relics, like the footprints at the Dome of the Rock, were objects of translation and veneration whose agency is well attested in medieval pilgrimage accounts. When framed with the right stories and traditions, imprint relics, like the footprints, served as portals into the sacred— conveying pilgrims into the presence of the holy person (whether Jesus, Muhammad, or Jacob) who had occupied the same space many centuries earlier.

The agency of translations is attested not only in the realm of ideas and spiritual experience but also in the realms of economics and politics. Though we may never fully understand the complex motivations behind the minting of the Saracen bezant during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the consequences of minting this curious currency are indisputable. When the Franks flooded the eastern Mediterranean market with their own version of Fatimid

dīnārs (whether we call them imitations or translations), they irreparably damaged the reputation of Fatimid gold coinage there and created a way for the resurgence of silver and eventually the transition to Italian gold coinage in the mid-thirteenth century. Beyond large-scale economic impacts, the Saracen bezant also served as an agent of cultural change—reminding its Frankish users (with its foreign script) that they were no longer in Europe, and its Syrian users (with its poor execution and Christian symbols) that they were no longer in *dar al-Islam*. On a daily basis, translations—whether of deeds of sale or of court records—were used by Franks, Muslims, Jews, and local Christians to secure property, claim inheritances, plead for justice, and seek restitution. Though very few of these kinds of documents survive from the period, we know from the Geniza and from the surviving Syrian documents that rank-and-file inhabitants of Syria were reliant not only on the occasional services of bilingual scribes, but also on the long-term authority of the translated (or bilingual) documents they produced. Similarly, neighboring principalities in Syria were reliant on written peace treaties and oral oaths of ratification to bring war to a close and to settle border disputes. The agency of diplomatic treaties was not dependent upon the ability or willingness of rulers to honor the terms of agreements they entered into; rather the agency of these translations was rooted in their very existence. Once a treaty was drafted—and translated with versions in the languages of both sides—and agreed upon with oaths of ratification, the treaty (both the physical copy and the memory of its execution) served faithfully as a mechanism for peace or a pretext for war.

Coming to Terms

By arguing for the necessity, versatility, and agency of translators and translation in the medieval eastern Mediterranean, I hope to contribute simultaneously to the fields of translation studies,

Mediterranean studies, and crusade studies. My contribution to translation studies is primarily "archeological." This pioneering study of translators and translation in the medieval eastern Mediterranean is the only work of its kind to date. It is the first attempt to fill in a few of the many blank spaces in the history of translation in the medieval Mediterranean. Not only are the time and place of my inquiry novel, but so are my inquiries into the histories of oral interpretation, daily practices of translation, and traditions and practices specific to the Islamic world. Additionally, following the lead of Anthony Pym and others, I have made translators— their identities, social contexts, and influence—the center of this study. While I have paid considerable attention to the agency of translations, I have prioritized the agency of human translators who are usually forgotten much sooner than the translations they produce.

My scholarly concern with the figure of the translator is rooted not only in the conviction that the neglected histories of nameless actors are historically significant and worth telling, but also in an intuition that these figures can help us make sense of the remarkable "connectivity-in-diversity" we find in the medieval Mediterranean. In examining linguistic fragmentation and the multifaceted connections and re-connections made possible by translators, I am offering one productive (and thoroughly understudied) direction for those interested in the "culturological" approach to the Mediterranean championed by Sharon Kinoshita and Brian Catlos. My emphasis on language and linguistic difference challenges the tendency in Mediterranean studies to reduce everything to political and religious difference. And my emphasis on linguistic barriers and the real need for real bridges (in the person of the translator) challenges the current obsession in Mediterranean studies with fluidity and hybridity. In addition, by focusing on the eastern Mediterranean, I am effectively pushing "Mediterranean" studies east of Sicily. That the emerging interdiscipline of Mediterranean studies has been dominated by scholars of the western

and central Mediterranean is not the fault of historians of Spain and Sicily, but rather the fault of "crusade" scholars who too often see Frankish Syria as an anomalous case that has no real analogues in the wider Mediterranean.

The result is that studies of Muslim-Christian encounter in Syria in the era of the crusades have been stuck in unproductive, tired binaries. Crusade and *convivencia*, tolerance and intolerance, integration and segregation, conflict and cooperation—at best these binaries explain a partial aspect of intercultural encounter in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. By examining the broader Mediterranean themes of fragmentation and connectivity through the lens of translation studies, I have been able to offer a new perspective on intercultural encounter—that of the man in the middle (sometimes literally) of Muslim-Christian encounter. In the same way that Ronnie Ellenblum's study of rural Franks and Christopher MacEvitt's work on Armenian Christians provided fresh perspectives that challenged the way we think about intercultural encounter in the medieval eastern Mediterranean, my study of translators and interpreters has been an attempt to help us see Muslim-Christian encounter from a different perspective—to help us hear these conversations in more than one language.

Exploring the role of translators and translation in the history of Muslim-Christian encounter in the medieval eastern Mediterranean contributes not only to the fields of crusade studies, Mediterranean studies, and translation studies; it also contributes to the larger humanistic endeavor of understanding how humans across time and space negotiate difference. In particular, this study should remind us that language is a fundamental category of human difference, one that must be bridged before any other categories of difference—gender, ethnicity, religion, culture, economics, or politics—can be addressed. This is both a sobering and a hopeful thought. Sobering because many modern philosophers and translation theorists have posited the

281

"impossibility of translation." Ample historical evidence of the treacherous complexity of

translation offers a dose of realism for those who think that categories of human difference are

thin social constructions that can be overcome without effort. And yet, if the figure of the

translator in history points back soberly to Babel, his very presence (even ubiquity) in the

historical record also points to something more hopeful. Categories of profound human

difference can be overcome and people can come to terms—if they can find a good translator.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Adelard of Bath, *Adelard of Bath: Conversations with His Nephew*: On the Same and the Different, Questions on Natural Science *and* On Birds. Edited and translated by Charles Burnett. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana = History of the Journey to Jerusalem*. Edited and translated by Susan B. Edgington. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007.

'Alī al-Harawī. *A Lonely Wayfarer's Guide to Pilgrimage: 'Alī Ibn Abī Bakr Al-Harawī's Kitāb Al-Ishārāt Ilā Ma'rifat Al-Ziyārāt*. Edited and translated by Josef Meri. Princeton: Darwin Press, 2004.

Amari, Michele. *I Diplomi Arabi Del R. Archivio Fiorentino: Testo Originale Con La Traduzione Letterale E Illustrazione*. Firenze: 1863.

Ambroise, *The History of the Holy War: Ambroise's Estoire De La Guerre Sainte*. Edited by Marianne Ailes. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003.

Amico, Bernardino. *Trattato delle piante et immagini de sacre difizi de Terra Santa*. Firenza: 1620.

Archives de l'Orient Latin. Edited by Paul Riant. Paris: E. Leroux, 1881-84.

Assises d'Antioche. Edited and translated by Léon Alishan. Venice: Imprimerie Arménienne Médaillée, 1876.

Baldric of Bourgueil. *The Historia Ierosolimitana of Baldric of Bourgueil*. Edited by Steven Biddlecombe. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2014.

Battifoglio, Pietro. *Notai genovesi in oltremare: atti rogati a Tunisi da Pietro Battifoglio : (1288-1289)*. Edited by Geo Pistarino. Genova: Istituto di Medievistica, 1986.

De Broussillon, Arthur Bertrand. *La maison de Craon, 1050-1480: étude historique accompagnée du cartulaire de Craon*. Paris: A. Picard et fils, 1893.

Caffaro, *De libertatione civitatum Orientis*, *RHC Occ.*, V 1895.

⸻*Caffaro, Genoa and the Twelfth-Century Crusades*. Translated by Martin Hall and Jonathan Phillips. Routledge: London, 2016.

Le Cartulaire du chapitre du Saint-Sépulcre de Jérusalem. Edited by Geneviève Bresc-Bautier. Paris: P. Geuthner, 1984.

Clermont-Ganneau, Charles. "Deux chartes des croisés retrouvées dans une chronique arabe manuscrite." *Recueil d'Archéologie Orientale*, edited by C. Clermont-Ganneau. Paris: Leroux, 1905.

Codice Diplomatico Del Sacro Militare Ordine Gerosolimitano. Edited by Sebastiano Paoli. Lucca, 1733.

Comnena, Anna. *The Alexiad*. Translated by Elizabeth Dawes. Cambridge: Byzantine Series, 2000.

Creutz, Rudolf. "Die Ehrenrettung Konstantins von Afrika." *Studien und Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Benediktiner-Ordens und seiner Zweige* 49 (1931): 25-44.

Delaborde, Henri François. *Chartes de Terre Sainte provenant de l'Abbaye de N.-D. de Josaphat*. Paris: E. Thorin, 1880.

Delaville Le Roulx, Joseph. *Cartulaire général de l'ordre des Hospitaliers de Saint-Jean de Jérusalem (1100-1310)*. 4 vols. Paris: Leroux, 1894.

___ "Inventaire de pièces de Terre-Sainte de l'ordre de l'Hôpital." *ROL*, iii. Paris: Leroux, 1895.

Drory, Joseph. "Some observations during a vist to Palestine by Ibn al-'Arabī of Seville in 1092-1095." *Crusades* 3 (2004): 101-124.

Enchiridion Locorum Sanctorum. Edited by Donato Baldi. Jerusalem: Typis PP. Franciscanorum, 1955.

La Fazienda de Ultra Mar: Biblia romanceada et itinéraire biblique en prose castillane du XIIe siècle. Edited by Moshe Lazar. Salamanca: University of Salamanca, 1965.

Fibonacci, Leonardo, and Baldassarre Boncompagni. *Scritti di Leonardo Pisano*. Rome: Tipografia delle scienze matematiche e fisiche, 1857.

Fitz Nigel, Richard. *Dialogus de Scaccario*. Edited and translated by Charles Johnson. London: Nelson, 1950.

"Fragment d'un cartularie de l'ordre de Saint-Lazare, en Terre Sainte." *Archives de l'Orient Latin*, ii. Edited by Paul Riant. Paris: E. Leroux, 1884.

Fulcher of Chartres. *Fulcheri Carnotensis Historia Hierosolymitana*. Edited by H. Hagenmeyer. Heidelberg: Winter, 1913.

___ *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem, 1097-1127*. Translated by Frances R. Ryan and H.S. Fink. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1969.

Gabrielli, Francesco. *Arab Historians of the Crusades*. Translated from Italian by E.J. Costello. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969.

Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hiersolimitanorum. Edited and translated by Rosalind Hill. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967.

⎯⎯*The Deeds of the Franks and Other Jerusalem-Bound Pilgrims: The Earliest Chronicle of the First Crusades*. Translated by Nirmal Dass. Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2011.

Gilo of Paris. *The Historia Vie Hierosolimitane of Gilo of Paris and a Second, Anonymus Author*. Edited and translated by C. W. Grocock, and J. E. Siberry. Oxford: Clarendon, 1997.

Gesta regis Henrici Secundi Benedicti abbatis: The Chronicle of the Reigns of Henry II and Richard I. Edited by W. Stubbs, *RS*, 49 (I, II) London, 1867.

Les Gestes des Chiprôis. Edited by Gaston Raynaud. Geneva: Jules-Guillaume Fick, 1887.

The Templar of Tyre: The Deeds of the Cypriots. Translated by Paul Crawford. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001.

Un grand maitre des assassins au temps de Saladin : Extrait du journal asiatique. Edited by Stanislas Guyard. Paris: Impr. National, 1877.

Gunther of Pairis. *The Capture of Constantinople: The "Hystoria Constantinopolitana" of Gunther of Pairis*. Translated by Alfred J. Andrea. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997.

Historia de expeditione Friderici Imperatoris. Edited by Friedrich Ansbertus and Josef Dobrovský. Pragae: Apud Cajetanum de Mayregg, 1827.

The crusade of Frederick Barbarossa: the history of the expedition of the Emperor Frederick and related texts. Translated by Graham Loud. London: Routledge, 2016.

Historiae Patriae Monumenta, Chartes II. Edited by Charles Albert. Taurinorum, 1857.

Ibelin, Jean. *John of Ibelin: Le Livre Des Assises*. Edited by Peter W. Edbury. Leiden: Brill, 2003.

Ibn al-Athīr. *Al-Kāmil fi'l-tarīkh*. 12 vols. Edited by C.J. Tornberg. Leiden, 1851-76.

The chronicle of Ibn al-Athīr for the crusading period from al-Kāmil fī'l-ta'rīkh. 3 vols. Translated by D.S. Richards. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006.

Ibn ʿAbd az-Ẓahir. *Baybars I of Egypt*. Edited and translated by Syedah Fatima Sadeque. New York: AMS Press, 1980.

__ *Tašrīf al-aiyām wa-'l-ʿuṣūr fī sīrat al-Malik al-Manṣūr*. Al-Qāhira: Wizārat at-Ṯaqāfa wa-'l-Iršād al-Qaumī, 1961.

Ibn al-ʿAdīm. *Zubdat al-ḥalab min taʾrīḫ Ḥalab*. 3 vols. Edited by Sami Dahhan. Damascus: Inst. Français de Damas, 1968.

Ibn al-Furāt. *Ayyubids, Mamlukes and Crusaders: Selections from the Tārīkh al-duwal wa'l-Mulūk of Ibn al-Furāt in Two Volumes: The text*. 2 Vols. Edited and translated by U. Lyons, M.C. Lyons, and Jonathan Riley-Smith. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971.

Ibn al-Qalanisi. *Dhayl tarikh Dimishq*. Edited by H. F. Amedroz. Leiden, 1908.

__ *The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades*. Translated by H.A.R. Gibb. London: Luzac & Co., 1932.

Ibn Battuta. *Rihlat Ibn Battuta*. Edited by K. Bustani. Beruit: Dar Beruit, 1980.

__ *The Travels of Ibn Battuta,* Vol. II. Translated by H.A.R. Gibb. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958.

Ibn Jubayr. *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr.* Edited by William Wright and M.J. de Goeje. Leiden: Brill, 1907.

__ *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*. Translated by Roland Broadhurst. New Delhi: Goodword Books, 2001.

Ibn Khallikan, *Biographical Dictionary*. Translated by William McGuckin de Slane. Paris: 1842.

Ibn Munqidh, Usama. *Kitāb al-Iʿtibār*. Edited by Philip K. Hitti. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1930.

__ *The Book of Contemplation: Islam and the Crusades*. Translated by Paul Cobb. London: Penguin, 2008.

Ibn Nazif al-Ḥamawī. *Al-taʾrikh al-Mansuri*. Edited by Abū-'l-ʿĪd Dūdū. Damascus, 1982.

Ibn Shaddād, Bahāʾ al-Dīn. *Al-nawādir al-sultāniyya wa-l-maḥāsin al-Yūsufiyya*. Edited by Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl. Cairo, 1964.

__ *The Rare and Excellent History of Saladin*. Translated by D.S. Richards. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001.

'Imād ad-Dīn, *Conquête de la Syrie et de la Palestine par Ṣalâh ed-dîn*. Edited by Carlo Landberg. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1888.

__*Conquête de la Syrie (Al-fatḥ al-qussī fī l-fatḥ al-qudsī)*. Translated by Henri Massé. Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1972.

Ineichen, Gustav. "Il Glossario Arabo-Francese de Messer Guglielmo e Maestro Giacomo." *Att. Classe di scienze morali, lettere ed arti* 130 (1972): 353-407.

Itinera Hierosolymitana crucesignatorum (sace. XII-XIII). Vol. 3. Edited by Sabino De Sandoli. Jerusalem: Franciscan Print. Press, 1983.

Itinera hierosolymitana et descriptiones Terrae Sanctae. Edited by Titus Tobler and Augustus Molinier. Geneva: J.G. Fick, 1877.

Itinera Hiersolymitana: Saeculi IIII-VIII. Edited by Paul Geyer. Leipsig: G. Fraytag, 1898.

Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Ricardi. Edited by William Stubbs. London, 1864.

__ *Chronicle of the Third Crusade: The Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta*. Translated by Helen J. Nicholson. London: Routledge, 2017.

Jacques de Vitry. *Lettres de Jacques de Vitry, 1160/1170-1240*. Edited by R. B. C. Huygens. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960.

Jerusalem Pilgrimage, 1099-1185. Edited and translated by John Wilkinson, Joyce Hill, and W. F. Ryan. London: Hakluyt Society, 1988.

John of Würzburg. *Descriptio Locorum Terrae Sanctae*. Edited by R.B.C. Huygens, *Peregrinationes Tres*, *CCCM* 139. Turnholt: Brepols, 1994.

Joinville, Jean. *Histoire de Saint Louis*. Edited by Natalis de Wailly. Paris: Librarie de Firmin-Didot, 1868.

Joinville and Villehardouin: Chronicles of the Crusades. Translated by Caronline Smith. London: Penguin, 2008.

Kohler, Charles. "Chartes de l'abbaye de Notre-Dame de la vallée de Josaphat en Terre Sainte," *Revue de l'orient Latin*, vii. Paris: Leroux, 1899.

Al-Makhzūmī, Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn 'Uthmān, *Kitāb al-minhāj fī 'ilm kharāj Miṣr*. Edited by Claude Cahen and Yūsuf Rāġib. Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1986.

Martène, E., and Durand, U., eds., *Thesaurus Novus Anecdotorum*, 5 vols. (Paris, 1717).

__*Veterum Scriptorum et Monumentorum amplissima Collectio*, 9 vols. (Paris, 1724-33).

Al-Maqrizi. *Kitāb al-suluk*: *History of the Ayyubids and Mamluks*. Translated by Roland Broadhurst. Boston, 1980.

Metellus von Tegernsee. *Expeditio Ierosolimitana*. Edited by Peter Christian Jacobsen. Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1982.

Michael the Syrian. *The Syriac Chronicle of Michael Rabo (the Great): A Universal History from the Creation*. Translated by Matti Moosa. Teaneck, NJ: Beth Antioch Press, 2014.

___ *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, ed. with French trans. J.B. Chabot, 4 vols. (Paris, 1899-1924).

Morozzo della Rocca, Raimondo, and Antonino Lombardo. *Documenti del commercio veneziano nei secoli XI-XIII*. Vol. 19. Torino: Libraria italiana, 1940.

Mujīr al-Dīn. *al-Uns al-Jalīl*. 2 Vols. Amman, 1973.

Nāṣir-i Khusraw. *Nasir-I Khusraw's Book of Travels = Safarnāmah*. Edited and translated by W. M. Thackston. Costa Mesa, Calif: Mazda Publishers, 2001.

Nerses of Lampron, *Les Institutions de l'Eglise et Explication du Mystère de la Messe*. Edited and translated by E. Dulaurier. *RHC Arm., I*. Paris, 1869-1906, 569-78.

___*Commentary on the Revelation of Saint John*. Translated by R.W. Thompson. Leuven: Peeters, 2007.

Niketas Choniates. *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniatēs*. Translated by Harry J. Magoulias. Detroit, Mich: Wayne State University Press, 1984.

Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of Normandy and England III*. trans. Thomas Forester. London, 1854.

Patrologiae cursus completus: Series latina. Edited by J.P. Migne. Vol. 202. Paris, 1855.

Peter the Deacon. *Itineraria et Alia Geographica*, *CCSL*. Edited by R. Weber. Turnholt: Brepols, 1965.

Petrus Tudebodus. *Historia de hierosolymitano itinere*. Edited by John Hugh Hill and Laurita L. Hill. Paris: Librairie Orientaliste, Paul Geuthner, 1977.

___ *Historia de hierosolymitano itinere: Peter Tudebode*. Translated by John Hugh Hill and Laurita L. Hill. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1974.

Piacenza Pilgrim. *Of the Holy Places Visited*. Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society. Translated by Aubrey Stewart. London: Adelphi, 1887.

Pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the Holy Land, 1187-1291. Edited and translated by Denys Pringle Farnham: Ashgate, 2012.

Al-Qalqashandi, Ahmad ibn. *Kitab subh al-a'shá*. 14 vols. Cairo: al-Maba'ah al-Amryah, 1913.

Ralph of Caen, *The Gesta Tancredi of Ralph of Caen*, trans. and ed. B.S. Bachrach and D.S. Bachrach. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005.

Raymond d'Aguiliers, *Historia Francorum qui ceperint Jerusalem*, *RHC Occ.* III.

    __*Historia Francorum qui ceperint Jerusalem*, trans. J.H. Hill and L.L. Hill Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1968.

Recueil des historiens des croisades: documents armeniens. 2 Vols. Paris: Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, 1869-1906.

Recueil des historiens des croisades: les Assises de Jérusalem. 2 Vols. Paris: Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, 1841-43.

Recueil des historiens des croisades, Historiens occidentaux. 5 Vols. Paris: Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, 1841-95.

Recueil des historiens des croisades, Historiens orientaux. 5 Vols. Paris: Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, 1872-1906.

Regesta chartarum italiae. Vol. 28. Edited by Pietro Guidi and Oreste Parenti. Rome: Loescher, 1940.

Regesta Regni Hiersolymitani (MXCVII-MCCXCI). 2 vols. Edited by Reinhold Röhricht. Oeniponti: Libraria Academica Wagneriana, 1893-1904.

La Règle du Temple. Edited by Henri de Curzon. Paris: Librarie de Renouard, 1886.

Revue de l'Orient Latin. 12 vols. Paris: Leroux, 1899.

Robert the Monk. *Historia Iherosolimitana*. RHC Occ., III. 717-882.

de Rozière, Eugène. *Cartulaire de l'Eglise du Saint-Sépulchre de Jérusalem*. Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1849.

Saewulf. *Peregrinationes Tres*, *CCCM* 139. Edited by R.B.C. Huygens. Turnholt: Brepols, 1994.

Şāliḥ ibn Yaḥyá. *Tārīkh Bayrūt, wa-huwa akhbār al-salaf min dhurriyat Buḥtur ibn 'Alī Amīr al-Gharb bi-Bayrūt*. Edited by Kamal S. Salibi, and Francis Hours. Beruit: Dār al-Mashraf, 1969.

The Seventh Crusade, 1244-1254: Sources and Documents. Edited and translated by Peter Jackson. Aldershot, Asghate, 2009.

Shāfiʿ ibn ʿAlī, *Kitāb Ḥusn al-manāqib al-sarīyah al-muntazaʿah min al-Sīrah al-Ẓāhirīyah*. al-Riyāḍ: ʿAbd al-ʿAziz ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Khuwayṭir, 1976.

Al-Shayzari, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Naṣr. *Kitāb nihāyat al-rutbah fī ṭalab al-ḥisbah*. Edited by al-Bāz ʿArīnī. Beruit: Dār al-Thaqāfah, 1969.

___*The Book of the Islamic Market Inspector : Nihāyat Al-Rutba Fī Ṭalab Al-Hisba*. Translated by Ronald Paul Buckley. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Silvestre de Sacy, Antoine Isaac. *Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque nationale et autres bibliothèques*. Tome IX. Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1827.

Symon Semeonis, *Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis ab Hybernia ad Terram Sanctam*. Edited and translated by Mario Esposito. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1960.

Tabulae Ordinis Theutonici. Edited by Ernest Strehlke. Berlin: Weidman, 1869.

Tafel, G. L. F., and G. M. Thomas. *Urkunden zur älteren Handels- und Staatsgeschichte der Republik Venedig*. 3 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1856.

Thesaurus Novus Anecdotorum. Edited by E. Martène and U. Durand. 5 vols. Paris: Delaulne, 1717.

Thietmar. *Magestri Thietmari Peregrinatio*. Edited by J.C.M. Laurent. Hamburg: Nolte & Köhler, 1857.

Veterum Scriptorum et Monumentorum amplissima Collectio. Edited by E. Martène and U. Durand. 9 volumes. Paris: Montalant, 1724-33.

De Villehardouin, Geoffroi. *Conquête de Constantinople*. Edited and translated by M. Natalis de Wailly Paris: Librarie de Firmin-Didot, 1882.

Walter the Chancellor. *Bella Antiochena*. Edited by H. Hagenmeyer. Innsbruck, 1896.

___*Walter the Chancellor's Antiochene Wars: A Translation and Commentary*. Translated by S.B. Edgington and T.S. Asbridge. Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999.

William of Tyre. *Chronicon.* Edited by R.B.C. Huygens. Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 63/63A. 2 vols. Turnhout, 1986.

___*A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*. Translated by E.A. Babcock and A.C. Krey. 2 vols. New York: Columbia University Press, 1943.

__ *Crusader Syria in the Thirteenth Century: The Rothelin Continuation of the History of William of Tyre with Part of the Eracles or Acre Text*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1999.

__ *La continuation de Guillaume de Tyr (1184-1197)*. Edited by Margaret Ruth Morgan. Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1982.

Secondary Sources

Abulafia, David. "The Role of Trade in Muslim-Christian Contact during the Middle Ages." Reprinted in David Abulafia, *Mediterranean Encounters, Economic, Religious, Political, 1100-1550*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000.

Allen, S. J., and Emilie Amt. *The Crusades: A Reader*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014.

D'Alverny, Marie-Thérèse. "Translations and Translators." In *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, edited by Robert Benson, Giles Constable, and Carol Lanham, 421-62. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991.

Asbridge, Thomas S. *The Creation of the Principality of Antioch, 1098-1130*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000.

__ *The First Crusade: A New History*. New York: Free, 2004.

Aksoy, Şule and Rachel Milstein. "A Collection of Thirteenth-Century Illustrated Hajj Certificates." In *M. Uğur Derman Festschrift : Papers Presented on the Occasion of his Sixty-fifth Birthday*, edited by İrvin Cemil Schick. Istanbul: Sabancı Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2000.

Atiya, Aziz S. *A History of Eastern Christianity*. London: Methuen, 1968.

Attiya, Hussein M. "Knowledge of Arabic in the Crusader States in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries." *Journal of Medieval History* 25, no. 3 (1999): 203-13.

Baedeker, Karl, ed., *Palestine & Syria: Handbook for Travellers*. Leipzig: Karl Baedeker, 1876.

Baldwin, M.W. "Ecclesiastical Developments in the Twelfth-Century Crusaders' State of Tripoli." *The Catholic Historical Review*, 22 (1936): 149-71.

Balog, Paul and Jacques Yvon. "Monnaies à légendes arabes de l'Orient latin." *Revue numismatique* 6 no. 1 (1958).

Bates, M.L. and D.M. Metcalf. "Crusader Coinage with Arabic Inscriptions." In *The Impact of the Crusades on Europe*, edited by H.W. Hazard and N.P. Zacour. Madison, Wis: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989.

Battaglia, Salvatore. *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana*. Torino: Unione tipografico-editrice Torinese, 1961.

Bartlett, Robert. *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change, 950-1350*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.

Bassnett, Susan. "The Translation Turn in Cultural Studies." In *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation*, edited by S. Bassnett and A. Lefevere. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1998.

Bassnett, Susan and André Lefevere. "Where are we in Translation Studies?" In *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation*, edited by Susuan Bassnett and André Lefevere. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1998.

Beddie, James S. "Notices of Books in the East in the Period of the Crusades." *Speculum* 8, no. 2 (1933): 240-42.

Blake, E.O., and C. Morris. "A Hermit Goes to War: Peter and the Origins of the First Crusade." *Studies in Church History* 22 (1985): 79-107.

Blancard, Louis. *Le Besant d'or Sarrazinas pendant les croisades*. Marseille: impr. de Barlatier-Feissat père et fils, 1880.

Brock, Sebastian P. "Syriac Manuscripts Copied on the Black Mountain, near Antioch." In *Lingua restituta orientalis: Festgabe für Julius Assfalg*, edited by Regine Schulz and Manfred Görg, 59-67. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1990.

Bruce, Travis. "Translating the Divide: Dragomans as Cultural Mediators in the Thirteenth-Century Mediterranean." (Forthcoming).

Buckley, R.P. "The Muhtasib." *Arabica* 39 (1992): 75-117.

Bull, Marcus. "The Relationship Between the *Gesta Francorum* and Peter Tudebode's *Historia de Hierosolymitano Itinere*: The Evidence of a Hitherto Unexamined Manuscript (St. Catherine's College, Cambridge, 3), *Crusades* 11 (2012): 1-17.

Buresi, P. "Traduttore Traditore: À propos d'une correspondence entre l'empire Almohade et la cité de Pise (début XIIIe siècle)." *Oriente Moderno* 88 no. 2 (2008): 297-309.

Burnett, Charles. "Antioch as a Link between Arabic and Latin Culture in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries." In *Occident et Proche-Orient: Contacts scientifiques au temps des Croisades*, edited by I. Draelants, A. Tihon, et al, 1-78. Turnhout: Brepols, 2000.

__"Arabic into Latin: the reception of Arabic philosophy into Western Europe." In *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, edited by P. Adamson and R. Taylor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

__"Stephen, the Disciple of Philosophy, and the Exchange of Medical Learning in Antioch." *Crusades* 5 (2006): 113-129.

__"The Coherence of the Arabic-Latin Translation Program in Toledo in the Twelfth Century." Reprinted in C. Burnett, *Arabic into Latin in the Middle Ages: The Translators and Their Intellectual and Social Context*. Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate/Variorum, 2009.

__"Adelard of Bath and the Arabs." Reprinted in C. Burnett, *Arabic into Latin in the Middle Ages: The Translators and Their Intellectual and Social Context*. Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate/Variorum, 2009.

__"Master Theodore: Frederick II's Philosopher." Reprinted in C. Burnett, *Arabic into Latin in the Middle Ages: The Translators and Their Intellectual and Social Context*. Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate/Variorum, 2009.

"Translation and Transmission of Greek and Islamic Science to Latin Christendom." In *The Cambridge History of Science, Vol. 2*, edited by David Charles Lindberg and Michael H. Shank. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

__"Simon of Genoa's Use of the Brevarium of Stephen the Disciple of Philosophy." In *Simon of Genoa's Medical Lexicon*, edited by Barbara Zipser. Berlin: Sciendo Migration, 2013.

__"The Synonyma Literature in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries." In *Globalization of Knowledge in the Post-Antique Mediterranean, 700-1500*, edited by Sonja Brentjes and Jürgen Renn. London: Routledge, 2016.

Burns, Robert Ignatius. *Islam Under the Crusaders, Colonial Survival in the Thirteenth-Century Kingdom of Valencia*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1973.

Burns, Robert Ignatius, Paul Edward Chevedden, and Mikel de Epalza. *Negotiating Cultures: Bilingual Surrender Treaties in Muslim-Crusader Spain Under James the Conqueror*. Leiden: Brill, 1999.

Cahen, Claude, *La Syrie du nord à l'époque des croisades*. Paris: Geuthner, 1940.

__ "Douanes et commerce dans les ports méditerranéens de l'Égypte médiévale d'après le Minhādj d'al-Makhzūmī," *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient* 7, no. 3 (1964): 217-314.

__"Un document concernant les Melkites et les Latins d'Antioche au temps des Croisades." *Revue Des Études Byzantines* 29 (1971): 285-92.

__*Orient et Occident au temps des Croisades*. Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1983.

__ *The Formation of Turkey*. Harlow: Longman, 2001.

Du Cange, Charles du Fresne and Leopold Favre. *Glossarium mediæ et infimæ latinitatis*. Vol. 3. Niort : L. Favre, 1883-1887.

Catlos, Brian. "Why the Mediterranean?" In *Can We Talk Mediterranean?: Conversations on an Emerging Field in Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, edited by Brian Catlos and Sharon Kinoshita, 1-17. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.

Catlos, Brian and Sharon Kinoshita, eds. *Can We Talk Mediterranean?: Conversations on an Emerging Field in Medieval and Early Modern Studies*. Cham: Palgrave MacMillan, 2017.

Ciggaar, Krijnie N. *Western Travellers to Constantinople: The West and Byzantium, 962-1204*. Leiden: Brill, 1996.

__"Manuscripts as Intermediaries: The Crusader States and Literary Cross-Fertilization." In *East and West in the Crusader States: Context, Contacts, and Confrontations* I, edited by K.N. Ciggaar and H. Teule. Leuven: Peeters, 1996.

Clermont-Ganneau, Charles. *Archaeological Researches in Palestine*. Vol. 1. Translated by Aubrey Stewart. London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1899.

Cochrane, Louise, *Adelard of Bath: The First English Scientist*. London: British Museum Press, 1994.

Constable, Olivia Remy. "*Funduq, Fondaco,* and *Khan*, in the Wake of Christian Commerce and Crusade." In *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World*, edited by A.E. Laiou and R.P. Mottahedeh. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2001.

__*Housing the Stranger in the Mediterranean World: Lodging, Trade, and Travel in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Curtin, Philip D. *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Daftary, Farhad. *The Assassin Legends: Myths of the Isma'ilis*. London: I.B. Tauris, 1994.

Dajani-Shakeel, Hadia. "Diplomatic Relations Between Muslim and Frankish Rulers, 1097-1153 A.D." In Crusaders and Muslims in Twelfth-Century Syria. Edited by Maya Shatzmiller. Leiden: Brill, 1993.

Daniel, Norman. *The Arabs and Medieval Europe*. London: Longman, 1979.

Dobie, Alisdair. *Accounting at Durham Cathedral Priory: Management and Control of a Major Ecclesiastical Corporation, 1083-1539*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

Dondaine, A., "Hugues Éthérien et Léon Toscan." *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyene Age*, 27 (1952): 67-134.

___"Hugues Éthérien et le concile de Constantinople de 1166." *Historiches Jahrbuch* 77 (1958): 473-83.

Edgington, Susan B. "Antioch: Medieval City of Culture." In *East and West in the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean*, edited by K. Ciggaar and M. Metcalf, 247-59. Leuven: Peeters, 2006.

___"Espionage and Military Intelligence During the First Crusade, 1095-99." In *Crusading Warfare in the Middle Ages: Realities and Representations. Essays in Honour of John France*, edited by S. John and N. Morton. Farnham: Ashgate, 2014.

Ehrenkreutz, Andrew S. "Arabic Dinars Struck By the Crusaders: A Case of Ignorance or of Economic Subversion." *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 7, no. 2 (1964): 167-82.

Elad, Amikam. *Medieval Jerusalem and Islamic Worship: Holy Places, Ceremonies, and Pilgrimage*. Leiden: Brill, 1995.

Ellenblum, Ronnie. *Frankish Rural Settlement in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

___*Crusader Castles and Modern Histories*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Flood, Finbarr B. *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval "Hindu-Muslim" Encounter*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009.

Flori, Jean. *Pierre l'ermite et la première croisade*. Paris: Fayard, 1999.

France, John. *Victory in the East: A Military History of the First Crusade*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

___ *Western Warfare in the Age of the Crusades, 1000-1300*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1999.

Friedman, Yvonne. *Encounter between Enemies: Captivity and Ransom in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*. Leiden: Brill, 2002.

__"Gestures of Conciliation: Peacemaking Endeavors in the Latin East." In *In Laudem Hierosolymitani: Studies in Crusades and Medieval Culture in Honour of Benjamin Z. Kedar*, edited by Iris Shagrir, Ronnie Ellenblum, and Jonathan Riley-Smith, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007.

__"Peacemaking: Perceptions and Practices in the Medieval Latin East." In *The Crusades and the Near East: Cultural Histories*, edited by Conor Kostick. Abingdon: Routledge, 2011.

Gilbert, Claire. "The Politics of Language in the Western Mediterranean, c. 1492-1669: Multilingual Institutions and the Status of Arabic in Early Modern Spain." PhD diss., UCLA, 2014.

__"Transmission, Translation, Legitimacy and Control: The Activities of a Multilingual Scribe in *Morisco* Granada." In *Multilingual and Multigraphic Manuscripts and Documents of East and West*, edited by Giuseppe Mandalà and Inmaculada Pérez Marin, 339-376. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2016.

Goldberg, Jessica. "Choosing and Enforcing Business Relationships in the Eleventh-Century Mediterranean: Reassessing the 'Maghribī Traders.'" *Past and Present*, no. 216 (2012): 3-40.

Goldman, Brendan. "Neither *Servi* nor *Dhimmī*: Jews and the State in the Latin Levant, 1098-1187," PhD diss., Johns Hopkins University, 2018.

Greif, Avner. "Reputation and Coalitions in Medieval Trade: Evidence on the Maghribi Traders." *The Journal of Economic History* 49, no. 4 (1989): 857-82.

Grimm, R. E. "The Autobiography of Leondardo Pisano," *Fibonacci Quarterly* 11, no. 1 (Febuary 1973).

Grousset, Réné. *Histoire des croisades et du royaume franc du Jérusalem*. 3 vols. Paris: Librarie Plon, 1934-36.

Halevi, Leor. "Christian Impurity vs. Economic Necessity: A Fifteenth-Century Fatwa on European Paper." *Speculum* 83 (2008): 917-945.

"Religion and Cross-Cultural Trade: A Framework for Interdisciplinary Inquiry." In *Religion and Trade: Cross-Cultural Exchanges in World History, 1000-1900*, edited by Francesca Trivellato, Leor Halevi, and Cátia Antunes. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Hamilton, Bernard. *The Latin Church in the Crusader States: The Secular Church*. London: Variorum, 1980.

__"Aimery of Limoges, Patriarch of Antioch: Ecumenist, Scholar, and Patron of Hermits." In *The Joy of Learning and the Love of God: Studies in Honor of Jean Leclercq*, edited by E.R. Elder, 270-85. Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publishing, 1995.

__"The Growth of the Latin Church of Antioch and the Recruitment of its Clergy." In *East and West in the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean*, edited by K. Ciggaar and M. Metcalf, 171-84. Leuven: Peeters, 2006.

Haskins, Charles Homer. *Studies in the History of Mediaeval Science*. 2nd Edition. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1960.

Hasse, D.N. "Mosul and Frederick II Hohenstaufen." In *Occident et Proche-Orient: Contacts scientifiques au temps des Croisades*, edited by I. Draelants, A. Tihon, et al. Turnhout: Brepols, 2000.

Havemann, Axel. "The Vizier and the Rais in Saljuq Syria: The Struggle for Urban Self-Representation." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 21, no. 2 (1989): 233-42.

Havemann, A., C.E. Boswroth, and S. Soucek. "Ra'īs." In *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, edited by P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Leiden: Brill, 2006.

Hiestand, Rudolf. "Un centre intellectuel en Syrie du Nord? Notes sur la personnalité d'Aimery d'Antioche, Albert de Tarse et *Rorgo Fretellus*," *Le Moyen Age* 100 (1994): 7-36.

Hillenbrand, Carole, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*. New York: Routledge, 2000.

Hirschler, Konrad. *Medieval Damascus: Plurality and Diversity in an Arabic Library : the Ashrafīya Library Catalogue*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016.

Hodgson, Natasha. "Conflict and Cohabitation: Marriage and diplomacy between Latins and Cilician Armenians, c. 1097-1253." In *The Crusades and the Near East: Cultural Histories*, edited by Conor Kostick. Abingdon: Routledge, 2011.

Holt, P. M. *Early Mamluk Diplomacy, 1260-1290: Treaties of Baybars and Qalāwūn with Christian Rulers*. Leiden: Brill, 1995.

Horden, Peregrine. "The Maritime, the Ecological, the Cultural—and the Fig Leaf: Prospects for Medieval Mediterranean Studies." In *Can We Talk Mediterranean?: Conversations on an Emerging Field in Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, edited by Brian Catlos and Sharon Kinoshita, 65-79. Cham: Palgrave MacMillan, 2017.

Horden, Peregrine and Nicholas Purcell. *The Corrupting Sea*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000.

Houben, Hubert. *Roger II of Sicily: A Ruler between East and West*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Hunt, R.W. "Stephen of Antioch." *Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 6 (1950).

Irwin, Robert. "The Supply of Money and the Direction of Trade." In *Coinage in the Latin East*, edited by P. W. Edbury and D. M. Metcalf. Oxford: B.A.R., 1980.

Jacoby, David. "Les Italiens en Egypte aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles." In *Coloniser au Moyen âge*, edited by M. Balard and A. Ducellier. Paris: A. Colin, 1995.

Jamil, Nadia and Jeremy Johns. "An Original Arabic Document from Crusader Antioch (1213 AD)." In *Texts, Documents, and Artefacts: Islamic Studies in Honour of D.S. Richards*, edited by Chase F. Robinson. Leiden: Brill, 2003.

Johns, Jeremy. "Arabic Inscriptions in the Cappella Palatina: Performativity, Audience, Legibility and Illegibility." In *Viewing Inscriptions in the Late Antique and Medieval World*, edited by A. Eastmond. New York, NY: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2015.

Jotischky, Andrew. *The Perfection of Solitude: Hermits and Monks in the Crusader States*. University Park, Pennsylania State University Press 1995.

Karabacek, Joseph. "Arabische Beiträge zur genuesischen Geschichte." *Weiner Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes,* I/1. Vienna, 1887.

Kedar, Benjamin Z. "Gerard of Nazareth: A Neglected Twelfth-Century Writer in the Latin East. A Contribution to the Intellectual and Monastic History of the Crusader States, "*Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 37 (1983): 55-77.

__*Crusade and Mission: European Approaches Toward the Muslims*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.

__ "The Subjected Muslims of the Frankish Levant." In *Muslims Under Latin Rule, 1100-1300*, edited by James M. Powell. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990.

__ *The Franks in the Levant, 11ᵗʰ to 14ᵗʰ centuries*. Aldershot: Ashgagte, 1993.

__"The Intercultural Career of Theodore of Antioch" (with Etan Kohlberg), *Mediterranean Historical Review* 10 (1995): 164-76.

__"Sobre la génesis de la Fazienda de Ultra Mar." *Anales de Historia Antigua y Medieval*, 28 (1995), reprntd in B. Kedar, *Franks, Muslims, and Oriental Christians in the Latin Levant: Studies in Frontier Acculturation*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005.

__ "Latins and Oriental Christians in the Frankish Levant." Reprinted in B. Kedar, *Franks, Muslims, and Oriental Christians in the Latin Levant: Studies in Frontier Acculturation*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006.

Köhler, Michael. *Alliances and Treaties between Frankish and Muslim Rulers in the Middle East: Cross-Cultural Diplomacy in the Period of the Crusades*. Translated by P. M. Holt and Konrad Hirschler. Leiden: Brill, 2013.

Kool, Robert. "The Circulation and Use of Coins in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem 1099-1291 CE." PhD Diss., Jerusalem: Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2013.

La Monte, John. *Feudal Monarchy in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, 1100 to 1291*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1932.

Laiou, A.E., "The Many Faces of Medieval Colonialism." In *Native Traditions in the Post Conquest World*, edited by E.H. Boone and T. Cummins, 13-30. Dumbarton Oaks: Washington, D.C., 1998.

Lavoix, Henri. *Monnaies à légendes arabes frappées en Syrie par les croisés*. Paris: Joseph Baer, 1877.

Le Strange, Guy. *Palestine Under the Muslims*. New York: Houghton, 1890.

Lewis, Kevin J. "Medieval Diglossia: The Diversity of the Latin Christian Encounter with Written and Spoken Arabic in the 'Crusader' County of Tripoli, with a Hitherto Unpublished Arabic Note from the Principality of Antioch (MS, AOM 3, Valletta: National Library of Malta, no. 51v)." *Al-Masaq: Journal of the Medieval Mediterranean* 27, no. 2 (2015): 119-52.

MacEvitt, Christopher. *The Crusades and the Christian World of the East*: *Rough Tolerance*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008.

Mallette, Karla. "Translating Sicily." *Medieval Encounters* 9, no. 1, (2003): 140-163.

Mavroudi, Maria. "Translations from Greek into Latin and Arabic during the Middle Ages: Searching for the Classical Tradition." *Speculum* 90, no. 1 (2015): 28-59.

Mayer, Hans E. *The Crusades*. Translated by John Gillingham. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, London, 1988.

Minervini, Laura. "Les contacts entre indigènes et croisés dan l'Orient latin: le röle de drogmans." In *Romania Arabica: Festschrift für Reinhold Kontzi zum 70*, edited by Jens Ludtke, 57-62. Tubingen: G. Narr, 1996.

Morreale, Laura K., and Nicholas Paul, eds. *The French of Outremer: Communities and Communications in the Crusading Mediterranean*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2018.

Murray, Alan V. "William of Tyre and the Origins of the Turks: of the Gesta orientalium principum." In *Dei gesta per Francos: etudes sur les croisades dédiées a Jean Richard*, edited by Michel Balard, Benjamin Z. Kedar, Jonathan Riley-Smith, and Jean Richard. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001.

___"National Identity, Language and Conflict in the Crusades to the Holy Land, 1096-1192." In *The Crusades and the Near East: Cultural Histories*, edited by Conor Kostick. Abingdon: Routledge, 2011.

Murrell, William S. "Aimery's Antioch: Reevaluating Intellectual Activity and Exchange in Frankish Northern Syria in the Twelfth and Early Thirteenth Centuries." Masters Thesis, University of Oxford, 2011.

Nader, Marwan. *Burgesses and Burgess Law in the Latin Kingdoms of Jerusalem and Cyprus (1099-1325)*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006.

Necipoğlu, Gulru. "The Dome of the Rock as Palimpsest: 'Abd al-Malik's Grand Narrative and Sultan Süleyman's Glosses." *Muqarnas* 25, no. 1 (2008): 17-105.

Nicolle, D. *Crusader Warfare*. London: Hambledon Continuum, 2007.

Niskanen, Samu. "The origins of the *Gesta Francorum* and two related texts: their textual and literary character." *Sacris Erudiri: A Journal of Late Antique and Medieval Christianity* 51 (2012): 287-316.

Owen, Charles A., and C. C. Torrey. "Scandal in the Egyptian Treasury: A Portion of the Lumaʿ Al-Qawānīn of ʿUthaman Ibn Ibrāhīm Al-Nābulusī: Introductory Statement." *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 14, no. 2 (1955) 70-80.

Peacock, Andrew C. S. *The Great Seljuk Empire*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015.

Peters, F.E. *Jerusalem: The Holy City in the Eyes of Chroniclers, Visitors, Pilgrims, and Prophets from the Days of Abraham to the Beginnings of Modern Times*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985.

Polanyi, Karl. "Ports of Trade in Early Societies." *The Journal of Economic History* 23 no. 1 (1963): 30-45.

Prawer, Joshua. *Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem: European Colonialism in the Middle Ages*. Weidenfeld and Nicolson: London, 1972.

___*Crusader Institutions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980.

___*The History of the Jews in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Pringle, Denys. *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem: A Corpus. Volume 3*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Pym, Anthony. *Method in Translation History*. Manchester: St. Jerome, 1998.

Rey, Emmanuel G. *Les colonies franques de Syrie aux XIIme et XIIIme siècles*. Paris: Picard, 1883.

Richard, Jean. *Le royaume latin de Jerusalem*. Paris, 1953.

___ "Église latine et églises orientales dans les états des croisés: la destinée d'un prieuré de Josaphat." In *Mélanges offerts à Jean Dauvillier*. Toulouse, 1979.

___ "Les Turcopoles au service des royaumes de Jérusalem et de Chypre: Musulmans convertis ou Chrétiens orientaux?" *Revue des études islamiques* 54 (1986): 259-70.

Riley-Smith, Jonathan. *The Knights of St. John in Jerusalem and Cyprus*. London: St. Martin's Press, 1967.

___ "Some Lesser Officials in Latin Syria," *The English Historical Review* 87, (1972): 1-26.

___ *The Feudal Nobility and the Kingdom of Jerusalem, 1174-1277*. Hamden: Archon Books, 1973.

___ "The survival in Latin Palestine of Muslim administration." In *Eastern Mediterranean Lands in the Period of the Crusades,* edited by P.M. Holt, 9-23. Warminster: Aris & Phillips LTD, 1977.

Rothman, Natalie. *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012.

___ "Interpreting Dragomans: Boundaries and Crossing in the Early Modern Mediterranean," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51, no. 4, (2009): 771-800.

Rubenstein, Jay. *Armies of Heaven: The First Crusade and the Quest for Apocalypse*. New York: Basic Books, 2011.

Santoyo, Julio-César. "Blank Spaces in the History of Translation." In *Charting the Future of Translation History*, edited by Georges L. Bastin and Paul F. Bandia. Ottawa [Ont.]: University of Ottawa Press, 2006.

Segal, J.B., 'Ibnal-ʿIbrī (Bar Hebraeus, Syriac Bar ʿEbhrāyā) Gerīghōr (Yūḥannān) Abu 'l-Faradj', in P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, et al. (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Islam, Second Edition* (Brill, 2011).

Schein, Sylvia. "Between Mount Moriah and the Holy Sepulchre: Changing Traditions of the Temple Mount in the Central Middle Ages." *Traditio* 40 (1984): 175-95.

Schlumberger, Gustave. *Numismatique de l'Orient Latin*. Paris: Leroux, 1878.

Shukurov, R. "Harem Christianity: The Byzantine Identity of Seljuk Princes." In *The Seljuks of Anatolia Court and Society in the Medieval Middle East*. Edited by A. C. S. Peacock and Sara Nur Yildiz. London: I.B. Tauris, 2013.

Singer, Charles. "A Legend of Salerno: How Constantine the African Brought the Art of Medicine to the Christians." *The Johns Hopkins Hospital Bulletin* 28, no. 311 (1917): 64-69.

Sivan, Emmanuel. "Le Caractère Sacré De Jérusalem Dans L'Islam Aux XIIe-XIIIe Siècles." *Studia Islamica*, no. 27 (1967): 149-82.

Smail, R.C., *Crusading Warfare, 1097-1193*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956.

Talbi, M. "Les courtiers en vêtements en Ifriqiya au IXe-Xe Siècle, d'après les Masā'il al-samāsira d'al-Ibyānī." *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 5, no. 2 (1962): 160-194.

Thomson, Robert W. "Nersēs of Lambron." In *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, edited by Alexander P. Kazhdan. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Tuley, K.A. "A Century of Communication and Acclimatization: Interpreters and Intermediaries in the Kingdom of Jerusalem." In *East Meets West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times Transcultural Experiences in the Premodern World*, edited by Albrecht Classen, 311-339. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013.

Tyan, Emile. *Histoire de l'organisation judicaire en pays d'Islam*. 2 Vols. Paris: Librairie du Recueil Sirey, 1938.

Tyerman, Christopher J.*God's War: A New History of the Crusades*. Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press, 2008.

Valérian, Dominique. "Les marchands latins dans les ports musulmans méditerranéens : une minorité confinée dans des espaces communautaires?" *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée* [En ligne] 107-110 (2005): 437-58.

___ "Marchands latins et sociétés portuaires dan le Maghreb médiéval: Le rôle central des intermédiares." In *"Arriver" en Ville: Les Migrants en Milieu Urbain au Moyen Âge*,

edited by Cédric Quertier, Roxane Chilà, and Nicolas Pluchot, 213-23. Paris: Sorbonne, 2013.

Van Cleve, Thomas C. "The Crusade of Frederick II." In *A History of the Crusades, Volume 2: The Later Crusades, 1189-1311*, edited by Harry W. Hazard, Kenneth Meyer Setton, and Robert Lee Wolff. London, 1969.

Van den Ven, Paul. *La Vie de Saint Symeon Stylite le Jeune, 521-592*, Vol. 1. Bruxelles, Société des Bollandistes, 1962.

Van Houtte, J.A. "Les courtiers au Moyen Age." *Revue historique de droit francais et etranger* (1936): 105-41.

Wallace-Hadrill, D.S., *Christian Antioch: A Study of Early Christian Thought in the East*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

Weitenberg, J.J.S., "The Armenian Monasteries in the Black Mountain." In *East and West in the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean*, edited by K. Ciggaar and M. Metcalf. Leuven: Peeters, 2006.

Weltecke, D., 'On the Syriac Orthodox in the Principality of Antioch during the Crusader Period' in K. Ciggaar and M. Metcalf (eds.), *East and West in the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean* (Leuven, 2006), pp. 95-124.

Wheeler, Brannon. *Mecca and Eden: Ritual, Relics, and Territory in Islam*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006.

Williams, Steven J. "Philip of Tripoli's Translation of the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Secretum secretorum*: Viewed Within the Context of Intellectual Activity in the Crusader Levant." In *Occident et Proche-Orient: Contacts scientifiques au temps des Croisades*, edited by I. Draelants, A. Tihon, et al, 79-94. Turnhout: Brepols, 2000.

Yewdale, Ralph Bailey. *Bohemond I, Prince of Antioch*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1924.