medieval worlds
comparative & interdisciplinary studies
No. 23, 2025

MULTILINGUALISM IN PREMODERN SOCIETIES

MOVING JOBS II

medieval worlds
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comparative & interdisciplinary studies
Volume 23, 2025

Multilingualism in Premodern Societies

Urban Administrative Spaces

Guest Editor:
Katalin Szende

Moving Jobs

Occupational Identity and Motility in the Middle Ages, II

Guest Editors:
Annamaria Pazienza and Irene Bavuso

ÖAW AUSTRIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

medieval worlds
comparative & interdisciplinary studies

ISSN 2412-3196 Online Edition
Media Owner: Institute for Medieval Research

Cover design, layout: Daniela Seiler
Proofreading: Nicola Wood
Cover image: HR-DAZD-26 Providurstvo Omi5, k. 1, sv. 1-4,fol. 12v © Zadar State Archives, whom we thank for their kind permission to use this image.

Austrian Academy of Sciences Press
Dr. Ignaz Seipel Platz 2, 1010 Vienna, Austria
Tel. +43-1-515 81/DW 3402-3406
Fax +43-1-515 81/DW 3400
hw.oeaw.ac.at, verlag.oeaw.ac.at

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eISSN-Nr. 2412-3196
DOI 10.1553/medievalworlds_no23_2025s1

Editorial

Ingrid Hartl and Walter Pohl

Two riveting studies on pragmatic literacy open our volume 23 of Medieval Worlds. Their careful and detailed research traces the encounter of the ruled with the ruler far from imperial palaces and much closer to everyday life on the basis of chancery documents. These documents record not only the formalised legal encounter for which they were produced but also the multilingual environment they were produced in. Making use of this, both authors, Lena Sadovski and Marijana Mišević, skilfully draw out vivid evidence of the interplay between the languages of Venetian Dalmatia and the Republic of Ragusa respectively – Latin, Italian, Slavic, Croatian, Turkish – between the 14th and the 16th centuries. This fulminant opening on *Urban Administrative Spaces* marks the start of a new series on *Multilingualism in Premodern Society* which will be continued in the following Medieval Worlds volumes.

Moving Jobs: Occupational Identity and Motility in the Middle Ages now resumes its investigations of the movement of people in connection with their work in its second instalment.[1] Guest editors Annamaria Pazienza and Irene Bavuso present case studies that range from one specific individual to a particular professional group and to an entire village community: Joe Glynias traces the movements of the renowned 11th-century physician and teacher Ibn Buṭlān between the Islamic and Christian worlds and shows how he employed his vast knowledge Greek and Arabic traditions to gain influential positions and high recognition throughout his career. Irene Bavuso revisits the model of itinerant artisans in the early Middle Ages and suggests a more complex model of mobility and sedentism based on archaeological and textual evidence. Robert Portass relies primarily on charters from 10th-century Spain to show how the examination of movement within a local environment may reflect how the majority of the early medieval population experienced mobility.

An additional contribution to our summer volume *The Mongols' Bagdhad. Knowledge Transmission through Manuscript Cultures before and after the Conquest*[2] presents a transcription and partial translation of a 13th-century poem on papermaking.

We stay in the 13th-century for a truly sensational find, which concludes our winter volume. Adrian C. Pirtea offers a preliminary examination of a so far overlooked Christian world chronicle in Arabic. In a case study of the recorded events of the year 633-634 CE he gives first insights into what might be expected once this exciting source can be fully explored.

1 For the first collections of articles see Medieval Worlds volume 20 (www.doi.org/10.1553/medievalworlds_no20_2024).

2 Medieval Worlds volume 22 (www.doi.org/10.1553/medievalworlds_no22_2025).

eISSN-Nr. 2412-3196
DOI 10.1553/medievalworlds_no23_2025s3

Multilingualism in Eurasian Premodern Societies – Introductory Remarks

Pavlína Rychterová and Katalin Szende*

This introductory essay outlines the aims, scope, and initial results of the work package *Multilingualism in Eurasian Premodern Societies: Social Hierarchies and Spaces*, part of the Cluster of Excellence »Eurasian Transformations«. The work package investigates multilingualism as a pervasive feature of premodern Eurasian societies and explores how language use intersected with social diversity, identity formation, and spatial organisation. By combining social, spatial, and linguistic approaches, the initiative seeks to illuminate the functional and ideological dimensions of historical multilingualism and to situate it within broader patterns of communication, mobility, and power. Since the 1990s, scholarship has recognised multilingualism not as an exception but as a structural norm of premodern polities. Building on this foundation, the work package examines multilingual practices in key urban settings – administrative, religious, and commercial – where social hierarchies were negotiated and reproduced. A series of workshops and a major conference held in Vienna between 2025 and 2026 addressed administrative multilingualism, elite linguistic repertoires, religious language spaces, and the linguistic dynamics of trade. These events highlighted how languages served as instruments of governance, social distinction, and economic interaction, and how multilingual practices were embedded in the spatial logic of cities and empires. The contributions by Marijana Mišević and Lena Sadovski exemplify the project's approach. Mišević analyses Ottoman–Ragusan multilingual diplomatic communication and the shifting role of Slavic expertise in early Ottoman administration, while Sadovski investigates the pragmatic coexistence of Latin, Venetian, and Slavic in late medieval Spalato, emphasising the social distribution of language skills and the significance of vernacular communication. Together, these studies open up new comparative perspectives on multilingualism in premodern Eurasia and lay the groundwork for further interdisciplinary research within the Cluster of Excellence.

Keywords: Historical multilingualism, urban space, eliteness, identity

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This article introduces the thematic section *Multilingualism in Premodern Societies. Urban Administrative Spaces*. To read all related articles, please access https://doi.org/10.1553/medievalworlds_no23_2025.

eISSN-Nr. 2412-3196
DOI 10.1553/medievalworlds_no23_2025s4

The essays by Lena Sadovski and Marijana Mišević in the cluster *Multilingualism in Eurasian Premodern Societies: Social Hierarchies and Spaces* are the first in a series of contributions that emerged from discussions within the work package of the same name in the Cluster of Excellence »Eurasian Transformations« (WP2024-1-18, principal investigators: Bernhard Palme, Pavlína Rychterová, Katalin Szende). One of the central research topics of the Cluster of Excellence, which concerns social diversity as well as the formations and transformations of social identities, is examined in relation to the diversity of languages in the societies of the Eurasian region. By integrating social, spatial, and linguistic approaches, the work package *Multilingualism in Eurasian Premodern Societies* aims to enhance the coherence of the focus of the Cluster of Excellence on Communication and Mobility, with a spatial and social and language-centred setup. It was designed as a framework for a series of interconnected collaborative research events that focus on historical multilingualism in both its functional and ideological dimensions.

I

Linked to the experience of increasing linguistic diversity in contemporary society, multilingualism became the focus of historical disciplines around three decades ago. The search for answers to pressing questions, such as how a society should address multilingualism in its discourses of self-reflection and self-description, how multilingualism can be related to the problem of social cohesion, how its connection to concepts and experiences of individual and collective identity can be understood, how it should be handled in social practice, and much more, how it is reflected in historical research.

Since the 1990s, when the academic community's attention was drawn to multilingualism as a ubiquitous and important social phenomenon, awareness of the diversity and sheer volume of source material has continued to grow. A very solid research base, achieved over the last two decades, allows us to view multilingualism in premodern societies generally not as an exception but as an omnipresent normality, which is merely reflected differently in the sources, influenced by secular and religious (church) policies. The more analyses of multilingual sources are conducted, the clearer and more concrete their potential for researching different cultural dynamics in the societies under focus becomes.[1]

1 Numerous works have been published on multilingualism in premodern societies over the last three decades, and interest has grown exponentially in recent years. If we consider only collaborative volumes published in the academic lingua franca, English, we see that the diversity of examples makes even a simple description of the source basis of multilingualism an enormous challenge. See, for example: Braunmüller and Ferraresi (eds.), *Aspects of Multilingualism in European Language History*; Kleinhenz and Busby (eds.), *Medieval Multilingualism: The Francophone World and its Neighbours*; Classen (ed.), *Multilingualism in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age. Communication and Miscommunication in the Premodern World*; Mandalà and Pérez Martín (eds.), *Multilingual and Multigraphic Documents and Manuscripts of East and West*; Pezzella and Scappaticcio (eds.), *Latin and Coptic. Languages, Literatures, cultures in Contact*; Silleras Fernández (ed.), *Iberian Babel. Translation and Multilingualism in the Medieval and the Early Modern Mediterranean*; Sövegjártó and Vér (eds), *Exploring Multilingualism and Multiscriptism in written Artefacts*; Borrut, Ceballos and Vacca (eds.), *Navigating Language in the Early Islamic World: Multilingualism and language Change in the First Centuries of Islam*; Minets and Nowakowski (eds.), *Shaping Letters, Shaping Communities. Multilingualism and Linguistic Practice in the Late Antique Near East and Egypt*.

The research in the work package *Multilingualism in Eurasian Premodern Societies* basically runs along two parallel tracks. On the one hand, we are interested in the relationship between multilingualism and space, especially urban space. In the Eurasian past, political, religious, and economic centres were linked to urban communities that exerted a gravitational pull on their immediate and wider surroundings. Urban space was becoming increasingly dominant in the dynamically developing societies of medieval and early modern Eurasia. Multilingualism was closely linked to the constant negotiation of social identities, which often underwent accelerated transformations as urban centres grew. The majority of the multilingual sources that have been handed down to us are connected with them, and it is therefore important to increase sensitivity to the specifics of the urban setting.

Languages are instrumentalised by the ruling social groups and thus hierarchised. The multilingualism of individuals and groups represents social capital today, as it did in the past; as such, it can now, and could then, help individual and collective speakers gain various privileges or, conversely, lead to disadvantage and discrimination. The strategies that these individuals and groups used to either acquire privileges and/or avoid discrimination are examined within the work package, as are the various types of interaction that these individuals and groups engaged in, in which social hierarchies were constantly being negotiated. The relationship between language and power in relation to social space as well as social production and reproduction of elites and elite languages with regard to their various social functions is always considered in the background of the individual studies and the discussion in the work package. The structure of the work package allows the topic to be approached from different angles: the discussion was opened in January of this year with a workshop on multilingualism in administrative sources from urban societies in premodern Eurasia at the CEU in Vienna (»Administrative Spaces and Administrative Languages«). The conference on elite multilingualism in a given time and space was held in March 2025 at the AAS in Vienna (»Elite Multilingualism in Premodern Societies and the Production of Power«), followed by a workshop on multilingualism in urban religious spaces in June 2025 at the CEU in Vienna (»Urban Religious Spaces and Their Languages«). The first phase of the joint work was concluded with a workshop on multilingualism in pre-modern urban commercial spaces in November 2025 at the CEU in Vienna (»Urban Commercial Spaces and their Languages«).

The workshops built on the spatial turn in historiography and examined key situations in which language use in urban environments became a problem, a source of conflict, or an instrument of power. The workshop »Administrative Spaces and Administrative Languages« started the discussion on multilingualism from the point of view of the political organisation (see below, in the second part of this introduction), while »Urban Religious Spaces and Their Languages« discussed the religious dimension of urban multilingualism. Frequently, distinct spaces were inhabited by individual religious and language groups within religiously designated urban areas, which brought with it a specific kind of tension. The role of religion in shaping the spatial arrangements was explored, together with topographies and morphologies of cities and towns, focusing on questions such as how did religious interactions correlate with the use of multiple languages; how can we discern models of segregation or integration within urban centres; and, additionally, what tools are at our disposal for comprehending the spatial systems of multilingual and multicultural urban communities, utilising archaeological and topographical indicators?

The international conference »Elite Multilingualism in Premodern Societies and the Production of Power« dealt with the role of language as a means of social stratification, as a status symbol, and as an effective strategy of identification. It explored elite forms of

hierarchical multilingualism, their interplay with other aspects of social life, and their transformative dynamics. The goal was to comprehend the role of language in producing social difference, shaping social hierarchies, and establishing power relations. Hierarchical forms of multilingualism in the sources and the relationship between elite and non-elite languages and scripts were of particular interest. The discussion delved into fundamental terminology and methodologies, focusing on the means of communication that individuals used to distinguish themselves and the ways in which such distinctions manifest in written sources. The discussion encompassed methodological approaches for distinguishing spoken and written languages, as well as the production and perpetuation of linguistic hierarchies linked to specific media. Further, the production of discourses of linguistic eliteness as a strategy of identification, modes of access to elite languages and scripts, and their role in social stratification were discussed. The concept of eliteness as a collective identification strategy was explored, particularly concerning its relationship to other identification strategies, such as those rooted in ethnicity or religion, within respective societies. The mechanisms of the cultural economy of language acquisition in premodern societies were explored, with a focus on fostering broad intercultural comparisons.

The workshop »Urban Commercial Spaces and their Languages« shifted the focus to the languages of trade and commodity production, its exchange and consumption. The discussion explored various patterns of language use shaped by these economic activities, addressing questions such as: how did the spatial and social structures of cities and towns accommodate the economic functions of production, exchange, and consumption? In what ways did oral and written language use intersect in commercial life, and what other non-verbal forms of communication can be identified? Furthermore, the workshop examined how and why norms and practices of language use in these economic activities differed from those established in administration and religion. This latter question served to consolidate the findings of the workshop series and lay the groundwork for new inquiries in the subsequent years of the Cluster of Excellence.

The conference and the series of workshops thus created a conceptual and functional framework for further research and discussion within the Cluster of Excellence. The research and discussions are based on the broad geographical coverage of the cluster and examine methods that can be applied to written sources from regions such as Egypt before and after the Arab conquest, Central Asia within the Mongol Empire, and Eastern Central Europe in the contact zone between the Byzantine Empire and the Holy Roman Empire.

The visual »logo« for the three workshops and the conference was Pieter Brueghel's »The Tower of Babel«, which is exhibited in the city where these events took place. Apart from that, and apart from the general relevance of the biblical passage on which this masterpiece is based for the aetiological and cosmological interpretation of linguistic diversity, the painting symbolises several key points of the workshop series. It reminds the viewer that the confounded languages of humanity are more than just means of communication: they also promote cohesion and joint action, as depicted in so many lively scenes at the base of the tower. The basic story is a typically Eurasian one, set in Babel or Babylon, the cradle of many civilisations that became crucial to these interconnected continents. It is also presented as an urban story, and a story of urban resilience: even if the tower remains unfinished, the city below stretches far and wide and continues to function.

II

The workshop »Administrative Spaces and Administrative Languages« focused on languages within the spatial dimension of multilingual administrative centres in late antique and medieval Eurasia. The discussion covered the material basis, the current state of research, and possible avenues for future comparative studies. The central questions guiding the case studies revolved around how the multicultural framework and the use of multiple languages contributed to the operational aspects of cities as administrative centres, occasionally shaping them into centres of realms inhabited by a diverse, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious population. Approaches and methods defined by geospatial data visualisations were presented in dialogue with research inspired by the social sciences and linguistics.

The overarching questions included: to what extent does the use of multiple languages influence the functionality of administrative centres? Under what circumstances does a single language prevail, and when is there room for negotiation and compromise? What are the specific spaces, places, and occasions where the use of multiple languages becomes not only possible but also necessary?

The contributions dealing with multilingualism in Roman, Byzantine, and early Arab Egypt shed light on the dynamics between Greek and Egyptian in the area of tension between the central metropolis and the peripheral Chora, as well as the establishment of Arabic as the administrative language. Research into cities and communities in Eastern Central Europe and the Balkans has progressed recently; multiple speakers referred to valuable examples of the simultaneous use of different languages in their administration. Several speakers presented case studies or methodological considerations on how patterns of segregation or integration can be identified in urban centres. Such models deepened our understanding of the spatial logic of multilingual and multicultural urban communities. In addition, general issues relating to urban multiculturalism and manifestations of cultural diversity were discussed from the perspective of language use and space.

The twelve presentations and Keith Lilley's keynote speech on »Polyvocality and the Medieval City: Mapping Spaces and Places of Urban Multilingualism« focused on the question of what specific forms multilingualism can take in city administration, and how this is reflected in the sources. The study of cities as hotbeds of multilingualism in the premodern era is particularly rewarding, as numerous sources have been preserved which are still awaiting basic analysis.

The Cluster of Excellence »Eurasian Transformations« provides an inspiring framework for researching urban multilingualism. It enables comprehensive comparisons across space and time through collaboration between researchers. Such comparisons put into perspective assumptions that are often taken for granted and are based on individual case studies or smaller samples – for example regarding the primacy of Latin as an administrative language in medieval Europe. The pooling of contributions from scholars with knowledge of a wide variety of languages and dialects, from Czech to Uyghur and Venetian to Khotanese, has, during the workshop, enabled discussion at a meta-level, the discovery of patterns on a global scale, the identification of exceptions to many of the patterns found, and the testing of hypotheses using a much greater variety of examples than any single scholar could cover. For example, we were shown the importance of trained translators and interpreters at the interface between local, regional, and supra-regional administrations, who enable the individual administrative spheres to communicate with each other and thus have a positive effect on social stability. Similarly, we learned much about the manner in which power was transferred during a change of governance. This specifically affected the administration, which

depended on the cooperation of many individuals and groups, the multilingual administration often playing a mediating role between the individual ethnic and social strata.

When considering the administrative languages of cities, it is important to take into account the larger political framework in which the cities were embedded. This inevitably determined the offices and staff available and required for the tasks at hand, as well as the problems to be solved and the range of issues that could be dealt with orally, as opposed to those that had to be dealt with in writing. The types covered in one or more of the workshop contributions included city republics or city states such as Venice and Dubrovnik/Ragusa; cities and municipalities in kingdoms (royal seats, capitals, cathedral cities, trading cities, small towns); cities in commonwealths, in this case the Polish-Lithuanian and Venetian ones; and cities in empires (stable or temporary imperial capitals, local capitals of conquered states, trading settlements and other urban centres, cities in imperial border areas). The Eurasian agenda led to lively discussions that extended to most of the continent's major empires: the Hellenistic-Roman, Byzantine, Mongol and its successors, the Ilkhanate and the Golden Horde, the Ottoman Empire, and the Holy Roman Empire in Central Europe.

It is worth looking at the terms administration, space, and languages to unveil the complexity of the approach of the workshop. This brief overview may also serve as a reminder or call for action to explore more deeply each of them in the above-mentioned broad geographic framework; the papers to be published in the current and subsequent issues of *Medieval Worlds* will show the way for this. Administration, or more generally, governance, is a term with multiple meanings and manifestations. In the broadest sense, it refers to the governance of communities for which cities served as centres. This usually meant far-reaching regional influence and the presence of a kind of court and court officials, whose expertise and networks were often intertwined with those of city officials. Secondly, it refers to the governance of the city itself by appointed or elected leaders: varying degrees of self-government and autonomy. Even in areas where central power dominated and appointed those responsible for city administration, the management of local public affairs such as defence, public spaces, public ceremonies, and public expenditure gave local actors leeway to pursue independent agendas. Third, administrative languages were needed for the administration of smaller local communities (e.g., guilds, brotherhoods, neighbourhoods) by appointed or elected leaders.

The administration also included the administration of justice at various levels and through various courts and authorities, whereby oral and written proceedings were usually combined, often in different languages and with the assistance of professional mediators, translators, and scribes. Another typical branch of municipal administration was the registration of property ownership and changes thereto. It was in the interest of local leaders to track the movements of real estate, as these formed the basis for the payment of taxes. Such records also provide an excellent selection of spatial data: in the absence of modern cadastral registers, points of reference, neighbours, landmarks, and field names of vineyards had to be specified during purchase and sale, often retaining vernacular forms or variants of toponyms. Accordingly, discussions focused both on communication networks within the city and on exchanges between centres and their immediate or more distant hinterland.

Spatial approaches, a hitherto less obvious or less practised aspect of urban multilingualism, deserve due attention, as they make it possible to reconcile the diversity and complexity of the urban fabric with the complexity of language use. As already indicated above in relation to a basic typology of cities in different political systems, space is important in its manifold dimensions and forms of political organisation, in terms of the centrality and

centralisation of power, and in terms of the languages used to achieve these goals. In the context of administrative languages, certain spaces within the city played a central role in communicating rules and decisions, in law-making, in the administration of justice, and in the storage and retrieval of information. In medieval Europe, the most typical of these spaces were town halls, multifunctional buildings with courtrooms (sometimes semi-open or open), council chambers, chancelleries, and archives, but there were also several transitional or alternative forms of buildings and spaces that served the same purpose.

The final word in the workshop title, »languages«, is also a placeholder for a variety of concepts. In an administrative context, for example, one can think of imperial languages, languages of power, or mediatory languages (lingua franca). The distinction between local vernacular languages and the languages of immigrants may not be as obvious as it seems at first glance, as it has often been influenced by changes over time, demographic shifts, and reversals in the balance of power. This has affected language regulations and policies, language hierarchies, and oral and written language use, turning language skills and the ability to acquire languages into instruments of political control. It is also necessary to distinguish between forms of multilingualism, which range from the parallel use of languages to borrowing certain phrases or loan words in another tongue. The recently coined term »plurilingualism« is intended to distinguish between the incomplete forms of language use and the complete mastery of several languages implied by multilingualism.[2] Multiscripturality, i.e. the use of different scripts to reproduce the words and sounds of languages that were not traditionally written or not written in that form (e.g. the reproduction of Hebrew words in Arabic letters, German words in Hebrew script, or Croatian in Cyrillic script), adds another layer of cultural and linguistic exchange processes, decisions and identities.

There are a number of »how« and »why« questions that were partially answered during the workshop but which could prompt further reflection and research, drawing on more comprehensive sources and comparisons from the period before the emergence of the nation state and its standardising influence.

First, let us look at the roots: how did multilingualism come about in the administration? Why did it emerge? Was it the result of conquests, the takeover of existing bureaucracies and subject groups? How did it work in practice? Why did it work or fail? How and why did the relative importance of the languages used in the administration and the degree of professionalisation change?

Second, considering the human factor: who made it work, who was responsible for what kind of work and in which language? Who employed the administrative staff, including elected semi-professionals and paid experts (notaries and scribes), and how was the choice of languages determined? How did elites and subjects negotiate language use in urban social and physical space? How did the needs of the administration and the judiciary affect the manner and locations of language acquisition? Which languages were worth learning, and who could afford to do so?

2 Most, Schäfer and Söderblom Saarela (eds.), *Plurilingualism in Traditional Eurasian Scholarship: Thinking in Many Tongues*.

In terms of content, what were the typical genres of oral and written administrative communication? Were there any rules or restrictions regarding their language(s)? What were the physical formats of multilingual administrative communication (layout, design, conventions, and practical aspects of writing materials)?

There were often reciprocal processes that are worth considering dialectically: how did the use of different/multiple languages affect the administrative process, and how did administrative use affect the languages? Did special administrative registers for languages develop? How did city administration affect language use in rural areas, and how did language use in rural areas affect city administration? What role did political power play in the administration of multilingual societies and situations, and what role did multilingualism play in the administration of composite polities?

The concluding discussion of the first workshop confirmed that in all the societies and places studied, multilingualism was the norm rather than the exception in premodern times. Against this background, it is extremely worthwhile to pay more attention to the carriers and manifestations of this widespread practice.

III

Marijana Misevic's essay draws attention to a hitherto little-noticed but extraordinarily rich corpus of sources documenting multilingual communication between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Ragusa (Dubrovnik) from the late 14th to the 17th century. It documents the use of various languages such as Latin/Italianate, Slavic, Turkish, Arabic, Persian and scripts (Latin, Cyrillic, Arabic). This complex variety originated in dynamic contact zones between the Balkans, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East – areas that modern research often artificially separates.

Despite its importance for research into premodern multilingualism, the corpus has never been systematically studied. Since the 19th century, historiography has mainly used Ragusan sources to reconstruct political, economic, and diplomatic events. National historical perspectives make it difficult to understand the linguistic complexity of the corpus. Diplomatic texts were often classified according to supposed ethnic-linguistic categories, which projects modern language boundaries onto premodern groups of actors. As a result, there is still no diachronic or synchronic analysis of multilingualism in Dubrovnik – and, analogously, in the Ottoman world – even though it was historically highly multilingual.

Nevertheless, previous research provides a solid basis for investigating the dynamic multilingualism in the administration. Dubrovnik already had established archival practices and a pronounced pragmatic multilingualism in the 14th century, while the Ottoman central administration was still in its infancy. The essay examines the emergence, development, and eventual disappearance of the Ottoman Slavic/Cyrillic chancellery, as well as the role of Slavic scribes and *dragomans* in the early Ottoman state, using numerous sources. The central thesis is that this chancellery only functioned as long as the Ottoman Empire was dependent on already established Slavic administrative personnel and diplomatic traditions of the late medieval Balkan empires. As soon as the *translatio imperii* – the takeover of rule over the region – was complete and the descendants of the Slavic aristocracies were no longer needed as political mediators, this chancellery lost its importance. From that moment on, the Ragusans (Dubrovčani) in particular, traditionally important trading partners, had to learn Turkish, as they could no longer count on Slavic-speaking mediators within the Ottoman administration. Marijana Misevic's study makes a valuable contribution to the

history of imperial dynamics in South-Eastern Europe, and her findings can serve as a basis for far-reaching comparisons on several levels.

Lena Sadovski's contribution to the thematic block shows the dynamic coexistence and pragmatic use of Latin, Italian (Venetian) and Slavic languages in the Dalmatian city of Spalato (Split), archbishopric seat and trading centre, in the late 15th and early 16th centuries. The study uses the innovative concept of the social distribution of language skills and also integrates the spatial aspect, which was high on the workshop agenda. The combination of these two perspectives provides an excellent starting point for a reassessment of the traces and significance of the Slavic language in the administration of Spalato.

The article explains how the legal context increased the value of knowledge of the local vernacular in order to avoid misunderstandings regarding the validity of transactions. It also becomes clear that a complete understanding of administrative practices is only possible with the help of in-depth archival research, as normative regulations alone tell only part of the story. Similarly, looking beyond the city walls at communication practices in the hinterland provides a more nuanced picture, including the deliberate development by the Venetians of communication channels in the vernacular for the local population. Sadovski's work also refutes the still widespread belief that the proportion of ethnic groups within a population can be calculated on the basis of language use or onomastic analysis. Another important observation is the gender-specific linguistic divide, which makes it clear that women were more strongly tied to the use of their Slavic vernacular languages. Sadovski's erudite and methodologically balanced study serves as a model for similar investigations in other urban communities.

The articles presented here are the first of a series in which we are going to showcase this exciting panorama of multilingualism in premodern societies in *Medieval Worlds* over the next few years, and we look forward to the conversations and discussions it will engender.

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Names in Translation: Multilingual Administration and Name Adaptation in Venetian Dalmatia (Fifteenth-Sixteenth Century)

Lena Sadovski*

This article examines the multilingual dynamics of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Dalmatia, with a focus on the city of Spalato (modern Split). It argues that the region's linguistic landscape was defined not by strict language hierarchies or rigid ethnic divisions but by a pragmatic and adaptive multilingualism. Latin and Italian dominated the spheres of formal administration, law, and commerce, functioning as the official languages of record. However, Slavic – spoken by the majority population – remained the principal medium of everyday communication and played a persistent, though often informal, role in public and administrative life. While Slavic was seldom used in official written documents, Latin and Italian records reflect Slavic input through references to translations, lexical borrowings, and direct quotations. Venetian authorities pragmatically accommodated the linguistic realities of their subjects by relying on translators, accepting bilingual communication, and tolerating unofficial scribes proficient in Slavic.

The article first discusses the social distribution of language skills and multilingual spaces within the city, before giving an overview of the use of Slavic as an administrative language in the communication between town and hinterland. Slavic lexical borrowings and the incorporation of direct quotations into Latin and Italian texts are addressed next. The focus then switches to the flexible use of both Slavic and Romance personal names as well as the challenges involved in recording Slavic place names. All this points to a society in which language use was driven by functionality rather than ethnicity. This »Slavo-Romance symbiosis« challenges binary models of identity and instead suggests a deeply integrated urban culture. Attempts to classify Dalmatian populations strictly by linguistic or onomastic markers are shown to be inadequate in capturing the region's social complexity.

Keywords: Spalato/Split, Venice, multilingualism, urban history, administration, onomastics, Slavic, Croatian, Italian, Latin

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This article is part of the thematic section *Multilingualism in Premodern Societies. Urban Administrative Spaces*. To read all related articles, please access https://doi.org/10.1553/medievalworlds_no23_2025.

Introduction

The study of multilingual practices in pre-modern Eurasian societies offers critical insights into the development and functionality of administration as well as the interaction between language, power, and identity. One particularly illustrative case is found in the Adriatic region during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, specifically in the Venetian administration of Dalmatia. At the intersection of Latin, Romance, and Slavic linguistic traditions, Dalmatia provides a compelling example of administrative multilingualism that reveals both the possibilities and limitations of communication in a polyglot urban setting.

This article will take the city of Spalato (Split) as an example to explore the coexistence and interaction of Latin, Italian, and Slavic languages in the urban administrative practice of Dalmatia.[1] After an overview of the linguistic environment and multilingual spaces within the city, it will briefly address the use of Slavic as a written administrative language, touching upon the important role of Spalato's contacts with Slavic-speaking (and -writing!) communities in its surrounding areas. It will then discuss Slavic lexical borrowings and direct quotations within Latin and Italian texts, before turning its focus to an aspect that has frequently been linked to discussions of ethnic identity: names. What was the social distribution of Slavic and Romance names and name forms, or can we observe such a distribution at all? How did the Venetians incorporate or adapt Slavic names into their administrative documents? What other direct traces of the Slavic language can we find in these writings? And what does this tell us about the ethnic and linguistic background of the town's inhabitants?

The Linguistic Environment of Dalmatia: Historical Background

In the late medieval and early modern period, the linguistic landscape of Dalmatia was shaped by centuries of layered cultural and political influences. Contrary to the assumption that the Italian or Latin elements were imposed during Venetian domination, the region had long been part of a broader Romance Adriatic space. Italian and Latin did not arrive with the Venetian conquest but had been present for centuries due to Roman heritage and earlier periods of intermittent Venetian control dating back to the year 1000. Indeed, by the time Venice re-established firmer control over Dalmatia between 1409 and 1420,[2] Latin and Italian already played a central role in legal and administrative communication in the region, without any strict distinction being drawn between (relatively) classical Latin and its vernacular Italo-Romance form.[3] Numerous town statutes from the fourteenth century were composed in Latin,

1 Throughout this article, I have chosen to use the Italian place names rather than the contemporary Croatian ones to maintain coherence between the language of the sources and the main text while pre-emptively addressing potential technical problems with search engines that might arise from the use of diacritics or the confusion of the place name »Split« with the English verb »to split«. Personal names are given as in the cited source.

2 On the establishment and functioning of the Venetian *Stato da Mar*, see Schmitt, Die venezianische Herrschaft in Südosteuropa; Arbel, Venice's maritime empire; Sadovski, *Venice and the Dalmatian Hinterland*, 13-17; Raukar, *Studije o Dalmaciji*; Ortalli, Schmitt and Orlando, *Il Commonwealth veneziano*.

3 Šimunković, La politica linguistica, 95-96; Metzeltin, Venezianisch und Italienisch in Dalmatien, 555; Orlando, *Strutture e pratiche*, 126-128; Novak, *Povijest Splita*, vol. 1, 253; Katičić, *Literatur- und Geistesgeschichte*, 495-501.

attesting to the long-standing prestige and functionality of that language. Moreover, the Venetian dialect of Italian had become a regional lingua franca well before the fifteenth century.[4] In many respects, the Venetian administration simply continued existing practices rather than introducing new linguistic norms.

The Slavic language, by contrast, occupied a different social and functional space. It was the everyday spoken language of much of the population, particularly – but not exclusively – among the non-elite and rural communities. Let us take a look at some sources that illustrate the social distribution of linguistic competence.

Giovanni Battista Giustinian, a Venetian envoy visiting Spalato in 1553, remarked on the linguistic practices of the city's inhabitants. According to his account, all male citizens spoke Venetian Italian and some adopted Italian dress. However, he noted that the women – regardless of social class – exclusively spoke their Slavic mother tongue.[5] This gendered linguistic divide is supported by various legal documents. In one 1491 lawsuit, two brothers contested the validity of their mother's testament, arguing that the chancellor who wrote the document could not have accurately understood her, because he did not know the local Dalmatian (Slavic) speech, and she, in turn, did not know any Italian.[6]

This case is instructive for two reasons. First, it highlights the communication barriers between Italian-speaking notaries and monolingual Slavic speakers. Second, it illustrates that even well-positioned individuals – such as the testator Marica de Augubio, who was married to an Italian and belonged to the elite non-noble class[7] – could remain outside the linguistic reach of the official administration. The conflict over the testament's validity reveals the legal vulnerabilities created by this linguistic gap.

Multiple sources confirm that women, even those of noble birth, were often monolingual in Slavic.[8] One noblewoman is recorded as stating that contracts should be translated into Slavic so that »women and other idiots« – a term referring to the uneducated – »who do

4 On the Venetian dialect, see Baglioni, *Il veneziano 'de là da mar'*; Marcato and Ursini, *Dialetti veneti*; Eufe, *Sta lengua ha un privilegio*; Folena, *Culture e lingue*, 232-233; Vicario, Note sulla diffusione; Dotto, Per il veneziano fuori di Venezia; Dotto and Vuletić, Il veneziano in Dalmazia; Cortelazzo, Il veneziano coloniale; Ferguson, Venetian language; Metzeltin, Venezianisch und Italienisch in Dalmatien. On multilingualism and lingua franca in the Mediterranean, see Dakhlia, *Lingua franca*; Dursteler, Speaking in tongues; Scaglione and Sottile, La lingua franca.

5 *Commissiones et relationes venetae* 2, ed. Ljubić, 215: *È ben vero, che i cittadini tutti parlano lingua franca, et alcuni vestono all'usanza italiana; ma le donne non favellano se non la loro lingua materna, benchè alcune delle nobili vestono secondo l'usanza italiana.*

6 Zadar, Državni Arhiv u Zadru, 16: Općina Split (henceforth DAZD-16): 22/39.7/572v: *Cancelarius est Italicus nec intelligit sermonem dalmaticum immo ipsum penitus ignorat et ipsa dona Mariça fuit dalmata nec intelligebat sed vere ignorabat linguam italicam* […]. Other witnesses testified that she *veramente ignoravit la lingua o vero sermone italico seu latino* (DAZD-16: 22/39.7/580r) and *sempre loquebatur lingua dalmata* (DAZD-16: 22/39.7/587v).

7 On this important (and notorious) family, see Sadovski, *Split*, 43-46, 251-261.

8 On the linguistic competences of women in the late medieval and early modern Mediterranean, see Dursteler, Language and gender; Sadovski, Le donne di Spalato, 125-128, including a critical discussion of Dursteler's article.

not know the Latin language would not be misled and betrayed«.[9] In addition to women, the rural poor and those not engaged in maritime trade or political life often lacked knowledge of Italian or Latin.[10]

In response to the widespread presence of monolingual Slavic speakers within the population, the Venetian administration in Spalato developed mechanisms to ensure legal clarity. One key adaptation was the institutionalization of translation practices in both legal and administrative contexts. On the occasion of the election of the communal translator in 1481, the Venetian governor Giovanni Bollani argued that having a competent translator was both necessary and advantageous for a state, ensuring that the intentions of the law were not undermined by misunderstandings or inaccurate wording and that justice was properly served to all:

> *Et mente et animo revolventes quod rei publice conferat sitque necessarium habere interpetrem (sic) idoneum intelligentem et sermone expeditum, sciat quoque ordinate interpretari que sclabonico sermone coram nobis exponi contingit ne ex verborum mutationem seu mala expressione quid fiat contra metas et ordines juris sed quisque justiciam debite consequatur*.[11]

Translators were thus crucial to guarantee legal certainty, thereby ensuring the people's confidence in and acceptance of the state – an aspect that was ever more important in the colonial situation of the Venetian *Stato da Mar*. From the early fifteenth century onward, most communes in Dalmatia employed official translators to bridge the linguistic gap between Latin/Italian-speaking notaries and Slavic-speaking clients. Spalato, however, did not establish such an office until 1472.[12] This relatively late adoption followed repeated complaints by the non-noble population, reflecting a growing demand for accessible and accurate communication in legal matters.[13]

Translators were necessary not only for formal documents but also for the accurate recording of oral testimony in court. In courtroom proceedings, oral statements delivered in Slavic were usually translated on the spot and recorded in Latin, often in the third person. This process was fraught with potential inaccuracies. Several lawsuits contain complaints that the written record did not correspond to what had actually been said.[14] However, such

9 DAZD-16: 48/59/328v: *azio che le donne et altri ydiote che non hanno lingua latina non siano decepte et inganate*. The vernacular Venetian-Italian language was frequently denoted as »Latin« in the sources.

10 The lacking language skills of the poor were addressed in a petition accusing the communal translator of abusing his office: DAZD-16: 58/66.II/236a-r.

11 DAZD-16: 18/35/389r: »And considering in mind and spirit that it benefits the state and is necessary to have an interpreter, suitable, intelligent, and fluent in speech, who also knows how to properly interpret the things which happen to be presented before us in the Slavic language, lest through a change of words or faulty expression anything be done against the goals and rules of law, but that everyone may duly obtain justice« (this and all following translations are my own).

12 *Libro d'Oro*, no. 64, ed. Gligo and Berket, 276; Orlando, *Strutture e pratiche*, 126.

13 Sadovski, *Venice and the Dalmatian Hinterland*, 165-167; Šimunković, La politica linguistica, 100.

14 For instance: DAZD-16: 22/39.8/646r: *Item sopradetto mathio comparse dauanti la vostra magnificentia ale franche porte interpretando ser marin millossevich vostro interprete publice e che quello che se contien nela scriptura de bernardin petrogar che non era vero ma che le stato interpretado altramente o uero scripto altramente de*

discrepancies were difficult to prove, particularly since no standardized process existed for verifying oral translation.

Next to officially appointed translators, »examinators« fulfilled similar duties. Every notarial act required the presence of such an examinator – a nobleman appointed to verify that all legal requirements were met.[15] Among his duties was the confirmation that every party involved in the contract or legal transaction understood the content of the document, which often necessitated translation.[16] These checks became especially important in lawsuits, where the accuracy of recorded testimony could be decisive.

Despite the statutes forbidding local Dalmatians from acting as official notaries, practical necessity often led to their employment as scribes and interpreters. The use of these local officials – though technically prohibited – was frequently tolerated, as their linguistic abilities were indispensable.[17]

These issues illustrate the vulnerability of Slavic-speaking individuals within a system that privileged Latin and Italian as authoritative written languages. At the same time, they underscore the flexibility and adaptability of the Venetian legal system, which often bent its own rules in response to local needs. This complex relationship between spoken Slavic and written Latin/Italian points to a broader dynamic of multilingual negotiation within the administrative apparatus.

The Space of Slavic within the Venetian Administration

A key observation emerging from the historical record is thus that Dalmatia exhibited a structured form of Italo-Slavic bilingualism: Latin and Italian served as the dominant languages for administration and commerce – the former as the main language of writing, the latter as both a written and a spoken language –, while Slavic functioned as the primary spoken vernacular language among the population. Despite its prevalence in oral communication, Slavic rarely appeared in written administrative documents within the cities.[18] The reasons for this are both ideological and practical. One the one hand, Latin and Italian had been in use as administrative and business languages for centuries, certainly carrying a higher prestige among the Venetians than the local Slavic language. On the other hand, the formal exclusion of local Dalmatians from the notarial profession – enshrined in town statutes[19] – was meant to ensure impartiality but had the unintended consequence of exacerbating linguistic

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quello ho detto mi matheo e cussi fo interpretato a la vostra magnificentia presente ser zuane de acomer e ser piero jacoulich al hora zudese e ser lorraço darnier e molti altri; ibid. 653v: *ipse teste audiente quod non testificatus est prout est scriptum [...] et ha testifica [sic] e non e scripto come la deto*.

15 On the development of the examinator's office, see Šufflay, *Die dalmatinische Privaturkunde*, 106-110.

16 For instance: DAZD-16: 24/40.1/283v-285r: *ut in infrascripta poliza manu eius propria mihi <cancelario infrascripto> tradita sibique de verbo ad verbum per infrascriptum dominum examinatorem de latino in illyricum sermonem interpretate ad eius claram intelligentiam interpretata [sic]*.

17 Sadovski, Litterae in lingua rassiana, 271; Sadovski, *Venice and the Dalmatian Hinterland*, 171-172.

18 I have expanded elsewhere on Slavic as a written administrative language: Sadovski, Litterae in lingua rassiana scriptae; Sadovski, *Venice and the Dalmatian Hinterland*, 134-185.

19 *Statut Grada Splita*, book 2, chapter 58, ed. Cvitanić, 434-436: *unus bonus et ydoneus notarius, qui non sit de prouincia Dalmatie*.

barriers. Most notaries operating in Spalato and similar towns were Italians unfamiliar with the local Slavic language. This created a structural imbalance in communication, especially when oral testimony or private agreements had to be integrated into legally binding contracts, leading to difficulties in drafting or interpreting documents involving monolingual Slavic speakers – particularly in legal contexts where misunderstandings could have serious consequences.

In the previous section, we have addressed some strategies to overcome this imbalance. What emerges from this discussion is, moreover, that the chancery was one of the most important places within the urban fabric, where multilingualism was enacted but also problematized. When drawing up notarial acts, commissioning or receiving official documents or licences, or being questioned within court or arbitration proceedings, the people and the Venetian rulers were most directly confronted with multilingualism. Given the growing need to enter into written contracts as part of the increasingly widespread use of »pragmatic literacy« in everyday life, the chancery increasingly became a place where rulers and the ruled, and thus also their different languages, came into contact.[20]

Taking a social-historical perspective on the chancery moreover reveals that, beyond producing certified documents and thereby ensuring legal certainty, it also played another key role within society: it brought together people from all layers of the urban population through legal transactions. Nobles and commoners, women and men, outsiders from Italy, the Slavic hinterlands, or Ottoman territories – they all came to the chancery and encountered one another as well as the Venetian administration. For many, the chancery was probably the most direct point of contact with that administration.

When we speak of »the chancery« here, however, it should also be understood in a metaphorical sense, since not all contracts written and certified by the chancellors were actually produced within the physical rooms of the municipal chancery. The metaphorical chancery was present throughout the city, including in public spaces:

Contracts were issued in, in front of, or at the window of the chancery, but also in or at the *logia Sancti Laurentii*, on the *plathea Sancti Laurentii* – Spalato's main square[21] –, in the square in front of the cathedral, under the bell tower outside the cathedral gates, in the rector's palace, at the city gates (*inter ambas portas* or *ad franchas portas*), at the customs house in the harbour, in the *logia marittima* or more generally at the harbour (*ad marinam*), in the notary's house or on his doorstep, in front of or inside the house or apothecary of someone not involved in the transaction, in monasteries, in front of churches, on the street, in or in front of the fortress, outside the city near the loggia of a city gate, or – especially often in cases involving women – in the home of one of the contracting parties, including

20 Keller, Grubmüller and Staubach, *Pragmatische Schriftlichkeit*. On this concept, see also the homepage of the Special Research Unit (SFB) 231 »Träger, Felder, Formen pragmatischer Schriftlichkeit im Mittelalter« at Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster: <https://www.uni-muenster.de/Geschichte/MittelalterSchriftlichkeit/>, 03.07.2025.

21 The square is today called *Narodni trg*, People's Square; however, it is commonly known as *Pjaca*, a Slavicized version of Italian *piazza*, which in itself is a telling example of the town's multilingual history.

that of the archbishop or his vicar, as well as in the city's *burgus*.[22] This incomplete list of locations where notarial instruments were drawn up illustrates how widely chancery activity was spread throughout the city and public spaces – highlighting the presence of the administration and its written practices, and thus also of multilingualism, in the urban landscape.

Despite the clear prevalence of Latin and Italian as written languages, Venetian policy did not completely exclude written Slavic from its administrative practices. Evidence from further north, on the island of Veglia (Krk) in the Kvarner Gulf, reveals that Venetian authorities could accommodate Slavic linguistic practices under certain circumstances. From the fifteenth until the eighteenth century, Slavic notaries on Veglia composed documents in the Glagolitic script alongside Italian- and Latin-writing notaries. These documents – mostly preserved from the later period – were legally valid and issued by notaries who were not merely tolerated but sworn and commissioned by the Venetian Republic itself.[23] This practice underscores a degree of administrative pragmatism and reflects the localized adaptation of Venetian policy in response to regional linguistic realities, in this case the survival of the Glagolitic script in the northern littoral.[24]

However, this flexibility did not extend to the Dalmatian coastal towns, where Latin and Italian remained the exclusive languages of administration. In these settings, Slavic was effectively marginalized in written form, despite its ubiquity in daily life. Nonetheless, the linguistic situation inland was markedly different. In the hinterland surrounding Spalato, Slavic was widely used in both spoken and written communication, including official documentation. This included the use of Cyrillic script in administrative records, particularly in areas under Hungarian or Ottoman rule, but also in Venetian territories. Before addressing how Slavic words and phrases were directly incorporated into Latin and Italian texts of the urban centre, we shall thus briefly discuss the multilingual communication between town and hinterland.

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22 All examples are from sources from the State Archive in Zara (DAZD): *in cancellaria Spalati, Spalati ante cancellariam communis, ad fenestram cancellariae communis, sub logia sancti laurentii, Spalati in plathea sancti Laurentii penes logiam custodie, Spalati ad angulum logie Sancti Laurentii super via tendente post palacium, Spalati in plathea sancti Domnii, Spalati sub campanille ante portas ecclesie cathedralis, Spalati in camera palatii residentie infrascripti magnifici domini constituentis, Spalati ad datium XXXmi, Spalati ad marinam ante trigesimum, Spalati in terra veteri in domo habitationis mei cancellarii, Spalati ad ianuam domus habitationis mei notarii et vice cancellarii, Spalati ante ~~cancel~~ in domo ser Antonii augubio civi Spalati (sic)), Split in plathea magna ante apothecam nobilis ser Joannis q. ser Michaelis de Grisogonis, Spalati in monasterio et reffectorio praedicto, Spalati ante hostium maiorem ecclesie Sancte Marie de Taurello, Spalati in capella Sancti Sebastiani, Spalati in via tendente a plathea ad marinam, Spalati in via publica ante portam pisturii, Spalati in arce dicte civitatis, Spalati in arce Spalati in camera minori domus habitationis magnifici domini Francisci Maurozeno dignissimi castellani et camerarii dicte civitatis, Spalati in arce ante ianuam in introitu illius, Spalati extra civitatem penes logiam pisture, Spalati in terra veteri in domo habitationis infrascripte constituentis, Spalati in sala inferiori archiepiscopatus praedicti, Spalati in camera residentie praefati domini vicarii in archiepiscopatu, Spalati in burgo in domo suprascriptis magistri Radi.*

23 Bošnjak Botica, Botica and Galović, *Hrvatskoglagoljski notarijat otoka Krka*, 44-52.

24 In the early modern period, Venice was also confronted with Glagolitic through the printing of liturgical manuscripts as a means of defending its religious sovereignty against papal policies. The Congregation of *Propaganda Fide*, in turn, saw Venetian Dalmatia and the use of Glagolitic prints in East Slavic Church Slavonic – as opposed to Croatian Church Slavonic – as a way to reach the Slavic Orthodox population in the Balkans and Eastern Europe. On this, see Ivančić, Glagolitic liturgical print.

Town and Hinterland: Communication Across Linguistic Boundaries

The relationship between urban centres like Spalato and their rural hinterlands was shaped by intense social, economic, and political interactions. The city of Spalato served as the economic and administrative nucleus of the region. People from surrounding territories – including areas like the rural polity of Poglizza (Poljica) and the fortress towns Almissa (Omiš) and Clissa (Klis) – routinely travelled to Spalato to conduct business or seek employment. Spalato's status as a fortified urban centre also made it a reliable site for the preservation and registration of legal documents.[25]

The Venetian governor of Spalato functioned as the appellate judge for court cases originating in Poglizza and Almissa, semi-autonomous territories within the Venetian sphere of influence (from 1444 to 1514 and 1797, respectively). This role required regular judicial cooperation between the city and its hinterland. These cross-border interactions necessitated administrative engagement with Slavic-speaking communities, many of which maintained their own legal customs and documentary practices, including the employment of Slavic in Cyrillic script for legal codifications, notarial and judicial documents, and correspondence. Importantly, Slavic legal documents written in Cyrillic were often brought to Spalato for registration, translation, or confirmation.[26]

One particularly illustrative case occurred in 1503 when the chancellor of Poglizza travelled to Spalato to commission the Italian translation of his wife's dowry contract. The original document, written ten years earlier in Slavic by a local priest, was translated and entered into the Venetian notarial record.[27] As explicitly stated in a similar case, Poglizzan contracts were translated and recorded in Spalato »pro maiori securitate et cautione« – for greater security and legal assurance.[28] This reflects the perception of urban chanceries as sites of enhanced legal reliability and shows how the prestige of Venetian administration extended beyond city limits.

These dynamics also reveal that the Venetian administration was not isolated from Slavic legal culture. Rather, it engaged with Slavic documents and practices through translation, adaptation, and selective incorporation. Slavic legal customs, such as the enhanced credibility afforded to the *pristav* – a bailiff who confirmed the legality of contracts and acted as an authenticating witness – were not only tolerated by the Venetians but also directly

25 For more details, see Sadovski, *Venice and the Dalmatian Hinterland*; Nazor, *Splitsko-poljički odnosi*; Domljan (ed.), *Omiš i Poljica*; Grekov, *Die altkroatische Republik Poljica*; Laušić, *Postanak i razvitak*; Pfauenthal, Beiträge zur Geschichte; Tolomeo, Chiave di difesa.

26 On the institutional relations, see Sadovski, La città e l'entroterra. The fifteenth-century statute of Poglizza (with later amendments) was written in Slavic and Cyrillic script: *Statut poljički*, ed. Jagić; Matić, Statut der Poljica. The statute of Almissa, in turn, was written in the 1570s in Italian: Cvitanić, Prilog; Cvitanić, *Iz dalmatinske pravne povijesti*, 390-391; Sadovski, *Venice and the Dalmatian Hinterland*, 67. On Cyrillic in Dalmatia, see Zelić Bučan, *Bosančica ili hrvatska ćirilica*.

27 DAZD-16: 34/46.2/119r-v: *Ibique personaliter constitutus ser Jacobus Dragochnich de policio exhibuit et tradidit mihi Petro cancellario comunis infrascripto scripturam quamdam litteris sclabonicis scriptam sigilloque sancti marci sub ea impresso munitam et cum ea aliam scripturam litteris latinis seu italis notatam quam dixit esse traductionem scripture ipsius sclabonice de sclabonicho in italum translatatam tenoris huiusmodi videlicet*.

28 DAZD-16: 39/51.2-3/25r-v.

encouraged.[29] In one court case, the Venetian patrician Alvise Capello, acting as extraordinary *provisor* of Poglizza and Almissa from 1509 to 1511, ordered the election of a *pristav* to ensure that the case adhered to the legal customs of Poglizza.[30] Upon its incorporation into the Venetian realm in 1444, the new authorities agreed to respect Poglizza's customs, allowing for the continued existence of local assemblies and the use of Slavic in the chancery.[31] Yet, most Slavic-language documents that reached Spalato were recorded only in their Latin or Italian translations. As a result, the survival of original Slavic texts from this period is minimal, making such documents particularly valuable when they do appear.

A rare and significant example of a preserved Slavic document from this period is a letter dated to 1505, located in the archives of Zara (Zadar). This letter, written in Slavic in Cyrillic script and addressed to the judges of Poglizza, is particularly noteworthy because it was issued in the name of Alvise Capello during his tenure as Venetian governor of Spalato. The fact that the letter was authored on behalf of a high-ranking Venetian official strongly implies that it was originally composed in Italian and subsequently translated into Slavic. This might explain why the language of the letter exhibits clear Romance influences, both through the use of Latinisms/Italianisms – *sentencia* from *sentenza*, *apelali* from *appellare*, *konpariti* from *comparire* – and the adoption of Latin and Italian scribal conventions like the vocalic use of the letter ⟨v⟩ as /u/.[32]

Although nothing is known about the scribe's identity beyond his name – Martin Martinčić –, his role in producing a Slavic version of a Venetian administrative letter underscores the extent to which the authorities in Spalato had, by necessity, developed channels of communication in the local language.. This instance is not an anomaly; other sources attest to similar practices, albeit typically only the Latin or Italian versions survive in the archival record.

For example, there are explicit references to Venetian notaries composing correspondence in the Slavic language – referred to in Latin as »lingua rassiana« – for dispatch to courts and officials in Ottoman-controlled territories, including Poglizza after 1514.[33] While the letters themselves have been lost, these references affirm the administrative reality that Slavic was occasionally employed by Venetian officials when addressing external bodies. This usage did not extend to internal administration, but it reveals a functional, if limited, written bilingualism in external affairs.

The archival silences surrounding original Slavic documents are thus a product of translation and archiving practice rather than an absence of Slavic communication. Whenever Slavic-language material entered the Venetian system, it was typically rendered into Latin

29 On the office of *pristav*, see Sadovski, *Venice and the Dalmatian Hinterland*, 155-159; Cvitanić, *Iz dalmatinske pravne povijesti*, 347-360; Šufflay, *Die dalmatinische Privaturkunde*, 17-19; Laušić, *Postanak i razvitak*, 169-171. For the statutory regulations regarding the *pristav*, see *Statut poljički*, arts. 67a-c, 68a-e, ed. Jagić, 74-77.

30 DAZD-16: 44/55/169r-173v. On Alvise Capello, see Sadovski, *Venice and the Dalmatian Hinterland*, 120-123.

31 *Libro d'Oro*, no. 30, ed. Gligo and Berket, 168-172.

32 DARD-16: 37/49.1/235b. In the Cyrillic document, the special square-shaped Bosnian Cyrillic character, used to represent /v/ instead of the standard Cyrillic letter ⟨в⟩, is employed to substitute the letter ⟨8⟩ – /u/ – in some instances, such as the spelling of the name »Luka« as »Lvka« (»Л□ка«, »Лвка«), similar to the Latin/Italian spelling of »una« as »vna«. For more details, see Sadovski, *Venice and the Dalmatian Hinterland*, 140-145.

33 DAZD-16: 57/65.2–VI/113r.

or Italian for official registration. This practice both ensured administrative standardization and minimized the visibility of Slavic in the documentary record. Yet, its underlying presence remains discernible through references to translations, marginal notes, signatures, and scattered bilingual documents that escaped full translation.

There is some evidence that Spalato did maintain an office for a chancellor of Slavic letters during the mid-fifteenth century, particularly in the 1450s and 1460s, when a *cancellarius littere sclave* or *cancellarius de littera sclava* was mentioned.[34] However, this office was not institutionalized to the same degree as in non-Venetian Ragusa (Dubrovnik), where Slavic played a far more central role in diplomacy and external affairs. The Ragusan case provides a useful point of comparison in evaluating the Venetian approach to multilingual administration.

In 1444, the Luccan scholar Philippus de Diversis composed a description of Ragusa in which he detailed the importance of a chancellor or scribe who was proficient in both Slavic and Latin.

> *Sed cum civitas ipsa vicinos Dominos habeat Sclavos, qui sclavis litteris scribunt contractos, privilegia, pacta, et conventiones plurimas cum Dominis Ragusinis, propterea peropus est, ut habeatur et habetur quidam Ragusinus Cancellarius seu Scribanus litteras sclavas pariter et latinas vulgares doctus, cujus officium est eos contractus, privilegia et pacta sclave in Libris communitatis scribere et copiare, illorum litteras legere, et responsivas, juxta Dominij mandatum, diligenter notare*.[35]

As we see from this passage, this official was tasked with writing contracts, privileges, treaties, and correspondence in the Slavic script and language, all of which were recorded in the communal books. The chancellor also read Slavic correspondence received by the city and drafted replies as directed by the governing authorities. This institutionalization of Slavic within the chancery highlights its strategic role in Ragusa's communication with neighbouring Slavic-speaking lords and Ottoman officials.[36] Some notarial acts were also recorded in the Slavic language, in particular testaments, but overall, these documents constitute only a small fraction of the extensive Ragusan archives preserved to this day.[37]

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34 DAZD-16: 11/25.12/8v; DAZD-16: 12/27.5/521r.

35 Philippus de Diversis, *Situs aedificiorum*, book 3, chap. 9, ed. Brunelli, 76: »Since this town has Slavic lords as neighbours, who write contracts, privileges, pacts and many treaties with the Ragusan lords in Slavic letters, it is essential that they have a Ragusan chancellor or scribe who is equally learned in Slavic and Latin vulgar letters, whose office it is to write and copy these contracts, privileges and pacts in Slavic in the books of the commune, to read their letters and diligently record the responses, according to the mandate of the authorities.«

36 Jireček, Die mittelalterliche Kanzlei der Ragusaner. Teil 2, 176; Beldiceanu-Steinherr and Beldiceanu, *Documents Ottomans*, 159; *Raguse (Dubrovnik) et l'Empire Ottoman*, ed. Bojović; *Tursko-slovjenski spomenici*, ed. Truhelka; with a focus on palaeographic aspects of the Cyrillic script in Ragusa: Paskojević, *Srednjovjekovna kancelarija*.

37 Cf. the many studies on the Ragusan chancery by Jireček: Jireček, Die mittelalterliche Kanzlei der Ragusaner. Teil 1, 501-502; Jireček, Beiträge zur ragusanischen Literaturgeschichte; Jireček, Der ragusanische Dichter Šiško Menčetić.

Although Venetian Dalmatia did not replicate Ragusa's model, the underlying need for such linguistic competence was not absent. Spalato, like Ragusa, bordered territories where Slavic was the primary administrative language. The use of Slavic in Venetian Dalmatia's external communication was therefore a practical adaptation to its geopolitical environment. The increasing number of surviving Slavic documents from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries – written in both Cyrillic and Latin script – demonstrate the gradual formalization of bilingual documentation. In many of these cases, the Slavic original and its Italian translation appear on the same page, reflecting a dual-audience strategy.[38]

A notable exception to the general exclusion of Slavic from administrative records within the city lies in the genre of testaments. Testaments were a legal instrument that, unlike many others, did not require the presence of an official notary. As such, they were often written by priests, literate individuals, or the testators themselves. Slavic-language testaments appear in both Cyrillic and Latin scripts, and in some locales, even in Glagolitic. The relative informality of testaments allowed for a greater degree of linguistic diversity, and their survival in the archives – especially from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries – suggests an increasing institutional tolerance for Slavic as a written language.[39]

In some cases, bilingual formatting is evident. For example, certain testaments are presented with the original Slavic text followed by an Italian translation, while others feature Cyrillic signatures appended to Latin or Italian texts.[40] These documents often originate from individuals living in the rural territories surrounding Spalato, which reflects the greater use of Slavic in writing outside urban centres. However, this should not obscure the fact that Slavic also played a significant role within urban society itself.

The case of Ragusa demonstrates that Slavic was employed for administrative and diplomatic purposes in fifteenth-century Dalmatia, although its use was more limited in towns under Venetian control (with the exception of Veglia). In these towns, Slavic appeared mainly in communication with nearby regions governed by the Venetians, Hungarians, or Ottomans, as well as in literary and humanist works by intellectuals like Marko Marulić. However, the local population did not use Slavic when producing documents for the Venetian administration.

Slavic Lexical Borrowings and Vernacular Speech in Italian and Latin Legal Records

Despite the official marginalization of Slavic as a written language, its pervasive presence in the spoken realm inevitably influenced the content and form of Latin and Italian administrative texts. One particularly clear example of this influence is the incorporation of Slavic

38 Many such documents are preserved in the collection of Almissa in the archive of Zara: DAZD-26: Providurstvo Omiš, 171/Zbirka Bogišić. Cf. Mošin, Izvještaj; Sadovski, *Venice and the Dalmatian Hinterland*, 177-181.

39 Notable collections of testaments from Spalato and Almissa can be found in DAZD-26: Providurstvo Omiš, 1; Split, Državni Arhiv u Splitu (henceforth DAST), 1 (Splitska općina): 17/ 1; DAST-180 (Zbirka oporuka) (»collection of testaments«).

40 For instance: DAZD-26: 1/1.4/12v, 54r. Cyrillic signatures can also be found in documents from the Venetian archive, for instance: Venice, Archivio di Stato di Venezia (henceforth ASVe), Capi del Consiglio dei Dieci, Lettere di Rectori et altre Cariche, 276: Cattaro (1739-1789), 131v.

lexical items into notarial and court records. These borrowings often referred to specific material or legal concepts for which no adequate Latin or Italian equivalents existed.

For instance, the term *rassa*, deriving from *raša*, frequently appears in documents to denote a particular kind of cloth, most likely an atlas or satin fabric.[41] The term *podvorniza* refers to a type of real estate or property holding for which the Venetians did not have an appropriate Latin equivalent.[42] In one document, the tenant of a *podvorniza* was contractually obliged to give the owner, each year at Easter, a chicken and *tortam unam lingua dalmata nuncupatam prisnaz* – a reference to *presnac*, a cake that is still traditionally served at Easter today.[43]

Similarly, a purchase contract from 1525 mentions *unam eorum plemenschinam sive patrimonium* in the region of Poglizza.[44] The term *plemenъština* (*племеньщина*) referred to a family's patrimony or inherited estate, which could only be sold under certain conditions.[45] In this case, the notary wrote down the Slavic legal term alongside its Latin counterpart to ensure both comprehension and precision by including legal concepts that were native to the local legal tradition. However, in the case of the *dvornicus* of the village of Kuk in the district of Spalato, the notary apparently saw no need to offer a Latin equivalent for this steward or village administrator. The Slavic term *дворьникъ* (*dvornik*)[46] was simply given a Latin ending, similar to *celnicus*[47] and *zupanus*[48] (*чельникъ*/*čelnik* and *жупанъ*/*župan*, both denoting a specific type of »leader, chief, headman«). This shows that the exact functions of these offices could not be easily mapped onto Latin administrative vocabulary. Such insertions of Slavic vocabulary into otherwise Latin or Italian texts thus reveal the limitations of those languages in capturing the cultural specificity of Dalmatian life.

41 Kümmeler, *Korčula*, 293, n. 355; Sadovski-Kornprobst, Multilingualism, 222-223; on the etymology of the term, which is probably linked to the toponym *Raš(k)a* of a medieval Serbian state, see Skok, *Etimologijski rječnik,* vol. 3, 111.

42 Mažuranić, *Prinosi*, 969.

43 DAZD-16: 34/46.1/61v-62r.

44 DAZD-16: 60/67/64r: A widow and her son sold *unam eorum plemenschinam sive patrimonium suum videlicet domos, terras, vineas, arbores, aquas, lapides, pascua et alia omnia et quecumque habent predicti mater et filii in Sitno et aliis quibuscumque terras et locis Pollicii*. Although the purchase contract was drawn up at the chancery window in Spalato, it explicitly noted that all applicable taxes were to be paid to the Sultan, as Poglizza was already formally under Ottoman rule by 1525: *et cum obligationibus et oneribus solvendi caragia et alias angaris domino Thurco*.

45 *Statut poljički*, arts. 51[a–e] (78-80), ed. Jagić, 59-60.

46 DAZD-16: 34/46.2/113v-114r: »dvornicus ville Chuch districtus Spalati«; Miklosich, *Lexicon Palaeoslovenico,* 156, gives »*dvorьnikъ*/*дворьникъ*« as »comes palatii«.

47 *Statut Grada Splita*, book 6, chapter 38, ed. Cvitanić, 221: *[…] quod pastores pecudum nequeant dimittere pecudes, antequam celnicus inueniat alios pastores, et celnicus vel pastor teneatur ducere domino pecudum omnes pelles morticinas […].* Miklosich, *Lexicon Palaeoslovenico*, 1112 gives »*чельникъ*« as »praefectus«.

48 ASVe, Senato, Deliberazioni, Mar, Registri, 18, 7v: *Quod zupano nuncupato de cervical detur prouisio de ducatos 2 in mense in vita, ad cameram Justinopolis*. Ecclesiastical or pious institutions, like monasteries, churches, or confraternities, often had a layman acting on their behalf as *zupanus*: DAZD-16: 60/67/64v: *ser Matheus q. Blasii cerdonis tanquam zupanus […] fratalee [sachratissimi corporis christi istius civitatis spalati]*; DAST-1: 198v-199r: *Damianus Bassetich zupanus earundem monialium*; DAZD-16: 24/40.1/80r-v: *magister Franciscus aurifex zupanus ecclesię [sancti spiritus]*.

Even more telling are instances in which Slavic terms were used despite the availability of equivalent Italian or Latin words. A particularly illustrative example comes from a written court statement that refers to »li altri zoveni vlastelini« – »the other young nobles«.[49] The word *vlastelini*, deriving from the Slavic root *власть*/*vlastь* (»power«), functions here in a context where the Italian term *nobili* would have been entirely appropriate to denote those who were in power. Accordingly, the term is employed side by side with *nobili* and *la nostra nobiltà* in the same text. Its use, without explanation or translation, indicates a level of assumed understanding among the author and the audience. Notably, the statement was made by a prominent citizen whose family background was Italian, suggesting that even elite speakers with full command of Italian might choose to use Slavic terms in formal writing when they felt them to be more expressive or accurate, or at least equivalent to Italian counterparts.

Next to lexical borrowings and direct references to translations of oral or written statements, the documents written in the chanceries throughout the city also reflect the multilingual environment in which they were produced through their multilingual wording itself. Some notarial acts and, more frequently, court files contain entire texts written in the Venetian vernacular, such as accusatory and defensive writings but also testaments or inventories. While personal aspects or explanations of the circumstances were thus often formulated in the vernacular – which was also the spoken language of the ruling authorities –, legal arguments within the same texts were usually written in Latin. One of many examples is the following excerpt from a letter of complaint submitted in a case concerning the alleged unlawful exclusion of a daughter as heir:

> *Si che poi nata el dito testamento per se e nullo & se essendo nata era fato* ***itidem*** *e nullo* ***per modum preteritionis*** *non poteva* ***salva pace ipsius testatoris*** *instituir heredi extranei* ***preteriendo filiam suam ex legitimo matrimonio procreatam*** […].[50]
>
> Thus, since she was born afterwards, the said testament is null in itself, and if it was made with her being born, it is **likewise** null **by way of preterition**, then, **saving the peace of the testator himself**, he could not appoint a stranger as heir **while omitting his own daughter begotten in lawful marriage** […].

By employing Latin phrases and expressions, the author was able to demonstrate legal knowledge and lend credibility to his argumentation. In other cases, direct quotations of oral statements are reproduced in the vernacular within Latin texts, as the following testimony recounting a failed attempt at matchmaking between two youngsters illustrates:

> *Et quod interim Catussa […] dixit ipsi ser Petro Cambio* ***Vui altri non ve save maridar*** *et sic interloquendo dixit* ***Io ve mostreria la piu bella creatura che sia insta terra*** *Et ipse ser Petrus ei respondidit* ***Io la voria veder*** *et tandem posito ordine cum dicta Cathussa ipse*

49 DAZD-16: 43/54/622r.

50 DAZD-16: 45/56.5/213v (my emphasis of Latin insertions).

ser Petrus init in calle seu via [...] et ibi expectavit Et sic praemissa Catussa venit [...] et cum premissa Catussa venit etiam antedicta Margarita [...] Et statim quamprimum ipsa Margarita vidit dictum ser Petrum [...] eam respicientem aufugit [...].[51]

And meanwhile Catussa [...] said to ser Petrus Cambio himself, **You don't know how to get yourself married**, and, speaking thus, she said, **I would show you the most beautiful creature that is in this world**, and ser Petrus himself replied to her, **I would like to see her**, and then, having arranged this with the said Catussa, ser Petrus himself went into a lane or street [...] and there waited. And thus the said Catussa came [...] and with the said Catussa also came the aforesaid Margarita [...]. And immediately, as soon as Margarita saw the said ser Petrus [...] looking at her, she fled [...].

This code-switching between Venetian and Latin in writing alongside the code-switching between spoken Slavic and Venetian characterized the sociolinguistic landscape of the Dalmatian cities. Whether Catussa and Petrus spoke Italian or Slavic with each other cannot be deduced from this source. The records reproduce originally Slavic oral statements either in Latin translations in the third person singular – as numerous witness testimonies included in court records show – or in Venetian translation. The latter preserves the orality of the original statement and was likely the case here, considering the widespread Slavic monolingualism among women.[52] In rare but significant cases, however, Slavic statements were also directly quoted within Latin or Italian documents, in particular when the exact phrasing of the speech was deemed legally or socially important. Following Fabian Kümmeler's interpretation, we find a striking example in a record from the island of Curzola (Korčula) describing a wedding ceremony held in the town's borgo in 1459. The priest, as the record states,

interrogavit ipsum Radovanum et dixit ***tuogistu*** *Marussa per toa muglier legitima [...] deinde petiit Marussam et dixit similia verba videlicet* ***tuogistu*** *Radovan per to marido [...].*[53]

asked Radovan and said: »**Do you want** (**take?**) Marussa as your lawful wife?« [...] Then he asked Marussa and said similar words, namely: »**Do you want** (**take?**) Radovan as your husband?«

Within the Latin text narrating the scene, the phrase *tuogistu* opens two quotations whose second part is given in Italian, before the text once again switches to Latin for the narration. *Tuogistu* could be a form of the Slavic verb *htjeti* (»to want«) – in this case, the second person singular: *tu ogis tu* would then correspond to modern Croatian *ti, hoćeš ti*, »you, do you want«, although this repetition of *ti* would be unusual for Slavic. An explanation for this might be that the writer did not understand the interrogative particle *li* (as in *ti, hoćeš li* or, adapted to the Italian orthography of the source, *tu ogis li*), which would be syntactically expected, and instead interpreted it as a repetition of the personal pronoun. The use of *tu* instead of the

51 DAZD-16: 43/54/631v-632r (my emphasis of Venetian-Italian insertions).

52 See the example in Sadovski-Kornprobst, Multilingualism, 211.

53 Kümmeler, *Korčula*, 260-262 (my emphasis and addition of punctuation).

correct Slavic *ti* would point to an Italo-Romance influence – either on the Slavic-speaking priest or on the scribe, who likely heard *tu*, a form more familiar to him, instead of *ti*.[54]

Given the setting of the wedding in Curzola's suburb, the Slavic origin of the spouses Radovan and Maruša, and the overall prevalence of Slavic as the spoken language in Dalmatia, the original statement was without any doubt uttered in Slavic. Including the Slavic passage in the official documentation would reflect the ceremonial and legal significance of the question and perhaps also a desire to document the precise form of consent given during the marriage rite.

We can observe something similar in a source from Ragusa, where proving consent was probably the motivation behind preserving the Slavic original in a passage from a dispute revolving around the execution of a will: *dixit quod audivit illam respondentem duabus vicibus* chochio chochio *ut habeas id et quicquid mihi pertineret.*[55] *Chochio* corresponds to modern Croatian *hoću* »I want«, a wording that was attributed with special legal significance.

Similarly, Slavic was occasionally used to record insults or emotionally charged exchanges. One example, though also from Ragusa rather than Spalato, captures the unfiltered nature of a verbal dispute that was the subject of criminal proceedings in 1488:

> *Jacomo de Julian testis: disse Andrea ad Martin:* ***suigno, sto ti snax****, et lo detto Martin li disse:* ***suignia niesam, dobri-sam chlouich chaco Stipcho Rogunouich, a suigna-si ti i-od suigne rogien****, e multe altre brutte parole disse uno ad altro*.[56]
>
> [testimony of the] witness Jacomo de Julian: Andrea said to Martin: **pig, what do you know**, and Martin told him: **I am not a pig, I am a good man, like Stipcho Rogunovich, but you are a pig and born from a pig**, and they told each other many other ugly words.

The preservation of this Slavic-language exchange in a formal Italian record suggests an effort to retain the authentic voice of the disputants, especially in cases where tone and wording could influence legal interpretation. Since most Slavic quotations were recorded in Italian or Latin translation, these quotations are exceptional and illuminating. They serve

54 Whether *tuogistu* is the Venetian-Italian rendering of an originally Slavic phrase asking for consent in marriage is, however, not entirely clear. In a personal letter from 1 October 2025, Franco Benucci (Padua) has suggested another interpretation of this passage: He considers *tuogistu* to be »a regular interrogative form (with ›subject inversion‹) in old Venetian variety (with ll > g' – cf. illi > igi, capilli > cavigi etc. – and still diphthongation and 2nd person *-s*): *Tuogis-tu*? corresponding to Latin *tollis tu*? (modern Paduan *Toi-to*, Venetian *Togi-tu* etc.), as the context also confirms (literally *Take-you Marussa as your wife legitimate*? *Take-you Radovan as your husband*?).« Although, Latin *tollere* and literary Italian *togliere* rather mean »to take away/to get rid off« than »to accept«, the Venetian counterpart tor can also have the meaning of »to take/to accept«, specifically in the context of marriage. Present-day Venetian sources, indeed, exhibit a concurrence between *ciapà(r)* »to take/to get« used in the wedding formula »ciapar par la to mojer« and *tor* in the same sense. This makes the decision between the Slavic and the Venetian interpretation more complicated; both analyses show some open issues.

55 »He said that he heard her responding twice *I want, I want* that you have this and whatever belongs to me«, cited from Dotto, Testi volgari, 115, who cites this passage in Muljačić, Noterelle lessicologiche, 408.

56 Jireček, Der ragusanische Dichter Šiško Menčetić, 55-56 (my emphasis of Slavic insertions).

as a reminder that oral language – particularly Slavic – continued to shape legal proceedings and written records, even when Latin and Italian remained the languages of the formal bureaucratic script.

Naming Practices and the Slavo-Romance Symbiosis

The final section of this article explores multilingual naming conventions documented in administrative records, also addressing the possibility of studying the interplay of language and identity through personal names. The study of names – both given and familial personal names as well as place names – has long been a focus of Croatian historiography. Several detailed studies already exist on the anthroponymy of Spalato, examining the geographical and ethnic origins, the modes of formation (patronymic, matronymic, based on nicknames, etc.), as well as the frequency of surnames and given names occurring in Spalato.[57] Scholars often attempt to determine the ethnicity or linguistic identity of medieval and early modern individuals based on the structure and origin of their names, particularly surnames ending in the Slavic patronymic suffix *-ich* or *-ić*. One study, for example, claims on the basis of such name endings that approximately 90% of the non-noble population of Spalato in the fifteenth century had Slavic or Croatian roots, a proportion that remained the same during Hungarian and Venetian times.[58] However, this study is based on a relatively small corpus of sources from the years 1368-1369 and 1443-1453 and exposes some common methodological difficulties.

Such quantitative approaches often fail to account for what the linguist Radoslav Katičić termed the »Slavo-Romance symbiosis« of Dalmatian towns. Katičić emphasized that, »it is important to note that it is not a question of the cohabitation within the city walls of Spalato of old Romance and new Croatian families, but that it is generally the same families, both among the nobility and the common people, who have become the bearers of both names, both ethnic traditions and probably also both languages«.[59]

In view of the many mixed marriages and the centuries-long merging – already underway at the time of Venetian rule – of the long-established Romance population with Slavic and Romance/Italian immigrants, assigning a clearly Romance or Slavic origin based solely

57 Marasović-Alujević, *Imena Splićana* deals with the pre-Venetian and Venetian city and provides a list of individuals from the eleventh to the eighteenth century, spanning nearly 180 pages. However, the author does so without using the records of the Venetian administration in the Zara archives as sources. Kuzmanić, *Splitski plemići* and Kuzmanić, *Splitski građani* list noble and non-noble families, respectively, in an unsystematic order, indicating the year in which the author came across a family member in the archival records of Zara related to Spalato. Due to the incomplete review of all existing archival material, numerous errors are evident – for example, many individuals appear in the preserved records several years earlier than Kuzmanić states, while certain family members are omitted altogether.

58 Andrić, *Život*, 27-32.

59 Katičić, *Literatur- und Geistesgeschichte*, 501: »Wesentlich ist, daß es sich dabei nicht um das Zusammenleben innerhalb der Stadtmauern von Split von altansässigen romanischen und zugezogenen kroatischen Familien handelt, sondern es in der Regel dieselben Familien sind, sowohl unter den Vornehmen als auch beim gemeinen Volk, die zu Trägern beider Namengebungen, beider ethnischen Traditionen und wohl auch beider Sprachen geworden sind.« See also Krekić, On the Latino-Slavic cultural symbiosis; Steinke, Begegnungen zwischen Slavia und Romania.

on the surname (let alone on the given name) appears unreliable and hardly meaningful. In Dalmatia, we are thus confronted with a blended cultural and linguistic identity shared by individuals and families rather than a clear-cut difference between Slavic and Romance people. Additional problems such as the frequent absence of surnames, differing pronunciations, and spellings that at times appear Romance/Latin, at other times Slavic (*de Bilsa* vs. *Bilsich*[60]), or the Latinization of Slavic names (*Lucia mater q. Martini Duhovinich seu Spiritelli*,[61] since Slavic *duh* means »spirit«) – which, however, could also be a Slavicization of Latin names! – make research endeavours that seek to link names and ethnicity particularly prone to error. This section therefore does not deal with the ethnic origin of the name-bearers but with the notaries' handling of Slavic personal and place names. In doing so, on the one hand, the frequently lacking knowledge of Slavic among the notaries again becomes apparent, while on the other hand, the widespread acceptance of Slavic name forms across all social classes also becomes visible.

Slavic given names such as *Radoslavus*, *Novacus*, *Biloslavus*, or *Marica* (also *Mariza*/*Mariça*), *Dobra*, *Betiza* can be found across all social classes, among the nobility particularly in the case of women.[62] The notaries typically added the Latin ending *-us* to male names in order to render the cases according to the O-declension in Latin documents, while female names – usually ending in *-a* – were declined according to the A-declension. As outsiders, however, they sometimes misunderstood the names, as shown by the confusion of the female name *Stoja* with the male *Ostoja*: a declaration of renunciation dealing with the administration of the estate of the recently deceased »Stoja, widow of the deceased Nicolaus Cuchlovich« (*Stoyę relictę quondam Nicolai Cuchlovich*) concerns 400 *librae* that Stoja's brothers owed her. In the document, her name (in the genitive) is given both as *Stoyę* and *Ostoyę* (*antedictę quondam Ostoyę*, »of the aforementioned deceased Ostoja).[63] The notary thus equated the male name *Ostoja* with the female *Stoja* and used both for the same person, who was undoubtedly a woman.

The spread and acceptance of Slavic name forms is illustrated not only by such names of Slavic origin, but even more so by the use of Slavic forms of Latin names that were well known to the notaries. Thus, in Latin and Italian documents, the name *Petrus* also appears as *Petar*, *Georgius* as *Jurai*, or *Stephanus* as *Stipan*.[64] Such Slavic forms of Latin-Christian names were in widespread use, with notaries employing them more frequently for individuals from the surrounding area of Spalato than for residents and citizens of the city itself. However,

60 DAZD-16: 24/40.1/128v-129r: *ser Marinus de Bilsa*; DAZD-16: 16/34/258r: *ser Marinus Bilsich*.

61 DAZD-16: 34/46.5/246v.

62 DAZD-16: 16/34/186r-v: *Radoslavus Bilossevich*; DAZD-16: 24/40.1/240r: *Magister Novacus q. Florii*; DAZD-16: 16/34/293v: *Biloslavus Braichovich*; DAZD-16: 24/40.1/266r-v: *Mariza relicta q. Bartholi marinarii de Spalato*; Marica de Augubio, belonging to the highest stratum of the non-noble commoners; DAZD-16: 16/34/261v: *Nobilis dona Dobra relicta q. ser Michaelis Laurentii de Grisogonis*; DAZD-16: 16/34/292v-293r: *Nobilis dona Dobriza relicta q. ser Nicolai Pecinich* (= Picenich or de Marulis); DAZD-16: 24/40.1/74r-v: *Nobilis Dona Betiza relicta q. ser Thomasii de Albertis*.

63 DAZD-16: 24/40.1/280r-v: *quas praedicti fratres dare et solvere tenebantur antedictę quondam Ostoyę*.

64 DAZD-16: 16/34/263r: *Petar Ivanovich*; ibid. 275r: *Jurai Thomasich de Susuraz*; ibid. 287v-288r: *Stipan Veselchovich de Pollicio*.

this does not mean that the use of Slavic name forms was tied to a strict social division. The socially prominent non-noble citizen Antonio de Augubio, whose father had migrated from Umbrian Gubbio to Spalato in the 1430s, referred to himself in an Italian letter written in his own hand and submitted in a court case as *Ante de Ugubio*, thus using the form *Ante* – a version of the given name *Anton*(*-io*/*-ius*) still common in Croatia today.[65]

In some instances, both Slavic and Romance versions of the same name appeared in a single document. In a *compromissum* for the appointment of arbitrators, for example, Johannes Michmirovich is referred to as *Ivan* just one line after his first mention as *Johannes*, when Lucia is introduced as his sister: *Johannes Michmirovich de vila Crisa et Nicolaus Ivanovich nomine Lucię eius uxoris sororis predicti Ivani [...].*[66] In accordance with the usual suffixing of Latin case endings, the name *Ivan*, here in the genitive, is suffixed with an *-i*: *Ivan-i*.

Petar Cranotich is referred to in the nominative form in his daughter Marchesina's marriage contract using the Slavic *Petar*, but in other cases he is designated in Latin as *Petri* and *Petrum*, whereby the similarity of the forms *Petrus* and *Petar* certainly facilitated the transition.[67] By contrast, in the *procura* contract of *Marchus q. Petar cerdonis de banatico*, the notary Antonius de Olzignano refrained from converting the name of the client's deceased father, *Petar*, into the grammatically required genitive form *Petri*, and instead left the Slavic form in the nominative.[68] These examples show that the notaries used both forms side by side and did not insist on a Latinization of the names even in Latin instruments. The Latinization would have enabled the grammatically necessary suffixing of case endings, yet such suffixing was not always carried out, especially since it was difficult to implement with genuinely Slavic names.

Occasionally, Slavic given and family names were translated into Latin or Italian via loan translation (calque). This is demonstrated by the parallel use of the names *Florius*, *Cvitanus* and *Civitanus Megliaevich* to designate a prominent citizen and lawyer who repeatedly represented the commoners in high-profile court cases. The names *Florius*, or *Fiorio* in the Italian version, and *Cvitanus* derive from the Latin *flos*, *floris*, and the Slavic *cvijet*/*cvet* (or *cvit* in the local dialect), respectively, meaning »flower«.[69] The designee likely preferred the Slavic form *Cvitan*(*-us*), as it appears much more frequently in the sources from his hometown Spalato, whereas he is found under the name *Florius*/*Fiorio* in Italian-only Venice.[70] However, *Cvitan*(*-us*) was apparently not understood by all notaries in Spalato, as they often transformed it into the more familiar-sounding *Civitanus*, reminiscent of Latin *civitas* – »the flowery one« thus became »the civic one« in the ears of the Italian notaries.[71]

65 DAZD-16: 42/53/189v. Similarly, in a court case, a woman is called *Antonia seu Antiza*: DAZD-16: 43/54/76v.

66 DAZD-16: 24/40.1/229r-v: »Johannes Michmirovich from the village Crisa and Nicolaus Ivanovich, in the name of Lucia, his wife and sister of the aforementioned Ivan.«

67 DAZD-16: 16/34/313v.

68 DAZD-16: 24/40.1/120v-121r, 16.10.1491. A similar case is Gregorius q. Jurai de Almissio, who is also called Gregorius q. Georgii (DAZD-16: 16/34/225r; DAZD-16: 24/40.1/290r).

69 DAZD-16: 42/53/358v: *Ser Cvitanus seu Florius* [Megliaevich].

70 ASVe, Auditori Nuovi 187/10, 175r.

71 Orlando, *Strutture e pratiche*, 59, 166 uses the form *Civitano*/*-us*.

The case of *Lucia mater q. Martini Duhovinich seu Spiritelli* has already been mentioned.[72] Here, *duh* (»spirit«) was replaced by *spirito*, and the diminutive form present in the Slavic *-ini-* was reflected through the Italian suffix *-elli*. The act of translating the family name – down to the morphological level – suggests a high degree of linguistic fluidity and mutual intelligibility. Since such loan translations were very rare, it was probably not the Venetian-born notary Petrus de Ferrara – whose hand is behind hundreds of preserved pages of records – who was responsible in this instance. Rather, it is likely that the family themselves adopted this second name, although it cannot be ruled out that it was originally a loan translation from Italian into Slavic.

The latter was likely the case in another example of such loan translations: in the will of Magdalena Bonzorno, her uncle Johannes bears the surname *Dobroiutrovich*. While *Bonzorno* is the Venetian form of the Italian *buon giorno* – meaning »good day/morning«– *Dobroiutrovich* derives from *dobro jutro*, also meaning »good morning«.[73] In this case, it is more likely that the Italian surname *Buongiorno* (or Venetian *Bonzorno*) came first and was translated into Slavic, since such delocutive names – those derived from performative expressions – are extremely rare and difficult to form in Slavic, especially with a patronymic suffix.[74] In any case, such parallel usages of Latin or Italian and Slavic given and family name forms – particularly in a personal document such as a will – point to the deep interweaving of the two linguistic cultures. The coexistence of both forms within the same family – and document – defies attempts to categorize individuals as either Slavic or Romance.

As mentioned above, the use of Slavic names did not correspond to a strict social division. Thus, no few noblewomen bore Slavic names, and even noblemen of the city were occasionally, though rarely, referred to using Slavic name forms. This is shown, for example, in the case of *Petrus quondam Georgii Bubanich*, who also appears in the sources under the name *Petrus Jurasich*. *Jurasich* is the Slavic equivalent of *quondam Georgii*, i.e., »(son) of the (deceased) George«.[75] The name *Jurasich* remained in use for this branch of the Bubanich family at least in everyday language: more than three decades later, in the years 1512 and 1515, Petrus' son Johannes Franciscus Bubanich is referred to in Italian-language documents submitted to the court as *Zanfrancesco Jurassich* or *Gurasich*, while in the Latin entries of the notary, the name *Bubanich* continues to be used.[76]

This practice of name-based differentiation within large noble families was also known among the de Grisogonis families present in Spalato and Zara. Probably in order to distinguish them from their relatives of the line of Arnerius de Grisogonis, the children of Michael Laurentii de Grisogonis were at times referred to solely by the name of their grandfather,

72 DAZD-16: 34/46.5/246v.

73 DAZD-16: 60/67/94r-v.

74 I would like to thank Univ.-Doz. Dr. Velizar Sadovski for referring me to Benveniste, Les verbes délocutifs.

75 E.g. DAZD-16: 16/34/177r-v.

76 DAZD-16: 42/53/187r; DAZD-16: 43/54/105r: *ad instantiam nobilis ser Joannis Arnerii de Grisogonis uti tutoris Joannisfrancisci filii & heredis q. ser Joannisfrancisci Bubanich*, followed by *Comparo Io Zuan de Arnier come tutor et eo nomine di Zuanfrancesco mio nepote zoe fiol de q. ser Zanfrancesco Jurassich mio zenero*.

either as *Laurentii* or, in the Slavic form, *Lovretich*, both forms meaning »son of Lawrence«.[77] The noble Natalis likewise acquired a Slavic name form through the addition of the suffix *-ić*: *Nadalichii*.[78] These parallel forms often appear in different contexts: the Slavic form in local or informal usage, the Romance/Latin form in official Venetian documents.

The choice of name was thus strategic and situational, and this practice of switching between name forms, even within the same document, illustrates the practical multilingualism of the society. It also undermines attempts to draw neat ethnic or linguistic divisions based solely on onomastics. The frequent and casual use of both Slavic and Romance names among all social classes reflects a deeply integrated linguistic environment, which again points to the Slavo-Romance symbiosis we have discussed above.

The occasional lack of understanding of Slavic names by some notaries did not only affect personal names – as shown by the adaptation of the name *Cvitan* as *Civitanus* or the confusion between male and female names described above – but also place names.[79] This relates not only to the undoubtedly difficult written rendering of Slavic names using Latin letters without diacritics and before orthographic standardization, which applied to both personal and place names. There is also an additional detail that sometimes appears in the naming of places: they are frequently preceded by the prefix *a-* as though it were part of the name itself – for example, *Asmocovich* instead of *Smocovich* (*Smokovik*).[80]

In a list of eight properties that arbitrators were to divide between the aforementioned nobleman Petrus q. Georgii Bubanich and his cousins Catharina, Franceschina, and Nicolina q. Simeonis Bubanich, no fewer than four place names are mistakenly given with the prefix *a-*: *Agripe* (*Gripe*), *Aloque* (*Lokve*), *Acociunar* (*Kocunar*), and *Agustirna* (*Gustirna*, from *cisterna*).[81] When the contracting parties told the notary in Italian that the properties were located »a Gripe«, etc., he evidently mistook the Italian preposition *a* for part of the unfamiliar and unintelligible place names and attached it to the names in his Latin document.[82]

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77 DAZD-16: 34/46.6/289v: While the text of the notarial act itself speaks of *nobili ser Antonio q. ser Michaellis de Grisogonis*, the marginal note records *pro ser Antonio Lovretich quietatio*.

78 DAZD-16: 53/62.1/215r.

79 On the toponymy of Spalato and its surroundings, see Petrić, Splitski toponimi; Marasović-Alujević and Vuković, Zaboravljeni toponimi; Šimunović, *Istočnojadranska toponimija*; Šimunović, Ranosrednjovjekovna toponimija; Skok, *Slavenstvo i romanstvo*.

80 DAZD-16: 24/40.1/55v-56r: *in loco vocato asmocovich*, ibid., 164r-v: *in contrata asmocovich districtus Spalati*, ibid., 200v. Other cases are *Acman* instead of *a C(h)man* (Kman) (ibid., 142v: *super terreno eclesię sancti Johannis in loco vocato acman*; ibid. 153r), *Acopilize* instead of *a Copolize* (Kopilica) (ibid., 115v-116r: *in loco nominato acoplize*), *Arogac* instead of *a Rogac* (Rogač) (ibid., 139v-40r: *posito arogac*), as well as *Alusaç* instead of *a Lusaç* (Lučac) (ibid., 235v-236) and *Achrisic* instead of *a Chrisic* (Križice) (ibid., 154v-155r, 20.1.1492). Lasić, Onomastički opis, 57 gives a list of places where the confraternity of the Holy Spirit owned land in 1525. Several of the mentioned place names were written with the incorrect suffix *a-*, for which Lasić, however, provides no explanation.

81 DAZD-16: 24/40.1/107r-v, 27.8.1491: *Terrenum in mergnano agripe vretenorum quatuordecim. Terrenum positum in Trestenicho vretenorum quatuordecim. Terrenum positum aloque vretenorum octo. Terrenum positum acociunar vretenorum octo. Terrenum positum agustirna vretenorum quatuor.* Similarly: *Aloque* instead of *a Loque* (Lokve): ibid. 253v-254r: *in loco nominato aloque*; ibid. 92v-93v.

82 This is also nicely illustrated by the phrasing *in contrata ubi dicitur agrippe in districtu Spalati*: DAZD-16: 20/37.3/27v.

The phrasing also shows that this is not merely a graphic phenomenon in which two separate words are joined and written as one. Although this does often occur, it cannot, on the one hand, involve the Latin preposition *a, ab*, since that means »from, from…toward, from… out of« and not »in« (locative). On the other hand, in the Latin phrases *in loco vocato acman*, *in contrata asmocovich districtus Spalati*, or *positum agripe* (place name in the ablative), no preposition is needed. The agglutination of local prepositions or articles is a well-known phenomenon in toponomastics and also occurs in reverse, as deglutination. Thus, the Latin *Ariminum* became Italian *Rimini*, when – due to the increasing use of prepositions in place of Latin cases like the accusative, locative, and ablative – the initial *a* was taken for the corresponding preposition and separated from the city's name.[83]

This treatment of Slavic place names is, on the one hand, yet another expression of orality within written sources, and on the other hand, it once again reveals the challenges posed by notaries and scribes unfamiliar with the local language and geography.

Conclusion

The linguistic landscape of Dalmatia in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as reflected in the Venetian administration of Spalato, reveals a sophisticated and adaptive multilingualism. Latin and Italian functioned as the primary languages of formal administration, legal documentation, and commercial exchange. Slavic, by contrast, remained the dominant spoken language of the majority population and served as the principal means of communication in both domestic and public life.

Slavic was not entirely absent from administrative practices, but its presence was generally confined to oral interpretation, translated documents, and a limited number of exceptional cases of preserved Slavic writings and original quotations. Venetian authorities adapted to the linguistic needs of their subjects by employing translators, tolerating unofficial scribes, and maintaining bilingual communication with Slavic-speaking regions. Although official records typically rendered Slavic-language materials into Latin or Italian, the underlying Slavic content often shaped the structure and vocabulary of those records. Lexical borrowings, direct quotations, and bilingual formatting all point to the persistence of Slavic as a crucial component of administrative life, albeit one that remained largely invisible in official policy.

The role of Slavic in testamentary practices, the use of both Slavic and Romance names across all social strata, and the casual switching between name forms, as well as the general interplay of oral and written communication, demonstrate that language in Dalmatian society was both fluid and functional. Rather than reflecting rigid ethnic boundaries, the multilingual practices of the period illustrate a flexible and pragmatic approach to identity and communication. The concept of a »Slavo-Romance symbiosis« is therefore essential to understanding Dalmatia's urban culture, one in which linguistic plurality was not merely tolerated but deeply embedded in everyday life.

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83 *Ire Ariminum* (Acc.) did not become *andare a(d) Ariminum*, but *andare a Rimini*, moreover maintaining the locative ending of *Arimini* in all cases. On this phenomenon, also with other prepositions, articles or remnants of Latin case endings, see Pellegrini, *Toponomastica italiana*, 20-21.

Efforts to quantify or categorize populations as »Slavic« or »Romance« based on naming patterns or language use alone fail to capture the complexity of this environment. Instead, the evidence points to a society characterized by overlapping identities, strategic code-switching, and a practical engagement with multiple linguistic traditions. In this sense, Dalmatia under Venetian rule offers a compelling model of early modern multilingualism, in which language served not as a marker of exclusion but as a bridge between communities, legal systems, and cultural traditions.

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by the Austrian Academy of Sciences with an APART-GSK-Fellowship (12176).

This publication has benefitted from the research environment of the Cluster of Excellence COE 8 »EurAsian Transformations« (Grant-DOI: 10.55776/COE8).

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Abbreviations

ASVe = Archivio di Stato di Venezia
DAST = Državni Arhiv u Splitu
DAZD = Državni Arhiv u Zadru

Unpublished sources

Split, Državni Arhiv u Splitu
    1: Splitska općina
    180: Zbirka oporuka
Venice, Archivio di Stato di Venezia
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    16: Općina Split
    26: Providurstvo Omiš

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The Written Communication Between Ragusans and Ottomans Before the Mid-17th Century: Notes on Multilingualism and Language Ideologies

Marijana Mišević*

This paper is an essay on the extant products of pragmatic literacy that testify to centuries-long written communication between Ottomans and Ragusans, emphasizing its multilingualism and multiscripturalism. It rests on the assumption that there is a benefit in studying this corpus by using language and literacy ideologies both as hermeneutical tools and as objects of historical investigation. This rarely, if ever, applied approach entails examining changing patterns in linguistic choices made within the distinct and/or intersecting realms of pragmatic literacy, as well as underlying explicit and implicit ideas about language and literacy use – issues that can be addressed, in the context of Ottoman-Ragusan relations, from at least the late 14th century onward. The main and modest ambition of this paper is to draw attention to the arguably neglected complexity of the history of this communication, and to suggest that its more detailed investigation could offer additional insights into the cultural and power relations between the two polities, the changing ways in which the Ottomans and Ragusans perceived and managed diversity, and the historically shifting relationships among users of multiple languages (Latin, Ragusan Romance, Italian, Slavic, Greek, Turkish, Arabic, Persian) and scripts (Latin, Cyrillic, Arabic, Greek). Although the relationship between the Ottomans and Ragusans – as it pertains to the movement of documents and people across vast geo-linguistic spaces – can be traced up to c. 1808 (the fall of the Dubrovnik Republic), the present discussion is confined to the period between the 1390s and the 1650s. This period may be further subdivided into several phases, each of which will be outlined in broad strokes and illustrated through representative literacy events.

Keywords: late medieval, early modern, multilingualism, pragmatic literacy, Ottomans, Ragusans, South-Slavia.

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This article is part of the thematic section *Multilingualism in Premodern Societies. Urban Administrative Spaces*. To read all related articles, please access https://doi.org/10.1553/medievalworlds_no23_2025.

eISSN-Nr. 2412-3196
DOI 10.1553/medievalworlds_no23_2025s41

The textual corpus attesting to the centuries-long communication between the Ottomans and the Ragusans[1] (hereafter: the *Corpus*) is preserved today in two of the richest extant premodern archives. One is housed in the State Archives in Dubrovnik[2] (hereafter DA), and the other in the Ottoman Archives of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey's Directorate of State Archives[3] (hereafter OA). Seen as a whole, the *Corpus* encompasses various texts produced using three scripts (Latin, Cyrillic, and Arabic) and five languages (Latin, Italian, Slavic, Turkish, Arabic, and Persian).[4] Its diachronic expansion is traceable from the late 14th century until Dubrovnik lost its independence in 1808.[5]

The texts mainly, though not exclusively, belong to the domain of pragmatic literacy.[6] They can be further categorized based on materiality and form. On the one hand, there are original documents, Cyrillic and Arabographic, that are almost exclusively preserved in the DA. On the other hand, in both the DA and the OA there are handwritten collections of document drafts and various kinds of copies, as well as series of records of official decisions on matters that were regulated through individual documents.[7] In its presently available form, the *Corpus* emerged through the circulation of people and written texts across some of the most intense linguistic and cultural contact zones of the late medieval and early modern periods, including regions often framed in historiography through modern constructs such

1 By both »Ottomans« and »Ragusans«, I simply mean individuals or groups who lived in the various formations of the Ottoman state (c. 1300-1926) and/or in the Dubrovnik commune c.1358-1808, no more and no less.

2 Sl. Državni Arhiv u Dubrovniku.

3 Tr. Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi

4 The labels for languages and scripts mentioned here do not exhaust all variants that individual producers of texts *could* possibly have used or to which they *could* have been exposed. The idiom known in the literature as Ragusan Romance (originally: *lingua ragusea* or *latina ragusea*), for example, was »one of the traditional official languages of the [Ragusan] patrician administration, besides Latin and Italian«. This note, together with more information on ideas and practices related to this and other Ragusan idioms (Latin, Italian, Slavic) in the 14th and 15th centuries can be found in Kunčević, *Myth of Dubrovnik*, 61 and *passim*. Some illustrations of how Greek mattered can be found later in this article. Note also that I use the label *Slavic* as an abstraction to designate the various mutually understandable idioms constituting the South-Slavic dialect continuum. In late medieval times and afterward, these were attested under the following names: *bosanski* (Bosnian), *bugarski* (Bulgarian), *hrvatski* (Croatian), *slovenski* (Slovene) and *srpski* (Serbian). I use these labels only when they appear in the texts I cite. See also Mišević, How and why, 282. Texts written in Latin using Latin script will be described simply as Latin texts. In all other cases, there is no such overlap.

5 For a general survey of the history of Dubrovnik in English, which, among other things, addresses the period of contact with the Ottomans, see Harris, *Dubrovnik*.

6 The texts that were not pragmatic yet still belong to the *Corpus* are those found in the manuscripts purchased and collected for use by Ragusan *dragomans* (interpreters). It is known that such purchases were approved by the Ragusan government as of 1582, but the surviving manuscripts appear to date mainly from the 18th century. See Miović and Selmani, Turska Kancelarija, 244-248.

7 In the Ragusan context, the core administrative material of this kind was the records (lat. *libri*) of the decisions (lat. *reformationes*) made by the three councils of the Dubrovnik commune, kept as of 1301. Earlier are the records of the Notary Public (kept as of 1278). These were written in Latin, which was gradually replaced by Italian. In the Ottoman context, a comparable type of record is designated by the generic term *defter*, further differentiated by subtype. These were predominantly written in Turkish, unless the drafted or copied documents were in Arabic or Persian. The relevant subtypes will be mentioned in due course. The same applies for the relevant Ragusan compilations of drafts or copies of individual Cyrillic documents.

as the Balkans, the Mediterranean, and even the Middle East. At first glance, therefore, the *Corpus* offers an unusually accessible and compelling case for exploring multilingualism, its late medieval and early modern manifestations and consequences. Nevertheless, to the best of my knowledge, the *Corpus* as a whole has never been treated as an object of focused research, and one may well wonder whether there are good reasons for this.

From the 19th century onward, Ragusan archival materials have been widely used by modern historians as sources of information on various aspects of the history of Dubrovnik, its neighbors, its political partners, and its adversaries. The scope and variety of research questions pursued have dictated the selection of subcorpuses used not only for narrative construction but also for the preparation of materials published in critical editions. The earliest publications of this kind also date to the 19th century, many remaining authoritative to this day, despite their varying quality. Since then, some collections considered important have been republished more than once, with the aim of both correcting or improving earlier editions and of reformulating the criteria for establishing a meaningful whole.[8] Similar attitudes informed the publication of Cyrillic texts that testify to the early phase of the development of the *Corpus*,[9] whereas the situation is somewhat different when it comes to their Arabographic counterparts.[10] These texts were rarely, if ever, juxtaposed – let alone analyzed together – though it is well known that in some instances (of varied frequency and form),

8 As late as the early 2020s, scholars were concluding that even the most frequently edited texts (an illustrative example being the charters of medieval South Slavic rulers) required further work before their editions could be considered adequate by contemporary standards. See, for example, *Dokumenti*, ed. Porčić, 9-19 and the literature cited therein. This particular collection adopts dynastic affiliation (the Nemanjić dynasty of Serbia, 1166-1371) as the organizing principle for corpus construction and a marker of historical continuity. By contrast, the (Cyrillic) script and (medieval) period served as the defining criteria in *Zbornik*, ed. Ćirković *et.al.*, whereas the notion of (»old«) rulership/statehood provides the framework for the *Codex Diplomaticus*, ed. Kurtović *et.al*.

9 A comprehensive survey of the published editions of these Cyrillic texts – which, among other things, include translations into French published by Boško Bojović – as well as a detailed account of the state of the art, is provided in Filipović, *Ottoman Cyrillic*. Here I will only recall the main editions – outdated but still relevant. In 1858, Miklosich published the results of his work on the DA Cyrillic documents that were then temporarily housed in Vienna, only some of which belong to the *Corpus*. He misleadingly assumed that *Serbian* was an adequate label for all published Cyrillic documents »related to the history of Serbia, Bosnia, and Dubrovnik«. See *Monumenta Serbica*, ed. Miklosich. The next important group of texts from the DA – kept in Dubrovnik at the time of publication in 1911, with a few exceptions that remained in Vienna – includes Cyrillic texts that unequivocally belong to the *Corpus*; see *Tursko-slovjenski spomenici*, ed. Truhelka. With some additions, the same collection was republished as part of an edition that, in principle, follows Miklosich's criteria – that is, it aimed to include all Cyrillic pragmatic texts from the DA, of which some 220 belong to the *Corpus*; see *Stare srpske povelje*, vol. 2, ed. Stojanović, 217-408.

10 The two volumes of *Turski Spomenici*, ed. Elezović, from 1940 and 1952, remain the only editions of their kind and the best available for Arabographic pragmatic texts relatable to South Slavia, including translations into Serbian, commentaries and facsimiles. The vast majority of these texts were or have been preserved in the DA and belong to the *Corpus*. An inventory of Arabographic texts from the DA produced on behalf of the Ottoman sultans can be found in Miović, *Dubrovačka Republika u Spisima Osmanskih Sultana*, 137-409. A single example of a translation of selected Arabographic texts into English is provided in Biegman, *The Turco-Ragusan Relationship*. For an overview of smaller publications, relevant literature, and the current state of the art, see also Filipović, *Researching*, esp. 270, 272-274.

both Cyrillic and Arabographic texts of the *Corpus* were produced in support of one and the same act of communication involving the same key actors.[11]

Thus, both in principle and in consequence, the scholarship converging around the *Corpus* remains shaped by the monolingual mentalities characteristic of national(ist) historiographies.[12] What also unites current approaches is their reliance on *diplomatics* as the key auxiliary discipline, with its heavy focus on the formal characteristics and genres of (mostly) authentic *diplomas* written in a language (or even dialect) recognized as national from the standpoint of modernity.[13] Significant efforts to analyze such monolingual corpuses have often concentrated on identifying patterns or clusters of formal features within the documents,[14] with only rare excursions into questions of cross-linguistic transfers or interconnections of any kind.[15] These patterns are almost routinely attributed to the »chanceries« of proto-national rulers, aristocrats, or noblemen.[16]

Considering the state of the art outlined above, it may not come as a surprise that no scholarly work to date has focused specifically on the multilingualism of Dubrovnik as reflected

11 Although, before the mid-20th century, both Truhelka and Elezović occasionally pointed to the various kinds of connections between documents in various languages and scripts, no attempts were made to address the broader implications of these connections. The main Slavic publications on Ottoman–Ragusan relations across different centuries do not take Arabographic sources into account. Nevertheless, the fact that the majority of incoming Arabographic texts prompted a chain of discussions and decisions traceable in Ragusan non-Arabographic sources is evident in all of these works. See Božić, *Dubrovnik i Turska*; Popović, *Turska i Dubrovnik*; Vinaver, *Dubrovnik i Turska*.

12 With rare exceptions, most historians of the Republic of Turkey tended either to ignore sources in languages not considered »properly Ottoman« (that is, languages other than Turkish, and to some extent Arabic and Persian), or to acknowledge them indirectly through selective citation of secondary literature. That the Ragusan archive contains material in various languages (that is, not just in Turkish) which may be relevant to Ottoman history has been recognized, but the existing reviews amounted to little more than calls for further attention. See Şabanoviç, Dubrovnik Devlet Arşivi; Emecen and Bostan, Dubrovnik Arşivi.

13 In the case of the Cyrillic portion of the *Corpus*, these languages could be identified as Serbian, Bosnian, Croatian, or Serbo-Croatian, depending on a scholar's position. Proper historical-linguistic analyses of some of the relevant documents have begun to appear only recently; see, for example, Polomac and Lutovac, *Dva pisma*, and Lutovac-Kaznovac, *Jezik pisama*. The Arabographic portion of the *Corpus* is indeed dominated by Turkish, but documents in Arabic have also survived, indicating a broader usage – mainly in transactions involving individuals rather than groups or collectives. As far as I understand, neither Latin nor Italian has been framed by scholars as a »national language« of the Ragusans.

14 For Arabographic documents belonging to the *Corpus*, an important early publication is Kraelitz, *Osmanische Urkunden*. Examples of general diplomatic surveys are Nedkov, *Osmanoturska diplomatika;* Reychman *et al*., *Handbook*; Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı belgelerinin dili.* Diplomatic features of Cyrillic documents of the *Corpus* have not been analyzed in detail, but see fn.15.

15 As a positive example, see Boškov, Odnos, which also offers a series of general remarks on, and a comparison of, the diplomatic features of relevant Cyrillic and Arabographic documents. See also Filipović, Ottoman Cyrillic, 303-306.

16 In Serbian historiography, for example, it has only recently been emphasized that, for the (late) medieval period, the concept of a chancery – as a stable, organized, and hierarchical institution – should not be taken for granted as the exclusive locus of textual production. See Vujošević, *Srpska vladarska*, 1-28, 284-301. This point is significant, because there is broad consensus that Serbian was among the diplomatic languages of the Ottoman government, a view that assumes certain continuities with the late medieval Serbian chanceries thus conceived. I would suggest that the same analytical reservation is relevant for the Ottoman context as well.

in surviving written texts, whether from a synchronic or a diachronic perspective. The same holds true for other historical polities of the Balkans, including the so-called Ottoman-ruled Europe, or *Rumeli*. Similar observations can be made with regard to broader, and specifically »Ottoman multilingualism«.[17] In much of Ottoman and related historiographies, the link between *a* language, *an* identity, and *a* culture is assumed rather than demonstrated. Although religious confession is usually – and justifiably – treated as the primary marker of difference within Ottoman conceptual frameworks, actors and groups are often profiled according to presumed linguistic competences, which are frequently tied to assumptions about their »origin«. These attributions, however, tell us more about the interpretive frameworks of historians than about self-perceptions of concrete historical actors.[18]

Rather than criticize the existing scholarship, the primary aim of the above considerations has been to suggest that it is precisely based on its achievements that we can conclude that the multilingualism of the *Corpus* is a legitimate theme, fully open to discussion and further research. This basic statement, however, does not resolve the question of how such research is to be conducted – or for what purpose.

As a theme, the multilingualism of written texts and textual traditions has only recently found its place on the agenda of (cultural) historians. Historians, however, rarely – if ever – engage in a critique of the linguistic concepts (of various kinds) they borrow in relation to the material they use. In consequence, similar conceptual problems persist across Eurasian historiographies. One reason for this is that both multilingualism and literacy contain multiple layers of meaning demanding different research strategies. Also, even though written texts constitute the key sources for reconstructing past events and continuities, the two have often been discussed separately. This makes it difficult to apply these notions to past realities as analytical rather than purely descriptive concepts. Moreover, the connotations *multilingualism* and *literacy* carry as concepts depend precisely on the prevailing understanding of the historical contexts in which multilingualism existed as a lived reality and in which *a literacy* or *literacies* were practiced. For example, multilingualism has often been endowed with positive connotations as a supposed indicator of – if not entirely peaceful, then at least less conflictual - coexistence among monolingual (literary) cultures, and by implication, their carriers. Having framed multilingualism as the antipode of situations characterized by strong language politics aimed at the homogenization of speech-communities around languages undergoing standardization or already standardized – and therefore around (national) identities and cultures – historians often find it sufficient merely to demonstrate that such

17 For a discussion of mainstream approaches to Ottoman multilingualism, with citations of relevant literature, see Mišević, Slavic Words, 262-266. For a discussion of my approach to this topic and the literature on which it is based, see Mišević, *Writing Slavic*, esp. 1-36.

18 This tendency is reinforced by the use of »Ottoman« – whether as a noun or an adjective – both as a self-explanatory descriptor and as an analytical vantage point. Consequently, discussions of multilingualism in Ottoman history rarely begin »from below«, where the sheer diversity of languages resists easy classification. Instead, they typically start »from above«, with »Ottoman« placed alongside equally broad extra-linguistic categories such as Muslim/Non-Muslim or Eastern/Western, or alongside glottonyms like (Ottoman) Turkish, Arabic, Persian, Greek, or Slavic – labels that modern readers often populate with meaning (and historical significance) based on their own knowledge and assumptions.

conditions did not exist in the past. When such considerations fail to theorize literacy, or take it for granted, power relations remain blurred – just as the distinction between the written and oral communication does.[19]

To begin with, a broad survey of the relevant material on which this paper relies shows that neither the Dubrovnik nor the Ottoman administrations transparently propagated or explicitly indicated a direct link between *a* language and *an* ethnic community or a (proto-) nation. Nor did the Ragusans and Ottomans who produced the *Corpus* explicitly speak about multilingualism in any sense that corresponds to the meanings we ascribe to it today. Therefore, this paper suggests that the multilingual *Corpus* provides an excellent case for discussing late medieval and early modern multilingualism as reflected in written texts, but sets the term aside in order to avoid circular descriptions and arguments. Instead, it proposes that the analysis of the *Corpus*'s linguistic composition can help us reconstruct the historical ideas about language(s) and literacy that shaped the communicative strategies and linguistic choices of participants in *literacy events*,[20] as well as their persistence, transformations, and analogues. It may be taken as an axiom that familiarity with these ideas – whether explicitly stated in the sources or embodied in practice – contributes to our understanding of the social history of individuals and interpretive communities organized around a single text or a group of texts. In other words, it can help us understand how people of the past – elite and non-elite, literate and illiterate – *coped* with multilingualism. Having in mind this goal, which, of course, can not be achieved immediately, the paper will delineate several patterns which appear significant for reconstructing these ideas in more detail, and, on this basis, outline a periodization of the history of the *Corpus*.

The (Ottoman-) Ragusan Treasury

When the Ottoman soldiers crossed the Dardanelles around 1350, they entered a relatively familiar, predominantly Grecophone continuum, from which they continued their advance into South Slavia, a geolinguistic region divided among independent and semi-independent polities, two of which styled themselves as empires (Serbian: 1346-1371; Bulgarian: 1185-1396).[21] This expansion likely introduced new challenges for the Ottomans, particularly in how they categorized, perceived, and navigated the region's increasingly complex linguistic landscape. Around the same time, in 1358, the commune of Dubrovnik freed itself from Venetian suzerainty and accepted a politically lighter, tributary relationship with the Hungarian crown – a change that enabled it to pursue a somewhat more independent foreign policy. Indirect and later direct contact between the Ragusans and the Ottomans followed

19 I hold here that pre-modern literacy – as a social practice not widely imposed by governmental structures – inherently implies the relative proximity of the literate to the centers of economic and political power, irrespective of the quality of the product of literacy which is observed.

20 My understanding of a literacy event here follows its most broadly accepted definition: »any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of the participants' interactions and their interpretative processes.« Street, Literacy events, esp. 21.

21 As is well known, the Ottoman Empire began as a small principality in western Asia Minor, neighboring the late-13th-century Byzantine Empire. Its Turcophone Muslim governors gained independence from the Ilkhanids and Seljuqs around 1300.

relatively soon thereafter, although the precise initiative behind it remains unclear. The oldest extant document of this direct contact is a 1396 letter written in Slavic using Cyrillic script (see below).

By the mid-15th century, the Ragusans were no longer paying tribute to the Hungarian crown but had instead entered into a new, firmly structured relationship with the Ottomans – one that enabled them to maintain semi-independence by paying an annual tribute directly into the sultan's treasury. Each new sultan, upon his enthronement, would renew the treaty, a document generally referred to in the literature by the technical term *ahdname (ar.tr.)*, issued by his predecessor. These documents regulated the obligations of Dubrovnik's citizens toward the Ottoman central government and set out the privileges they enjoyed while on Ottoman territory or in transactions with third countries of interest to the Ottoman state. As international agreements, they have attracted considerable scholarly attention and are regarded as the principal sources for understanding the political relationship between Ragusans and Ottomans. The standardization of literacy events based on such agreements, however, has its own history, as will be seen later in the paper.

This relationship between Ragusans and Ottomans has typically – and often anachronistically – been framed as one between a mighty »empire« and a tiny, yet brave and cunning, maritime republic. While broadly accurate, this deeply ingrained image obscures the fact that, when the Ragusans first came into contact with the Ottomans, both the central and provincial Ottoman bureaucracies were still in their formative stages.[22] By contrast, the Ragusans could already boast a long tradition of pragmatic literacy, preserved in an archive containing documents in multiple languages. The ideas and practices that shaped the history of the *Corpus*, whose early stages were marked by a pronounced and only seemingly unregulated use of Slavo-Cyrillic texts, can be understood only if this asymmetry is fully acknowledged.

Besides their own administrative records and the Latin and Italian documents exchanged with western and northern ecclesiastical and political authorities, the Ragusans' archival repository – in its 1396 configuration – also held a rich corpus documenting their varied relations with neighboring Slavic-speaking polities. In these states, institutional archiving, if practiced, was largely a Church function. Consequently, the oldest records of these interactions, dating from the late 12th century, along with much of the overall corpus, survived in the DA. Initially, the texts were produced in Latin by the Ragusans as addressees, sometimes accompanied by Slavo-Cyrillic versions supplied by the issuers.[23] The intensification of these relationships paralleled the emancipation of Dubrovnik and its Slavic hinterland

22 A rather small number of documents from this early period, irrespective of the genre, have survived. See, for example, Zachariadou, Records.

23 The earliest preserved example of this kind is a peace treaty signed in 1186 between the Serbian grand *župan* Stefan Nemanja and his two brothers, the *knez*es, on one side, and the Dubrovnik city government (headed by the *knez*) on the other. The text was produced by a Ragusan (ecclesiastical) scribe and written in Latin. The only Slavo-Cyrillic elements are the signatures of the *župan* and a *knez*, see *Dokumenti*, ed. Porčić, 129-131. The oldest surviving Slavo-Cyrillic document from DA (and oldest in the context of South-Slavia in general) is the 1189 charter in which *Ban* Kulin of Bosnia grants privileges to Ragusan merchants. The Slavo-Cyrillic version of the charter was produced by a scribe (sl. *dijak*) in the service of the *ban*, based on the Latin template prepared in Dubrovnik; see *Codex Diplomaticus*, ed. Kurtović et.al., 32-33.

from Byzantine control after 1204.[24] Soon after, Dubrovnik employed its first known Slavic scribe (fl. 1215-1254), an anonymous figure who learned Slavic as a second language and was trained in a neighboring Serbian principality. With his help, the Ragusans produced a series of Slavo-Cyrillic texts addressed both externally and internally (i.e. documents stamped or verified only by the party granting privileges or assuming obligations toward Dubrovnik). Following a roughly thirty-year gap without preserved activity, a long line of Slavo-Cyrillic scribes known by name appears.[25] Their training is less well documented than that of Latin/Italian scribes, but it seems that their Slavic was often self-learned or acquired as a first language. Initially, all scribes and secretaries – regardless of working language – were clerics and/or members of the local aristocracy. The first non-ecclesiastical Latin scribe, brought from Italy (a practice that became customary), was the first notary public (fl. from 1278). With the end of the last aristocrat-scribe's career in 1324, the recruitment of Latin scribes shifted to common citizens, marking a broader transition that concluded in 1347 with the retirement of the last Slavic scribe of noble origin.[26]

Thus, by the mid-14th century, the core structure of the Ragusan linguo-bureaucratic regime – defined by distinct habits, customs, and ideas and, one may cautiously add, relatively conservative in the centuries that followed – was already firmly established. The protohistory of Ottoman bureaucracy and its reliance on pragmatic literacy overlaps with the earliest phase of the *Corpus*'s development. This raises the key question of who the Ottomans involved in producing these documents actually were and what broader implications their linguistic choices carry.

With the exception of Arabic and Persian,[27] non-Turkish languages in Ottoman documents are often described as *diplomatic*, with exchanges framed as dealings between Ottoman officials and independent political entities. The earliest surviving example, a 1397 treaty between Sultan Murad I (r. 1362-1389) and the Commune of Genoa, is described by Fleet as »the only known extant 14th-century treaty between the Ottomans and a western city state«. Preserved in an Italian translation, it was originally drafted in Greek – the common practice at the time – yet, as Fleet notes, it followed »the pattern of Genoese notary deeds rather than that of a document of an Islamic chancery«.[28] Another early case is a 1403 treaty drafted in Greek and translated into Turkish, surviving only in a poor Venetian Italian version that also diverges from Arabographic chancery conventions.[29] In both instances the Turkish

24 Of a few, incoming Greek documents which survived in the DA, three are dated to post-1204 (1206, 1234, 1237) and were produced by the issuers. No trace of Ragusan production of documents in Greek survived. Indirect evidence exists that these were not the first to have been received, but the interesting part about the relevant note (from Giacomo Di Pietro Luccari's annalistic history, published in 1605, in Venice) is that Ragusans were willing, around this time, to send their young men to Byzantium for schooling, provided its government covered the costs. See Tafel and Thomas, Griechische, 510.

25 Čremošnik, Postanak, 75-79. See also, Vrana, Tko je pisao, 314.

26 Čremošnik, Postanak, 79.

27 This remark is meant to draw attention to the fact that Arabic and Persian as Ottoman diplomatic languages – a function they certainly had, among others – have been poorly studied, if at all.

28 Fleet, The treaty, 31-32.

29 Dennis, The Byzantine-Turkish; *Ottoman historical*, ed. Ménage, 162, fn 10.

originals are lost, but later comparable examples suggest that multilingual versions of such treaties were not necessarily verbatim translations of a single »original«.[30] The language of the first draft likely depended on both available expertise and the power dynamics between the parties. Studying Venetian-Ottoman diplomatics, Theunissen argues that Arabographic international agreements (the *ahdnames*) were well-established before 1387, and that Greek or Italian chancery influence was weaker than previously assumed.[31] The Ragusan Slavo-Cyrillic chancery, as far as I know, has not been examined as exerting any direct influence on the Ottoman Arabographic tradition, nor have its documents been studied with an eye to the role of translation in producing such texts.

Based on one of the largest editions, some 220 Slavo-Cyrillic documents exchanged between Ottoman officials and the Ragusan commune (1396-1542) have survived. Of these, 119 were sent in the name of five sultans: Murad II (1421-1451): 4; Mehmed II (1451-1481): 42; Bayezid II (1481-1512): 55; Selim I (1512-1520): 9; and Süleyman I (1520-1566): 9. Production gradually increased, peaking under Bayezid II, then declined sharply under Selim I and Süleyman I. The remaining 101 documents were exchanged between Ragusans and about 50 other Ottoman officials.[32] These collections include copies. Applying criteria of originality such as sultanic seals (tr. *tuğra*s) reduces the number of sultanic letters to Dubrovnik to 95.[33] Only around 13 texts, mostly dated 1396-1417 (see below), were written in the name of Ragusans. The Slavic used is vernacular, with some Church Slavic elements in stylistic or formulaic parts. The writers appear fully competent in spoken Slavic.

The Slavic of the *Corpus*, was indeed the language of negotiation and diplomacy, at least initially. For Ragusans, it was also a language actively spoken by Dubrovnik's citizens; for the Ottomans, it, alongside Greek, was also a language used by a significant number of the formerly imperial, and now Ottoman subjects. Yet the limited late 14th-early 15th-century Arabographic material, and later evidence, suggest that Ottoman sultans and officials never intended to officially grant privileges or address their own subjects in any language other than Turkish.[34] Some of the ideas behind this attitude are implicit in the early history of the *Corpus*, where Ragusans were first engaged as »foreign« negotiators and clients through Slavo-Cyrillic – letters. Once their tributary status was established, more formal and well-structured Arabographic genres began to appear, coexisting with Slavo-Cyrillic texts for a time, before eventually replacing them (see the next section).

30 For more on the issue of translation, see, for example, Römer, Contemporary European translations.

31 For illustrations and an example of excellent analysis, see Theunissen, Ottoman-Venetian.

32 *Stare srpske povelje*, ed. Stojanović, 218-408.

33 Of these, 53 were composed in Istanbul, 18 in Edirne, and 13 in various other places. Lutovac-Kaznovac, *Jezik pisama*, 17-29.

34 The number of extant Arabographic documents increases significantly as of the reign of Sultan Mehmed II, known for strong and clearly visible tendencies towards centralization and bureaucratization of the state apparatus. The earliest known Ottoman document issued on behalf of a Slavic/Serbian landholder dates to 1386 and is written in Turkish. To the best of my knowledge, it appears to be the earliest surviving example of its kind when viewed across the empire's multilingual subjects. See Beldiceanu-Steinherr and Estangüi Gómez, Autour du Document. For examples dated to 1405 and 1439, respectively, see Kotzageorgis, An Ottoman document; Kolovos, A Biti

The phraseology and content of the early letters suggest that from the onset, the participants in these literacy events *perceived* the acts of communication as constituting the broader process of *translatio imperii*. The political imagination of all parties was informed by the notion of empire, yet the process does not unfold linearly in the texts, as a simple and factual replacement of one clearly defined polity by another. The more formal Arabographic genres become dominant when the process of *translatio imperii* was finished – that is, when power relations underlying the Ottoman language and political regime were settled in actuality. It was around the mid-16th century that the Ottoman Slavo-Cyrillic »chancery« was suspended. In the remainder of this paper, I will attempt to illustrate these developments, using the Slavo-Cyrillic letters from 1396 and 1542 as tentative points of orientation.

Direct Ragusan-Ottoman communication began when the Ottomans became neighbors of late medieval Serbia, which had long traded with Dubrovnik. In the beginning of the history of the *Corpus* (1396-1417) that is attested by drafts from Ragusan secretary Rusko Hristiforović, the chief Ottoman provincial representative (*uç beyi*) was based in Skoplje (conquered in late 1391) and was already sponsoring the »Ottomanization« of the town and surrounding border province (tr. *uç*). Stefan Lazarević of Serbia (*knez* 1389-1402, despot 1402-1427) was an Ottoman vassal, likely enabling Ottoman control over urban centers beyond the *uç* and access to strategic roads toward Bosnia and Ragusa.

Of the 13 letters copied by Hristiforović, 11 were sent by Ragusans during Bayezid I's reign (1389-1402), and two under Mehmed I (1413-1421).[35] Most were responses to the Slavo-Cyrillic letters previously received from the Ottoman officials, the contents of which are summarized by Ragusans. These portions show that some incoming letters recorded the results of oral agreements and functioned as legal instruments when sealed by the granting party – here, Ottoman provincial officials using Arabic-script seals and signatures. At first glance, the diplomatic structure of these earliest letters resembles that of other Christian correspondence circulating in South Slavia.

In terms of how the *translatio imperii* was articulated, the letters provide the following evidence. In 1396, the anonymous qadi of Gluhavica granted the Ragusans »v(je/i/e/)ra« (sl./ guarantee, promise) from himself and the »emperor« to trade in the »emperor's land«, requiring merchants to stop at his seat and pay customs there.[36] The Ragusans replied that the emperor's land was large, requesting the qadi's permission to travel freely.[37] »To grant *vjera*« was a standard phrase in earlier Dubrovnik-Slavic contracts; for example, a 1360 charter of Serbian emperor Stefan Uroš V (r. 1355-1371) reads:

> [...] the *empire of mine* (sl. *carstvo mi*) has granted them *this charter* and *my imperial guarantee* (sl. *carsku vjeru*) that both nobles and merchants of Dubrovnik (can) travel freely with (their) goods and with whatever they buy, in the land of *the empire of mine*...without being

35 *Stare srpske povelje*, ed. Stojanović, 218-227.

36 Gluhavica was the first iron mine in medieval Serbia. It was protected by the nearby Jeleč Fortress.

37 *Stare srpske povelje*, ed. Stojanović, 217-218.

> disturbed by any *kefalija*, nor *vlastelin* of the empire of mine, nor by any *knez*, nor anyone else be they of minor or high stature ….[38]

The phrase *carstvo mi* (»the empire of mine«) was a Byzantine calque used by Serbian emperors to designate the royal person. Titles such as *kefalija*, *vlastelin*, and *knez* were among the late medieval titles which also feature in Slavo-Cyrillic texts of the *Corpus*.

In 1398, the Ottoman voyvoda Paşayiğit, on behalf of Bayezid I and himself, granted Ragusans *vjera* to trade freely.[39] In spring 1399, he confirmed they could go to the Serbs, offering trusted Serbs to secure the business and promising severe punishment for anyone who interfered – »if he was a Turk – his head should be cut off; if he was a Serb – his head should be cut off«.[40] By fall, customs remained an issue. From the letter the Ragusans sent to Paşayiğit, we read that they had received a letter from Bayezid I carrying his personal seal, together with a letter from Paşayiğit himself in which he authorized the carrier of the two letters, *kefalija* Feriz*,* warden of Zvečan Fortress, as a legitimate envoy and negotiator. Yet, Feriz, the negotiator, did not bring his *dijak* (sl.gr. student, deacon; scribe) with him on his visit to Dubrovnik and had asked Ragusans to write down the results of the negotiations. The Ragusans finally asked Paşayiğit to send them a confirmation of the agreement written up by his *dijak* and sealed by himself.[41] Despite promises, Paşayiğit occasionally overlooked damages caused to Ragusan merchants by »the Turks and, with them, the Vlachs, *Paskac*, *Ninac*, *Dobric*, *Drman*, *Dragovrat* and *Bogavac*«, prompting complaints to the voyvoda »Sarhan«, a high-positioned novice in the region who had previously granted them *vjera* of »the great ruler« (i.e. the sultan), »the master Koca Feriz's« and his own.[42]

After a gap of more than a decade, the provincial correspondence was renewed under Mehmed I, who seems not to have contacted the Ragusans directly. In 1415, they wrote to Balaban Beg, »the honest *subaša* (commander) of Kruje and Raban«. From this we see that the domain of Ragusan movement regulated by exchanges of Slavo-Cyrillic letters, aside from Slavic and Turkish, encompassed the Albanian ethno-linguistic space. The geography changes, but the means of communication, the subject issues and terminology remain similar – Balaban had previously informed the Ragusans that »the noble great sultan« sent him to rule Kruje and the »Albanian land« and that he himself was granting them *vjera* to trade thereabouts. The Ragusans reciprocated, allowing his men, whether Turk or Albanian, to come to Dubrovnik »for whatever reason, be it trade, or else«.[43] Finally, in 1417, Hamza Beg informed the Ragusans that (some) land had been granted to him as *baština* (sl. a free estate inherited from father, or land to be held as heritable, permanent property), so they could

38 *Dokumenti srpskih*, ed. Porčić, 278.

39 *Stare srpske povelje*, ed. Stojanović,218.

40 *Stare srpske povelje*, ed. Stojanović, 219.

41 *Stare srpske povelje*, ed. Stojanović,219-220.

42 All of these names sound Slavic, though they might also be of different origin. The Vlachs were nomads and cattle breeders. *Stare srpske povelje*, ed. Stojanović, 223.

43 *Stare srpske povelje*, ed. Stojanović, 225-226.

trade there.[44] The Ragusans' reply was similar to that from 1415, adding that they were glad to be free to trade all over the lands held by Turks (sl. *turska država*).

The primary producers of these and comparable Slavo-Cyrillic letters, aside from the officially employed Ragusan Slavic secretary, were *dijaks* from the Slavic hinterland. Little is known about their education, though it is likely that Slavic was their first language. Ottoman local officials clearly relied on *dijaks* skilled in both Slavic orthography and chancery style. In the local exchanges with Ragusans, it seems, Turkish letters were not necessary at all. It is, however, uncertain whether these *dijaks* were always permanently attached to local Ottoman magnates' chanceries or hired as needed. At the time, the Ottomans could also draw on secretaries of local Slavic officials who generally supported Ottoman policies. Whether provincial *dijak*s knew any other language can only be speculated based on a more in-depth linguistic analyses of individual letters, but Slavo-Greek bilingualism was certainly a possibility inherited from pre-Ottoman times. For the period up to 1542, a handful of provincial *dijak*s who provided service for local Ottoman officials are known by name.[45]

Whether Ottoman provincial *dijak*s acted as interpreters in the 14th and later centuries, we cannot know based on the texts of the *Corpus*, just as we cannot know whether a centrally appointed qadi of Gluhavica, for example, knew Slavic in addition to Turkish and the required Arabic, or whether he relied on the services of a *dijak*. Hristiforović's drafts also do not allow us to conclude whether the qadi's *dijak* and a Ragusan scribe employed a uniform style and language, although the chances that they did are high. The following scenarios illustrate how literacy events involving users of multiple languages (including a qadi) could unfold in ways shaped by ideological considerations.

A *dijak* named Radonja served as secretary to Hamza, the provincial governor (tr. *sancak beyi*) of Herzegovina, who in around 1470 arbitrated disputes arising during the execution of the testament of Stjepan Vukčić Kosača (a politically active Bosnian nobleman, d. 1466). Some of Kosača's property, held in Dubrovnik, was to be distributed between his sons: *herzeg* Vlatko (d. 1489), and *knez* Stjepan (d. 1517), who would later convert to Islam, become known as *Hersekoğlu* (*Hersekzade*, *Hercegović*) Ahmed Pasha, and rise to the post of grand vizier of the Ottoman Empire. For this occasion, Radonja first produced a Slavo-Cyrillic copy of the confirmation signed by Vlatko and Stjepan, in which they stated that they had received everything owed to them by the Ragusans. He notes at the end of the copy that, on the order of his master Hamza Beg, he wrote down everything found in »the *hužet* (tr. *hüccet*, confirmation receipt)« of the two brothers. The style and structure of the document bear no resemblance to the *hüccet* known from Ottoman diplomatics, so Radonja's analogy was clearly drawn from function rather than form.[46]

44 *Stare srpske povelje*, ed. Stojanović, 227.

45 Đorđić mentions three: one from Bosnia (Šišman Botić) and two from Herzegovina; Radonja and Ćupelija Ajvazović, one Christian and one Muslim. Truhelka provides several more examples »from the first forty years after the conquest of Bosnia«, emphasizing they were all Christians and noting that local officials also employed Christians as representatives in their business with Dubrovnik. Đorđić, *Istorija*, 163 and facsimile no. 226; Truhelka, *Turskoslavjenski spomenici*, 177.

46 *Stare srpske povelje*, ed. Stojanović, 191.

One year later, when Hamza himself got into a territorial dispute with the Ragusans, Radonja produced two Cyrillic copies of a charter issued by the Serbian king Stefan Dušan (king 1331-1346, emperor 1346-1355) in 1333, working from the Slavic original or a copy held by the Ragusans. The charter, originally composed in Latin and Slavic, had granted the disputed land to the Ragusans as *baština* in exchange for an annual tribute. At the end of each copy, Radonja notes that, on the order of his master Hamza Beg, he transcribed everything from »the *knjiga* (sl. document, letter, book) of king Stepan«. Each of the two copies contains two Arabographic notes: one in Turkish by Hamza and one in Arabic by a qadi from Foča named Eminüddin. The qadi's role was to confirm that the copies corresponded exactly to the original.[47] Hamza wrote a note on each copy describing what the document was about. One note reads:

> This is a copy of the confirmation (tr. *ḥüccet*) given to the people of Dubrovnik by the emperor (sl. *car*) Stefan for Ston and Posrednica. It is in no way to be used for anything else. /Written by the poor and humble Hamza./[48]

The other reads:

> This is a copy of the confirmation (tr. *ḥüccet*) for Ston and Posrednica, given by the pride of the infidels, the emperor (sl. *car*) Stefan to people of Dubrovnik. It is authentic. It is in no way to be used for anything else. It is correct. /Written by the poor and humble Hamza./[49]

Many late medieval imperial decrees retained their legal force for long periods, and the incoming Ottomans often recognized them as valid and/or took them into consideration when regulating matters related to the properties mentioned in these decrees. From this perspective, the use of Radonja's copies may be viewed as a fairly typical example. However, citing a fully comparable case would require further research, since the ways in which such documents were handled have not been treated as a topic in their own right. The differences between the two Arabographic notes attributed to Hamza are particularly interesting in that they appear to have been written by two individuals who not only heard and transcribed one of the two Slavic place names differently, but who also had essentially the same, yet subtly divergent, understanding of who the signatory of the original charter was. Both use the word

47 The text of the charter – and these two versions, which are not the only surviving copies – has been known to scholars for most of the 20th century. The Arabographic notes, however, have only recently been correctly deciphered and published in transliteration and Serbian translation. The qadi's notes in the two versions written by the same *dijak*, differ slightly in wording but convey the same amount of information. The first reads (in transliteration slightly modified by myself): *Naḳlu hāẕihi'ṣ-ṣūreti min aṣli'l-ḥujjeti ʿindī wa anā żaʿfu'l-ʿubbād Emīnu'ddīn al-faḳīr al-ḳaẕī fī wilāyati Hersek bi-Drin*. (This is a copy made based on the original confirmation which I have with me, and I am the weakness among the slaves, the poor Emīnu'ddīn, the judge in the province of Hersek, in Drin (probably synonym for Foča)«, *Dokumenti*, ed. Porčić, 212.

48 *Çār İstepān Dubrovniklulere İston içün ve Posırednisa içün virdüği hüccetiñ ṣūretidur. Bir dürlü dāḥi değildür. Ḥurrirehu el-faḳīrü'l ḥaḳīr Hamza*, *Dokumenti*, ed. Porčić, 213.

49 *İfṣithārü'l-küffār çār İstepan Dubrovnıklülere İston içün ve Bosrekniça içün virdüği hüccetiñ ṣūretidur. Ṣarīḥ. Bir dürlü dāḥi değildür. Saḥḥ. Ḥurrirehu el-faḳīrü'l ḥaḳīr Hamza*, *Dokumenti*, ed. Porčić, 213.

çār, but they display different degrees of concern with intitulation. The phrase »pride of the infidels« in the quoted notes is reminiscent of expressions found in 15th-century sultanic orders (tr. *fermān*) as part of their formula of intitulatio – for example, *ifitħārü'l-ümerā'* (»the pride of the commanders«), applied to *sancak beyi*s. The Turkish term for »infidels«, *küffār* (sg. *kāfir*), was used in orders and letters (such as letters of recommendation) to refer to Christians who were not subjects of the Ottoman state.[50] Thus, instead of two authors, we may in fact speak of three (Hamza, the qadi, and someone else), and it is even possible to question whether Hamza wrote anything himself. Finally, designating the *knjiga* (issued by a king perceived as an emperor) as a *hüccet* can be understood as an act of translation that effectively reduced the kingly/imperial authority to that of a judge – an official normally appointed by the emperor.[51]

A glimpse of how the Ragusans gradually learned about the nuances of Ottoman political realities can be seen in the summarized letters to Balaban and Hamza – Balaban was sent to govern, while Hamza received the land as *baština*, though both were centrally appointed local officials. A question that emerges from this corpus is whether the Ragusans themselves formulated new expressions based on their understanding of the new socio-political reality or whether they tended to adopt ready-made solutions from the Ottoman side. In any case, the exchange of knowledge in these earliest provincial letters was certainly not based on the translation of written documents. The written traces of cross-linguistic contact were initially limited mainly to the adoption of titles and a few crucial institutions. In some letters, we also see instances of the Ragusan practice of adopting Ottoman titles directly (e.g. *subaša* for Turkish *subaşı*), rather than searching for Slavic functional cognates. Foreign phonetics were, unsurprisingly, initially recorded by transcription based on hearing. The integration of Turkish terms into Slavic texts gradually expanded to encompass more titles and the names of institutions established in the region. It is also worth noting that as early as the 1390s, the ethno-linguistic space reflected in these letters was already legally divided: on the one hand, the Ragusans (Dubrovčani), and on the other, the allied Turks, Serbs, and/or Albanians holding various social positions. Based on a brief survey of Arabographic cases of a later date, I concluded that Slavic texts were generally more permeable to Turkish terms than vice versa. In the long run, *voyvoda* is one of the rare Slavic titles that crossed the linguistic barrier to become an Ottoman term par excellence. The same is true for *vjera*, which even transcended documentary literacy to enter Ottoman narrative discourse in the form of *vire*.[52]

50 One such example is from 1464: an Arabographic-Turkish letter in which Isa Beg issues a letter of recommendation »to infidel Latin merchant by the name Franko« (tr. *Frānḳo adlu Lātin bāzergān kāfirine*)., *Turski Spomenici*, vol 2, ed. Elezović, 7.

51 In Ottoman diplomatics, *hüccet*s are described as documents issued by qadis; see Boškov, Die hüccet.

52 For a broader contextualization of these observations, see Mišević, *Writing Slavic*, esp. 309-310.

The Ottoman Slavic Dragoman Interrupted

What all the literacy events discussed in some detail so far have in common is that they took place in Ragusa and/or Ottoman-ruled South Slavia. Those events that have actually led scholars to describe Slavic as a diplomatic language of the Ottoman government, however, were based on texts produced by scribes employed in the chanceries of Ottoman sultans or by highly placed government officials, most notably grand viziers.[53] That these scribes possessed skills in Slavic orthography and chancery style is beyond doubt. What remains less clear is how they acquired these skills, as is also the case with the role of translation in the production of Slavo-Cyrillic documents sent on behalf of the parties mentioned. Since these patterns have not been studied systematically, what we currently know is limited to insights drawn from a select number of specific literacy events. Finally, a very small number of Slavo-Cyrillic texts issued by the sultanic chancery or by other Ottoman officials have been preserved in the OA. Most of these, however, belong to the *Corpus* and have survived in the DA. Summarily speaking, the history of Slavic as a diplomatic language of the Ottoman governors effectively begins (c. 1430; see below) and, in a sense, ends (c. 1542; see above, p. 11) with the documents contained in the *Corpus*.

The literacy events based on Slavo-Cyrillic texts produced in the sultanic chancery that led to the consolidation of Ragusan tributary status (before and shortly after 1458) constitute one of the crucial segments of the history of the *Corpus*. The year 1458 is significant, because it marks the date of its oldest Arabographic text: a *hüccet* (19 November) issued in Istanbul by Mehmed II, confirming that the Ragusan envoys had duly submitted the tribute – twenty plus days earlier in Skopje. For, prior to this, on 23 October, the same transaction had been confirmed by a receipt written in Slavo-Cyrillic. On that same day, in Skopje, a general Slavo-Cyrillic treaty was drafted by the sultan's scribe, Toma Gramatik, and verified by sultanic seal.[54] After this point, we can observe an increasing influx into the DA not only of Arabographic-Turkish documents from the Ottoman central government but also of Arabographic (Turkish and Arabic) records of local communication between Ragusans and Ottoman officials (qadis, customs officials, provincial governors, and others).[55] Some of these incoming Arabographic texts from the central government were accompanied by Slavo-Cyrillic counterparts which, although never verbatim translations, regulated the same transactions and carried the same legal force. Once this practice ceased, sometime in the 16th century, the Ragusans began to educate their own interpreters – *dragoman*s – at least for Turkish.[56] As noted earlier, Slavo-Cyrillic documents addressing various matters continued to arrive in the DA until c. 1542. Most, if not all Arabographic documents issued by the central Ottoman authorities and preserved in the DA have not survived as part of the OA. This is certainly the case for the period before c. 1542, and although further research is needed, the informed impression is that the same holds for later periods as well. This does not imply that

53 Polomac, *Srpski*.

54 *Turski Spomenici*, vol 2, ed. Elezović, 3: Nedeljković, Dubrovačko-Turski.

55 Besides Miović cited in fn.10, see also Miović, *Dubrovačka Republika u Spisima Namjesnika*.

56 Miović-Perić, Dragomans, 81-94.

the Ottoman central government failed to keep records of the relevant literacy events; rather, as I will suggest, the beginning of a particular form of record keeping around1544 represents a new phase in the history of the *Corpus*. Before addressing that, let me unpack some of the claims made here by means of concrete examples.

The oldest extant Slavo-Cyrillic letter issued directly in the name of an Ottoman sultan is dated 10 July 1430. Sent from Edirne to Dubrovnik and sealed with the *tuğra* of Murad II, it is one of three such surviving letters. Together with two additional samples – an official translation from a Greek original and a Ragusan copy –, some scholars interpret these as evidence of a Slavo-Cyrillic sultanic chancery during Murad II's reign.[57]

The 1430 letter is stylistically Slavic. The sultan first reprimands the Ragusans for failing to send envoys despite trading »throughout his lands«, and then, acting upon the complaint of »his man« and tribute (sl. *danak*)-payer, Radoslav Pavlović, orders them to return the land they took away from him. The sultan dispatches the letter with his nobleman (sl. *vlastelin*) Karač, authorizing him to speak on his behalf, and uses the phrase »the lordship of mine« (sl. *gospodstvo mi*) instead of the sultanic »I«.[58] Whether a Slavic scribe was employed or the services of Karač's or someone else's scribe were used remains unclear. Notably, this is the only Slavic letter to employ the Slavic term *danak* for »tribute«; later scribes prefer the Arabic loanword *harač*.

The next Slavo-Cyrillic document, from December 1430, is a treaty guaranteeing Ragusan commercial freedom. More formal than the previous letter, it reflects mixed chancery influences. Its intitulation mirrors that of contemporary Arabographic documents. The opening reads as follows:

> I, the great master and the great commander (*amiru*), Amurat Beg, the son of the great master and the great commander (*amire*) Sultan *Mehemet* Beg; wills and commands the lordship of mine the following [...]

Its geographic scope is described is some detail:

> [...] wherever they choose to go, in the western and the eastern sides, across the land and over the sea, in Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and all lands and towns and counties (sl. *župa*s) of the lordship of mine, (and all) those (lands) which are under my protection [...][59]

This treaty was produced in Slavic, Greek, and apparently also Turkish.[60] Based solely on the Slavic version, I cannot draw any conclusions regarding how the two texts, Slavic and Greek, are related. The use of the Italo-Romance *porta* for the Ottoman court and the absence of

57 Nakaš, Portina, 288; Polomac described the chancery producing Slavo-Cyrillic documents in Murad II's time as »Turkish«; Polomac and Lutovac, Dva pisma,10.

58 *Stare srpske povelje*, ed. Stojanović, 227-228.

59 *Stare srpske povelje*, ed. Stojanović, 229-231.

60 Božić wrote about the Turkish version of this document citing the DA collection titled *Lettere di Levante*. Božić's remark appears in various later publications, but as far as I can determine so far, this version is not preserved. Božić, *Dubrovnik i Turska*, 54; see also, Groot, Historical development, 580.

the Slavic *vjera* are striking, but no particular evidence clarifies the authority of the Greek version. Two sealed versions in different languages may have been necessary simply because the sultan's domains were vast, inhabited by speakers and readers of both Slavic and Greek, and the know-how for their production in different languages was obviously available.

Several other examples illustrate how the Ottoman-Slavic chancery related to Greek and other chancery traditions. A clear example of translation surpassing the level of words and phrases is that of »the extended oath« used in treaties. The documents quoted below are also illustrative of the change in the Ottoman perception of the space in which the Slavic documents were in force.

Theunissen notes that the extended oath's origins and original language are unknown; its earliest version appears in the 1403 peace treaty. He notes that for a Muslim to guarantee his word, a rather short formula was needed, but despite this, criticizes an earlier opinion that extensive Islamic, and therefore, Ottoman oaths were developed »under pressure from Christian, probably Venetian negotiators«.[61] Over time, these formulas became increasingly elaborate and were translated into all languages used in the 15th-century sultanic chancery – Italian, Greek, Turkish, and, very early on, Slavic. The oldest surviving Slavic version, however, is not in a sultanic document.

In 1441 (Vučitrn, 13 July), independently of Murat II, Şehabeddin Pasha, »the master of all western sides« (i.e. *beylerbeyi* of Rumelia) entrusts his message to the Ragusans to *sklav* Yakub. The letter grants the Ragusans *vjera* for their safety and promises mediation:

> [...] if there appears some business to be done with the great emperor, we will send them (the merchants) to the great emperor with our man, and return them to you safe and sound.

The oath, placed at the end, reads:

> And for this, we give our solemn oath unto God, creator of the earth and the heavens, and upon the great prophet of ours Muhamed and upon the Seven *Mushaf* which we believe in and (which we) respect and upon my soul and the head of mine, so it never happens the other way.[62]

In 1442, two Cyrillic contracts were drafted, one by Ragusans and one by Murad II, each containing oaths referring to the parties' religiosity. The sultanic version includes an expanded oath formula echoing the one quoted above in the letter of *beylerbeyi*, but more elaborate:

> I, the great master and the great commander (*amira*), Sultan Murat Beg, the son of the exceptional and great lord commander (*amir*) Sultan Mehemet Beg, give my solemn oath, upon God I swear, who created the heavens and the earth, and upon the great prophet Mahmet, and upon the seven Mushaf in which we *Musromans* believe, and upon 124000 prophets of God, and upon the soul of my father, and my grandfather, and upon my soul,

61 Theunissen, Ottoman-Venetian, 288-295, esp. 295.

62 Truhelka, *Turskoslavjenski*, 7-8. Seven *mushaf* is written as seven *musafeh*.

> and upon the sabre I am girding myself with, and upon my head, that since this day and in the time after, I gave my solemn oath to the honourable *knez* and *vlastela dubrovčanom*, since the *knez* and … had sent to the porte of the lordship of mine the honest gifts and their emissaries […][63]

Here, third parties are no longer defined ethnically or geographically but in socio-political terms. No harm is to be done to Ragusans by the sultan, his viziers, *subaša*s, or any of his men, including tribute-payers (»those who give me *harač*«), and Dubrovnik is acknowledged as a free city governed by its own laws.[64]

In 1453, after conquering Istanbul, Mehmed II issued an *ahdname* to the inhabitants of Galata with a similar opening – the intitulation and oath are structurally identical, though with minor differences in wording. İnalcık notes that it was first drafted in Greek and later translated into Turkish, at an unknown point.[65] The same oath appears in a treaty of 7 March 1459 addressed to Dubrovnik (preserved in an official Italian translation from Turkish).[66] In 1478, Mehmed II wrote to Venice and explicitly mentioned his »Latin« scribes. This is the third known document he issued in Italian; the first is from 1466, the second from 1471.[67] The oath from the 1478 document is placed towards the end, but has a similar wording to that mentioned in previous examples.

All of the above suggests, that, from the very foundation of the sultanic Slavic chancery, if it existed as a permanent structure, its scribes were very well acquainted with corresponding activities in *at least* the Greek chancery. Until further research is conducted, however, it can only be concluded that within the Ottoman chancery as a whole, translation remained limited to particular phrases or formulaic elements (like oaths, salutations) used in documents intended for communication with individuals/corporations beyond the confines of the Ottoman polity.

If we are to judge by the Slavo-Cyrillic part of the *Corpus*, the structure of documents composed – conditionally speaking – according to Slavic diplomatic principles remained remarkably stable for a very long period of time, all the way until the reign of Süleyman I, irrespective of the sender. In other words, Arabographic-Turkish chancery rules based on the Persian model never interfered with the structure of Slavo-Cyrillic documents to the point of disturbing continuity with pre-Ottoman practices. This implies that several generations of scribes employed at the Ottoman court were acquainted with the diplomatic principles of the Slavic and Greek chanceries established in pre-Ottoman times and perpetuated during the process of the gradual imposition of direct Ottoman rule in the Balkans.

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63 Truhelka, *Turskoslavjenski*, 9-10. The only earlier example Theunissen provides for an oath of almost identical wording is an Ottoman Venetian treaty issued by Murad II, in 1430 and extant in an Italian (Greek) version: Teunissen, Ottoman-Venetian, 271.

64 Truhelka, *Turskoslavjenski*, 9-10.

65 İnalcık, Ottoman Galata.

66 Truhelka, *Turskoslavjenski*, 16-17

67 *Seven Ottoman Documents*, ed. Menage.

Whether – and, if so, when exactly – the Ottoman court began educating its own scribal staff responsible for Slavic correspondence, rather than outsourcing from the pool of Slavic or Greek allies and officials, is not known. The same uncertainty applies to the question of when – and whether at all – this specialization became unrelated to the ethnic origin of the students. What is certain is that, from its initial phases, training guided by the Ottoman educational cadre at court was conducted by employing all available resources, and the known methods of language instruction were based on the historical experiences and grammatical traditions of Islamicate societies. This can be inferred from the three surviving handbooks for learning multiple languages at the court of Mehmed II – one of which was Slavic/Serbian. Discussing handbooks, I concluded that the idea of educating scribes at the court existed, but it never materialized in a way which provided full competence reflected in the outgoing Slavic documents.[68] The Slavo-Cyrillic letters of the *Corpus*, however, do offer some information about Slavic *dragoman*s, most of whom can be assumed to have been trained in Slavic literacy before entering court service.

As early as 1431, Murad II's slave (sl. *sklav*) Ali Beg, the *defterdar* (head of the finance administration), traveled from Istanbul with a *tuğra*-sealed Slavo-Cyrillic letter authorizing him to negotiate with Dubrovnik. Ali Beg appears to have traveled alone. The letter contained some Greek phrases.[69] His ethnic origin is unknown, but his possible knowledge of Slavic or Greek is noteworthy given his position: interpreters and scribes involved in diplomatic work rarely held financial offices in the central Ottoman chancery. Although individuals holding multiple offices was not unusual in Ottoman history, the combination of two scribal roles in one person, as in Ali's case, is striking. But, was Ali Beg a *dragoman* as well?

Discussing the 16th-century period, Matuz notes that the office of *dragoman* was normally combined with non-scribal, middle-ranking posts.[70] Observing the reign of Süleyman I, he observes that the first person (ever?) to hold the *dragoman*ate as a full-time court position was Atik Ali, first mentioned in 1502. Matuz also notes that all *dragoman*s employed by the Ottoman court arrived already literate in a »foreign« language.[71] The question of whether Slavic can be considered a language »foreign« to the Ottomans has already been raised indirectly here, but based on the ways it was used by the Ottoman governing elite, it appears to have been fashioned as one. That said, it may be important for future investigations of the *Corpus* to note that Ragusan *dragoman*s, mentioned in the DA as of 1558[72], belong to the rare but highly mobile group of South Slavs whom we can confidently identify as having studied and used at least Turkish – though the exact written record of their translating skills has been poorly studied.[73]

68 On these, see Mišević, How and why.

69 Like *heretisanije* instead of sl. *pozdrav*.

70 Like *ṣubāşı*, *müteferriḳa*, and *silāḥdār*. Matuz also writes that Turks working in the central chancellery never learned a language other than Turkish. Matuz, Die Pfortendolmetscher, 34.

71 Matuz, Die Pfortendolmetscher, 41.

72 Miović-Perić, Dragomans, 83, fn. 6.

73 The one publication dealing with Ragusan translations from Turkish that I am currently aware of is from 1932: Elezović, Tursko-Srpski.

Some further depth on the issue of translations and the production of both Slavo-Cyrillic and Arabographic texts in the *Corpus* can be gained by examining the few known court scribes who wrote Cyrillic letters to Dubrovnik on behalf of the Ottoman sultans toward the end of the 15th century. One such figure is Ibrahim, active around 1474 and a native speaker of Slavic. A letter dated 8 July 1474, written in Istanbul and sealed with Mehmed II's *tuğra*, was sent with him to Ragusa to collect money owed to the sultan.[74] The letter identifies him as »*sklav* Ibrahim« and »the servant and the slave of the empire of mine« (sl. *sluga i sklav carstva mi Ibrahim*). A second letter, dated 24 September of the same year and likewise issued in the name of Mehmed II, calls him »*logofet* Ibrahim«, in addition to servant and slave. The Ragusan recipients refer to him as a *dragoman*, confirming that he acted as an interpreter and probably as the writer of the letters he carried. This time he was assigned to help resolve an inheritance dispute between Ahmed (Stjepan) and Vlatko by examining the documents held by the Ragusans in the DA.[75] In early 1486, Ibrahim traveled to Ragusa again, now identified in the letter he carried as »*spahioglan* Ibreim« (*sipahi*-oğlan, the son of a *sipahi*).[76]

Ibrahim the *dragoman* was of Herzegovinian origin. His father held a land estate there – granted by the Ottoman government until 1477 – as the leader (*knez*) of a local Vlach (pastoralist) community. Hence the *sipahi* – landowner obliged to military duty.[77] Ibrahim is also known as the *dijak* of Isa Beg Isaković (of Skoplje and later Bosnia). Scholars maintain that Ibrahim entered Ottoman service through a political alliance between his father and the Ottomans rather than through the *kul*/*devşirme* system.[78] His Slavic origin likely recommended him for *dragoman* service, but whether he received his first education at the palace remains uncertain; his father, after all, was literate. As a Muslim, Ibrahim likely studied at least some Arabic in addition to Turkish. Several corrupted, Slavicized Turkish words appear untranslated in the letters he carried – and likely wrote – such as *hazna*, a Slavic form of Turkish *hazine* (»treasury«). This may reflect either Ibrahim's interpretation or the fact that the term had by then become embedded in Slavic vocabulary.

In April 1479, the sultan sent his *sklav* Kasum to Dubrovnik with another Cyrillic letter, to collect money. On 7 March 1481, Kasum wrote to the Ragusan Municipality on his own behalf, identifying himself as »*dragoman* Kasum«. He emphasizes the assistance he offered Ragusan envoys at court, notes that he received a small goblet as a gift from their representatives and five ducats for each *hüccet* he issued, and remarks that earlier gifts had been more generous. Kasum apparently remained in the service of Bayezid II: in 1485 he held the

74 Truhelka, *Turskoslavjenski*, 38-39.

75 Truhelka, *Turskoslavjenski*, 38-40.

76 Truhelka, *Tursko slavjenski*, 85.

77 Truhelka, *Turskoslavjenski*, 177. A recent summary of available data is available in Konjević, Herak Vraneš.

78 One anonymous scribe, perhaps Ibrahim, wrote a Cyrillic letter (dated to 1472, and written in Tirhala/Greece) in which Mehmed II informs the Ragusans that he ordered Hamza Beg of Herzegovina to collect *Vlahe i Vlašiće* (Vlachs/ and plural of diminutive of Vlach, maybe a child Vlach, but could also be something else) for *acemi-oğlans* (i.e. *devşirme*). This letter contains a proverb (meant as a threat) which perhaps betrays a native speaker: every man will reap what he sows (sl. *što poseje vsaki človek, toi ke požeti*); Truhelka, *Turskoslavjenski*, 37-38.

post of gatekeeper (tr. *kapıcı*), and he is attested again in 1486.[79] His tenure overlapped with Ibrahim's, and he was almost certainly a native speaker of Slavic.

The next scribe-interpreter known by name is Skender. In 1486 he appears as the Ottoman ambassador to Venice; on his way he was supposed to pass through Dubrovnik, where he would receive a ship and safe conduct. This order was issued in the Slavo-Cyrillic letter he carried, though it is unclear whether he wrote it himself, since Kasum still seems to have been active as a Slavic scribe, and Skender's main duties in Venice were to be conducted in Italian. It is noteworthy that, despite Skender's knowledge of Italian, the instruction for the Ragusans was written in Slavic. Skender appears as the writer of a Slavic letter only in 1506 – a personal letter written on his own behalf, lively in tone and rich in detail. Scholars described him as a non-native or second-language speaker of Slavic.[80] This may explain why he explicitly mentions translation in the letter, saying:

> [...] the news from the seas, which you wrote and sent by your servants, they came and brought the letters, one for the honourable emperor, and one for Mustafa Pasha. And I turned (them into) Turkish, and all of it was retold and explained to the emperor in detail. And having formulated his response, that (response) was sent to the nobility of yours.[81]

The letter also reports news from court: the appointment of the new grand vizier Ali Pasha, who then reassigned various *sancak beyi*s.[82] When referring to Ottoman pashas of Slavic origin or appointed to Ragusa's Slavic hinterland, Skender uses Slavic surnames ending in *-ić* rather than *-oğlu* or *-zade*. From this letter we also learn two additional facts about *dragoman* Kasum: before 1506 he traveled as an envoy to Hungary, and in 1506 he was appointed *sancak beyi* of Kruševac (Akhisar, in present-day Serbia).

After Skender, no other Slavic *dragoman* employed at the court is known by name. Slavo-Cyrillic documents continued to be issued in the sultan's name for a time, but from the later part of Bayezid II's reign, a clear trend emerges: both the number and the variety of subjects addressed in these documents decline, while the production of Turkish documents increases – addressed to the Ragusans and even more frequently to both Ragusans and provincial officials, including qadis handling disputes. It was also Bayezid II who, in 1485, issued an order recognizing Ragusan receipts of commercial transactions at the court and instructing local qadis to consult local priests for interpretation when necessary. Later he decreed that entries from qadi court records (sl. *kadino libro*), together with *hüccets* issued by qadis, were the only valid proofs at court. During the reign of Selim I, confirmations of tribute payments and treaty renewals became the sole subjects of sultanic Cyrillic documents, which had been

79 Truhelka, *Turskoslavjenski*, 81-82, and 88-89.

80 This is noted by Nakaš, who adds that he does not seem like a Greek who learned Slavic, illustrating the conclusion with linguistic evidence; Nakaš, Portina, 276.

81 Truhelka, *Turskoslavjenski*, 131-133. Mustafa Pasha could be Çoban (tr./shepherd) Mustafa Pasha (d.1529), conscripted through devshirme.

82 This is Bosnian-born Hadım (tr./eunuch) Ali Pasha (d. 1511). This was his second tenure as a grand vizier.

issued in two versions since at least 1458. During the reign of Süleyman I, the sultanic Slavic chancery ceased to produce documents.

Besides the Slavo-Cyrillic documents issued in the sultans' names, the *Corpus* also contains dozens of letters issued on behalf of grand viziers of Slavic aristocratic origin between the mid-15th and early 16th centuries. Hersekoğlu Ahmed Pasha who died in 1517, was one of them. So, once figures of this kind disappeared from the scene, Slavo-Cyrillic letters ceased to be produced by centrally based Ottoman officials. As already noted, only a negligible number of these documents were preserved in the OA. Nevertheless, the province remained a realm in which Slavo-Cyrillic literacy – together with Slavo-Latin – continued to flourish throughout the 17th century, now exclusively in the form of semi-formal letters addressed to non-Ottoman subjects.

The Early Modern Ottoman Libri Reformationes: *A Conclusion*

The history of the *Corpus* begins with Slavo-Cyrillic documents from around 1396, followed by a brief period – starting circa 1458 – during which documents were issued in both Slavic and Turkish. Around 1542 the *Corpus* entered its longest phase, characterized by the exclusive use of Turkish documents. From roughly the same period dates (1544-1545) the oldest surviving volume from the long series of *mühimme defter*s – registers of important affairs.[83] These were bound compilations of Imperial Council decisions and deliberations, most of which involved issuing written orders. Entries concerning Ragusa appear interspersed among a wide array of other matters until the turn of the 17th century.

In 1604, Ottoman administrators in Istanbul created a dedicated register compiling copies of documents that trace the history, purpose, rhythm, and quality of communication between the imperial government and the Republic of Dubrovnik, alongside decisions of the Imperial Council prompted by Ragusan petitions. This register covers the years up to 1618 and was followed in the 17th century by two further examples, for 1628-1646 and 1647-1665. These collections were produced by scribes attached to the Imperial Council (*Divan-ı Hümayun*). Portions of the registers also include entries concerning relations with Venice.[84]

The introduction of the two types of *defter*s complicates the task of identifying individual literacy events, their participants, and broader patterns – far more than was the case with stand-alone documents. Yet even a cursory examination reveals a remarkable expansion in the social range of individuals who indirectly participated in, or were affected by, literacy events prompted by Ragusan initiatives or by their Ottoman counterparts. Many of these were Slavs of the Ragusan hinterland, some of whom were Christians who, based on everything we know, did not learn Turkish (Arabic, Persian) at school, and of whom we know very little.

This paper has not attempted to exhaust any of the topics it touches upon. Rather, by sketching a periodization of the *Corpus* and examining a select set of literacy events, it has

83 Sahillioğlu, Topkapı.

84 All three *defter*s have been transliterated in three MA thesis: Kara, *13/1 Nolu*; Köker, *XVII. Yüzyılda*; Diraga Canbaz, *15/3 No'lu*. See also Bojanić, *Sultanska akta*.

aimed to suggest that the *Corpus* itself has a history – one best understood through close attention to its multilingualism in all its complexity, rather than by relying on categories anachronistically derived from modern notions of »diplomatic language«, »foreign language«, »imperial/administrative language«, and the like.

Acknowledgments

This publication has benefitted from the research environment of the Cluster of Excellence COE 8 »EurAsian Transformations« (Grant-DOI: 10.55776/COE8).

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Moving Jobs: Occupational Identity and Motility in the Middle Ages II – Introduction

Annamaria Pazienza and Irene Bavuso*

This introduction presents the second part of a themed issue on *Moving Jobs: Occupational Identity and Motility in the Middle Ages*, whose first part appeared in volume 20 (2024). It discusses the advantages of considering the concept of motility to investigate the combination of movement and occupation, and its reflection on identity construction. Some of the issues that the contributions to both parts have addressed include how mobility could have important consequences on social advancement and the shaping of identities; the kinds of networks that helped the movement of individuals and were created by them; the importance of micro-mobilities and the local horizon of the medieval communities. The introduction also summarises the contents of the three new contributions. Irene Bavuso investigates the mobility of smiths in early post-Roman England; Robert Portass focuses on local mobilities in rural societies of tenth-century northern Spain; Joe Glynias concentrates on the highly mobile career and multiple identities of the eleventh-century intellectual Ibn Buṭlān. The introduction concludes with some reflections on how to approach female work and mobility – a theme that has been traditionally less visible in early medieval scholarship, and for which one may profit from theoretical refinements and well as from a cross-disciplinary broadening of the pool of investigated sources.

Keywords: motility, medieval work, gendered division of labour, local mobility, peasantry, craftspeople, transcultural mobility, job identity, social mobility, networks

The contributions collected here continue the reflection started in volume 20 (2024), where the authors investigate the mobility of people related to work, and how such movements had an impact on the shaping of job identities in the medieval period. The focus of our inquiry

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This is the introduction to the volume *Moving Jobs: Occupational Identity and Motility in the Middle Ages, II*, guest editors: Annamaria Pazienza and Irene Bavuso. To read all related articles, please access https://doi.org/10.1553/medievalworlds_no23_2025 for the entire part II and https://doi.org/10.1553/medievalworlds_no20_2024 for part I.

has mostly fallen on the Early Middle Ages – understood, however, as a broadly defined temporal span. While mobility rightly continues to receive considerable attention in scholarship, much can still be done to illuminate movement in connection to work during the early medieval period, and its relations with job identity.[1] In order to approach this topic, we have proposed that the analytical tool offered by the concept of motility may be fruitfully applied. Motility refers to and includes all those elements and factors that create the potential – the capital – for mobility.[2] Such potential extends from the network of relations that help with movement and relocation, to the presence of essential facilities, as well as to specific individual characteristics including skills, means and aspirations. These are some of the key factors and themes explored by the contributions in their respective case studies, each of which addressed the individual, relational, or collective dimension (or a combination of the three). As discussed in the Introduction to the 2024 section, the themed issue conceives the notion of work in a comprehensive perspective, thus including non-remunerative activities that were nonetheless essential to the functioning of the communities, or which were important to the shaping of social roles and positions.

Several of the contributions to the present volume and the 2024 section demonstrate that the capacity to move had significant repercussions on social advancement, as well as, crucially, on identity formation, both at the individual and the group level. People who relocated for work often relied on pre-existing networks, and in many cases were able to create new personal ones – also thanks to skills such as multilingualism and the strategic deployment of individual identities. Such networks could act as conduits for the exchange of knowledge and experience, and networks pertaining to different spheres – including, for instance, religion, artisanal crafts, trade, diplomacy, culture, political power – could intertwine with one another. Networks and movement need not happen over large distances only; in fact, micro-mobility and the local horizon are key to understanding the everyday life of medieval communities, as short-distance mobility no doubt constituted most of the movement for the majority of non-elite groups. Importantly, focusing on work-related (micro-)mobility allows us to recognise that this can be motivated by ambition and entrepreneurial attitude also in the case of ordinary men and women during the early medieval period.

In the present section, Irene Bavuso's contribution concentrates on the figure of the itinerant smith in early post-Roman England. The model of the itinerant smith is often linked to a specific understanding of the functioning of hierarchical structures: smiths are seen as crucial producers of the objects used by elites as gifts to assert their status. Yet while movement may indeed foster the smiths' upward social mobility, the reality was likely more complex than assumed in this model. The need for smiths to possess specialised skills and knowledge, to access exotic materials and the operational networks, along with a widespread distribution of metalworks – which problematises the idea of gift-exchange –, seems to point to a higher degree of sedentism, and to movement also likely dictated by resource and knowledge

1 New research on medieval mobility since the first part of this themed issue was published includes Sarti and von Trott zu Solz (eds.), *Mobility in the Early Middle Ages, and Beyond*.

2 See Kaufmann and Audikana, Mobility capital and motility; Guitton *et al.*, Defining motility; see further our introduction to the first part of this themed issue in vol. 20: Pazienza and Bavuso, Moving Jobs.

requirements (rather than solely by elite's needs). All of this, in turn, may help us to rethink the overall relationship between smiths and elite patronage.

Robert Portrass' study investigates the true nature of mobility for non-elite populations in the Early Middle Ages, challenging narratives that prioritise elite long-distance travel. Using charter evidence from tenth-century northern Spain, particularly the Galician village of Rabal, the research asserts that the lives and identities of rural cultivators were primarily structured by small-scale movements. Due to dispersed landholding patterns, journeys between home, field, and neighbouring settlements were a near-daily occurrence. Beyond agricultural labour, this micro-geography of mobility was further shaped by both economic motives (e.g. land transactions) and legal demands (e.g. appearing in court), which saw non-elite individuals perform crucial community-facing roles like witnessing disputes. The article proposes that to accurately historicise early medieval life, scholars must prioritise the preponderance of »the local« and its fundamental influence on non-elite work, identity, and social structures.

Joe Glynias' work focuses on the emblematic eleventh-century figure of Ibn Buṭlān, a physician trained in the Greco-Arabic intellectual and medical tradition, as well as a diplomat, a convert to Byzantine Orthodoxy, a teacher, and a litterateur. Highly renowned in his own time, Ibn Buṭlān consciously and flexibly deployed his multiple, intersecting cultural and occupational identities to forge a brilliant career that spanned the Islamic and Byzantine worlds. He achieved this while utilising his frequent and extensive travel through Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Constantinople, and Antioch. Through his vast knowledge of languages and scholarly traditions, he was able to expand his personal networks, fuel his popularity, and ultimately consolidate his career achievements. Ibn Buṭlān is the quintessential example of an individual who, possessing a high degree of motility, successfully navigated diverse political and cultural frontiers, both literally and metaphorically.

While the themed issue has adopted a broad geographical and chronological scope, motility has proved to be an excellent concept for deepening our understanding and opening new vistas on the theme of mobility for work and its role on identity construction in medieval societies. In future research, we hope that this theoretical lens will continue to prove useful in illuminating situations that remain poorly understood, along with groups and occupations that are less visible in the source material. In this perspective, a few words on female workers are pertinent – as they are not the subject of a dedicated contribution, yet appear intermittently throughout the collected essays.

Throughout the medieval centuries, including the Early Middle Ages, women consistently worked hard, though their labour is often obscured to modern eyes for several reasons – ranging from the nature of medieval sources to the biases inherent in historiographical inquiry. Only recently has the contribution of feminist historians cast unprecedented light on this subject. Due to their subordinate legal status, which made the very nature of female commitment often informal and intermittent, women retained little independent occupational identity. Elite and non-elite women alike were primarily active within the businesses and activities of their fathers, husbands, and sons in both urban and rural economies. In such a context, which makes any investigation into early medieval female labour a significant challenge, medievalists must employ more flexible categories and approaches – an ambition the present themed issue seeks to pioneer. Indeed, as research has progressed, the protagonism of female workers has become ever apparent. Women marketed food products and commodities alongside male artisans, worked in agriculture side-by-side with male family members, and managed estates and traded in land like many landlords. Furthermore,

the pioneering studies of Janet Nelson have shown that intellectual work, too, was open to female creativity even in the Early Middle Ages.[3] That said, gender specialisation and sexual division of labour was a well-established feature of the medieval labour market. While some specialisations were quite apparent – such as for wet nurses and sex workers, or to some extent textile production – other alleged gendered divisions were more blurred. As Jane Whittle has pointed out, the argument that women's work unfolded mainly around the house and farmstead owing to home-based duties of childcare is merely impressionistic. There was no reason why childcare had to take place entirely within the house.[4]

Especially for the poorly documented Early Middle Ages, archaeology appears to be a promising field for contributing to the history of the sexual division of labour at the intersection of gendered mobility patterns. A recent study of the sixth/seventh-century community of Corte Romana (Cividale, Italy) has shown relatively high occupational stress, as evidenced by markers found on the bones (osteological indicators). This finding is consistent with a community of artisans, breeders, and farmers. While demonstrating an equal share of workload between males and females, who experienced similar mechanical stress levels, the collected data agree with a scenario where community members engaged in physical occupational tasks irrespective of sex. This outcome fundamentally challenges the stereotyped vision of women being restricted indoors for domestic tasks while only men dealt with most physically demanding outdoor activities. The inclusion or exclusion of women from some occupations was not determined by physical characteristics, but was instead influenced by cultural and institutional factors.[5]

The mobility-and-work binary concept serves as an effective prism for understanding social and gender inequality and the roles of women in the early medieval economies. In early medieval Frankish manors, for instance, the emigration of peasants from one *mansus* to another was massive. Therein, women were not only more mobile than men due to exogamy, but they also moved longer distances, joining the marginal fringes within the manor alone or with their children, thus contributing to agrarian expansion in an unsuspected manner.[6] This displacement pattern relates to the low social status of young unmarried girls, while simultaneously disrupting the common assumption that restricts female readiness to movement and their degree of motility. As a matter of fact, throughout the Middle Ages, women were systematically disadvantaged in their participation in business because the prevailing trend dictated that they were not legitimately permitted to leave the household and travel alone. Women engaged in international trade as sedentary investors but never as traveling merchants; they participated in retail markets as traders, clothiers, and mercers, but only rarely as street vendors.[7] All in all, as far as women's work is concerned, the challenge is to overcome stereotypes by expanding the pool of available sources and renewing our interpretative categories to capture situations that are little visible but numerous and therefore significant.

3 Nelson, Gender and genre in women historians.

4 Whittle, Rural economies.

5 Martinoia *et al.*, Anthropological, palaeopathological, and stable isotope analyses.

6 Devroey, Peasant mobility and settlement.

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Wandering Artisans? The Mobility of Smiths in Early Post-Roman England

Irene Bavuso*

This article seeks to re-evaluate the evidence for the itinerancy of smiths in the early medieval period, focusing especially on England between the fifth and the early seventh century. The »itinerant smith« is a well-known model to explain metalworking in north-western Europe during these centuries. Yet the idea of a totally itinerant smith relies heavily on outdated theoretical models, and on literary images that cannot be considered to represent reality at face value. Geographical mobility is to some extent inherent in metalworking, and it was also a way through which smiths could expand their networks and gain upward socio-economic mobility and social standing. However, it is profitable to consider a more complex model, in which various forms of mobility and sedentism coexisted. Given the severely fragmentary state of the evidence, both written sources and archaeological remains from the Continent will be considered, including fundamental insights from early medieval technical treatises. A re-evaluation of the mobility of the smiths – this article holds – may also have theoretical consequences for broader questions about early post-Roman England, especially concerning the landscape of settlement, the connections between elites and crafts, and the mechanisms of construction and reproduction of hierarchical relationships.

Keywords: early medieval England, mobility, smiths, metalworking, craftsmanship, craft treatises

Introduction

The fifth and sixth centuries in England are well known as marking a low point in socio-economic life, from several interconnected points of view. Among these, a general discontinuity of urban life can be mentioned, as well as the absence of coin minting and a severe simplification of crafts that were essential for everyday life such as pottery making. Communities and social structures are generally understood as displaying a reduced degree of hierarchisation in the fifth and sixth centuries, as shown by settlement and funerary remains.[1] From the perspective of rural production, this period has been defined as one of an »abatement

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This article is part of the volume *Moving Jobs: Occupational Identity and Motility in the Middle Ages, II*, guest editors: Annamaria Pazienza and Irene Bavuso. To read all related articles, please access https://doi.org/10.1553/medievalworlds_no23_2025 for the entire part II and https://doi.org/10.1553/medievalworlds_no20_2024 for part I.

1 See e.g. Ward-Perkins, *Fall of Rome*; Wickham, *Framing*; Scull, Social transactions; Hamerow, *Rural Settlements*; Crabtree, *Early Medieval England*, 18-85; Fleming, *Material Fall*.

eISSN-Nr. 2412-3196
DOI 10.1553/medievalworlds_no23_2025s73

economy«, determined by a simplified agricultural structure and a high importance of husbandry.[2] Then, the seventh and eighth centuries mark a reflourishing of economic life; major evidence of this change is the rise of the coastal *emporia*, increased coin distribution, the presence of centralised production – crafts, agriculture and husbandry –, settlement development, and, from a political point of view, the structuring of larger kingdoms.[3]

The focus of the present article falls on the earlier period, before this strong seventh- and eighth-century economic growth. Specifically, this contribution seeks to address the theme of the mobility of metalworkers, re-evaluating the model of the itinerant artisan and its implications from a socio-economic perspective. The itinerant artisan is a model that has often been applied to post-Roman England but for which, at least in the case of metalworkers, we do not have conclusive evidence.[4] Whether craftsmanship was associated with itinerancy or sedentism (and everything that falls within this spectrum) is a question which is intimately connected with our understanding of the landscape of settlement, production and consumption. As will be discussed below, the presence of artisans in connection with the development of towns is, for instance, an important topic of recent research for studies on Scandinavia. In the case of England, the itinerant character of artisans would fit well with a context like that envisaged for the earliest post-Roman period, defined by the absence of economic structures capable of sustaining more permanent craftsmanship – such as large *emporia* and towns. Yet there is scope for arguing that even before the seventh- and eighth-century developments, the picture may have been more complex than this.

Itinerancy has been proposed in the case of a few highly skilled potters, in a context, however, where the overwhelmingly majority of pottery was crafted by low-skilled local »household productions« (in other words, it was produced in settlements).[5] However, much more famous than the peripatetic potter is the figure of the itinerant smith, which has received greater attention in the scholarship. This interest may have various motivations. First, metalwork is probably the most impressive archaeological evidence for this early period in north-western Europe in general. Moreover, as discussed below, scholarship attributes a special role to luxury metalwork in the creation and maintenance of hierarchical social relationships. Such centrality, in this view, is reflected in a particular social standing of the smiths, which sets them apart from other types of artisans. In addition, the early medieval smiths have literary and folkloric counterparts that have been amply studied.

The present article first discusses the model of the itinerant smith and the perspectives from which smiths are generally studied, namely social status and social and symbolic liminality. Then the contrast between mobility and sedentism is explored through written and

2 Faith, Forces and relations; Banham and Faith, *Anglo-Saxon Farms*. On rural economies, see Wickham, *Framing*; Bavuso, Peasant mode, with further references.

3 See e.g. Blair, *Building Anglo-Saxon England*; McKerracher and Hamerow, *New Perspectives*; McKerracher, *Farming Transformed*; Naismith, *Making Money*, esp. 253-258 and 262-282.

4 E.g. Hinton, *A Smith*; Leahy, *Anglo-Saxon Crafts*, 167-168; Hinton, *Gold and Gilt*, 36 (noting that smiths could also work at permanent sites).

5 On the possibility of skilled potters travelling, see Fleming, *Material Fall*, esp. 66-67. She also notes that »many settlements' pottery may not have been produced by households on their own, but rather by coresidential groups, that is, households within a single community« (p. 68).

archaeological evidence – the focus will be on goldsmiths, though other types of metalworkers will also be taken into consideration. Given the extreme scarcity of evidence for England, further contemporary evidence from the Continent will be discussed; the latter also clearly illuminates how mobility played an essential role in enabling metalworkers to achieve social and economic status. Among the written sources, the inclusion of early medieval craft treatises is essential. Although rarely considered from an economic point of view, craft treatises permit us to explore specialised knowledge and the interconnection of crafts. This recognition will then pave the way to some reflections at the broader socio-economic level, including on the landscape of settlements, on the system of construction and reproduction of hierarchical relationships – in which the smiths are deemed to play a pivotal role –, and on the connections between smiths and elites.

The Model of the Itinerant Smith

A brief preliminary overview is needed on the model of the itinerant smith and its origins, which are less acknowledged in scholarship than they should be, as they are potentially problematic. The notion of a free itinerant smith was theorised by V. Gordon Childe in the 1930s, in the Bronze Age context.[6] This idea was developed to explain the introduction and spread of technological developments of bronze making in Europe. Crucially, in this theory, it was the special high position of the smiths in society that permitted them to move freely – Childe envisaged them as »perhaps the first independent craftsmen«.[7] Although it falls outside the focus of the present contribution, it is important to note that Childe's model has been amply debated by scholarship on the Bronze Age.[8] After Childe, the special status of the smiths was also theorised by Mircea Eliade, another key scholar who helped to construct many of the current interpretations of the smiths' social position.[9] Eliade focused on the power of metalworkers in his 1956 book *Forgerons et alchimistes*, where he explored beliefs in the power of stones and in the forces of metals, which, being under the earth, belong to a place that is utterly different from the human dimension. It is from this kind of belief that the power of smiths derived, as smiths possessed specialised secret knowledge of and deep intimacy with these powerful elements, knowledge that to some extent set them apart from society.[10] This is a central aspect: the liminal character of metalworkers is very often highlighted in studies on the early medieval period (we will come back to this later in this section). Eliade's work provided a wide range of examples of beliefs in the power and liminality of smiths from non-European contexts, especially African. This kind of comparison continues to be used in

6 Childe, *Bronze Age*, 4-11; Childe, *Dawn*, 113-117.

7 Childe, *Bronze Age*, cit. p. 4.

8 See e.g. Rowlands, Archaeological interpretation; Webley *et al.*, *Social Context*, esp. 43-67, 187-189; Epimakhov *et al.*, Were metalworkers itinerant?, Stróżyk *et al.*, Tracking. Also, on late prehistory, see Gibson, Death of a salesman.

9 Mircea Eliade and his methods have been amply discussed and criticised; see e.g. Smith, *Relating Religion*; on history: Allen, *Myth and Religion*, esp. chapters 8 and 9; on smiths: Tobias, *Frühmittelalterliche Gräber*, 10.

10 Eliade, *Forgerons et alchimistes*; also Childe, *Bronze Age*, had stressed the secret knowledge of the smiths.

recent scholarship: in a 2019 article on the status of the early medieval smith, Duncan Wright refers to the African Mandingo in modern times, and to native North American groups.[11]

However, the construction of models for early medieval Europe on the basis of modern ethnographic research and theories about prehistoric smiths is methodologically difficult: the risk is that we end up with an a-historical picture. One reason why this kind of comparison might ultimately prove to be problematic is that it frequently cherry-picks individual elements that are deemed to be common, abstracting and isolating them from their own specific historical and social contexts. These common monadic elements are then applied to entire societies as if they were universal beliefs.[12] It is true that various expressions of the belief in the power of stones and metals were present in Roman and medieval Europe – we can see that in classical and medieval authors.[13] However, we do not know how and to what extent they were spread across specific societies, and whether and to what degree they affected the everyday life and craft of the metalworkers. It is highly likely that differences existed at regional and local levels, and a comparison that merely extrapolates commonalities offers limited value when attempting to reconstruct a multifaceted reality.

In the context of early medieval England, a much more stringent comparandum is provided by Scandinavia due to the historical connections between the two territories. Scandinavia is very often used to understand and frame the socio-economic realities and development of England after Late Antiquity.[14] In the case of metalworkers, the most famous result of this approach is probably the stress on the figure of Wayland, the mythical smith of the *Vǫlundarkviða* in the *Poetic Edda*, who is also famously depicted on the early eighth-century Franks Casket. However, even comparisons between post-Roman England and Scandinavia run the risk of not considering the historical contexts of the two regions, especially the fact that the former had a Roman past, whereas the latter did not. This is often not taken into account but is likely to have had some role in the development of craftsmanship.

In England, the model of the itinerant metalworker responsible for the introduction of new stylistic developments found an early realisation in the idea of the »Kentish master«, proposed by Egil Bakka in the late 1950s. This master craftsman, from Denmark, was said to be responsible for the introduction of Salin's Style I in England, and it was further claimed that it should be possible to identify the brooches which were the product of the »Kentish master's« workshop on stylistic grounds.[15] In other words, stylistic developments moved with the people capable of realising them in practice, allowing scholars to trace the movement of metalworkers accordingly. This is an example of the movement of craftsmen in the

11 Wright, Crafters of kingship.

12 Tobias, *Frühmittelalterliche Gräber*, esp. 7-10. Tobias considers the ethnographic perspective but notes that it is not possible to extrapolate general models and statements about the status of the smiths. On this point and the difficulties of ethnographic comparisons, see also Rowlands, Archaeological interpretation, which is based on a wide-ranging set of cases, from Africa to Indonesia.

13 See e.g. Pliny, *Naturalis historia*, ed. Mayhoff and von Jan, esp. books XXXV-XXXVII; Isidore, *Etymologiae*, XVI, ed. Lindsay. On stones in medieval times, see recently Buettner, *Mineral*.

14 On smiths and metalworking, see e.g. Pollington *et al.*, *Wayland's Work*; Wright, Crafters of kingship. For instance on state formation: Escalona, Towards an archaeology.

15 Bakka, On the beginning, see also Suzuki, *Anglo-Saxon Button Brooches*, esp. 284-287.

broader context of migrations from Scandinavia. However, as Nancy Wicker noted in the case of Scandinavian bracteates (thin single-sided gold pendants, whose decoration likely originated from imperial portrait medals), the identification of objects as the product of the same workshop is rather difficult, even in the case of bracteates for which the same punch tools have been used. Instead, various possibilities can be imagined: they may be the work of the same artisan, or of multiple artisans who used tools passed on to later generations, or – quite simply – it may well be that it is the objects which moved, not the artisan(s).[16] Beside stylistic grounds, the recovery of only a small quantity of production debris is a further element that has been indicated as evidence that craftspeople were itinerant, as the small size of these deposits would be less than those produced across an entire year of activity. This was suggested for comb making at Viking Age Baltic sites by Kristina Ambrosiani, who proposed seeing it as an activity carried out by specialised itinerant craftspeople and not by artisans working on comb making part-time. However, inferring the logistics and mobility of crafts from the size of deposits of debris has been criticised: issues include unknowns about the relative scale and production dynamics.[17]

The model of an itinerant smith, who would have enjoyed a particular social status, has had various ramifications in the scholarship on the early medieval period. A strong strand of studies has focused on the identity of the metalworkers, in particular in relation to the idea of the smith as a liminal individual.[18] Although this perspective falls outside the scope of the present contribution, some words should be included on this concept of liminality, as it has repercussions on how smiths have been viewed from a socio-economic perspective. As mentioned above, scholars generally base the smiths' liminality on ideas on the power of stones and metals, and the skilled and »mysterious« knowledge that metalworkers were required to master. Apart from comparisons with non-European communities (often in modern times), evidence is usually taken from literary-mythological models: from the powerful and vicious Wayland from northern Europe, to Continental folklore of underground smiths, up to Hephaestus, whose lameness set him apart from the other gods, and whose distance is even stressed in a spatial sense, as he was hurled down from Olympus at birth.[19] From a Christian perspective, one should also consider sources that represent smiths possessed by demons or as pagans in need of conversion – as in some Continental hagiographies, where we find, for instance, the *faber* Godolaicus of Limoges who, taken by a demon, verbally abuses the man of God calling him *latronem, falsatorem, inpostorem*, or the demonic smiths who throw huge burning slags at Brendan and his companions.[20] However, to use literary figures as a mirror of what society believed in respect to the everyday figure of the smith remains highly

16 Wicker, On the trail. Comparable ambiguities in respect to the possible logistics of metalworking apply to the recovery of moulds: see e.g. Hinton, Anglo-Saxon smiths, 5-6; Hinton, *Gold and Gilt*, 36, with references.

17 See Ambrosiani, Viking Age Combs; critique: Ashby, With staff, 20-22, with further references.

18 See e.g. Hinton, Anglo-Saxon smiths; Pollington *et al.*, *Wayland's Work*, 124; Wright, Tasting misery; Birch, Living; Tormey, Magical; Wright, Crafters of kingship.

19 On Continental folklore on smiths, see Motz, *Wise One*.

20 *Vita Pardulfi abbatis Waractensis* 11, ed. Levison, 32; *Navigatio sancti Brendani*, ed. Orlandi and Guglielmetti, 23. See also Eucherius of Lyon, *Passio Acaunensium martyrum* 17, ed. Krusch, 39: a *gentilis faber* converted by the martyrs. For the liminal smith from a Christian perspective, see Wright, Crafters of kingship.

problematic – and all the more so when such connections are made over large areas and across centuries.

Liminality has been taken as a key component of the identity of early medieval smiths, but it is of course not all there is to it. Regarding their social identity, much research has analysed the primary sources that tell us about their social status – in particular the legal sources and the *Vita Eligii*. The *Vita Eligii* will be considered in the next section; here it is sufficient to note that this is the preferred source to observe the case of the free, mobile high-status goldsmith. The legal sources instead show us that slaves were also involved in metalworking; in some regions unfree smiths had a different wergild than the slaves who carried out other kinds of works, while in other cases, we do not see a distinction. For example, in the *Lex Burgundionum* (*Liber constitutionum*) an unfree »select goldsmith« (*aurificem lectum*) has a wergild of 200 solidi, while it is 100 for a silversmith (*fabrum argentarium*), and 50 for an ironsmith (*fabrum ferrarium*).[21] Here, the wergild of goldsmiths is comparable to that of freemen.[22] In the *Lex Romana Burgundionum*, however, the goldsmith is worth 100, and the blacksmith 50.[23] By contrast, in the *Pactus Legis Salicae* goldsmiths and ironsmiths have the same wergild as household slaves, swineherds, and slaves involved in other activities.[24] In England, the Laws of Æthelberht only list the case of the killing of an *ambihtsmiþ*, that is an »official smith« in the royal service.[25]

Beyond the focus on social identity and liminality, the figure of the metalworker plays a crucial role in our general picture of social relationships in early medieval north-western Europe. This is particularly the case for hierarchical relationships. The current understanding is that, during the earliest post-Roman period, portable wealth played a major role in the construction of social status and in the shaping of social hierarchy. Within this framework, precious metal objects (among other kinds of luxuries) were exchanged through non-commercial mechanisms in order to cement social relationships. This system fostered the structuring of social hierarchies: those who could amass portable wealth and donate it with largesse gained social status. This is a very brief sketch of a complex model that takes gift-exchange as central to the shaping of social hierarchical relationships in the earliest medieval period.[26] In this model, the skilful smith lay at the very heart of the system: quite simply,

21 *Leges Burgundionum*, *Liber constitutionum* 10, *De interfectione servorum Burgundio et Romanus una conditione teneantur*, ed. von Salis 50-51.

22 *Leges Burgundionum*, *Liber constitutionum* 2, *De homicidiis*, ed. von Salis 42-43.

23 *Leges Burgundionum*, *Lex Romana* 2, *De homicidiis*, ed. von Salis, 125-127.

24 *Pactus legis Salicae* 35, *De homicidiis seruorum uel expoliationibus*, ed. Eckhardt, 128-132.

25 *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings, Laws of Æthelberht* 7, ed. Attenborough, 4-5. On the social status of smiths, see Hamerow, *Rural Settlements*, 184-185, arguing that: »Discussions have tended to centre on whether the smith was itinerant and ›free‹ or bound to a lord: the situation, in fact, is unlikely to have been so clear-cut« (p. 184).

26 See e.g. Härke, Early Anglo-Saxon; Scull, Social transactions; Nicolay, *The Splendour*; Richardson, Farfetched treasures. On gift-exchange in the peasant mode of production, see Wickham, *Framing*, 535-547; Bavuso, Peasant mode.

smiths make the objects that will then be exchanged and used to build social relationships, elites and power. They are thus essential and strongly connected to the elites.[27]

The skilful metalworkers have enjoyed a long and rich history of studies. Often taking a comparative and cross-disciplinary approach, scholars have concentrated on social identity and status, and – in connection to the latter – on mobility. The following section will consider in detail the evidence for mobile/settled smiths. Then, starting from crafts treatises, the article will discuss some of the broader consequences of our understanding of metalworkers on the socio-economic sphere.

Mobile and Immobile Smiths: Written Sources and Archaeology

It is well known that skilled early medieval metalworkers could have strong connections with the central powers, even at the highest levels. We do not have written sources for such cases in early post-Roman England, but on the Continent, Eligius (c. 588-660) is the most famous example. From his *Vita*, we are well informed about his mobile career.[28] Probably coming from Aquitaine, he completed his apprenticeship under the goldsmith and moneyer Abbo of Limoges. After that training, thanks to the patronage of the court's treasurer Bobo, Eligius became a member of the court of Chlothar II, and then of Dagobert I. He ended his life as bishop of Noyon, a position which he held from the 640s. Before Eligius, a less famous example is Leo, a sixth-century bishop of Tours, who is said by Gregory of Tours to have practised craftsmanship, including goldsmithing.[29]

While the life and career of Eligius was surely not the norm, it is perhaps safe to generalise on certain points regarding the mobility of metalworkers (and other skilled artisans). First, they needed an apprenticeship period, and this being a craft that required precise and specialised skills, the apprentices might need to move in order to work under a master. Yet the master, in this case Abbo of Limoges, was settled. Then, skilled metalworkers may have travelled to conduct work upon request. As for the apprenticeship, it is important to clarify that this kind of mobility is not a prerogative of the metalworkers: for instance, glassmakers too most likely needed to move to work on specific requests.[30] Eligius has often been taken as the example of the real-life itinerant goldsmith.[31] However, »itinerancy« may be too broad a category here, and one prone to ambiguity – it encourages the image of an artisan always on the move. Instead, from the *Vita* it appears that Eligius gravitated around specific places and his

27 See e.g. Coatsworth and Pinder, *Art*, 242, on the inclusion of the itinerant smith in elite entourages; Pesch, Goldsmith, 39, on the »ambivalent relationship« between the goldsmith and the elite; Fern and Butterworth, *Warrior Treasure*, 57, arguing that »the smith was in effect the king's man«. See also below n. 80.

28 *Vita Eligii episcopi Noviomagensis*, ed. Krusch.

29 See Gregory of Tours, *Decem libri historiarum* X.31, ed. Krusch and Levison, 532: *Leo ex abbate basilicae sancti Martini ordinatur episcopus. Fuit autem faber lignarius, faciens etiam turres olocriso tectas, ex quibus quaedam apud nos retinentur. In aliis etiam operibus eligans fuit*. […]. See also Roth, *Kunst*, 41.

30 For example, they may need to move to work on window glass during the construction of churches. In England, we have the case of Glastonbury Abbey, where furnaces have also been found; glassmaking for windows and vessels there is dated to the late seventh century: see Willmott and Welham, Late seventh-century glassmaking; also Willmott and Welham, Saxon glass furnaces.

31 E.g. Wicker, Elusive smith.

own properties, from which he would travel (thus, similarly to the common elite movement). The same is likely to have been the case for other metalworkers. The fact that skilled artisans attached to political and ecclesiastical power travelled for work clearly fits the broader social environment: royal courts moved, and a high level of mobility was a characteristic of high-status people in general (including work-related mobility, since, for instance, they moved to fulfil their duties, to participate in court life, or to control their possessions).[32] In the early medieval period, specialised craftsmanship could foster social advancement, as has been pointed out in the case of Eligius, and this relationship might even have been more widespread a phenomenon than it appears from the specific cases illuminated by the written sources – as evidenced by the eighth-century »smith-peasant« of Miranduolo (Chiusdino, Siena).[33] A further important point that needs to be highlighted is that, as in the case of the elites just mentioned, *spatial* mobility may have been key in fuelling the *social* mobility of skilled metalworkers. Eligius moved within a network and was helped by it: this network of people and institutions, both lay and ecclesiastical, facilitated further spatial mobility and, ultimately, social advancement.[34]

Leaving Eligius aside, the mobility of smiths connected to elite power could also take different forms: the forced displacement of metalworkers appears, for instance, in a story of the *Vita Severini*, written by Eugippius at the beginning of the sixth century, which mentioned metalworkers taken prisoner.[35]

An important degree of mobility is arguably inherent in metalworking in general, and not only in the early medieval period: while the first phases of metal extraction must happen *in loco*, the later stages of manufacturing vary and can be performed at places far away from the initial source.[36] A recent model to describe different mobility patterns proposes defining the movement of travelling smiths as a form of »repeated (cyclical) mobility« (»movements between two or more locations followed by short stays«); this kind of mobility is the same as that which characterised transhumance, or people involved in trade or seasonal activities. In the case of the travelling smith, this model is built on modern ethnographic examples.[37] Nonetheless, the »repeated (cyclical) mobility« might be a useful pattern to bear in mind for some medieval smiths as well – although it must be stressed that generalisations are risky. In the case of early medieval north-western Europe, Steven Ashby's research has highlighted the many possibilities regarding craftsmen's mobility, which form a spectrum ranging »from pure sedentism to perpetual movement«.[38]

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32 Cf. Pazienza and Bavuso, Moving jobs.

33 On specialised craftsmanship as an opportunity for social advancement and Eligius, see Claude, Handwerker, 257. On the »smith-peasant« of Miranduolo, see Valenti, Miranduolo; Anguilano *et al.*, Paesaggi minerari.

34 Economic aspects and the consequences of royal patronage and gift-giving in Eligius' case have been highlighted by Visintini, Gift-giving.

35 Eugippius, *Vita sancti Severini* 8, ed. Sauppe, 11-12.

36 On a different area and period, see Georgakopoulou, Mobility and early Bronze Age: metal production is »inherently mobile« (p. 49). See also Knappett and Kiriatzi, Technological mobility, giving insights that can also be of use for the medieval period.

37 Reiter and Frei, Interpreting (quotation p. 458).

38 Ashby, With staff, 18.

We now need to consider what other evidence exists for travelling smiths beyond the case of the goldsmith attached to kings exemplified by Eligius. Given the scarcity of written sources, archaeological remains are essential here; however, the picture they provide is far from conclusive. The fortune of the itinerant smith model in the case of England has much to do with the scarcity of excavated metalworking workshops pertaining to the early post-Roman period there. Yet this scarcity should not be taken as proof of the actual absence of settled workshops, not least given the notorious issues associated with early settlement sites in England: among others, settlements have been excavated to a much lesser extent than cemeteries, their nature may be difficult to ascertain, and they are dispersed and do not present precise borders.[39] In addition, while Wright suggested that metalworkers' workshops at elite residences occupied a precise space (also associated with the ritual sphere), sites involved with the initial phases of metalworking like the smelting of iron tend to be outside of the inhabited settlements; as a result, some of them may simply not have been identified.[40] Regarding goldsmiths, moreover, what a workshop would look like is not fully understood, and the remains might just consist of the furnace, production debris, and perhaps some tools.[41]

Further archaeological evidence comes from the so-called »smiths' burials«. This label is used for burials spanning centuries between prehistory and the Middle Ages and found throughout Europe, which are characterised by the deposition of metalworking tools.[42] »Smiths' burials« have received much attention in scholarship and have fed an important debate on the status and characteristics of smiths: for instance, whether metalworkers were free or not, if they were itinerant or settled workers, and how their link with elite power was shaped. However, direct identifications of smiths on the basis of grave goods have been proven to be problematic: weapon burials have been extensively discussed in this sense, and the same goes for burials with tools. In general, grave goods are now understood as symbolising the social status of the deceased and their family. A classic argument in favour of this interpretation for burials with weapons and tools is their recovery in graves of children, showing that the choice behind the deposition of objects did not follow linear connections with practical use during the deceased's lifetime.[43] Apart from children, a further argument comes from the recovery of tools in royal burials, which strongly speaks for the custom of burying tools as a symbol of social standing.[44] Notwithstanding the growing literature

39 Hamerow, *Rural Settlements*.

40 See Birch, Living, on iron-working sites; Wright, Crafters of kingship.

41 Aufderhaar, What would a goldsmith's workshop.

42 See Tobias, *Frühmittelalterliche Gräber*, for an up-do-date state of the art on the subject and for a terminological discussion (pp. 1-3).

43 On weapon burials, see Halsall, *Cemeteries*; Effros, *Merovingian Mortuary Archaeology*. On burials with tools, see Capelle, An insight, 22, who, however, seems to assume that women could not be smiths; yet this is not substantiated by evidence that women were not employed in metal- and goldsmithing (though see Capelle and Vierck, Modeln, 77). On female burials with tools, see Ježek, Disappearance; Tănase, *Craftsmen*, 262-264; on female smiths, see Pesch, Goldsmith, 43; Wicker, Elusive smith, 34. See also Tobias, *Frühmittelalterliche Gräber*, esp. 51-58, noting that, in any case, the human remains have mostly not been examined (p. 52).

44 See Ježek, Disappearance. On metalworking tools in graves as symbols of social standing, see Tobias, *Frühmittelalterliche Gräber*.

that has severed the link between the objects buried and the occupation of the deceased during their lifetime, tools buried in graves have continued to be used to understand the early medieval smith.[45]

In Francia, important graves with tools for metalworking have been recovered at Hérouvillette and Frénouville, in Calvados. At Frénouville, two graves contain items associated with blacksmithing (grave 331, dated to the middle of the fourth century) and goldsmithing (grave 452, from the early fifth century).[46] Grave 10 at Hérouvillette, dated to the sixth century, is a remarkable find, as it contains a large variety of tools together with scrap metal, glass, and weapons. Although the professional identity of the person buried in grave 10 cannot be ascertained, in the context of Hérouvillette this appears to be a high-status burial, as shown by the number of weapons, including a sword, that were buried with the deceased.[47] There is thus a clear connection between metalworking tools and high status, a link that can be identified in many other »smiths' burials« from the early medieval period.[48]

A famous »smith's burial« in post-Roman England is the one at Tattershall Thorpe (Lincolnshire), which has been dated to the seventh century. This is generally regarded as the grave of an itinerant metalworker. Much attention has been paid in this regard to the isolated position of the grave, which would have set it apart from the local population. This would fit the image of both the metalworker as a liminal figure and that of a travelling smith, who happened to die in a foreign land and was then buried as an outsider. In the 2000 publication of the Tattershall Thorpe finds, David Hinton states that »it will (…) be assumed that its occupant was the user of the tools«, while regarding the questions about itinerancy and permanency, he regards the material to be »ambivalent«.[49] The bell found among the assemblage is hypothesised to have been used by the travelling smith to signal their presence. The need for a stranger to signal their arrival can be found in the late seventh-century Laws of Wihtred of Kent, where strangers were required to make their presence known by shouting or blowing a horn.[50] However, as Hinton noted, the bell appears to have been buried without the clapper – so it could not have had a practical use at the time of deposition. Hugh Willmott and Adam Daubney have recently proposed a rereading of the brazed handbells, including the one found at Tattershall Thorpe. They suggest that these handbells should be understood as having a precise religious significance (as this type of bell appears to have had in areas of Insular Christianity), and dismiss a practical use such as in animal husbandry or for

45 See Wright, Crafters of Kingship; although the author acknowledges that the identification of smiths on the basis of grave goods is problematic (p. 284), he builds some of his arguments on this premise.

46 See Effros, *Merovingian Mortuary Archaeology*, esp. 144. The publication of the cemetery is Pilet, *La nécropole de Frénouville*; see esp. vol. 1, 147-150 on these two burials: *La pince de fondeur montre sans ambiguïté que son possesseur était un forgeron* (p. 147, in relation to grave 331); grave 452 contains a balance with weights (p. 148).

47 See Decaëns *et al.*, Nouveau cimetière. On the high-status character of grave 10, see also Capelle, An insight, 25; Tobias, *Frühmittelalterliche Gräber*, I, 121-144, arguing that this individual was the head of the village (pp. 143-144). On this burial, see also Ježek, Disappearance, 131; Bavuso, Trade.

48 Cf. Ježek, Disappearance.

49 Hinton, *A Smith*, 112.

50 Hinton, *A Smith*, 44-47.

signalling one's presence. Thus, they should not be seen as »functional« items for the smiths; but in any case, smiths may have been considered to have an important role in their creation, both symbolic and ritual.[51] If this was so, the case for attributing an itinerant character to the »smith« at Tattershall Thorpe would be much diminished. The interpretation of »smiths' burials« is therefore not straightforward: a linear association of grave goods and profession in life is highly problematic; and this is probably even more true when it comes to hypothesising a mobile character of the profession itself.

There are some elements that may point to a stronger sedentism of smiths than generally admitted. First, the fact that their legal status varied may be telling in this sense. The Laws of Ine of Wessex, issued in the late seventh century, state that elite persons that are moving residence are allowed to bring their smith with them.[52] This is a case of mobility connected to that of the elite household – although whether this law shows that the smith was attached to the lord and not to the estate may be doubted.[53] Regarding unfree smiths, it seems reasonable to suggest that at least some of them were also settled.[54] The laws in England do not regulate the work of these smiths – thus, there is no certainty regarding whether smiths attached to aristocrats had to work exclusively for their household or not. In this regard, it is interesting to note that the *Lex Burgundionum* regulates the case of unfree smiths who have been permitted to work for others, *in publico*.[55]

In other areas of western Europe such as the Frankish kingdoms and in Italy, smiths appear to be settled in towns, monasteries, and on royal estates.[56] For Ostrogothic Italy, Cassiodorus provides information on the top-down state organisation of the *armifactores* (weapon-makers), who were supervised by the *primicerius fabricae*; the organisation was overseen by the praetorian prefect.[57] The *fabricae* (statal factories) appear to have been in towns, as was the case in earlier centuries.[58] In England, however, the landscape of settlement is different from that in the Frankish kingdoms or Italy, as towns were in harsh decline during the fifth

51 Willmott and Daubney, Of saints; they also note that the finds at Tattershall Thorpe may be a depositional hoard and not pertain to a burial (p. 351). Hinton, *A Smith*, 4-5: there is a record that bones were found, but they are not preserved.

52 *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings, Laws of Ine*, ch. 63, ed. Attenborough, 57.

53 Differently Pollington *et al.*, *Wayland's Work*, 124: »The naming of the smith among the close servants implies that the duty of the smith was to his lord personally and not to the estate where he resided.« Noble, Itinerancy, 69, suggests that while some smiths could have followed the courts, others could stay settled.

54 Driehaus, Zum Problem, 404, argued that the Merovingian goldsmith was largely unfree and immobile, although mobility was possible (while Werner, Zur Verbreitung, favoured an interpretation of the smith as a free craftsman).

55 *Lex Burgundionum*, *Liber constitutionum* 21, *De servorum contractibus*, ed. von Salis, 60: 2. *Quicumque vero servum suum aurificem, argentarium, ferrarium, fabrum aerarium, sartorem vel sutorem in publico adtributum artificium exercere permiserit, et id, quod ad faciendam operam a quocumque suscepit, fortasse everterit, dominus eius aut pro eodem satisfaciat aut servi ipsius, si maluerit, faciat cessionem*.

56 See Pinar Gil, La quotidianità, 11-12. Pinar Gil proposes that the relevance of monasteries in this sense is especially visible from the seventh century. However, metalworking connected to monasteries in the Frankish kingdoms is also attested in an earlier period; see Bully *et al.*, Des traces d'artisanat.

57 Cassiodorus, *Variae* 7.18 and 19, ed. Mommsen.

58 Christie, Ostrogothic Italy, 134.

and sixth centuries, and monasteries only started to be founded later, from the seventh century onwards. Evidence for metallurgical *production* during the earliest post-Roman period is particularly scanty too.

Hinton, among others, has provided a more balanced picture of smiths in early post-Roman England. He assumes the presence of travelling goldsmiths, but also of workshops based on the scanty surviving evidence, such as that from Spong Hill (Norfolk) and Kent.[59] In Kent, the survival of the Latin toponym Faversham, derived from *faber* (OE **fæfer*, »smith« + *hām*, »village, homestead, estate«), is often highlighted – and Faversham is a place connected with a strong royal presence.[60] Lyminge is likewise a case where metallurgy, including iron smelting, was performed in a high-status centre.[61] Notwithstanding these examples, as mentioned above, there is a remarkable absence of excavated metallurgical workshops for the fifth and sixth centuries. Thus, an important perspective from which archaeologists have tried to disentangle the question of the mobility of smiths has been that of the distribution of particular types of brooches. Working on cruciform brooches – a form which started to appear in England in the early fifth century –, Toby Martin noticed that the distribution of the different typological groups of these brooches is regional, or even micro-regional. Martin concluded that, if itinerant, these smiths worked within small circuits, but the patterns are also consistent with the work of individual metalworkers or workshop traditions. In any case, »although it appeals to our romantic sense of the period, an entirely independent, roving smith, carrying with them the sum of their tools and supplies, presents an unlikely prospect«.[62] Close connections between items in terms of their design and appearance have also been used to identify the works of specific goldsmiths. For instance, this has been proposed in the case of three garnet-inlaid disc brooches from seventh-century Wessex, for which the goldsmiths appear to have worked in the context of elite patronage.[63] The two sites where these three brooches were found are rather close to each other, in the Upper Thames Valley; however, the finds tell us nothing about the possible mobility or sedentism of the goldsmiths themselves. A further difficulty is exemplified in the case of the fifth- and sixth-century square-headed brooches, namely, they are essential items to the creation and representation of the elite, and this role has a structural effect on their distribution and the networks it created.[64]

59 Hinton, *Gold and Gilt*, 36-38; Hinton, Anglo-Saxon smiths, for further cases. See also Pollington *et al.*, *Wayland's Work*, 129-133.

60 On royal presence there, see e.g. Tatton-Brown, Towns of Kent. On place-names connected to »smith«, see Pollington *et al.*, *Wayland's Work*, 130.

61 On Lyminge, see Thomas and Knox, *Lyminge Interim*; Thomas, Life; Thomas, Monasteries.

62 Martin, *Cruciform Brooch*, esp. 130-132 (quotation at p. 130).

63 Hamerow *et al.*, Early medieval garnet-inlaid metalwork.

64 On this, see Martin, Casting the net wider, noting at p. 882 that the itinerancy of artisans, gift-exchange, and movement of women are possible explanations for how these brooches moved, but we cannot be certain.

Treatises and Specialised Knowledge, Settlements and Power

As mentioned above, metalworking involved highly specialised knowledge and skills. While in early post-Roman England we can presume that the smiths were illiterate, and thus the knowledge was passed on orally in a master–apprentice relationship, a small group of treatises from the Continent tells us much about the technology, craft, and materials involved in metalworking production. Crucially, they may be used to complicate the picture of smiths' mobility.

The best-known technological treatises of the Western European Middle Ages pertain to later centuries, such as the twelfth-century *De diversis artibus* by »Theophilus« and *De coloribus et artibus romanorum*, a twelfth-century composite treatise which includes parts that may be dated to the early medieval period.[65] Yet we also have much earlier treatises, such as the *Mappae clavicula* and the *Compositiones variae*. The former is a miscellaneous compilation of recipes which took shape in Late Antiquity: the core appears to come from fourth-century Egypt, and to be related to earlier Greek texts known from the papyrological tradition. The Latin translation was seemingly produced in the fifth century, although the earliest manuscript is a tenth-century one.[66] The *Compositiones variae* are included in a manuscript dated to the late eighth/early ninth century.[67] These texts provide invaluable information on the different phases of production of metal objects, including items that must have been made by goldsmiths. Besides the primary metals that formed the objects' main base, the goldsmiths needed access to diverse materials. For instance, they needed mercury – a material that had to be imported – in order to perform the fire-gilding technique.[68] This was the common gilding technique in use in England in the earliest medieval period, where the gilding of personal items appears to have been a widespread practice and one not restricted to the elite.[69] The fire-gilding process as described in the *Mappae clavicula* involved many phases needed to produce a mercury–gold amalgam and then to apply it to the specific object that required gilding. In one of the final phases, the artisan needed access to *aqua melanteriae* (produced with a metallic sulphate, generally of iron or copper), which the text describes as *aqua caligariorum qua denigrantur coria* (»the shoemakers' water which is used to blacken the leather«).[70]

65 Theophilus Presbyter, *De diversis artibus*, ed. Brepohl; Heraclius, *De coloribus et artibus romanorum*, ed. Merrifield; Garzya Romano, *I colori*; Tosatti, *Trattati medievali*.

66 See *Mappae clavicula*, ed. and trans. Baroni *et al.*, with a discussion of the manuscript tradition and of the relation with the Greek papyri. See also Clarke, Earliest technical recipes; *Mappae Clavicula*, trans. Smith and Hawthorne.

67 Lucca, Biblioteca Capitolare Feliniana, Codex 490. Other names for the *Compositiones variae* are *Compositiones Lucenses* and *Compositiones ad tingenda musiva*. See Burns, *Compositiones Variae*.

68 See Bavuso, Trade.

69 On fire-gilding, see e.g. Oddy, Gold in antiquity; Aufderhaar, From the goldsmith's point of view; on non-elite access, see Bavuso, Trade.

70 *Mappae clavicula* LX, *Deauratio omnium si velis deaurare sive argenteum sive aereum vas*, ed. Baroni *et al.*: [...] *Cum itaque tibi color placuerit, primum calefac vas et mitte in aquam melanteriae, id est aqua caligariorum qua denigrantur coria, et tunc terge.* [...].

The connection between the use of mercury and leather workshops in the context of gilding may complicate the idea of itinerant goldsmiths, because it brings to the fore a picture of a *réseau opératoire*.[71] Different artisans and crafts were needed in order to carry out a certain activity: this fact tips the scales in favour of a picture in which sedentary workshops and centres were crucial. This does not necessarily imply that the smiths themselves were always sedentary; but it seems at least more likely that there were specific centres in which different activities were carried out simultaneously. The idea of a link between the operational network and permanency of sites and communities has already been stressed in the case of the eighth-century *emporium* at Ribe in Denmark. In that context, it has been proposed that the need for a *reseau opératoire* would represent a fundamental driving force – a bottom-up one – toward the establishment of permanent urban communities.[72] In terms of urbanisation, there are obvious differences between Denmark and England that need to be considered: only the latter already had an urban past before the early medieval period (though the early medieval urbanisation in England rested on other bases too). Leaving this aspect aside, it is nonetheless clear that the need for a collaboration between different crafts adds an important element of permanency to the issue of the mobility of smiths. In England, there is no dearth of evidence for metalworking performed close to other crafts from the late seventh/eighth century at the *emporia*; however, the picture is much less clear when it comes to the previous centuries.[73] The *emporia* in England have often been regarded as the earliest permanent sites devoted to production and trade after Late Antiquity: »permanency« has been a central category for distinguishing them from earlier sites involved in long-distance exchange that have left no archaeological evidence – precisely due to their temporary character.[74] Crucially, however, goldsmiths who wanted to use the fire-gilding technique had to carry out the same production phases in the sixth century as they did in the eighth and ninth (since the gilding was, as noted above, performed using the same technique). This may have wider socio-economic implications.

Looking at the landscape of settlement is important to understand mobility better, as well as to frame the relationships between the smiths and power. In terms of settlement, one should look at various places – not only places where sedentary production within workshops may have been carried out but also centres that may have been conducive to exchange of knowledge and ideas. For the earliest post-Roman period in England (thus, before the major monastic foundations and the flourishing of the *emporia*), elite and royal centres are some of the best candidates in this sense. Among recent archaeological research,

71 On this concept, see Croix *et al.*, *Réseau opératoire*.

72 Croix *et al.*, *Réseau opératoire*. On Kaupang, see McGraw and Mjærum, Tools.

73 See e.g. Bayley and Russel, Making gold-mercury amalgam, on gold working; Bayley, *Anglo-Scandinavian*, on non-ferrous metalworking at Coppergate. On *emporia* in England and craft activities, see e.g. Malbos, *Ports*; Crabtree, *Early Medieval England*, 86-137; Blair, *Building Anglo-Saxon England*, 165-174.

74 See e.g. Lebecq, England and the continent, 51; Hodges, *Dark Age Economics: A New Audit*, 101. The classic model on the evolution of trading sites is that by Hodges, *Dark Age Economics: The Origins*, 50-52, which is also based on the category of permanency; but see now Scull, Ipswich; Loveluck and Tys, Coastal societies; Hodges, *Dark Age Economics: A New Audit*. For permanency as a fundamental category in the transformation of settlements and the economy, see e.g. Skre, Post-Substantivist towns; Skre, Markets.

metalworking has been uncovered at the elite sites of Lyminge in Kent (as mentioned above) and Rendlesham in Suffolk, both of which were inhabited from the earliest post-Roman period.[75] Other contexts are more difficult to identify, but the sites of assemblies, as well as landing and trading sites, are likely to have been important for providing access to the necessary materials (such as gold, silver, mercury, and garnets) and to the exchange of knowledge and ideas – although not in a year-round way. Indeed, as Torsten Capelle noted: »Settlement in one place was only possible (…) if sufficient raw material was available locally or could be made available, and when there was sufficient demand for his [the craftsman's] products«.[76] In the sixth century, landing and trading sites are often found at a rather short distance from royal and elite centres – at least in south-eastern England –, thus implying important connections. However, in this period these links did not translate into top-down control over long-distance goods and traffic by kings and elites.[77] The itinerant metalworker model, and its fortune, is anchored in the strong socio-economic decline of the fifth and sixth centuries – which was then followed by economic growth from the seventh and eighth centuries. In the early period, smiths would have travelled because there would not have been socio-economic structures strong enough to support permanency. However, high-status centres, landing and trading sites, and sites of assemblies should all be considered, as they may have been part of a web of places that allowed for some stability. The massively widespread distribution of metalwork that required a goldsmith's knowledge (even if only for gilding), moreover, suggests that several types of places may have been part of such a web. The wide distribution of these objects also runs counter to the idea that the goldsmith's products were mostly used as part of a gift-exchange system. As mentioned above, a pillar of broad models of north-western European smiths in the earliest medieval period is the idea that these artisans were pivotal in the gift-exchange system, which was based on portable wealth and was essential for the building and functioning of hierarchical relationships. Wright, for instance, suggested that this situation only changed with the broader transformation of kingship during the seventh and eighth centuries: from that moment, »Society gradually lost dependence on smiths for the production of the high status goods that had previously been central to reciprocal gift-exchange«.[78] Yet if gift-exchange was only one of the ways through which items circulated, this would mean that the smiths should not be considered exclusively in their connection with the elites. This becomes clear as soon as we start having the evidence of metalworking in the *emporia*; but it could have been the case in the earlier period too.

A related issue which is worth addressing, albeit briefly, is: how did the smiths obtain the materials that they needed? This is a question that cannot be answered with certainty for

75 On Lyminge, see above n. 61. On Rendlesham, see now Scull *et al.* (eds.), *Lordship and Landscape*; the excavation uncovered evidence of two working areas but no workshop, and they suggest either a permanent presence of metalworkers or a periodic one (p. 187).

76 Capelle, An insight, 17. Yeavering, Northumberland, is an important example of a royal and assembly site for which there is also evidence of metalworking: see Wright, Crafters of kingship, on metalworking. On assemblies, see e.g. Semple et al, *Negotiating the North*, with further references on Yeavering.

77 For a rejection of the idea of a monopolistic trade controlled by the kings, see e.g. Fleming, Movement; Bavuso, *Sixth and Early Seventh Centuries*; Bavuso, Balance of power.

78 Wright, Tasting misery, 134, with reference to Hinton, *A Smith*.

early post-Roman England.[79] However, the idea that they obtained their materials directly from the kings and elites (which is in turn linked to a model of top-down control of long-distance goods and luxuries) remains rather problematic.[80] As shown by the craft treatises, a goldsmith was required even just to know which material was needed for a particular technique. This is the case for mercury, which is invisible to the naked eye on the final product. The same might be the case for garnets, as there are instances of very luxurious metalwork – such as objects in the Staffordshire Hoard and in the Sutton Hoo ship burial – in which it appears that the goldsmith chose garnets with different shades of colour for aesthetic purposes.[81] Admittedly, this is metalwork of the highest quality, but in any case, it shows that smiths (at least the highly skilled) could have had access to a variety of materials that could hardly have been chosen and provided by the elites themselves in all cases, since selecting them required the specific knowledge of the artisan. Although the question of access to the materials remains open, and numerous possibilities are likely to have coexisted, this question is worth asking, as it complicates the relationship between smiths and elites/patrons.

Conclusions

A degree of mobility was inherent in metalworking in the early medieval period, and, through inclusion in a social network, spatial mobility appears to have been capable of fostering upward social mobility. However, in the case of early post-Roman England, the model of the itinerant smith may be more problematic than useful. As already noted in the existing reserach, the archaeological evidence is not conclusive, and more complex patterns of mobility may have been in place. This article has shown that technical treatises demonstrate the need for specialised skills and knowledge, access to specific materials, and an operational network, which may have included different crafts, artisans, and traders. This circumstance is self-evident as soon as we have the written sources in the period of the *emporia* (when we see the archaeological evidence of different crafts being carried out at the same location), but, given the continuity of techniques, it may have been the case even before that. Thus, a higher degree of sedentism than currently assumed may have been in place in the period before the *emporia*. Early elite and royal centres are attested cases, and they should be considered in their wider landscape, also taking into account landing and trading sites, and perhaps sites of assemblies as moments of exchange of knowledge and ideas. A main point of the present contribution is that the figure of the travelling smith, connected to elite patrons, is inextricably tied to a certain, specific model of the functioning of social hierarchical relationships in early post-Roman England – a model that one should not necessarily take for granted. From this perspective, a reconsideration of the smiths might have larger repercussions and contribute to how we understand that system. Many questions remain open; but the specialised

79 See, tellingly, Hinton, *Gold and Gilt*, 36: »the smiths who made the jewellery must have had their own ways of getting at least the latter [i.e. mercury].«

80 Hinton, Anglo-Saxon smiths, 10, assumes a top-down model, in which elites wanted to control access to prestigious items; in turn, this would reflect on a need to control the smiths. On royal control, see also Fern and Butterworth, *Warrior Treasure*, 57.

81 See Fern *et al.* (eds.), *Staffordshire Hoard*, 131, with reference to Sutton Hoo.

knowledge, the access to highly specific materials, and the overall distribution of the final products complicate the theoretical model of gift-giving and the shaping of hierarchies – showing that the strong link between smiths and their patrons may not be the full story.

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Abbreviation

MGH Monumenta Germaniae Historica

Manuscript

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Work and Mobility in their Local Dimensions in Early Medieval Iberia

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This article begins and ends by arguing that social historians of the early Middle Ages interested in the relatively neglected themes of work and mobility would do well to refocus their energies on the »small worlds« unearthed by charter-based reconstructions of local societies – the latter a methodology associated above all with the pioneering studies of Wendy Davies since the 1980s. It argues that this approach – that is, what we might call a »reversion to the local« – remains relevant because most people's social experience – indeed, their entire referential system – took root and developed within a limited geographical compass, so if we want to understand the structures that gave shape and meaning to non-elite life, it is imperative that we consider work and mobility – the principal themes of this article – in the specific local contexts in which they operated. Such an approach is of course constrained by the patchy survival of evidence from across early medieval Europe. But the mundane affairs of the village society of tenth-century north-western Spain can be tracked in some detail, especially in certain unusually well-documented villages, such as Rabal, analysed herein, thanks to significant numbers of surviving charters, allowing us to see something of the potential richness of »the local« as a frame of analysis. This article proposes that by focusing on the small-scale and the quotidian, we address the lives of rural cultivators, as far as possible, on their own terms, enabling us, to the degree that it is indeed possible, to set those lives within carefully historicised contextual horizons.

Keywords: work, mobility, local society, the peasantry, communal management of resources

If mobility across time and space has tended to be seen by historians as the preserve of elites, it has been just as damagingly mischaracterised, particularly in narratives designed to emphasise the impact of »modernity«, as a phenomenon largely unknown in the pre-modern world.[1] Enough scholarship now exists to undermine both these postulates, such that we can now declare with certainty that people moved around, even in the early Middle Ages, more than we once thought they did, sometimes traversing great distances and varied geographies. Consider the invaluable accounts of the diplomatic missions of Liudprand of Cremona to

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This article is part of the thematic section *Moving Jobs: Occupational Identity and Motility in the Middle Ages, II*, guest editors: Annamaria Pazienza and Irene Bavuso. To read all related articles, please access https://doi.org/10.1553/medievalworlds_no23_2025 for the entire part II and https://doi.org/10.1553/medievalworlds_no20_2024 for part I.

1 Cresswell, *On the Move*; Cresswell, Towards a politics; Canzler, Kaufmann and Kesselring, *Tracing Mobilities*; Baumgarten and Franchi, Modernity and Mobility.

eISSN-Nr. 2412-3196
DOI 10.1553/medievalworlds_no23_2025s97

Constantinople, or of John of Gorze to Córdoba, or – for that matter – the writings of any of the Arab geographers of the Abbasid period, all of which reveal detailed information about routes and itineraries, modes of transit, and the myriad challenges faced by travellers before the year 1000.[2] Furthermore, such movement was not restricted wholly to elites: soldiers, merchants and pilgrims make sporadic appearances in our sources – fighting, flogging their wares, and praying, or some combination of all three – on distant shores, far from home.[3]

To acknowledge as much remains a useful starting point for any investigation of mobility in the early Middle Ages.[4] But it must only be a starting point, because the risks inherent in exaggerating the scale and frequency of travel in the pre-modern world *tout court* but especially in the early medieval centuries, and even more especially in contexts in which small-scale agrarian cultivation was the principal economic activity, are not difficult to discern. Put simply: in most parts of early medieval Europe the majority of people were settled cultivators of diverse social, economic, and legal status, and these people (or at least most of them), invariably did *not* journey great distances at any stage in their lives. This does not mean that they were immobile, nor that their lives were static, unchanging affairs; journeys between the home and the field were not the only physical and psychosocial geographies that rural cultivators (that is, peasants) traversed, and no such claim is being made here.[5] But »the local« was nonetheless the sphere in which most people, in most places, moved.[6] It was also the sphere in which they worked.[7] If we forget these basic facts, we risk – in the course of our own scholarly peregrinations – replacing one misleading narrative about the early Middle Ages with another. We risk, that is, rightly rejecting the idea that early medieval societies were »static, ossified, and self-contained«, only to fasten on an equally misguided notion which holds that most people inhabited »a heterogenous contact zone of cultures, ideas and products«, an experience that would hardly have been recognisable to most people in early medieval Europe.[8]

Framing the subject in this way, it becomes clear that to approach early medieval mobility by focusing primarily on maritime commerce, diplomatic entanglements, or travel as a cultural marker of elite groups is in one rather obvious sense actively misleading, for it is to privilege activities in which the vast majority of people played no role at all, at least directly.[9]

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2 Liudprand, *Relatio de Legatione Constantinopolitana*, ed. Squatriti; *Vita Iohannis Abbatis Gorziensis*, ed. Pertz; al-Yaʿqūbī, *Kitāb al-Buldān*.

3 Verdon, *Travel in the Middle Ages*; O'Doherty and Schmieder (eds.), *Travels and Mobilities*.

4 »Mobility« is of course a hard concept to define, but for present purposes I work within the guidelines and explore some of the possibilities provided by the guest editors in their Introduction. I have focused in particular on the question of how one's labour overlapped and interacted with other social identities and roles in the community, discussed in more detail in Pazienza and Bavuso, Moving jobs, 6-7.

5 The best summary of attempts to rebut this view is found in Schofield, *Peasants and Historians*.

6 As one of the editors of this journal has indeed reminded us in Pazienza, Mobility, displacements and identity.

7 Two recent studies that have foregrounded the need to consider where work took place and what it meant for mobility are: D'Aguanno Ito, Work and workplaces; Zeller, West, Tinti, *et al.*, *Neighbours and Strangers*.

8 Heath, Gantner and Manarini, Movement and mobility, 3.

9 This observation reflects my concern that global history has not yet found a persuasive methodology with respect to how it might encompass peasants in global narratives. Nelles and Salzberg (eds.), *Connected*

It is likewise important not to exaggerate the distances that most people typically roamed in their everyday lives; not because medium- to long-distance travel – that is, travel beyond the locality – is inherently less important or less interesting than travel within the locality, but simply because there was much less of it.[10]

»Local mobility«, for want of a more elegant locution, was preponderant in the sense that it simply *was* mobility for most people, the majority of whom moved in and across relatively small physical spaces – the village, its surrounding fields, neighbouring settlements; at a stretch, the valley, or the nearest town. Local mobility thus structured the working lives of rural cultivators and artisans, delimiting the agential capacity of the vast majority of non-elite people. Accordingly, local mobility engendered and consolidated most social relationships in early medieval contexts, and those relationships in turn fashioned self-perception and constructed social identity.[11] The contours of life for the majority in early medieval western Europe, although subtly different from one peasant community to another, nonetheless had a familiar shape, a discernible weather-beaten arc. »Unremitting toil from dawn to dusk«, Werner Rösener told us in his classic study, »set its stamp on the daily round of peasant work in the home, in the farmyard, in the fields or meadows.«[12]

Without wishing to push this idea too far lest we fall into romantic cliché, a certain homogeneity of experience, of socialisation achieved by means of routine and familiarity, is indeed a recognisable characteristic of peasant life as reflected in charters and estate surveys, with their repeated refrains and consistent focus on farming and its attendant tasks.[13] Admittedly, documentary evidence of this kind has limitations, requires careful interpretation, and does not provide a transparent window on local society. All the same, while we must make allowances for the conventions of genre, and acknowledge the myriad other difficulties posed by working with documents of practice, what charters involving non-elite actors seem to indicate is clear enough, namely, that many of the small worlds of medieval Europe before 1000 were in some measure self-contained and inward-looking, and that neighbours and family constituted one's support system, while strangers were relatively rarely encountered.[14] Indeed, far from being omnipresent, connections in rural settings across putative frontiers of language and socio-cultural practice – although fascinating where we do find them – are empirically very hard to identify in much of early medieval western Europe – even in regions of demonstrable ethnic and religious plurality, such as Spain.[15] Connections of this kind are

Mobilities; Casado Alonso, Los flujos de información; Ehmer, Quantifying mobility; Fraser (ed.), *The Mobility of People and Things*.

10 Here I follow the convention established in Zeller, West, Tinti, Stoffella, *et al.*, *Neighbours and Strangers*, xiv, which considers a »locality« to be »an area of the order of 10kms diameter«.

11 Colleoni and Caiello, Mobility and multilocal identity; Belanche, Casaló and Rubio, Local place identity; Iles, Ma and Erwin, Identifying.

12 Rösener, *Peasants*, 6.

13 On the perils of romanticising the timeless, unchanging village, see Schofield, *Peasants and Historians*.

14 Zeller, West, Tinti, *et al.*, *Neighbours and Strangers*.

15 Still influential on this question is Castro, *España*, although see Soifer's excellent characterisation in Soifer, Beyond *convivencia*, 20: »Castro's *Convivencia* was an idealist construct that aspired to describe mental processes taking place in the collective consciousness of the three cultures but was never meant to be tested

almost entirely confined to elite and, of course, urban contexts; but were they, one wonders, the exception that proves the rule – the rule being that the lives of *most* people were rooted in small rural communities, their horizons only extending across the valley or down from the mountains to the edge of the plain, each village a world unto itself?

In light of the foregoing, the journey this article proposes to embark upon is appropriately modest in its objectives. It begins by restating an unfashionable fact, namely, that local concerns structured the day-to-day lives of most people in early medieval northern Spain, and – one suspects – many other parts of agrarian Europe, not travel, nor cross-cultural encounter, and that we should not mislead ourselves by pretending otherwise. Most people's social experience – indeed, their entire referential system – took root and developed within a limited geographical compass, so if we want to understand the structures that gave shape and meaning to non-elite life, it is imperative that we consider work and mobility – the principal themes of this article – in the specific local contexts in which they operated. The village society of tenth-century Spain, analysed hereafter, allows us to see something of the potential richness of »the local« as a frame of analysis, and by focusing on the small-scale and the quotidian, we address the lives of rural cultivators, as far as possible, on their own terms, enabling us, to the degree that it is indeed possible, to set those lives within carefully historicised contextual horizons.

Micro-geographies of Mobility: Rabal

Typical of the expedient and purposeful trips made by most people in Western Eurasian contexts in the early medieval centuries, were those made across relatively short distances within the same locality on a daily or near-daily basis, such as those made by the peasant proprietors of northern Iberia – the focus of this article – who made their way from field to orchard and from meadow to granary. Many of these people seem to have owned scattered plots, often of modest dimensions, their holdings taking them from one end of their village to the other, in accordance with the demands and patterns imposed by the many tasks involved in crop production and the raising of livestock.[16] What we know about village life – largely thanks to charters, estate surveys, inventories, and archaeology – suggests that cultivators moved busily and frequently hither and thither, digging, weeding, planting, and sowing.[17] Activities such as these, as well as many more, certainly took place in plots that lay adjacent to the home, but peasant holdings were not always contiguous within the same settlement, which must have given rise to short journeys on a near-daily basis; even gardens sometimes »lay separate from their owner's other properties«, the need to tend them ensuring a

against the social and political realities of Jewish–Christian–Muslim interaction. Paradoxically, the quotidian experience of living was missing from the concept usually translated into English as ›living together‹.«

16 Davies, *Acts of Giving*; Portass, *Village World*.

17 The richest evocation of peasant life in the early Middle Ages, in my view, remains Eileen Power's account of the life of the peasant Bodo, in Power, *Medieval People*, ch 1. For an insight into northern Iberian early medieval archaeology of village society, see Quirós Castillo, Arqueología del campesinado altomedieval; and Escalona, Early Castilian peasantry. It is becoming increasingly clear that it is to archaeology and bioarchaeology that we should look to further our understanding of early medieval farming, for a taste of which, see McKerracher, *Farming Transformed*.

certain degree of work-related movement.[18] Connecting these plots were rudimentary roads or tracks that offered access to cultivable plots and grazing lands; it was this kind of local infrastructure, maintained by the locals themselves, that facilitated the physical movement of people and animals on which most forms of work depended, and the documents make clear that peasants were fully cognisant of their significance, recognising them as defining features of the landscape.[19]

What are we to make of the constant swirl of activity – of mobility – demanded of peasant proprietors? First, it was more often than not confined to a relatively small geographical area. Let us consider the village of Rabal, in Galicia, aspects of the local society of which can be reconstructed thanks to an unusual number of surviving documents which record the transactions of its inhabitants.[20] The documents survive in the monastic cartulary (known as the *Tumbo*) of San Salvador de Celanova, a twelfth-century compilation of 198 folios.[21] Celanova was a wealthy monastery of aristocratic foundation, and the scale of the *Tumbo* – some 578 charters written between 842 and 1165 – and the nature of much of the business recorded therein, reflect the monastery's role as the principal regional powerbroker.[22] Rabal is unattested in the cartulary before 956 but thereafter seems to have been systematically targeted by the monks at Celanova, who made more than thirty separate acquisitions there in the third quarter of the tenth century; twenty-one of these acquisitions, typically small plots bought from peasants, took place in a strikingly concentrated period of expansion of just two years.[23] For example, in February 962 Foquima sold a vineyard in Rabal to Bishop Rosendo and the monks at Celanova, receiving seven *quartarios* of grain and one *sextario* of wine by way of payment.[24] A month or so later, in March, the apparently more substantial peasant couple Baltario and his wife Leovili sold multiple vineyards and ten apple trees for thirty measures of grain, wine, and cloth.[25] Consolidation was clearly Celanova's aim here: Baltario and Leovili noted, perhaps ruefully, that the vineyards they agreed to sell lay amidst vineyards owned by other proprietors which had already been acquired by the monastery.

18 Davies, *Gardens*, 72.

19 Roads are a common feature of the documentation from across Christian Iberia, as the following examples show: *inter vinea Raiane et carraria de vereda*, in 149 (962), in *Colección diplomática del monasterio de Celanova, II*, ed. Sáez and Sáez [hereafter *Celanova, II*]; *et per illa carral per ubi andant illos carros*, in 457 (978), in *Colección documental del archivo de la catedral de León, II*, ed. Sáez and Sáez [hereafter *León, II*]; *et per illa karrera qui discurrit strata maiore pro ad Oueto in directa linea*, 27 (1003), in *Colección diplomática del monasterio de San Vicente de Oviedo*, ed. Floriano Llorente

20 Pallares Méndez, *Ilduara*, 38-47; Portass, Rethinking, 96-103. On Galician rural society, see Isla Frez, *La sociedad.* On Rabal and Galician rural settlement, although with a rather different emphasis than that explored here, see Pallares Méndez and Portela Silva, La villa.

21 Portass, *Village World*, 128-132.

22 The best analysis to focus on the charters that underpin the transactions of Rabal is now found in Barrett, *Text and Textuality*, 72-76.

23 *Celanova, II*, ed. Sáez and Sáez, 129 (961); 130 (961); 131 (961); 132 (961); 133 (961); 134 (961); 135 (961); 136 (961); 137 (961); 138 (961); 139 (961); 140 (961); 143 (961); 145 (962); 146 (962); 147 (962); 148 (962); 149 (962); 150 (962); 151 (962); 152 (962).

24 *Celanova, II*, ed. Sáez and Sáez: 147 (962).

25 *Celanova, II*, ed. Sáez and Sáez: 150 (962).

The same is true of the ten apple trees included in the transaction, which were apparently surrounded by, perhaps even within, orchards the monastery had purchased within living memory.[26] Landowners operating in this way may well have been selling at a considerable disadvantage; after all, they parted with long-term, relatively secure assets in exchange for modest, perishable goods, such as grain and wine.[27] This need not have always been true, however, since those selling to Celanova were sometimes demonstrably not poor, many of them indicating in the charters recording the transaction in question that they owned assets other than those they were agreeing to alienate. Why, then, did they accept such terms at all? Whilst we cannot be sure, we should not rule out that the status and prestige gained by dealing with the locally powerful, in addition to the possibilities of patronage and clientelism that such deals possibly enshrined, indicate a hinterland of motivations only partly visible in the documents.

What is perhaps most striking about these transactions is how much land Celanova acquired in so small an area. Thanks to the pioneering studies of María Pallares, we know that Rabal was approximately 3kms by 3kms in extent, so the footprint of Celanova's ownership can hardly have gone unnoticed as early as the spring of 961, by which stage Celanova had already made a dozen transactions in the village in the first few months of the year.[28] Indeed so frequent was the transfer of landed property in this small world that we must surmise that in the 960s the local geography of private ownership was dramatically reconfigured – with consequences for its social geography too, and implications for the amount and type of work undertaken by the selling parties thereafter. Celanova's campaign of acquisitions inevitably meant that expectations of what constituted »work« changed too, at least for certain members of the community, who took on new roles unrelated to farming. For when the inhabitants of Rabal had to deal with the agents of Celanova, the transacting parties relied on the willingness of other members of the community to vouchsafe proceedings. A quick glance at the charters confirms this impression, for it shows that some members of the community were »habitually present at transactions«, witnessing, legitimising, and – in some limited sense – supervising the proceedings.[29]

Gundesindo is a case in point. He witnessed some fifteen of these Rabal transactions, and the role in question – work of a public, community-facing kind – seems to have been associated with him personally, perhaps on account of his local status; after all, his authority was apparently heritable, for his son, Mito Gundesindi, was also a trusted community figure, appearing in his own right as a witness on 13 occasions.[30] Whether or not the supervisory role performed by smallholders such as Gundesindo and his son was institutionalised in

26 *Celanova, II*, ed. Sáez and Sáez: 150 (962) *et iacent ipsas cum vineas de frater Gondemaro et de Asoi, de Itila, que iam comparastis…et X manzanarias, inter vestros pomares, que iam vobis comparatos habetis*.

27 Quirós Castillo, Inequality; or, for a different view, Portass, Peasant proprietors; and Feller, Gramain and Weber, *La fortune*.

28 Pallares Méndez, *Ilduara*, 38-47; *Celanova, II*, ed. Sáez and Sáez, 129 (961); 130 (961); 131 (961); 132 (961); 133 (961); 134 (961); 135 (961); 136 (961); 137 (961); 138 (961); 139 (961); 140 (961).

29 Barrett, *Text and Textuality*, 75.

30 Discussed by Barrett in the context of charter production and the »lateral diffusion« of literacy, in *Text and Textuality*, 76-77.

some indiscernible, quasi-formal way is impossible to say: all the same, prominent locals were, for some reason or other, charged with jobs other than farming, here in Rabal and further afield in northern Iberia too; they were, that is, »promoted«, their expertise and status recognised, as they became »guardians of memory« for the community.[31]

There are no indications in the charters that those individuals who performed these roles, superintending the petty business of friends and neighbours, possessed as a matter of course any auxiliary or technical skills that would aid them in their endeavours. They were not professionals but merely men of substance in the locality – wise heads to whom one turned to give a sheen of respectability to business dealings. In other Christian Iberian contexts from this period, we see individuals described as *boni homines* performing a similar function.[32] These »good men« helped to oil the wheels of community business, although we should be wary of overplaying their putative neutrality and perhaps not expect them to have been dispassionate about its outcome on all occasions. Still, the point remains that a certain enthusiastic if inexpert willingness to serve the local community – to coordinate the small-scale human associations, freely entered into, that structured rural life – can be detected in the actions of some individuals in tenth-century Iberia; these people balanced different tasks and performed more than one role, even if polyoccupationalism, as that term might be understood today, did not really exist.[33]

In addition to all the sowing, harvesting, buying, and selling of land that features so prominently in the charters, we must intuit other activities in the absence of more concrete evidence. Some members of the community, for example, must have made clothes, pots, and basic implements, or at least had access to them, and lists of appurtenances in charters furnish clues on this particular, but information on the division of labour, let alone specialist producers, is virtually non-existent. Very rarely, in fact, are jobs, *stricto sensu*, mentioned at all. An exception must be made for Summiro the blacksmith, who witnessed a single Rabal charter dated to April 961, appearing alongside the local lord's representative in an otherwise perfectly standard sale.[34] Examples such as this – surprisingly rare across the entire corpus, let alone just the Rabal charters – should not incline us to take an excessively narrow view of work in the broad sense of that term. Certainly, insofar as most people spent most of their time working, they did so in fields, but as we have seen, taken together, what the above suggests is that in spite of the opacity of the sources, there was clearly more than one kind of activity or role that one could undertake or perform in Rabal. There was agricultural »work« as we now more properly understand it, that is, work that involved a great deal of physical labour, the goal of which was to produce food for consumption and sale; and there was another kind of task associated not with »making a living« but with ensuring that the community continued to function.

31 Barrett, *Text and Textuality*, 75.

32 Davies, *Boni homines* in northern Iberia.

33 Hénaut, Lena and Accominotti, Polyoccupationalism. On polyoccupationalism, see the framing comments of the guest editors of this special issue, and in particular their emphasis – shared here – on »skills, knowledge and networks« in Pazienza and Bavuso, Moving jobs, 6-7.

34 *Celanova, II*, ed. Sáez and Sáez: 136 (961) *Summiro, ferrario, ts*.

Rabal seems to have been no different to the other villages of the region, and – if the charters are to be believed – its land was put to the same uses we see elsewhere.[35] We can only say so much about the density of transactions that occurred there because most of them involved the monks of Celanova, who kept the records of their business in the village. But a fine-grained examination of the village of Bobadela, also located within the orbit of Celanova (hence the survival of its charters), has identified a roughly similar community in terms of size and composition.[36] There, at Bobadela, rural cultivators farmed parcels of land of varying size, and the transfer of that land by means of written contract was clearly well established. Further studies, focused on the villages of northern Spain in the hundred years or so either side of 1000, have fleshed out this impressionistic picture to present something resembling a pattern.[37] Villagers did business locally, with friends, neighbours, and – rather less frequently – strangers. In general terms, most people did not need to move far to conduct the business on which their livelihoods depended, and they would seldom have done so; what mattered was that they could draw a mental map of the micro-geographies in which their lives played out, and we see that this map functioned as a frame of reference for business affairs in thousands of charters from northern Iberia. Many of these charters locate property by carefully describing its situation in relation to widely known features of the landscape, the houses of neighbours, and past transactions.[38]

Motives for Movement: Land, Law and Lordship

Understanding local mobility is important because it illuminates aspects of the working lives of peasants, as we have seen. This is broadly true across the northern half of the Iberian Peninsula, and the findings presented heretofore, while built on the foundation of a single well-documented Galician village, can serve as a guide to the fundamental patterns of peasant society in early medieval Christian Spain. The same economic motives, for instance, can be detected in the planning that a certain Arias must have undertaken before deciding to buy land from three sets of neighbours in the same village on the plains of León in the middle of the tenth century.[39] One can indeed readily imagine the process: that is, how Arias must have visited the plots to consider their potential value and productivity; gathered information as to who owned them, whether they wanted to do business, or indeed whether they would be permitted to have much say in the matter; and eventually settled the negotiation via written contract. And given the hundreds of examples we have of similar small-scale transactions in the Iberian documents, we can state with some certainty that economic motives structured much quotidian mobility.[40]

35 Davies, *Acts of Giving*; Portass, *Village World*.

36 Fletcher, *St James's Catapult*, 8.

37 Portass, Peasants, market exchange.

38 Barrett, *Text and Textuality*, 75.

39 *León, II*, ed. Sáez and Sáez: 372, 373 and 374.

40 Portass, Peasants, market exchange; Davies, *Acts of Giving*.

Much, but not all: for example, in Galicia, around the year 1000, two sets of peasants (one set, a mother and her son; the other, a married couple), made the short journey from the village of Moreira to the monastery of San Salvador de Celanova, a trip of no more than two kilometres or so.[41] They did so to face judgement for their deceitful involvement in the theft of a sow, so we may reasonably surmise that they made their way to the monastery with some reluctance, aware that their fate was to be decided *in iudicatio*.[42] Peasants accused of wrongdoing were sometimes summonsed to Sobrado de los Monjes, another Galician monastery of aristocratic foundation, which also occasionally served as a make-shift court. Where such evidence survives, we can trace the movements of peasants from one place in the extended locality to another: Raiola, mother of the apparently light-fingered Sentarius, cannot have relished accompanying her son to Sobrado at the behest of the local executive officer (*Perductus igitur fuit ante iudicum, hic ad Superatum* [Sobrado] *per saione nomine Leovildo*) to face whatever kind of justice awaited him.[43] Their journey, at least, was not arduous: this we know because the landed holdings that Raiola was compelled to surrender to the aristocratic couple presiding at Sobrado, on account of her son's misdemeanours, lay in the village of Sanctum Iulianis de Colimbrianis, just 3kms north of the monastery.[44] These were most definitely local journeys in that the distances covered were short; the reputational consequences of such short trips may well, however, have lasted a lifetime.[45]

Court proceedings, some rather obviously grander affairs than others, provide a great deal of information about individuals performing specialist roles akin to jobs, some of which involved training and specialist knowledge, and apparently presupposed the ability to write, or at least a certain familiarity with procedures predicated upon the use of documents. Judges, sundry legal experts not identified specifically as judges (that is, not described as *iudices* in the language of the charters), court officers, and individuals invested with the authority to preside over proceedings all »went to work« in tenth-century Spain to resolve disputes and contractual infringements.[46] It is also possible that judges may have worked their own circuits, which must have involved a certain amount of mobility beyond the immediate locality.[47] It would perhaps be naïve to imagine that peasants took on these specialist roles themselves, but that the challenges of life were mediated in part by acquaintance with documentation, even if at one remove, is now beyond doubt.[48]

Facing a particularly thorny kind of challenge were local communities engaged in the collective or group-led management of resources, who – the sources suggest – sometimes

41 *Celanova, III*, ed. Sáez and Sáez: 248 and 249.

42 The accused were, after all, described variously as a *iudicatore falso* and *iudicatores mentiosos*.

43 »He was then led before the judges, here at Sobrado, by the saio, named Leovildo«: Charter number 31 (951) in Loscertales de García de Valdeavellano, *Tumbos del monasterio de Sobrado de los Monjes*.

44 Now the parish of San Xiao de Cumbrao, in the *concello* of Sobrado.

45 Exile also caused members of the local community to leave the village, and therefore in some sense played a role in determining mobility, for more on which, see Lorenzo Rodríguez, Out of the village.

46 Davies, *Windows*, ch. 6.

47 Davies, *Windows*, 160-164.

48 Barrett, *Text and Textuality*.

mobilised in order to defend their rights in the locality, normally in an attempt to repel encroaching powers.[49] Relatively informal decision-making bodies, often denoted by the word *collatio* in the charters, saw leading groups or individuals from several different villages meet to coordinate local affairs; the individuals involved, about whom we can say very little, presumably performed a range of jobs on behalf of their communities, from consultation to dispute resolution.[50] The management and protection of rights to water was a particularly pressing concern, as Wendy Davies, as well as Álvaro Carvajal Castro and Julio Escalona, have shown in recent years.[51] Other extremely interesting examples of what we might call the collective at work involve groups of villagers acting in unison to defend the boundaries of their settlement. Most of these disputes seem to have been brought to court by major landowners, most often monasteries, seeking to reassert their rights to estates, but local involvement in the unfolding of judicial process is clear in all such examples, and these »boundary dispute« charters allow us to say something about local mobility and the variety of roles and tasks performed by elites and non-elites.[52]

To illustrate this point, witness the following complicated account from 987 of a dispute involving Galician villagers who had seemingly found themselves at odds with their lord. The charter consists of two principal parts, the first of which sees the inhabitants of Zacoys, led by a peasant named Hordonio, recognise that their claim to land in San Felix had been overruled by a named panel of judges, after investigation *in situ* had taken place. The second part, not produced here (because its content is less relevant to the thematic concerns of this article), comprises a *manifestum* by Hordonio, followed by detailed statements on how the judicial proceedings in part one should take place, with various tasks and responsibilities assigned to the procurator (*mandator*) and executive officer of the court (*saio*), whom we first encounter in part one, produced here.[53]

> We, the men who inhabit the village (*nos homines qui sumus habitantes*) of Zacoys, that is, those named Hordonio, Vermudo, Habze, Abdella, and Tunimi, to you our lord Manillano, abbot, and our lord Didaco, and your brothers of the monastery of Celanova. It is known by many that we obtained the rights to a part of the village of San Felix due to the generosity of our lord Rosendo, bishop, of happy memory, which part was given to us in usufruct for our own sustenance. And, humiliated by sin, we entered into dispute over that part with your brother Oduario, who had come to possess that same part of San Felix, for which reason we went to that very village in the presence of the judges (*pro quo peruenimus in ipsam uillam in presentia iudicum*) Froila Nuniz, the abbot Abraham, Pelayo Spasandis, Oduario Tetoniz, Gemondo Froylaz, Alfidio Guderiz, Pelayo Tructesindiz, Fagildo the confessor, Oduario the confessor, Vimara Froilaz, and many others of good birth; all of whom examined the boundaries, as is written in your charter, and concluded that truth is on your side

49 Examples: charter numbers 128 (938) and 184 (944), both in *Colección documental del archivo de la catedral de León, I*, ed. Sáez and Sáez [hereafter *León, I*].

50 Carvajal Castro, Escalona, Martín Viso *et al.*, Collective action, 153; Davies, *Windows*, 219-230.

51 Davies, *Windows*, 186-190; Carvajal Castro and Escalona, Mills.

52 Davies, *Windows*, 221-226.

53 By far the best guide to this document is Collins, Visigothic Law, 88-90. Cf. López Sabatel, Apuntes, 226.

> (*dixerunt quia uestra est ueritas*). Therefore, your procurator (*mandator*), named Salvador, provided reasonable cause that we abide by the law and comply with what has been ordered (*ut fuissemus ad legem et quod nobis ordinasset adimplessemus*). Thus, we recognise that you are in possession of the truth, and we have assigned to you that village by means of a charter and via the mediation of the executive officer, Godesteo (*agnouimus uos in ueritate et adsignauimus uobis in uestra uilla per textum scripture placiti et per saionem nomine Godesteo*).[54]

What are we to make of this story and what does it tell us about mobility, work, and the relationship between the two? At first glance, it would seem to demonstrate that lordly oversight was alive and well in tenth-century Galicia and to confirm that certain procedural measures, based on Visigothic law, could be implemented to settle boundary disputes.[55] Specialist jobs, tasks requiring skill and authority, are described in matter-of-fact terms and associated with named individuals: the monastery could call upon a procurator well-versed in the law to remind the men of Zacoys that its claim to the disputed land was unimpeachable, and the *saio*, a sort of factotum court officer, handled the paperwork and appears to have been an intermediary between the disputing parties.

But once we have absorbed the predictably contrite and regretful tones of the men of Zacoys, we notice that local mobility – that is, movement here and there in the extended locality – looms large in the account of how events unfolded. The men of Zacoys made the journey to the village of San Felix, the ownership of which was the source of contention; once there – they intimate – they observed, perhaps participated in, the perambulation of the contested boundaries; they also assembled in court, apparently held in San Felix, as instructed. There are good reasons to believe that this business dragged on for some time too, occasioning more than one local trip for Hordonio: the second part of this document, not translated here, stipulates that Salvador the procurator and Hordonio, acting as the representative of the inhabitants of Zacoys, agree to appear before a named judge on two further occasions.[56]

How far these men travelled is not entirely clear, because it is nigh-on impossible to be exactly sure of where Zacoys was located, but if we assemble and interrogate the few clues we possess, something of the micro-geography in which these events played out can be adumbrated. The wording of the charter tells us no more than that the men of Zacoys claimed a right to land in San Felix, implying but not stating that the two settlements are close to each other. To know for certain that they were, and to locate them more precisely in Galicia, we

54 *Celanova, II*, ed. Sáez and Sáez: 200 (11 May 987). Translation my own.

55 *Leges Visigothorum*, 10, 3, ed. Zeumer, 396-399.

56 *Celanova, II*, ed. Sáez and Sáez: 200 (11 May 987): *Salvator et Hordonio tibi saioni nostro Gudesteo per hunc nostrum placitum tibi compromittimus ut presentemus nostras personas ista IIII[a] feria in presentia iudicis Abrahame abba proad lege pro quinta de ipsa villa, et quod nobis lex iusserit adimpleamus. Et qui unus ex nobis hunc placitum excesserit pariet de quo agitur in duplum. Salvator et Ordonio in hoc placitum manus nostras (signum). Salvator qui voce intendit de fratribus Cellenove et Ordonio qui voce intendit sua et de suos heredes tibi saioni nostro Gudesteo per hunc nostrum placitum tibi compromittimus ut presentemus nostras personas et testimonias in presentia iudicis Froyla Nunnizi die ista* V[a] feria hic in ad Sanctum *Christophalum ad Malage, et firme ego Salvator quia ipsas quattuor rationes de ipsa villa Sancto Felice per ubi eam designavimus iste Ordonio et suos heredes tollerunt ad ipsos fratres de eas iure, et abent illas contra se*.

need to examine the only other reference to Zacoys in the Celanova cartulary, which can be traced to another boundary dispute, recorded in a charter dated to 950.[57] In this earlier document, Bishop Rosendo, then at the height of his influence, litigated with the inhabitants of the villages of Villaza, Albarellos, and Santa María *pro terminis et limitibus de villa Santa Felice*. That this *Santa Felice* is our San Felix from 987 is demonstrated by the description of the route taken by the inspectors appointed to walk the contested boundaries, which tells us that having encountered engraved boundary markers delimiting the territory of San Felix, they proceeded *directly* to Zacoys.[58] These places, the charter makes plain, were in the vicinity of Baroncelli, now Monterrei, near Verín, close to what is now the border with northern Portugal. They lie something in the order of 60kms from Celanova; but, crucially, Villaza, Albarellos, and Santa María survive to this day as extant parishes of Monterrei, and they are each within 3kms of each other, the sort of distances that would have been no impediment to the forming of sworn associations of locals in the face of encroaching lords. And what of San Felix, the crux of the entire dispute? A local tradition, traceable to the seventeenth century, holds that the San Felix contested in 950 and 987 is now the settlement of Pazos (still, officially, *San Fiz* de Pazos), which sits three kilometres to the east of Villaza and Albarellos.[59]

In sum, the micro-region that encompassed San Felix and its neighbouring settlements was, as Davies would have it, a »small world«, a landscape that required dense local knowledge to navigate.[60] But there is also a broader point to be made: these charters evince a clear demonstration of »local mobility« in action, and they demonstrate that tasks other than agricultural work were sometimes required of villagers. What, then, can we say at this juncture by way of summary? At the very least, that people travelled to and from their workplaces on a daily or near-daily basis, and that they also journeyed to hold meetings with friends, neighbours, and the representatives of local communities; and yet, on other occasions, it was the long arm of the law, or at least of the local lord, that prompted people to move beyond the household.

Postscript: The Local Contours of Movement

The foregoing has shown that if we are prepared to think capaciously about what work entailed in early medieval northern Iberia, we see that in addition to labouring on the land, some non-elite individuals performed other roles, some of which involved representation, disputation, and negotiation. These tasks, it would seem, were not remunerated. But they constituted »work« in the fundamental sense that what they demanded of those charged with them required the purposeful and directed exertion of mental and physical resources to a specific end.

57 *Celanova, II*, ed. Sáez and Sáez: 86 (13 June 950).

58 *Celanova, II*, ed. Sáez and Sáez: 86: *et inde gradientes per duos aggeres terre invenimus contra Alvarelios mulionem in carraria fictum et contra partem sancti Felicis duas columnas ex quibus una incisa videtur ob signum terminationis, deinde pergentes provius per aggeres terre in directo per Zaccoys*.

59 Taboada, A Alta Idade Media, 82.

60 Davies, *Small Worlds*; Escalona, Dense local knowledge.

And what of farming itself, which took up most of the time and energy of the vast majority of ordinary people? Difficult as it is to enter the thought-world of the tenth-century Iberian peasant, the answer to this question must surely be that agricultural labour was considered »work«, and there are indeed indications in the charters that work shaped the identity of the *laboratores* who did that work, marking out, say, the *homines de Zacoys* from their social superiors. In contexts in which rural cultivators were heavily enserfed, we would do well to ask where work ended and service began, as Nicolas Schroeder has recently done with characteristic acuity, but in landscapes peopled by considerable numbers of free proprietors, such as northern Iberia, the question loses some of its potency.[61] It must be conceded, however, that in Spain we do occasionally encounter explicit references to the work that dependents were expected to do, even if it is rather vaguely described: when, for example, Ramiro III donated the *villa de Sancti Victori* to the abbot Juan in 978, it was made clear that the men of that village were expected to busy themselves with *opera in quacumque fuerit necessarium*.[62] Admittedly, the terms *opus/opera* are not particularly prevalent in the corpus, but it is clear nonetheless that when it was used, it was understood to denote physical labour.[63] It may even have given rise to related terms used to describe workers with technical expertise, such as those *operariis* who, in 905, patently understood something about hydraulic technology, however rudimentary their knowledge.[64]

Other terms denoting work of the kind on which village life depended – the *orriario* in charge of the granary; the *fornarius* who worked (and owned?) the oven; the *pellicularius*, that is, the tanner or the peltmonger – appear in our charters, although not in sufficiently large numbers to make generalisation possible.[65] All the same, these people, the tasks they performed, and – where we can say something about it – the distances they moved evoke a world in which the local contours of life gave all work and work-related tasks contextual meaning. These small worlds, inhabited by modest folks, were no less complicated, no less conflict-riven, and no less rich than those peopled by their social superiors; but recognising something of their scale induces a healthy scepticism with respect to the utility of diachronic studies of connection across vast distances in a period as fragmented and technologically-constrained as the early Middle Ages. Simply stated, the study of how most people in most places in pre-modern Europe experienced mobility and were themselves in some sense mobile, promises to tell us little about the interregional networks, flows and connections

61 Schroeder, *Servitium et opus*. Note that hereditary obligations best described as »domestic service« are clear enough in the Celanova inventories, but the individuals in question all worked at Celanova; for more on the bakers (*pistores*), swineherds (*porqueros*), and female kitchen staff (*mulieres de quoquina*) that toiled there, see *Celanova, II*, ed. Sáez and Sáez: 183 (977).

62 *León, II*, ed. Sáez and Sáez: 461 (978).

63 Charter 400 (1013) in *Colección diplomática*, ed. Herrero de la Fuente: *et de opera manuum nostrarum*.

64 *León, I*, ed. Sáez and Sáez: 19 (905): *et rivum quam ipse Nabaz cum suis operariis aperuit*.

65 For an *orriario,* see *Colección documental*, ed. Ruiz Asencio, charter 786 (1022); for a *fornarius*, see *Colección diplómatica*, ed. Mínguez Fernández, charter 59 (936); for the *pellicularius*, see *León, II*, ed. Sáez and Sáez: 230 (950). With respect to the »professions« in urban contexts, see Pilsworth, Could you just sign this for me John?

that dominate most global history, and early medievalists should feel no shame in recognising as much.

Accordingly, this article hopes to remind us that to discuss early medieval mobility at a meaningful and appropriately historicised scale demands, above all, that we begin by recognising the significance of »the local«. Having said that, as always when dealing with the early Middle Ages, we must recognise that there are grounds for caution. This article has focused on predominantly agrarian societies, practising mixed farming in hill country, lowland, and plain; we might consider, however, that things were somewhat different in other early medieval settings and contexts. For example, the almost certainly greater mobility demanded by the lifestyles of highland pastoral communities, plains cattle herders, and coastal fishing communities largely escapes the charters, so we must not imagine for a moment that an analysis based on settled rural cultivators in early medieval north-western Iberia encompasses the entirety of the topic.[66] It must also be conceded that to defetishise »connection« over large distances, and to return to the routine and the everyday – building outwards from the general to the particular, from the rule to the exception – will not provide us with all the answers we seek; nonetheless, given the preponderance of small-scale rural cultivation in much of Europe before the year 1000, it may well represent the best place to start.

66 I am indebted to the wise words of one of the peer reviewers of this article, who pushed me to expand upon the very particular view of society that charters provide. To see something of the breadth of types of labour in the feudal centuries, see Arnoux, European workers.

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Ibn Buṭlān, a Physician on the Move between the Byzantine and Islamic Worlds

Joe Glynias*

In this paper, I introduce a novel perspective on the Baghdadi physician Ibn Buṭlān, analyzing how he flexibly deployed his Christian identity, his Baghdadi medical education and connections, and his knowledge of the Greek and Arabic traditions to gain employment and fame as he traveled across both the Byzantine and Islamic worlds. Ibn Buṭlān is known to scholars of medieval Arabic medicine and literature as an exemplary Arabic litterateur of the Islamicate world. However, his actions and career as a Christian Arabic author – including his authorship of a treatise on the Eucharist for the Byzantine patriarch in the midst of East-West schism in Constantinople in 1054 – are much less well understood. In this paper, I show how Ibn Buṭlān marketed his Baghdadi intellectual heritage as he traveled across the Islamic world. Furthermore, I show that he converted to join the Byzantine church and became a Byzantine monk. This enabled him to join other Arabic-speaking Christian scholars active under Byzantine rule in the city of Antioch, and to market his Baghdadi heritage to new Byzantine audiences, both Arabic- and Greek-speaking. I argue that, by composing Arabic texts and instructing students in Antioch, he helped instigate a wider, long-lasting Byzantine interest in the Greco-Arabic medicine of Baghdad.

Keywords: Greco-Arabic translation, Baghdad, Constantinople, Antioch, Melkite, Byzantium, ʿAbbāsid Caliphate, History of Medicine

The Baghdadi physician Ibn Buṭlān was an expert in the Arabic medical-philosophical traditions that had developed from the Greco-Arabic translation movement, the Arabic literary tradition, and the nearly millennium-old East Syrian Christian scholarly tradition. In 1049, he embarked on a journey from Baghdad, becoming known as a prototypical traveling physician in medieval Arabic literature for his journeys through Syria, Palestine, Egypt,

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This article is part of the volume *Moving Jobs: Occupational Identity and Motility in the Middle Ages, II*, guest editors: Annamaria Pazienza and Irene Bavuso. To read all related articles, please access https://doi.org/10.1553/medievalworlds_no23_2025 for the entire part II and https://doi.org/10.1553/medievalworlds_no20_2024 for part I.

and Constantinople, until his death in Antioch in 1066.[1] Ibn Buṭlān repeatedly traversed political and religious borders across the Byzantine and Islamic worlds, in the process both undergoing transformations and transforming his surroundings. Most notably, he became a Byzantine monk and joined the Byzantine Melkite community of Antioch. This Eastern Christian community under Byzantine rule benefited from being in communion with the Byzantine imperial church, from their knowledge of both Arabic and Greek, and, in the 11th century, from the immigration to Antioch of Eastern Christian scholars like Ibn Buṭlān and Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd al-Anṭākī.

This article uses Ibn Buṭlān's career as a lens to view the mobility and flexibility of patronage of Arabic-speaking physicians in the medieval Middle East.

An East Syrian Physician of Baghdad

Born in early 11th-century Baghdad, Ibn Buṭlān was the star pupil of ʿAbdallāh ibn al-Ṭayyib (d. 1043), the leading physician and philosopher of his era in Baghdad.[2] Ibn al-Ṭayyib practiced medicine and taught at the celebrated ʿAḍudī hospital,[3] in addition to composing philosophical and scientific works, including commentaries on Aristotle, Galen, and Hippokrates. He was a leading figure in the »Baghdad School« of Aristotelian philosophy, which had a fierce rivalry with the Khurāsānī school led by Ibn Sīnā.[4] Ibn al-Ṭayyib reportedly »revered [Ibn Buṭlān], extolled him, and held him above his other disciples«, instructing him in the *Posterior Analytics*, likely as part of a wider philosophical curriculum.[5] While in Baghdad, Ibn Buṭlān wrote the dietary manual *Taqwīm al-Siḥḥa*, which was being studied at the ʿAḍudī hospital, where he had likely worked with Ibn al-Ṭayyib, during Ibn Buṭlān's lifetime.[6] This text would be popular for centuries in both Arabic and its Latin translation.[7] Likely around the same time, he composed his *Treatise on Buying Slaves and Inspecting Servants*, a text which used racialized physiognomy to advise Islamicate elites about which slaves to purchase.[8] Armed with his training by Ibn al-Ṭayyib and his plentiful connections to Baghdadi

1 Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 2.1, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 10.38; Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Taʾrīḫ al-ḥukamāʾ*, ed. Lippert, 294-315; Schacht and Meyerhof, *Ibn Butlan and Ibn Ridwan*; Conrad, Ibn Butlān in Bilād Al-Shām.

2 Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 2.1, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 10.38.1; Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Taʾrīḫ al-ḥukamāʾ*, ed. Lippert, 223, 314-315; Samir, La place d'Ibn at-Ṭayyib.

3 Faultless, Ibn al-Ṭayyib, 667.

4 Pines, La ›Philosophie orientale‹; Ladjal, Philosophical conflict; Ferrari, Abū l-Faraǧ Ibn al-Ṭayyib.

5 Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Taʾrīḫ al-ḥukamāʾ*, ed. Lippert, 314-315.

6 The earliest manuscript fragment of this text, held in private hands, contains a note saying that it was read in the ʿAḍudī hospital on 14 May 1057: Christie's Auction House, A section from possibly the earliest recorded copy.

7 E.g., among the many manuscripts of the text, expensive and illuminated copies of the *Taqwīm* were commissioned as prestige objects by 13th-14th-century rulers as disparate as the sultans of Ḥamā and the Visconti of Milan: Bertiz, *Picturing Health*; Hoeniger, Illuminated *Tacuinum Sanitatis*; Mane, *Le travail à la campagne au Moyen Âge*, 58-60.

8 Ibn Buṭlān, Risāla jāmiʿa li-funūn nāfiʿa, ed. Hārūn; Sanagustin, *Médecine et société*. I intend to investigate this text in the future for the light it shines on medieval Islamic conceptions of race.

elites across confessional lines, Ibn Buṭlān presented himself as a preeminent scholar of the Baghdadi scholarly tradition.

While in Baghdad, Ibn Buṭlān was also trained in the East Syrian Christian scholarly tradition by both Ibn al-Ṭayyib and Elias of Nisibis. In addition to being a philosopher and physician, Ibn al-Ṭayyib was also a high official in the Church of the East, who helped systematize the East Syrian tradition in Arabic by translating and codifying large chunks of the exegetical and canon law traditions of his church.[9] We will see that Ibn Buṭlān's text on the Eucharist shows the influence of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's exegesis, indicating that he likely studied Christian texts with Ibn al-Ṭayyib. Additionally, a series of theological questions posed by Ibn Buṭlān to Elias of Nisibis indicates that Ibn Buṭlān also studied with this major East Syrian bishop, theologian, and historian of the era.[10] He addressed Elias as his teacher, using language fitting for a bishop in his Christian sect. He called himself »your poor and sinful student«, and called Elias »my pure teacher«, »your holiness«, and »your excellence«, likened him to a »thirteenth Apostle«, and implied that he could work miracles.[11] He asked Elias to resolve significant uncertainties that might lead him to deny Christ or espouse atheistic discourse – an unusual subject for a medieval Christian Arabic text, including topics as fundamental as contradictions in the Bible about forgiveness and punishment, the reality of the resurrection, and the nature of Christ's glorified body.[12] We will see that the habit that Ibn Buṭlān displayed here of playing devil's advocate would repeatedly get him into trouble. At the same time, his apparent willingness to challenge his own East Syrian religious norms may have facilitated his eventual conversion to Byzantine Orthodoxy.

An Expert in the Baghdadi Medical Tradition

Across his writings, Ibn Buṭlān interweaved anecdotes of ancient Greek and recent Baghdadi physicians as part of his self-presentation as an authority on the modern medicine of Baghdad and the scientific trajectory through which it had developed. Furthermore, Ibn Buṭlān's knowledge of the Arabic medical tradition that had developed in Baghdad in the wake of the Greco-Arabic translation movement enabled him to travel extensively across the Islamic and Byzantine worlds. These travels earned him further fame as a scholar and, in the process, gained him further anecdotal knowledge of contemporary physicians.

In basing his authority on the Baghdadi medical tradition, Ibn Buṭlān came into conflict with those who had competing claims of medical expertise, such as Ibn Riḍwān, the leading physician in Cairo. Ibn Riḍwān considered himself the true heir to the ancient Greek medical tradition. He was a rare autodidact in the Islamic world whose knowledge came from personal study of Arabic translations of ancient Greek texts.[13] As a result, he developed a model of scholarly authority derived from his perceived understanding of studying ancient texts

9 Faultless, Ibn al-Ṭayyib, 668-669.

10 Samir, Elie de Nisibe; Samir, Les apories.

11 Samir, Les apories, 379.

12 Samir, Les apories, 379-383.

13 Das, Hippocratism of ʿAlī Ibn Riḍwān, 156-159, 167-177; Reisman, Medieval Arabic medical autobiography, 559-569.

that contradicted the Baghdadi model of Ibn Buṭlān, who prized the living Arabic medical tradition he was trained in, which had already incorporated knowledge from and, in his estimation, even surpassed that of the ancient Greeks.

The dispute between the two began in 1049, when Ibn Buṭlān harshly condemned a Galenic treatise written by a student of Ibn Riḍwān's, the Syrian Miaphysite al-Yabrūdī. After Ibn Buṭlān arrived in Cairo not long thereafter, the two physicians exchanged a series of verbal ripostes. Although Ibn Riḍwān convinced Cairo's medical community to eject Ibn Buṭlān from the city by 1050, this dispute would become foundational to Ibn Buṭlān's later scholarly reputation. The treatises they wrote against one another would become famous in the medieval Islamic world, quoted extensively by Ibn al-Qifṭī and Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, as well as in modern scholarship, immortalized in a 1937 book-length publication by the prominent orientalists Joseph Schacht and Max Meyerhof.[14] What began as a dispute over a minor point of Galenic medicine would quickly devolve into a much larger debate about education, scholarship, and authority in the Islamicate scholarly world.

Aileen Das has argued that Ibn Riḍwān presented himself as a peer to Galen, who aimed, like Galen, to provide an exegetical model of the Hippokratic corpus.[15] In works such as his *Useful Book on the Teaching of the Medical Art*, he criticized innovations made from the Greek medical tradition by Arabic authors, like Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq (d. 873), Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (d. 925/935), and Ibn Buṭlān's teacher ʿAbdallāh ibn al-Ṭayyib – whom he declared a mere sophist.[16] To Ibn Riḍwān, Ibn Buṭlān was a typically problematic Baghdadi scholar, whose knowledge came from the garbled tradition he inherited.[17]

Ibn Buṭlān directly challenged Ibn Riḍwān's critiques of him and the Baghdadi medical tradition. He mocked Ibn Riḍwān's pupils as foolish and derided their attempts to serve Buyīd aristocrats in Baghdad.[18] He called Ibn al-Ṭayyib »our *shaykh*«,[19] invoking his teacher as a hallowed authority. He pointed out Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq's essential role in transmitting Greek science into Arabic.[20] He ridiculed Ibn Riḍwān's attempts to find contradictions between Galen and Ḥunayn as a misunderstanding based on comparing dissimilar things, like legal prescriptions given by two Ḥanafī judges about two separate groups called Ṣābians.[21] He not only accused Ibn Riḍwān of plagiarizing Ibn Baks's *Doubts against Ḥunayn*, but then derided that text, saying that Ibn Baks was a near-blind, shaky-handed drunk whose medical knowledge was laughed at in Baghdad.[22] As a *coup de grâce*, Ibn Buṭlān pointed to Ibn Riḍwān's Arabic

14 Schacht and Meyerhof, *Ibn Butlan and Ibn Ridwan*.

15 Das, 167-177.

16 Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 2.2, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 14.25.9; Schacht and Meyerhof, *Ibn Butlan and Ibn Ridwan*, 20-29, 43.

17 Das, Hippocratism of ʿAlī Ibn Riḍwān, 156-159, 167-177.

18 Schacht and Meyerhof, *Ibn Butlan and Ibn Ridwan*, 58, 59 (Arabic).

19 Schacht and Meyerhof, *Ibn Butlan and Ibn Ridwan,* 51, 54 (Arabic).

20 Schacht and Meyerhof, *Ibn Butlan and Ibn Ridwan,* 56 (Arabic).

21 Schacht and Meyerhof, *Ibn Butlan and Ibn Ridwan,* 66-67 (Arabic). On Ṣābians, see Van Bladel, *From Sasanian Mandaeans to Ṣābians of the Marshes*.

22 Schacht and Meyerhof, *Ibn Butlan and Ibn Ridwan*, 68-70 (Arabic).

monolingualism as proof that the latter could not even access the ancient Greek texts that he claimed to be studying directly, but knew them only in Arabic translation.[23] He scorned Ibn Riḍwān's inability to even pronounce the Greek names of Galen's late antique commentators. He argued that apparent contradictions between Greek and Arabic medical texts resulted from the slightly differing meanings of Greek and Arabic medical terms, giving Greek terms as examples.[24] Ibn Buṭlān argued that his Baghdadi Galenic education was ideal, in that he could draw directly on the ancients (in Greek if necessary) in addition to centuries of Arabic scholarship upon them.

This tactic helped Ibn Buṭlān convince later medieval scholars of his reliability as a source on the ancient physicians. Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa began his section on the Alexandrian commentators in his *The Best Accounts of the Classes of Physicians* by quoting the list Ibn Buṭlān had given when mocking Ibn Riḍwān's inability to pronounce their names.[25] In his *History of Learned Men*, Ibn al-Qifṭī referenced Ibn Buṭlān's statements on minor ancient authors and treated him as an authority on Greek medicine. After quoting Ibn Buṭlān about Proklos the Successor, he said, »Ibn Buṭlān was well-read in the sciences of the ancients, their books, and in reports about them, not at all suspect in what he relates«, echoing this praise after referencing Ibn Buṭlān about Nikolaos of Damascus.[26] In contrast to his esteem for Ibn Buṭlān, Ibn al-Qifṭī deemed Ibn Riḍwān an unoriginal scholar whose works contributed little beyond their compilations of previous sources, derisively saying that: »[Ibn Riḍwān's] students used to relate from him risible medical arguments, astronomical doctrines, and logical pronouncements, if the transmission was accurate.«[27] His opinion on Ibn Riḍwān was likely influenced by Ibn Buṭlān's polemics, which Ibn al-Qifṭī quoted extensively in his *History of Learned Men*.[28] As David Reisman has argued, both Ibn al-Qifṭī and Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa likely gave their rhetorical support to Ibn Buṭlān over Ibn Riḍwān because the former supported their own projects of valorizing the long history of Arabic medicine as a continuation of

23 Schacht and Meyerhof, *Ibn Butlan and Ibn Ridwan,* 59-60 (Arabic).

24 Schacht and Meyerhof, *Ibn Butlan and Ibn Ridwan,* 59-60 (Arabic).

25 Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 2.1, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 6.1.1; Schacht and Meyerhof, *Ibn Butlan and Ibn Ridwan*, 59-60 (Arabic).

26 Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Taʾrīḫ al-ḥukamāʾ*, ed. Lippert, 336 ,89. Both statements of Ibn Buṭlān conflated these ancient scholars with their namesakes from Laodikeia. Ibn al-Qifṭī conflated Proklos of Athens with Proklos of Laodikeia, a 4th-century Neoplatonist, whose commentary on Pythagoras' *Golden Verses* was synthesized by Ibn Buṭlān's teacher, ʿAbdallāh ibn al-Ṭayyib: Westerink, Proclus commentateur des ›Vers d'or‹, 78-61; Ibn al-Ṭayyib, *Proclus' Commentary on the Pythagorean Golden Verses*, ed. Linley; Izdebska, Man, god and the apotheosis of man. Either Nikolaos of Laodikeia or his earlier contemporary, Nikolaos of Damascus, authored Aristotelian commentaries that were translated into Syriac and Arabic: Herzhoff, Wer war der Peripatetiker Nikolaos, 165-142. Yāqūt also preserved this section, though the modern edition copies transliteration errors. Yāqūt gives Theophilos (توفلس) of Laodikeia instead of Proklos (برقلس), a transcription error caused by their similar consonantal skeletons. Moreover, Yāqūt attributed it to »Ibn Faḍlān« (d. 960 CE) instead of »Ibn Buṭlān«, although al-Qifṭī independently confirms that this came from Ibn Buṭlān's geographical missive to Hilāl: Yāqūt ibn ʿAbdallāh al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-Buldān*, vol. 4, ed. Wüstenfeld, 339; Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Taʾrīḫ al-ḥukamāʾ*, ed. Lippert, 298-297.

27 Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Taʾrīḫ al-ḥukamāʾ*, ed. Lippert, 444.

28 Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Taʾrīḫ al-ḥukamāʾ*, ed. Lippert, 298-314; Schacht and Meyerhof, *Ibn Butlan and Ibn Ridwan*, 30-32.

Greek medicine, a continuity that Ibn Riḍwān's arguments against the utility of the Baghdadi medical tradition sought to disrupt.[29]

Ibn Buṭlān's knowledge of the Greek tradition was complemented by his authority in the Baghdadi medical tradition, a fact that is most visible in his *Why Physicians have Changed to a Cooling Treatment*. In this work, Ibn Buṭlān argued for novel medical treatments developed by recent Baghdadi physicians that yielded improved results over ancient Greek practices. Though *Why Physicians* is no longer extant, later biographical dictionaries extensively quoted its anecdotes about Baghdadi physicians. Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa quoted *Why Physicians* to start his entry on Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ḥarrānī (d. 975/980), which describes how al-Ḥarrānī used bloodletting to heal the Būyid Abū Ṭāhir ibn Baqiyya after he had had a stroke and become unconscious – a practice in line with Ibn Buṭlān's wider arguments in *Why Physicians*.[30] While this anecdote erroneously convinced Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa that Ibn Buṭlān had studied with Abū al-Ḥasan, in actuality, Ibn Buṭlān related this story of the earlier physician as part of his corpus of Baghdadi medical knowledge.[31]

Moreover, Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa brought multiple passages from *Why Physicians* together in his entry on Ṣāʿid ibn Bishr (fl. 11th c., first half), a figure whom Ibn Riḍwān implied was one of Ibn Buṭlān's Baghdadi teachers.[32] This set of passages began with Ibn Buṭlān's identification of Ṣāʿid ibn Bishr as an innovator in some medical methods he was discussing, namely: »he would treat patients by bloodletting, giving them cooling and moisture-inducing remedies, and not allowing them to take food.« Due to his success, »[Ṣāʿid] became the chief physician upon whom kings depended for their regimens.«[33] Ibn Buṭlān reported that the *raʾīs* Abū Yaḥyā told him in Mayyāfāriqīn that Ṣāʿid was called to cure his father, the vizier Abū al-Qāsim al-Maghribī, because baths, enemas, and hot potions had proven ineffective. Ṣāʿid gave the vizier iced water, bled him, and forced him onto a cleanse in which he ingested only nutritious fluids – a treatment which revitalized him.[34] Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa concluded this set of quotations by paraphrasing another anecdote from Ibn Buṭlān about Ṣāʿid curing the scorpion bite of the Shīʿī jurist, al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā.[35] Later, in his entry on the philosopher Abū ʿAlī ibn Zurʿa, Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa once again quoted *Why Physicians* to explain how Ṣāʿid had developed new cool and dry treatments for treating Ibn Zurʿa for hemiplegia, after older, renowned Baghdadi physicians had made no headway with treatments prescribed by the ancients.[36]

29 Reisman, Medieval Arabic medical autobiography, 559-60, 567-69.

30 Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 2.1, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 10.8.2.

31 Schacht and Meyerhof point out the chronological impossibility of Abū al-Ḥasan teaching Ibn Buṭlān: Schacht and Meyerhof, *Ibn Butlan and Ibn Ridwan*, 59 n. 2.

32 Schacht and Meyerhof, *Ibn Butlan and Ibn Ridwan,* 108.

33 Translation adapted from Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 3.1, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 10.13.2.

34 Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 2.1, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 10.13.3.

35 Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 2.1, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 10.13.5.

36 Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 2.1, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 10.23.2.

Beyond these quotations from *Why Physicians*, Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa repeated Ibn Buṭlān's recounting of a meeting between two famous 9th-century intellectuals, the East Syrian physician Yūḥannā ibn Māsawayh and the Arabic litterateur al-Jāḥiẓ.[37] He further quoted Ibn Buṭlān's rendition of a humorous poetic exchange about laxatives between the East Syrian translator Isḥāq ibn Ḥunayn and the ʿAbbāsid vizier al-Qāsim ibn ʿUbaydallāh in his *Banquet of Physicians*.[38] By integrating medical history into his medical texts, Ibn Buṭlān established himself as an intellectual historian. In doing so, he helped mythologize Baghdadi scholarship, thereby buttressing his argument to Ibn Riḍwān that one should learn medicine from experienced teachers in a developed tradition, as was the case in Baghdad.

Soon after Ibn Buṭlān left Cairo, he arrived in the Byzantine capital of Constantinople. Ghars al-Niʿma al-Ṣābiʾ (d. 1086/7), the son of Ibn Buṭlān's former Baghdadi correspondent Hilāl al-Ṣābiʾ, narrated a story told to him by Fakhr al-Dawla Ibn Jahīr (d. 1090), the founder of the Banū Jahīr bureaucratic dynasty:[39]

> [Fakhr] said: »I went to the Emperor of the Romans, on a mission for Zaʿīm al-Dawla, Abū Kāmil Barakat ibn al-Muqallad, the emir of the Banū ʿUqayl. I saw Ibn Buṭlān, the physician, there; he was friendly to me, was at my service, and treated me with deference. One day, I said to him: ›I passed by Ṭarsūs and saw that the tomb of al-Maʾmūn was unkempt and dilapidated, and it grieved me. If the emperor were to order that it be rebuilt, it would be a good action, and he would be praised.‹ He said to me, ›Let me tell you something curious. I saw the tomb while traveling to this emperor, and I wanted to urge him to this noble deed. One day, I was determined to do this, and I began to recount the merits of al-Maʾmūn and his beautiful feats, which might inspire someone like this emperor toward what I wished for the tomb. However, all I could cite were mistakes, blunders, or errors from the shamefulness of al-Maʾmūn. In response, he laughed and jeered. As it was unfeasible to do what I wished, I desisted, with no way left to achieve what I wanted.‹ Then, in my dream that night, I saw al-Maʾmūn saying to me: ›May God not reward you well on my behalf. My merits and good deeds have spread across the earth, yet you have gained neither a story, nor a tradition, nor a report about me. May God disfigure you.‹ I woke up troubled, and I remained amazed at what had happened to me.«[40]

The above-quoted anecdote, which aimed to mock Ibn Buṭlān's claim to be a local son and historian of ʿAbbāsid Baghdad, continued by explaining how Fakhr al-Dawla successfully persuaded Monomachos to build a lavish domed shrine at al-Maʾmūn's tomb by praising his wisdom as a judge through comparison to al-Maʾmūn. This story fills a lacuna in our knowledge of the tomb of al-Maʾmūn in Ṭarsūs.[41] Putting aside the apparent bias in favor of

37 Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 2.1, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 8.26.12.

38 Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 2.1, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 8.30.5.

39 Pomerantz, Error and the Abbasid Performer; Hanne, The Banū Jahīr.

40 Ghars al-Niʿma al-Ṣābiʾ, *al-Hafawāt al-Nādira*, ed. al-Ashtar, 115-117.

41 See Cooperson, Grave of Al-Ma'mūn in Tarsus. Unaware of this report, Cooperson discussed how 14th-century Islamic sources indicate that a building had been built over al-Maʾmūn's tomb during the Christian occupation of the city from 965 to 1275, which by the 14th century included a church.

Fakhr al-Dawla, if we take this story at face value, it would have to have occurred between 1050 and 1052, when Zaʿīm al-Dawla was the ʿUqaylid emir.[42] It is thought-provoking to contemplate how Ibn Buṭlān might have attempted to compare al-Maʾmūn, a figure closely associated with the ʿAbbāsid translation movement, with Monomachos, an emperor famed for his patronage of Byzantine intellectual culture.[43]

A second source corroborates Ibn Jahīr's interactions with Ibn Buṭlān in Constantinople, c. 1051-1052. Ibn al-Athīr reports that Ibn Jahīr publicly feuded with the ambassador of the Marwānid emir, Naṣr al-Dawla (d. 1061), in Constantinople. Ibn Jahīr thought that he should take precedence over the Marwānid ambassador because Naṣr al-Dawla paid tribute to the sovereign he represented, the ʿUqaylid emir.[44] As we will see, Ibn Buṭlān was likely the Marwānid ambassador whom Ibn Jahīr attempted to chastise. This fact would explain why Ibn Jahīr depicted Monomachos mocking Ibn Buṭlān, but being persuaded by his own arguments about rebuilding al-Maʾmūn's tomb.

There is ample evidence of Ibn Buṭlān's connections to the Marwānid emirate and the scholars there. As we saw, he related stories about Ṣāʿid ibn Bishr and the vizier Abū al-Qāsim, as recounted by the latter's son, the *raʾīs* Abū Yaḥyā, in Mayyāfāriqīn. It was conversations between this same Abū al-Qāsim and Ibn Buṭlān's teacher, Elias of Nisibis, in Mayyāfāriqīn in 1026, that formed the basis for Elias's *Book of the Sessions*.[45] Elias himself was bishop of Nisibis, also under Marwānid rule. Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa also informs us that Ibn Buṭlān was a close friend of ʿUbaydallāh ibn Jibrāʾīl ibn Bakhtīshūʿ (d. 1058),[46] a scion of the great Bakhtīshūʿ East Syrian medical family.[47] Like Ibn Buṭlān, ʿUbaydallāh was an elite Christian Arabic litterateur and physician who helped transmit Baghdadi knowledge to new centers in the 11th century. After his father Jibrāʾīl ibn ʿUbaydallāh (d. 1005) had ended his illustrious career at the Marwānid court, ʿUbaydallāh worked his whole life in Mayyāfāriqīn as a physician and as an author of medical and literary texts, under the patronage of the Marwānid Naṣr al-Dawla.[48] It is not hard to see what ʿUbaydallāh and Ibn Buṭlān had in common: both were East Syrian Christian physicians and masters of Arabic literature who spread the Baghdadi tradition outside Baghdad.

However, the clearest piece of evidence connecting Ibn Buṭlān to Naṣr al-Dawla is his *Banquet of Physicians*, which he dedicated to the emir in September 1054 from Constantinople.[49] Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa connected Ibn Buṭlān with Marwānid medical culture so thoroughly that he mentioned Ibn Buṭlān's dedication of this text to Naṣr al-Dawla in his entry on Elias of

42 Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-tārīkh*, 8, ed. Tornberg, 75-76, 98.

43 Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture*, 75-104; Mordechai, *Costly Diversity*, 91-98, 201-204.

44 Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-tārīkh*, 10, ed. Tornberg, 182-183.

45 Bertaina, Science, syntax, and superiority; Samir, Elie de Nisibe, 257-268.

46 Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 2.1, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 8.6.

47 Ullmann, *Die Medizin im Islam*, 108-112.

48 Ibn Bakhtīshūʿ, *Risālah fī al-ṭibb*, ed. Klein-Franke; Contadini, *World of Beasts*, 39-53.

49 The colophon is no longer preserved in manuscripts of *Banquet of Physicians*, but is quoted in Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 2.1, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 10.38.6. Ibn Buṭlān dated his text 1365 in the Seleucid era, which Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa incorrectly converted to 450 A.H. (1058 CE), an error that Conrad mistakenly followed: Conrad, Ibn Butlān in Bilād Al-Shām, 144-145.

Nisibis's brother, the physician Zāhid al-ʿUlamāʾ, who built Mayyāfāriqīn's hospital for the ruler.[50] In this early example of the *maqāma* genre,[51] Ibn Buṭlān utilized his encyclopedic knowledge of Greek and Arabic intellectual history to place himself at the forefront of Arabic medical and literary worlds. He formulated the text as a dialogue where the narrator interrogated and embarrassed a series of medical professionals (a physician, oculist, surgeon, etc.), through which, Conrad argued, he fictionalized and reframed his feud with Ibn Riḍwān.[52] Like his later *Banquet of Priests*, he set *Banquet of Physicians* in the Marwānid-ruled Jazīra, in this case in Mayyāfāriqīn.

The *Banquet of Physicians* was a tour de force of erudition. Ibn Buṭlān's literary Arabic prose is replete with anecdotes and quotations from famous intellectuals of the ancient and Islamic worlds, including Greek scholars like Galen, Plato, Pythagoras, and Hippokrates and figures from Islamic history like the folk-hero ʿAmr ibn Maʿdīkarib (d. 630s-640), the singer ʿUbaydallāh ibn Surayj (d. 716), and the physicians Isḥāq ibn Ḥunayn (d. 910) and Bakhtīshūʿ ibn Gabriel (d. 870). While Ibn Buṭlān himself composed most of the poems in this *maqāma*, he also included verses by literary contemporaries such as Abū al-Ḥusayn ibn Naffākh, Isrāʾīl al-Kaḥḥāl, and Aḥmad ibn Qurāba.[53] The medical questions written across the *maqāma* were incisive enough that the early 12th-century physician Ibn Athradī collected and answered them.[54] The *Banquet of Physicians* would be popular in elite circles, as is evident from two sumptuous 13th-century manuscripts, covered in miniatures.[55] In dedicating this text to Naṣr al-Dawla, Ibn Buṭlān was capitalizing on his reputation as a physician and man of letters to maintain his prominent place in Islamic scholarly networks while living in the Byzantine world.

At the same time as he was writing the *Banquet of the Physicians* and representing Naṣr al-Dawla, Ibn Buṭlān described a massive plague that filled the cemeteries of Constantinople in May/June 1054, which resulted in 14,000 people being buried at the Church of St. Luke in cemeteries for foreigners and the indigent.[56] He likely dealt with the effects of the plague while working as a physician in the »monastery that Emperor Constantine founded in the outskirts of Constantinople,« where he wrote the *Banquet of the Physicians*, as reported in the text's colophon. We can identify this as the Monastery of St. George in the Mangana, an extravagant foundation of the aforementioned Emperor Constantine Monomachos, which included a large and famous hospital.[57]

50 Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 2.1, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 10.54.1.

51 Kennedy, The *Maqāmāt* as a nexus of interests, 171-175; Beaumont, Mighty and never ending affair.

52 Conrad, Scholarship and social context.

53 Ibn Buṭlān, *The Doctors' Dinner Party*, ed. Kennedy and Farrell, 46-47, 50-51, 64-65.

54 Ibn Athradī, *Le banquet des médecins*, ed. and trans. Dagher and Troupeau; Ibn Buṭlān, *Das Ärztebankett*, trans. Klein-Franke 147-204.

55 Baer, Illustrations.

56 Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 2.1, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 10.38.4; *Accounts of Medieval Constantinople*, 3, trans. Berger, 85. Skylitzes also mentioned this plague: John Skylitzes, *A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811-1057*, trans. Wortley, 455.

57 Attaleiatēs, *The History*, trans. Kaldellis and Krallis, 84-91; Miller, *Birth of the Hospital*, 149-150; Janin, *Les èglises et les monastères*, 75-81.

Ibn Buṭlān is not the only known Arabic-speaking physician who seems to have worked at the Mangana. Ten remedies from the Mangana hospital are found across Vat. gr. 299, all of which likely can be dated between Monomachos and the Latin conquest of Constantinople in 1204.[58] One of the three named physicians is Abram »the Saracen«, *aktouarios* of the Mangana and imperial *archiatros*, who would have been one of the most prominent physicians in Constantinople in the late 11th/12th century.[59] Vat. gr. 299 (fols. 374r-374v) and BML Antinori 101 (fols. 353v-354r) contain a purgative remedy of Abram's written out, both as Arabic transliterated into Greek characters and as a Greek translation of the Arabic.[60] As a bilingual physician trained primarily in Arabic working in a Byzantine monastic hospital, Abram was assuredly a Melkite, that is, a Middle Eastern Christian in communion with Byzantine Orthodoxy.[61] We can, perhaps, connect the patronage of Arabic-speaking Melkites at the Mangana to its founder, Monomachos, who was born and raised in the Melkite metropolis of Antioch and maintained deep connections with the place.[62] Indeed, already by c. 1037/38, there is evidence of Antiochene physicians becoming prominent in Constantinople in a physician to the powerful John the *orphanotrophos*, whom Empress Zoe tried to bribe to poison John.[63] Around the same time that Ibn Buṭlān was at this monastic hospital in Constantinople, he converted to Byzantine Orthodoxy and took the monastic habit.

An Arabic Christian Scholar

Ibn Riḍwān mockingly stated that Ibn Buṭlān did not need to keep repeating that he was a »Christian from Baghdad«, because his affiliation with Christianity and Baghdad were so well known.[64] Indeed, in addition to promoting his connection to the Baghdadi intellectual tradition, Ibn Buṭlān also prominently advertised his Christian affiliation throughout his travels, writing about and for Christian audiences. He sought to participate in the Christian communities that he encountered, describing Christian churches and monasteries in detail in letters to Hilāl al-Ṣābiʾ.[65]

In his first stop after leaving Baghdad, Ibn Buṭlān approached the Mirdāsid emir of Aleppo, Muʿizz al-Dawla, and used his erudition to gain »control over the worship of the Christians [of Aleppo]… He [then] began to establish religious canons in accordance with their [Christian] principles (*uṣūl*) and obligations (*shurūṭ*), and they hated him for it.«[66] We

58 Bennett, *Medicine and Pharmacy*, 107-120.

59 Bennett, *Medicine and Pharmacy*, 115.

60 Bennett, *Medicine and Pharmacy*, 23.

61 Nasrallah, *Histoire 3.1*, 37-45.

62 Roberts has pointed to Monomachos's descent from Antioch as a reason for why he may have appointed Peter III as the city's patriarch, the only known Antiochene Melkite given that position in the 11th century. See Todt, *Dukat und griechisch-orthodoxes Patriarchat*, 284; Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations*, 226; Roberts, *Reason and Revelation*, 24.

63 John Skylitzes, *A Synopsis of Byzantine History*, trans. Wortley, *811-1057*, 379–80.

64 Schacht and Meyerhof, *Ibn Butlan and Ibn Ridwan*, 40-41 (Arabic).

65 Conrad, Ibn Butlān in Bilād Al-Shām, 148-149.

66 Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Taʾrīḫ al-ḥukamāʾ*, ed. Lippert, 315; Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 2.1, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 10.38.2.

can interpret the deployment of the Islamic legal terms *uṣūl* and *shurūṭ* in several ways: Ibn Buṭlān may have employed Islamic terminology to discuss the Christian legal tradition in Arabic, as his teacher Ibn al-Ṭayyib did in his legal projects.[67] Indeed, Ibn Buṭlān's apparent goal of forming and enforcing a canon law code for Aleppo's Christians may have been influenced by his teacher Ibn al-Ṭayyib, who synthesized the East Syrian law code.[68] Alternatively, perhaps Ibn Buṭlān was employing Arabic legal vocabulary that the Muslim emir, to whom he was proposing his Christian legal project, would understand. It is even possible that Ibn al-Qifṭī (or his source) was opting to explain these events using Islamic legal norms. Regardless of the origins of this Islamic legal terminology, by seeking religious authority over all of Aleppo's Christians, regardless of confession, Ibn Buṭlān was skirting local ecclesiastical power structures. Bishops in the Islamic world were rarely subjected to transconfessional Christian authorities empowered by local Muslim rulers – let alone to one who was, apparently, not yet a cleric.[69] As a result, after Ibn Buṭlān embarrassed a local Christian physician, Mubārak ibn Sharāra, in a medical argument, Ibn Sharāra exploited the enmities among Aleppo's Christians that Ibn Buṭlān's strict regulations had created to hound him out of Aleppo.[70] As with Ibn Riḍwān, Ibn Buṭlān made the mistake of insulting the wrong local elite. Ibn Sharāra likely belonged to the well-documented Melkite community of the city, whereas East Syrians like Ibn Buṭlān were rare in Aleppo.[71] Ibn Sharāra lived in the city for more than four decades after Ibn Buṭlān left and wrote a history of it. His prominent family there preserved his papers for consultation for generations, due to his repute as a scribe.[72] After being chased out of Aleppo (and then Cairo), Ibn Buṭlān appeared in Constantinople, where his religious and medical careers became further intertwined.

While in Constantinople in 1054, Ibn Buṭlān became embroiled in the dispute that would later be considered the moment of irreconcilable split between New and Old Rome.[73] In the introduction to his *Treatise on the Eucharist*, Ibn Buṭlān described how papal delegates had brought a letter to Constantinople in 1054 that critiqued Eastern practices like using leavened bread in the Eucharist and allowing priests to grow beards. The pope then sent this letter to the other Eastern patriarchs. At this fraught time, Ibn Buṭlān visited the patriarch of Constantinople, Michael Keroularios, describing their interaction as follows:

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67 On Ibn al-Ṭayyib's use of Islamic legal terminology, see Weitz, *Between Christ and Caliph*, 231-234.

68 Ibn al-Ṭayyib, *Fiqh al-Naṣrānīya*, ed. Hoenerbach and Spies.

69 Tannous, *Simple Believers*, 162-163. This contrasts with the *raʾīs al-yahūd*, who had power over different Jewish communities: Cohen, *Jewish Self-Government*.

70 Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Taʾrīḫ al-ḥukamāʾ*, ed. Lippert, 315.

71 Nasrallah considered Ibn Sharāra a Melkite and noted that Graf gave two identical entries for Ibn Sharāra as a »Melkite« and »Nestorian«: Nasrallah, *Histoire 3.1*, 155, 174-175; Graf, *GCAL 2*, 71-72, 195. Oltean accepted Graf's »Nestorian« entry and conjectured that Ibn Sharāra first disliked Ibn Buṭlān for asserting power over the East Syrians of Aleppo – a community whose supposed prominence he entirely concocts – and later despised him for becoming a Melkite: Oltean, Ibn Buṭlān and the Byzantines, 371. These suppositions do not fit our evidence.

72 Ibn al-Qifṭī, ed. Lippert, *Taʾrīḫ al-ḥukamāʾ*, 330; Ibn Shaddād, *Description d'Alep*, ed. Sourdel, 46; Sibṭ ibn al-ʿAjamī, *Kunūz al-dhahab*, 1, ed. Shaʿath and al-Bakkūr, 340.

73 Despite this event's political ramifications, it was only deemed a defining »schism« in later centuries: Mayne, East and West; Harris, ›Schism‹ of 1054, 1-4; Kaplan, La place du schisme de 1054.

> I came to [the patriarch] in those days and found him worried and distressed about this situation. He said to me, »What do you think about what this opposing sect is saying?« I said to him, »O master, command me to go to them so that I might thoroughly probe their thinking. For if I should succeed in rebutting them, I might spare us the burden of troubling with them. And if it should be otherwise, there would be no blemish on the clergy on my account, for I am foreign in lands and language.« He answered me, saying: »No. Instead, go and write a treatise on this.«[74]

After the patriarch's »expert translator«, ʿĪsa, had read Ibn Buṭlān's treatise to him in Greek, Keroularios had it read to his synod and sent to the papal legates. Not long thereafter, mutual excommunications were exchanged between the papal legates and Patriarch Keroularios.

The existence of this text is remarkable, seeing that it was written in Arabic for a Greek-speaking audience by a foreigner with a suspect Christological background. Modern scholarly interpretations have done little to contextualize it. Georg Graf claimed that Michael Keroularios commissioned this »Nestorian« (i.e. East Syrian) author to give a third-party perspective that supported Byzantine arguments. Due to Graf's hallowed name in Christian Arabic studies, this contention has been largely accepted.[75] However, it is difficult to imagine that Keroularios would have sought a theological opinion from a »Nestorian« deemed a heretic by both Greeks and Latins. Indeed, Ibn Buṭlān's description of these events portrays him as a foreign Chalcedonian coreligionist of the Byzantine patriarch: when he offered to spy for the patriarch because he could gain the Latins' trust, the implication was that he was like the Melkites of Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria, whom the pope and patriarch were both trying to win to their side. Furthermore, previously neglected manuscript evidence suggests that Ibn Buṭlān was, in fact, in communion with the Byzantine Church at the time he wrote this text.

Graf edited less than half of the *Treatise on the Eucharist*, summarizing the rest, using three Vatican manuscripts of Abū Shākir ibn al-Rāhib's (d. 1290) Copto-Arabic encyclopedia, *Book of the Proof*, in which the text was included alongside marginal comments of al-Asʿad ibn al-ʿAssāl (d. before 1259).[76] While these manuscripts effectively represent Ibn al-Rāhib's work,[77] Graf did not have access to four Melkite Arabic manuscripts that contain Ibn Buṭlān's *Treatise on the Eucharist* as an independent text.[78] The distinct recension in these Melkite manuscripts contains Ibn Buṭlān's encomiastic introductory address to Patriarch Keroularios, a long, flowery passage written in rhymed prose that indicates Ibn Buṭlān's adherence to the

74 Holy Sepulchre ar. 12, fol. 282v. For ease I cite only this manuscript, but all texts come from my collated edition and translation, which I plan to publish.

75 Graf, Eucharistielehre des Nestorianers; Mavroudi, Empress Zoe, 433-436; Oltean, Ibn Buṭlān and the Byzantines, 357-358. Fiey does not follow Graf but postulates (with little evidence) that Ibn Buṭlān could have been a Syrian Miaphysite: Fiey, Ibn Buṭlān and the Patriarch of Constantinople.

76 Vatican ar. 104, 116, and 117.

77 Vat. ar. 104 is an autograph by Ibn al-Rāhib, while the other two manuscripts provide valuable information on his later revisions to his encyclopedia. See Sidarus, Les sources, 127-128.

78 Holy Sepulchre ar. 12, Bibliothèque Orientale 516, Latakia 3, Latakia 34.

Byzantine Church.[79] In this passage, which the Coptic encyclopedists had omitted – perhaps due to their opposition to Byzantine ecclesiology – Ibn Buṭlān extolled Keroularios in biblical language. He described the patriarch as one whom God made his cornerstone (*raʾs al-zāwiya*) and intermediary (*wāsiṭ*) to humankind. He compared him to Christ through a host of scriptural allusions and stated that it was the role of the »elected patriarchs and the rightly guided scholars« to overcome Satan's traps. Echoing his earlier rhetoric in his questions to Elias of Nisibis, Ibn Buṭlān called himself an »insignificant student«, and said that the patriarch's holy inspiration and aid enabled him to compose this treatise against their Frankish brethren.

Ibn Buṭlān echoed his confessional allegiance to the Byzantine church elsewhere in the treatise. He stated that »there are five patriarchs, four of them sanctify [the Eucharist] with leavened bread, and one with unleavened bread,« calling Leo IX both »Pope« and »Patriarch of Rome«, and Keroularios, »Patriarch of Constantinople«.[80] This was a remarkably Byzantine idea of the pentarchy, which had been codified at councils not accepted by the Church of the East.[81] Ibn Buṭlān had evidently placed himself under the authority of the Byzantine church.

Graf presented two arguments that this was a »Nestorian« text. The first is that Ibn Buṭlān interpreted the Eucharist as a symbolic, rather than literal, transformation of Christ's body and blood, in line with East Syrian authors like Babai the Great and Pseudo-George of Arbela.[82] This is an overstatement. Ibn Buṭlān followed Patristic precedent by using symbolic language to describe the Eucharist, but also affirmed its literal transformation into Christ's body and blood. Graf admitted as much. He dismissed the fact that Ibn Buṭlān repeatedly called the Eucharist the »body of the Lord« as a metaphor. However, this would have been a novel term to East Syrians, implying heretical Theopaschism.[83] Graf also found four intertexts between Ibn Buṭlān's *Treatise on the Eucharist* and Ibn al-Ṭayyib's *Commentary on the Gospels* in discussing Matthew's account of the Last Supper (Matthew 26:17-30).[84] However, seeing as none of these intertexts provided evidence of East Syrian theology, this merely indicates that Ibn Buṭlān had learned biblical exegesis from Ibn al-Ṭayyib, his teacher in Baghdad. In sum, Ibn Buṭlān cited no East Syrian authorities, provided scriptural exegesis that was unproblematic to his Byzantine audience, and gave arguments that accorded with Byzantine Christology and ecclesiology.

A letter written by the Byzantine polymath Michael Psellos provides possible evidence of Ibn Buṭlān's conversion. Scholars have pointed out the probable connection between Ibn Buṭlān and Psellos, for example in Psellos's reference in a letter to Keroularios to an individual

79 Holy Sepulchre ar. 12, fols. 283r-v.

80 Holy Sepulchre ar. 12, fol. 287r.

81 The fifth patriarchate, Jerusalem, was created at Chalcedon. The Pentarchy was formalized under Justinian. See Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions*, 54-66; Demacopoulos, *The Invention of Peter*, 117-130.

82 Graf, Eucharistielehre des Nestorianers, 50-51.

83 Graf, Eucharistielehre des Nestorianers, 51; Gero, Eucharistic Doctrine.

84 Graf, Eucharistielehre des Nestorianers, 175-177, 189-191.

from »Babylon« (likely Baghdad) who had come to study with him.[85] Both Psellos and Ibn Buṭlān were prominent intellectuals active in patriarchal and imperial circles, and Psellos was well-acquainted with ambassadors from Islamic polities.[86] Furthermore, in one letter written in the name of Emperor Monomachos, Psellos described his excitement for the upcoming baptism of the unnamed recipient of the letter.[87] He said that Monomachos himself will be the godfather, while Keroularios, Psellos, and every intellectual in the capital will be present, per the recipient's request. I identify Ibn Buṭlān as the recipient of this letter based on the circumstances: the letter was written to a heterodox scholar in high repute in Constantinople between 1047 and 1054.[88] The letter begins by praising the beauty, intelligence, and complexity of the recipient's previous letter. Few figures who were not already Byzantine Christians could impress Psellos with their Greek rhetoric. Although we have no evidence that Ibn Buṭlān could write beautiful, literary Greek, he was an erudite Arabic writer who may have utilized a translator like Keroularios's »skillful Arabic translator«, ʿĪsa.[89] Although rebaptism was not canonically necessary for »Nestorians« to convert according to the 95th Canon of the Quinisext Council (692), there are ample reports of canonically unnecessary rebaptism of Syrian Miaphysites, Armenians, and Latins in this period under the auspices of Keroularios.[90] The conversion of East Syrians to Byzantine Orthodoxy in this period was rare, but not unprecedented. For example, after an older student of Ibn al-Ṭayyib, ʿAlī ibn ʿĪsā al-Kaḥḥāl, had become a Melkite, he had Melkite children throw pamphlets into East Syrian churches.[91] To expedite his integration into the Byzantine elite, Ibn Buṭlān likely chose to be rebaptized, with the emperor himself as his godfather.

Moreover, while in Constantinople, Ibn Buṭlān began residing in Byzantine Orthodox monasteries and writing texts for explicitly Christian audiences, in addition to taking a new name that does not appear in his earlier texts: Yuwānīs (يوانيس).[92] This was a transliteration of

85 Psellos, *Epistulae*, ed. Papaioannou, no. 111, ll. 93-96; Ibn Buṭlān, *Das Ärztebankett*, trans. Klein-Franke, 16-19; Volk, *Der medizinische Inhalt*, 15-20; Oltean, Ibn Buṭlān and the Byzantines, 363-364. Mavroudi's contention that Babylon refers to Cairo does not rule out Ibn Buṭlān: Mavroudi, Translations from Greek into Latin and Arabic, 50-51.

86 Oltean, Ibn Buṭlān and the Byzantines, 362-372. Oltean postulated that Ibn Buṭlān was Psellos's primary contact in Antioch and at St. Symeon's Monastery – where he speculates Ibn Buṭlān resided. However, there is no concrete evidence for this, in contrast to Psellos's known connections to religious and lay leaders around Antioch. See Oltean, 362-376; Glynias, Black Mountain; Cheynet, Michel Psellos et Antioche; Cheynet, L'administration provinciale, 52-54. In a letter to a *doux* of Antioch, Psellos relates praise he had heard from the ambassador of the Mirdāsid emirate in Aleppo: Psellos, *Epistulae*, no. 189, ll. 30-46; Cheynet, Michel Psellos et Antioche, 419.

87 Psellos, *Epistulae*, ed. Papaioannou, no. 185; Jeffreys and Lauxtermann, *Letters of Psellos*, 386.

88 Jeffreys and Lauxtermann, *Letters of Psellos*, 385-386.

89 Jeffreys and Lauxtermann suggest the possibility of a translation: Jeffreys and Lauxtermann, *Letters of Psellos*, 386.

90 Michael the Syrian, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, 3, ed. Chabot, 131; Matthew of Edessa, *Armenia and the Crusades*, trans. Dostourian, 84; Kolbaba, On the closing of the churches.

91 Nasrallah, *Histoire 3.1*, 156-158.

92 Yuwānīs appears in the *Treatise on the Eucharist* and the colophon to *Banquet of the Physicians*. Usāma ibn Munqidh calls him Yūḥannā: Graf, Eucharistielehre des Nestorianers, 52; Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 2.1, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 10.38.6; Usāma ibn Munqidh, *Kitāb al-iʿtibār*, ed. Hitti, 183.

Ἰωάννης, rather than a more standard form of »John« used by Arabic-speaking Christians, Yaḥyā and Yūḥannā. Transliterating Greek names like this was a common practice among Melkites.[93] Yuwānīs was likely either Ibn Buṭlān's new baptismal name or his monastic name – though it is unclear when exactly he took the monastic habit. Although he had established himself in Constantinople as a diplomat and physician, Ibn Buṭlān transcended his foreign status by converting to the dominant Byzantine form of Christianity between 1051 and 1054.

A Melkite Physician and Monk in Syria

Sibṭ ibn al-ʿAjamī provides a description of Ibn Buṭlān's last dozen years that other sources corroborate: after leaving Constantinople, Ibn Buṭlān went back and forth between Antioch and Aleppo, before dying as a monk in Antioch in 1066.[94]

Usāma ibn Munqidh (d. 1188) recounts stories that depict Ibn Buṭlān as a physician treating patients from his shop in Aleppo, surrounded by students.[95] He says that Ibn Buṭlān came into the service of his great-grandfather, the emir of Shayzar, Muqallad ibn Naṣr ibn Munqidh (d. 1059), at one point treating his son ʿAlī (Usāma's grandfather). Muqallad's death dates the stories between 1054 and 1059.[96] During this period, Ibn Buṭlān may also have been involved in building a hospital in Aleppo.[97] Ibn al-ʿAjamī tells a somewhat humorous story of how Ibn Buṭlān cured the knee of Kusrā, the *qāḍī* of Aleppo, by forcing him to begin walking again to escape the embarrassment of public nudity, a technique that Ibn Buṭlān deemed more »gentle« than remedies or poultices.[98] Around the same time, Ibn Buṭlān often visited the famous poet Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī (d. 1058) in nearby Maʿarrat al-Nuʿmān, as emerges from a story about al-Maʿarrī's death: Ibn Buṭlān predicted that al-Maʿarrī would soon die because he had dictated in incorrect Arabic, a feat that Ibn Buṭlān knew was impossible for his erudite friend when healthy.[99] Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa quotes a lament written not long thereafter, in which Ibn Buṭlān mourned the deaths of al-Maʿarrī, Ibn al-Ṭayyib, and a host

93 E.g. Yānī, an Arabic transliteration of Γιάννη, held by the translator Yānī ibn al-Duks and found in contemporary Melkite Syriac manuscripts: Glynias, Homiletic translation in Byzantine Antioch; Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts*, 322-325.

94 Sibṭ ibn al-ʿAjamī, *Kunūz al-dhahab*, 1, ed. Shaʿath and Fāliḥ al-Bakkūr, 446-447; Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Taʾrīḫ al-ḥukamāʾ*, ed. Lippert, 294. His death date, the 8th of Shawwal, 458 AH (September 2, 1066) is given as a Friday but was actually a Sunday. Either the day of the week was incorrectly written or the year was. In the latter case, the two closest possibilities when the 8th of Shawwal was a Friday are 456 AH (September 23, 1064) and 464 AH (June 28, 1072).

95 Usāma ibn Munqidh, *Kitāb al-iʿtibār*, ed. Hitti, 183-185; Conrad, Ibn Butlān in Bilād Al-Shām, 136-137.

96 Usāma ibn Munqidh, *Kitāb al-iʿtibār*, ed. Hitti, 184. Conrad argued for the historicity of this anecdote because it reflected Usāma's family history: Conrad, Ibn Butlān in Bilād Al-Shām, 145.

97 Sibṭ ibn al-ʿAjamī, *Kunūz al-dhahab*, 1, ed. Shaʿath and Fāliḥ al-Bakkūr, 445. Conrad considered this story of Ibn Buṭlān's hospital foundation in Aleppo ahistorical because of its similarity with the apocryphal story of al-Rāzī's foundation of the ʿAdudī hospital: Conrad, Ibn Butlān in Bilād Al-Shām, 137-138. However, Ibn Buṭlān, who worked at the ʿAdudī hospital, may have imitated its foundation myth.

98 Sibṭ ibn al-ʿAjamī, *Kunūz al-dhahab*, 1, ed. Shaʿath and Fāliḥ al-Bakkūr, 446-447.

99 Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh al-ruwāh ʿalā anbāh al-nuḥāh*, 1, ed. Ibrāhīm, 117; Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Bughyat al-ṭalab fī tārīkh Ḥalab*, 2, ed. Zakkār, 910.

of other Arabic scientists, poets, Muslim jurists, and other scholars.[100] A decade after leaving Baghdad, Ibn Buṭlān was still maintaining connections with peers in Baghdad and elsewhere in the Islamic world – but, like him, many were getting old.

Ibn Buṭlān lived his last years in Antioch, a center of Christian Arabic scholarship under Byzantine control.[101] In Antioch, he taught students, became a monk, and wrote medical texts for diverse audiences. In so doing, he helped invigorate interest among Antiochene Melkites in transmitting Arabic science into Byzantine contexts.

Ibn Buṭlān had enjoyed his previous visit to Antioch in 1049, after Ibn Sharāra had driven him from Aleppo. In his most detailed letter sent to Hilāl al-Ṣābiʾ, Ibn Buṭlān described Antioch's landscape and walls, focusing on aspects of its religious and intellectual environment that interested him, e.g. a hospital, the well-functioning water system that served both baths and terraced gardens, and, in most detail, the Cathedral of St. Kassianos (al-Qusyān).[102] He further described his awe in visiting the ascetic landscape of the Black Mountain outside the city, lavishing praise on the wealth of the Monastery of St. Symeon the Younger.[103]

Ibn Buṭlān found compatriots in the local Melkite physicians of Antioch, whom he depicted as assured of their superiority to Greek-speaking »Roman« doctors.[104] He positively referenced two Antiochene physicians in his *Egyptian Discourse*, in one case relating a story from the Antiochene physician Abū Naṣr ibn al-ʿAṭṭār about a greedy Roman physician who confused basic terminology of Galenic medicine.[105] Ibn Buṭlān praised this Ibn al-ʿAṭṭār to Hilāl al-Ṣābiʾ, calling him Antioch's »judge of judges«, and saying he »has a hand in the sciences and is eloquent and discerning«.[106] His patronymic, »ibn al-ʿAṭṭār«, means »son of the perfumer«, notable due to the appearance in Greek manuscripts around this time of recipes for Arabic and Persian perfumes.[107] Indeed, the aforementioned Empress Zoe was famously interested in making perfumes and incense, and an ointment recipe of hers is preserved in a late 11th-century manuscript collection that also included Arabic-influenced pharmacological texts written by a student of Ibn Buṭlān's in Antioch, Symeon Seth.[108]

Ibn Buṭlān also befriended Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd al-Anṭākī in Antioch, a Melkite who had come to Antioch in 1014/15 from Egypt, fleeing the persecutions of the Fāṭimid Caliph al-Ḥākim.[109] Yaḥyā is famous today as a historian.[110] However, like Ibn Buṭlān, he was also a bilingual physician who was a fount of Greek knowledge to the Islamic world and of Arabic knowl-

100 Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 2.1, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 10.38.4; Schacht and Meyerhof, *Ibn Butlan and Ibn Ridwan*, 62-64.

101 See Roberts, *Reason and Revelation*.

102 See Eger, (Re)Mapping medieval Antioch, 117-127.

103 Glynias, Black Mountain, 415-416; Schacht and Meyerhof, *Ibn Butlan and Ibn Ridwan*, 19-20 (Arabic).

104 On Roman ethnicity in Byzantium, see Kaldellis, *Romanland*.

105 Schacht and Meyerhof, *Ibn Butlan and Ibn Ridwan*, 57-59.

106 Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Taʾrīḫ al-ḥukamāʾ*, ed. Lippert, 297.

107 Bennett, *Medicine and Pharmacy*, 128-146.

108 Mavroudi, Empress Zoe; Bennett, *Medicine and Pharmacy*, 49-80.

109 Forsyth, *Byzantine-Arab Chronicle*, 7-11.

110 See Forsyth, *Byzantine-Arab Chronicle*.

edge to the Byzantine Empire. At one point Ibn Buṭlān's old enemy Ibn Riḍwān wrote to Yaḥyā, asking for information about the Greek Hippokratic corpus; Yaḥyā translated a list of Hippokrates' Greek works into Arabic for him, which Ibn Riḍwān proudly quoted as a mark of his own ancient learning.[111] In *Why Physicians*, Ibn Buṭlān praised Yaḥyā as a »master in our time, an authority in the sciences, preeminent in religion and refinement, [who] has splendid works«, and shared a story that Yaḥyā told him in Antioch that demonstrated his shared derision for Roman physicians. Yaḥyā described how a Roman physician slowly killed his patient, »a servant of the emperor [and] Roman youth«, with improper treatments.[112] Yaḥyā was an old man by 1063 CE, when Ibn Buṭlān wrote this text. He lived at least a few years longer, as his chronicle is reported to have run until 1066 CE.[113] I have begun to study his commentary on Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq's *Questions on Medicine for Scholars*, which is extant in a single, unstudied manuscript, (Rabat) Kattānī 396. The existence of Yaḥyā's commentary on this work, an essential handbook of Arabic Galenic medicine, indicates that, like Ibn Buṭlān, Yaḥyā was actively working to bring the Baghdadi medical tradition into Byzantine Antioch.

Ibn Buṭlān also trained students in Antioch who could navigate the Greek and Arabic traditions, two of whom we can discuss in detail: Symeon Seth and Yūḥannā al-Anṭākī.

A prominent intellectual known for his Greek philosophical, pharmacological, and astronomical writings that drew on Arabic sources, Symeon Seth was a Melkite scholar of Antioch who became a court astrologer to multiple Byzantine emperors. It has been demonstrated that Seth studied under Ibn Buṭlān in Antioch in the 1050s or 1060s, before being patronized by Michael VII Doukas (r. 1071-1078) in Constantinople.[114] While Seth seems to have borrowed arguments from Ibn Buṭlān's *Banquet of the Physicians* in his *Refutation of Galen*,[115] the most unmistakable evidence of their pedagogical relationship is Seth's Arabo-Greek translation of excerpts from Ibn Buṭlān's *Taqwīm al-Siḥḥa*. Pietrobelli and Cronier argued that Seth used his teacher's book to make this elliptical paraphrase of the *Taqwīm* for his own private consultation.[116] Seth brought the Baghdadi tradition to a Byzantine Greek-reading audience through such translations – a topic I take up elsewhere.[117]

One other Antiochene is referred to as a »student of Ibn Buṭlān« in the heading for his only known text: the priest Yūḥannā al-Anṭākī. In this fragment of a philosophical work excerpted by al-Muʾtaman ibn al-ʿAssāl (d. before 1286) in his Copto-Arabic encyclopedia, Yūḥannā used the Baghdadi vocabulary of Aristotelian metaphysics to explain how to describe causation in different ways.[118] Samir has argued that he aimed to philosophically justify the Trinity by building on arguments of Ibn al-Ṭayyib, which he learned from Ibn Buṭlān. As an

111 Rosenthal, An eleventh-century list.

112 Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 2.1, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 10.36.

113 Forsyth, *Byzantine-Arab Chronicle*, 16-21; Yaḥyā al-Anṭākī, *Histoire III*, 3, ed. Kratchkovsky, 374-377.

114 Pietrobelli and Cronier, Ibn Buṭlān and Symeon Seth.

115 Cronier *et al.*, Galien en procès à Byzance, 96-97.

116 Pietrobelli and Cronier, Ibn Buṭlān and Symeon Seth.

117 Glynias, Symeon Seth.

118 Ibn al-ʿAssāl, *Majmūaʿ uṣūl al-dīn*, 1, ed. Pirone, 380-382.

Antiochene priest, Yūḥannā was assuredly a Melkite.[119] Ibn Buṭlān's circle in Antioch likely included other Melkite clerics like Yūḥannā and lay scholars like Seth.

Ibn Buṭlān also disseminated Baghdadi ideas of medical praxis in Antioch by writing texts like *Why Physicians* and his *Medical Manual for the Use of Monks and Country People*. The colophon of the lost *Why Physicians*, like numerous passages from it referenced in this chapter, was preserved by later encyclopedists. It says that Ibn Buṭlān completed the text in 1063 CE, when he was »exhausted in body and broken in mind, while gathering materials to build a hospital in Antioch«.[120] As we have seen, this work, written near the end of Ibn Buṭlān's life, exemplified his larger intellectual project to promote Baghdad's contributions to Greek science.

Samira Jadon argues that Ibn Buṭlān likewise wrote his *Medical Manual* in Antioch, after he had become a monk and encountered medical issues that arise without access to urban hospitals.[121] The first 40 of the 42 chapters of the *Medical Manual* were a shortened, edited version of Ibn Sīnā's famous medical *Canon*, thus bringing the essentials of cutting-edge Arabic medicine to monks and other Melkites in Antioch.[122] He combined this with dietary and pharmacological prescriptions explicitly targeted at Christians and monks in two original chapters at the end of the text. In Chapter 41, Ibn Buṭlān provided recipes for what monks and Christians should eat when sick or fasting. This chapter circulated independently of the larger text, for example in two manuscripts of the recipe compilation, *The Description of Familiar Foods*.[123] In Chapter 42, »which incenses are used in the churches«, Ibn Buṭlān began by describing a »Melkite« variety of incense, then proceeded to describe other types of incense and their use – notable, given the aforementioned Constantinopolitan interest in Arabic incense recipes. Though he explicitly wrote this for a Christian audience, manuscript evidence indicates that the *Medical Manual* circulated in Islamicate medical settings.[124] Ibn Buṭlān was disseminating Arabic scientific paradigms and Baghdadi medical innovations to the Byzantine world, while maintaining a broader Arabic audience within the Islamic world.

Conclusions

A Baghdadi intellectual of the highest caliber, Ibn Buṭlān died as an honored Byzantine monk in Antioch in 1066, facts we ironically know from reports by his old rival, Ibn Sharāra, and his descendants in Aleppo.[125] Through his multilingualism, his promotion of his pedigree as a physician, his deployment of his Christian identity, and his integration into Arabic literary networks, Ibn Buṭlān was able to navigate both the Byzantine and Islamic worlds. He joined other Melkite scholars in Antioch, like Ibn al-Aṭṭār and Yaḥyā al-Anṭākī, in seeking

119 Samir, Les auteurs et les oeuvres des XIème et XIIème siècles, 214-215; Nasrallah, *Histoire 3.1*, 253-254.

120 Sibṭ ibn al-ʿAjamī, *Kunūz al-dhahab*, 1, ed. Shaʿath and Fāliḥ al-Bakkūr, 445-446.

121 Jadon, *Ibn Buṭlān's Medical Manual*, 49-55. I look forward to David Baldi's upcoming work on this text.

122 Jadon, *Ibn Buṭlān's Medical Manual*, 43-46.

123 Perry and Arberry, Description of familiar foods, 443-450; Lewicka, *Food and Foodways*, 37 n. 50.

124 Jadon, *Ibn Buṭlān's Medical Manual*, 82-85.

125 Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Taʾrīḫ al-ḥukamāʾ*, ed. Lippert, 315; Sibṭ ibn al-ʿAjamī, *Kunūz al-dhahab*, 1, ed. Shaʿath and Fāliḥ al-Bakkūr, 447.

to offer the intellectual traditions of Baghdad to a Byzantine audience. Their expertise, as they claimed it, was based on their ability to navigate both the Arabic and Greek traditions, leading to widespread disdain for monolingual scholars, whether Arabic-speaking or Greek-speaking. Ibn Buṭlān's student Symeon Seth would continue his legacy of championing the Baghdadi tradition by catalyzing Byzantine interest in translating Arabic scientific knowledge into Greek.[126]

126 See Glynias, Symeon Seth; Pietrobelli and Cronier, Ibn Buṭlān and Symeon Seth.

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The *Kāghaẕ-nāma*: Papermaking in 13th-Century Baghdad

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In the absence of documented information about papermaking during the early Islamic centuries, our knowledge of production methods, trade, types, and major centres remains fragmentary, limited to a few scattered references in primary sources. This article introduces a rare Persian treatise on the manufacture of cotton paper in the thirteenth century, entitled *Kāghaẕ-nāma* (»Book of Paper«), composed in a *maqāma-like* prosimetric style. It is the earliest known work on papermaking in Persian, dated 649 AH/1251 AD, and was written by ʿIzz al-Dīn Maṭlaʿī for a patron probably named Tāj al-Dīn in Khorasan. Although an edition of the text was published in Iran in 2013, it has never been examined in Western scholarship. This paper seeks to introduce the *Kāghaẕ-nāma* to a wider audience and to explore what it reveals about papermaking practices and the symbolic meanings attached to paper in Mongol Baghdad. After introducing the sole surviving manuscript (Istanbul, Ayasofya 4824), its author, and the dedicatee, I discuss the treatise's allegorical and mystical dimensions, alongside its practical descriptions of papermaking. The evidence suggests that the author's depiction of the process, though couched in metaphor, corresponds closely to the actual techniques used in thirteenth-century Islamic workshops.

Keywords: Kāghaẕ-nāma, ʿIzz al-Dīn Maṭlaʿī, Islamic papermaking, Mongol Baghdad

Introduction

The *Kāghaẕ-nāma* is a short Persian treatise of nine folios, preserved within a *majmūʿa* held in the Ayasofya Library, Istanbul (MS 4824, fols. 20r–28r). The *treatise* survives in a single known copy, and is therefore a *unicum*. The composite manuscript, copied in 649 AH/1251 AD, contains five works:

1. fols. 1v-19v: *Rāz-nāma* (also known as al-*ʿAyniyya*) by Aḥmad al-Ghazālī;
2. fols. 20r-28r: *Kāghaẕ-nāma* by ʿIzz al-Dīn Maṭlaʿī;
3. fols. 29r-63v: *Jawāhir al-Nafīs* by Ibn al-Ḥaddād Muḥammad ibn Manṣūr ibn Habīsh (in Arabic);
4. fols. 64v-126r: *Amāthil al-Amthāl* by Thaʿālibī (in Arabic);
5. fols. 127v-192r: *Tuḥfat al-Mulūk* by ʿAlī ibn Abī Ḥafṣ ibn Faqīh Maḥmūd Iṣfahānī.

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This article is part of the thematic cluster *Mongols' Baghdad. Knowledge Transmission Through Manuscript Cultures Before and After the Conquest*, guest editors: Bruno De Nicola and Nadine Löhr. To read all related articles, please access https://doi.org/10.1553/medievalworlds_no22_2025.

The manuscript was copied in a fine *naskh* script by Muḥammad ibn Manṣūr ibn Darvīsh Wāʿiẓ, known as Ibn Ḥaddād.

Each work in the manuscript opens with an illuminated panel (*sarlauḥ*), but the *Kāghaẓ-nāma* instead begins with an illuminated cusped oval (*turanj*) bearing the author's name, ʿIzz al-Dīn Maṭlaʿī (fol. 20r).

«امیر حکیم فیلسوف روزگار ملک الحکما عزّالدّین مطلعی رحمهُ الله»

The noble sage and philosopher of his age, the king of sages, ʿIzz al-Dīn Maṭlaʿī, may God bless his soul.

The closing phrase, »may God bless his soul«, indicates that the author had already died by the year 1251. The style of the illumination and the dated colophon suggest that the text and decoration were likely produced within the same workshop and period, around 649/1251.

The treatise is dedicated to a certain Tāj al-Dīn, described in highly honorific terms as »the honour of Khorasan« at the end of the treatise (fol. 28r):

«الصدرُ الامام و الحبر الهمام الاجل العالم العامل الزاهد المجاهد المکرم المحق المحقق تاج الدین شمس الاسلام امام الائمه عز الامه زین المله ناصح الملوک و السلاطین محیی السنه علم الهدی قدوة الافاضل منبع الفواضل حسان الشعراء سلطان الشرع ذو المحامد و المناقب، افتخار خراسان»

The chief Imam and the eminent scholar, the most noble, the learned and practising scholar, the ascetic, the warrior in faith, the magnificent, the discerning scholar, Tāj al-Dīn (the crown of religion), the sun of Islam, the imam of imams, the glory of the community, the adornment of the faith, counsellor of kings and sultans, reviver of the tradition (Sunna), the banner of guidance, exemplar of the virtuous, the source of virtues, the pride of poets, the sovereign of the sharīʿa law, embodiment of goodness and virtue, the honour of Khorasan.[1]

Although the author's name, ʿIzz al-Dīn Maṭlaʿī, is clearly mentioned in the manuscript, no biographical information about him is known. The patron's identity likewise remains uncertain, as *Tāj al-Dīn* was a common honorific name during this period and it has not been possible to determine which historical figure is meant. As reflected in the translation, *Tāj al-Dīn* may also have been used here as an honorific epithet rather than a personal name for the dedicatee.[2]

The text of the *Kāghaẓ-nāma* was edited and published in Iran by Behruz Imani in 2013,[3] but he neither identified nor suggested any historical figures corresponding to the names. One possible candidate for the patron is Tāj al-Dīn ʿUthmān Marghānī (or Marghīnī), the magistrate of the fortress of Khaysār near Herat, who was an ancestor of the Kartids (1244–1381).[4] His brother, ʿIzz al-Dīn, died in 599/1202, and his son Rukn al-Dīn Abū Bakr,

1 All translations are by the author.

2 See the transcription of the *Kāghaẓ-nāma* below.

3 Maṭlaʿī, *Kāghaẓnāma*, ed. Imani.

4 The Kartids (Āl-i Kart) were a Persian (Sunni Muslim) dynasty who ruled over a large part of Khorasan from their capital in Herat during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

connected to the Ghurids by marriage, died in 643/1246. An allusion to the gardens of Sivas and a reference to the fine canvas sold in the drapery shops of Ray (fol. 21r, l. 11–fol. 21v, l. 1) may suggest that Maṭlaʿī had travelled to these cities in western Anatolia and northern Iran.

He evidently dedicated the treatise to *Tāj al-Dīn* (fol. 28r, l. 4) after receiving from him a long roll of paper (*ṭūmār*): »If that noble man had not bestowed upon me this honourable gift of the *ṭūmār*, how would this *Kāghaẕ-nāma* have been created?«

A treatise dedicated to a noble patron often served as a demonstration of the author's literary and intellectual skill. The *Kāghaẕ-nāma* is written in an elaborate prosimetric style resembling a *maqāma*, rich in rhetorical and figurative devices such as simile, metaphor, personification, allegory, allusion, and various forms of pun and ambiguity.[5] The story is told in the voice of a sheet of paper – a technique known in Persian as *zabān-i ḥāl*, through which an inanimate object speaks and recounts its own experience.[6] In this narrative, the paper describes the different forms of mortification (*riyāżat*) it has undergone, including five stages of transformation in a process of purification. These stages are symbolic and do not correspond to the physical division of the text, which consists of ten short sections. It is through these allegorical descriptions that we gain insight into the actual techniques of papermaking and, more broadly, into the symbolic perception of paper in thirteenth-century Persian culture.

The story concerns cotton paper, described from the moment the seed is planted until it becomes a sheet. According to Maṭlaʿī, cotton cloth was first used for graceful and pleasant purposes – such as »bed sheets for lovers or veils for brides' faces« (fol. 24r, l. 4).[7] Once tailored, it became the garment of beautiful women »whose fragrance was like musk« (fol. 24v, l. 8), and when worn thin, it was passed on to dervishes. When it had become threadbare and nearly destroyed after long usage, it was finally sold to papermakers. Through this poetic narrative, Maṭlaʿī turns the material life of cotton cloth into a metaphor of spiritual purification and transformation, tracing its passage from luxury to asceticism, and finally to immortality as paper.

The refined composition of the *Kāghaẕ-nāma* reveals its author as an erudite figure, well versed in the intellectual and literary traditions of his time. His mastery of Arabic and Persian poetry and prose, as well as his familiarity with the Qurʾan and *ḥadīth*, are evident throughout the text. Stylistically, the treatise exemplifies the ornate and highly self-conscious prose of early Persian belles lettres, in which artistry of expression rivals content in importance. Maṭlaʿī's language is saturated with rhythm and internal rhyme, evoking the cadence of *sajʿ* while maintaining a conversational intimacy through the paper's first-person narration. The alternation of technical precision and mystical reflection recalls the dual register of medieval

5 A *maqāma* (*prosimetrum*) is a poetic–prose composition that alternates segments of prose and verse. It is usually a short text devoted to a single theme, in which the author displays his mastery of eloquence and prosody, often conveying a moral or mystical idea. The two earliest and most celebrated examples of the genre are the *Maqāmāt-i Ḥamīdī* by Ḥamīd al-Dīn Balkhī (d. 1139), written in Persian, and the *Maqāmāt al-Ḥarīrī* by al-Wasīṭī (1237), composed in Arabic.

6 See Pūrjavādī, *Zabān-i Hāl dar ʻirfān va adabiyyāt-i Fārsī*.

7 … *ṣuḥbat-i ʿazīzān rā shāyam va ẓāhir-i ʿarūsān rā bāyam*; in which *suḥbat* means copulation.

didactic prose in Persian literature, where craftsmanship and spiritual allegory intertwine. The tone oscillates between irony and reverence – the paper laments its trials yet celebrates its exaltation – mirroring the Sufi dialectic of subsistence and annihilation.[8]

Paper Colour

The author repeatedly refers to the white and luminous colour of paper, illustrating this quality through a range of metaphors.

»O! You pale-faced, sweet-spoken one!« (fol. 21r, l. 9)

»The marks of age (i.e. a white beard) apparent in your surface, yet you remain youthful in freshness.« (fol. 21v, l. 1)

»as though you have been kneaded from camphor powder.« (fol. 21v, l. 2)

»He placed in my right hand a letter white as the face of the pious, and as the scroll of the righteous.« (fol. 21r, l. 1)

The text also emphasises that *paper* – from the Islamicate lands – was never entirely white, and always retained a creamy hue even in its brightest specimens (fol. 27v, l. 6).

بسیار اجسام بینی که از روی بیاض بر من ترجیح دارند، اما چون تلخی مجاهده نچشیده‌اند و مشقّت ریاضت نکشیده‌اند، بدین شرف نرسیده‌اند و این درجه و مرتبت ندیده‌اند.

You may see many bodies whose whiteness surpasses mine, yet because they have not tasted the bitterness of *striving* nor endured the hardship of discipline, they have not attained this honour nor reached this rank and station.

Maṭlaʿī interprets the process of making paper as five stages of transformation, describing how, according to destiny's decree, it has been undone and remade through successive afflictions (fol. 21v, l. 10, and fol. 22r, l. 3). According to him, the uses of paper include love letters and the preservation of wisdom and quotations (fol. 21v, ll. 6-7):

باطنم خزینهٔ عقل است و ظاهرم سینهٔ نقل است. خاتونان ختن غیب در من آرامند، و مه رویان تتق فضل بر سر من خرامند.

Inwardly I am the treasury of intellect, outwardly the repository of transmitted knowledge. The noble ladies of the unseen Khutan repose within me, and the moon-faced maidens of the brocade of virtue glide gracefully upon my surface.

8 *Baqāʾ and fanāʾ*. On this Sufi concept, see Böwering, Baqāʾ wa fanāʾ.

Baghdadi Paper and Ink

In the *Kāghaẕ-nāma*, papermaking is described exclusively as taking place in Baghdad, with explicit references to the city in folio 26v, line 5 and folio 28r, line 2. The treatise was composed before the Mongol sack of the city in 1258, after which paper production there declined significantly.[9] Baghdad was one of the most important papermaking centres in the Islamic lands, known for the abundance and fineness of its production. Although Samarqand – another major papermaking centre – was geographically closer to the author's or patron's region, Khorasan, the treatise focuses solely on Baghdad.[10]

Until the thirteenth century, most books were written on sheets roughly twice the size of modern office paper (A4). From that period onward, both the size and the quality of paper produced in Iran increased considerably.[11] Surviving manuscripts indicate that Baghdadi paper was particularly large and was commonly spread on walls to dry. Jonathan Bloom demonstrates that, over time, Islamic societies steadily developed a preference for larger manuscripts, and consequently also for larger paper sheets.[12] Al-Qalqashandī (1355/56-1418) reports that the largest Baghdadi sheets measured nearly one metre in width (usually folded once or twice), [13] which accords with the *Kāghaẕ-nāma*, where the sheets are described as being spread on walls to dry (fol. 27r, l. 9). Such large sheets were far more difficult to produce and, as a result, prohibitively expensive to use.

Paper was generally made from a mash of strips of linen or cotton rags, and occasionally from hemp rope.[14] Only a small fraction of Islamic paper is believed to have been wove paper.[15] The *Kāghaẕ-nāma*, however, refers exclusively to paper made from cotton fibres derived from woven cloth. According to the author, the tattered fabric was beaten and soaked in water until it became a pulp. After being placed in the mould, the sheets were set on reeds to begin drying in the wind, and then laid on walls for two to three days to dry completely (fols. 26v-27r). Further evidence is required to determine whether cotton was the principal raw material used for paper production in some Persian cities and whether the author was located in one of those centres. Baghdadi paper was characteristically smooth and even, with a consistent texture, and its quality continued to improve throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

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9 See Bloom, *Paper*, 53.

10 For a list of Iranian cities in which paper was made, like Tabriz, Isfahan, Yazd, Qazvin, Zanjan, Nishapur, and Herat, see Afshar, Use of paper in Islamic manuscripts, 78-82.

11 After the Ilkhanids, papers were produced in smaller sizes.

12 Bloom, Paper in the Iranian world.

13 Bloom, *Paper*, 13. Al-Qalqashandī was a polymath who served at the Mamluk chancery in Cairo, and is known for his important encyclopaedia, *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā* (The Dawn for the Blind) in fourteen volumes completed in 1412, which covered geography, political history, natural history, zoology, mineralogy, cosmography, and time measurement.

14 Bosch, Carsewell, and Patherbridge, *Islamic Bindings and Bookmaking*, 28-29. Loveday argues that grass moulds show apparent ›curvings‹ of the laid lines at both ends; see Loveday, *Islamic Paper*, 76, 83-84.

15 Baker, Conservation of *Jamiʿ al-Tawarikh*, 30, as cited in Wright, *Manuscript Production in Shiraz,* 356, note 66 and 142.

The ink, as described in the text, is black – likened to black hair, *ʿanbar-i sārā* (pure ambergris), and musk (fol. 21v, ll. 8-9). Muslim scribes primarily used two types of ink: a black ink known as *midād*, and a more brownish ink called *ḥibr*.[16] However, it is not certain that Maṭlaʿī meant the latter. Persian sources generally regarded both as shades of black, ranging from very dark brown to deep blue (*kabūd*).[17] The most common black ink of the period was iron-gall ink, made from tannic acids and iron salts, valued for its depth and permanence; in contrast, inks derived from plant extracts tended to appear lighter or more brownish. The *Kāghaẕ-nāma* associates black ink not only with beauty and refinement but also with eloquence, suggesting that writing with such ink bestows dignity and permanence upon the text. In this sense, the darkness of the ink contrasts symbolically with the whiteness of the paper, evoking the complementary union of form and meaning that defines the written word.

The Written Surface

After being made, paper was bundled and taken to the *ʿaṭṭārī* to be sold (fol. 27r, ll. 10-11). This detail in the *Kāghaẕ-nāma* offers a rare glimpse into the commercial circulation of paper. The *ʿaṭṭārī* – literally a perfumery – was also, and often primarily, an apothecary or physician's shop.[18] ʿAṭṭārs (apothecaries) mainly sold dried herbs, spices, and medicinal substances, whereas paper was typically sold in the so-called *bāzār-i warrāqān* (stationers' marketplace). Maṭlaʿī's reference to an *ʿaṭṭārī* may therefore indicate that he lived in a smaller city lacking a specialised stationers' market, where apothecaries may have also handled the sale of writing materials.

Maṭlaʿī also discusses the kinds of content written on paper – an honour that he presents as the paper's highest privilege. At the beginning of the treatise, he lists the most exalted subjects it carries: the superior sciences (*fażāʾil*, later mentioned in the singular *fażl*), letters exchanged between lovers, quotations in which wisdom is veiled, and the unrevealed truths of the hidden world (fol. 21v). At the end, he adds the »sultans' signatures and the rulers' decrees« (fol. 27v, l. 1).[19] It is quite curious that he makes no mention of the Qurʾan among the writings that confer distinction upon paper. Nor does he refer to collections of *ḥadīth*, although the »knowledge« he praises could encompass the scholarly curriculum that included many such texts. It is well known that paper was used primarily for secular purposes – administrative documents, maps, and various kinds of books. Maṭlaʿī's omission of the transcription of the Qur'an among the other uses of paper is nevertheless particularly striking.[20]

16 Bloom, *Paper*, 107.

17 For instance, see Dihkhudā, *Lughat-nāma* under *ḥibr*, which, citing al-Qalqashandī amongst others, explains the word as »black« and even »blackness« as its equivalent. Cf. Bloom, *Paper*, 107.

18 The most famous example is Farīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār of Nīshābūr, who would visit patients daily in his *dārūkhāna* (apothecary). On ʿAṭṭār and his works, see Shafīʿī Kadkanī, *Zabūr-i Pārsī*, 37-43.

19 The word *ṭughrā* appears in Persian sources as early as the eleventh century and became increasingly common in the twelfth. See *Lughat-nāma*, s.v. »ṭughrā«, for examples in poetry.

20 For the introduction of paper to the Islamic Caliphate, see Malczycki, Papyrus Industry, 189-194 and Appendix 1. The evidence indicates that paper was primarily used for administrative and political purposes during the early Abbasid period.

The cultural prestige of writing and books in Islamic civilization undoubtedly contributed to the elevated status of paper itself. In the *Kāghaẕ-nāma*, the emphasis on writing seems to derive from two sources: the broader Islamic reverence for the written word, and the intellectual disposition of the author himself, who is described as a *ḥakīm* and philosopher in the illuminated *turanj* and therefore must have been an erudite familiar with the administrative and literary traditions of his milieu. The Persian administrative tradition, in particular, was deeply rooted in the art of writing and composition.[21] According to the treatise (fol. 27r-v), the court and administrative offices purchased their paper from local bazaars, suggesting that they relied on ordinary urban trade networks rather than maintaining specialised supply systems.

Conclusion

The *Kāghaẕ-nāma* by Maṭlaʿī is a short *prosimetrum* on papermaking composed in the thirteenth century. It offers valuable information on the various stages of paper production in Baghdad, which was then one of the most flourishing centres of the industry, even though it declined after the Mongol invasion. The author's narrative is written in the *zabān-i ḥāl* style – a literary mode in which inanimate objects are personified and made to speak, often in a mystical register. His discussion of the five stages of transformation from a cotton bud to a sheet of paper reveals that the fundamental principles of cotton papermaking were not very different from those employed in traditional methods today.

This treatise is the earliest known work about paper in Persian. Although its *prosimetric* form and intricate metaphors make it challenging to interpret in places, it remains a remarkable and original text, worthy of detailed study and translation. The transcription of the *Kāghaẕ-nāma* from the manuscript is therefore provided below, together with the English translation of select passages from each phase of transformation, to offer a glimpse into its vivid and poetic narrative.

21 Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*; Cf. Bloom. *Paper*, 98ff.

Transcription of the text[22]

[fol. 20r] کاغذنامه از انشاء امیر حکیم، فیلسوفِ روزگار، ملک‌الحکماء عزّالدین مطلعی، رحمهُ الله

[fol. 20v] روزی از روزها بعد ما که در احتراق فراق روز قیامت دیده خرشید اُمید که منوّر وجود عالم و مصوّر هیاکل مقصودست، بر حُکم اشارت «إِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ»[23] از اوج کمال در حضیض زوال، بر حسب عبارت «يَومَ نطوي السَّمَاءَ كَطَيِّ السِّجِلِّ لِلكُتب»[24] پیچان شده، نشر اندوه در دل بستوهم پیدا گشته و حشر تیمار در دل بیمارم هویدا شده، لهیب مهیب دوزخ آوخ در گنبد اثیر تأثیر کرده، پای نفس بر صراط هوس از جای رفته، درین میانه چون آن همه علامت قیامت مشاهده کردم دانستم که روز عرض حساب و گاه کشف کتاب است. در تشویر تقصیر خویش مانده دست چپ از آستین طلب بیرون کردم تا نامهٔ چون دل خود سیاه ستانم و قصهٔ چون حال خود تباه خوانم.

حالی، یکی که فرید زمان و برید شاه جهان است [fol. 21r] درآمد و نامهٔ سپید چون روی دین‌داران و جریدهٔ نیکوکاران در دست راستم نهاد که «اقْرَأْ كِتَابَكَ كَفَىٰ بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيبًا».[25] گفتم: خه! اهلاً و مرحباً! مگر غلط آورده‌ای که این نامه درخور بارنامهٔ من نیست. من همه گناه و تقصیر دارم. اگر نامه‌ای لایق حال و موافق مآل خواهد بود، از دل من سیاه‌تر باید. گفت نه، چون سر و کار با کریمان باشد، گناه را وزنی نماند. القصه تا به عَجمش رسیدن در حجمش عجب مانده بودم. چه لب بر لب نهاده بود و به صد زبان سخن می‌گفت. همه تن گوش گشتم تا خود چه خواهم شنید. راست که دهان باز کرد گوش چون حلقه بر در ماند. چه سخن باهوش می‌رفت که «بَيْنُ المُحبَّينَ سِرٌّ لَيْسَ يُفْشِيهِ قَوْل، ولا قَلَمُ لِلحقّ [لِلْخلقِ] يَحْكِيهِ »[26]

اینت گویای بی‌نشان [بی‌زبان] که تویی

اینت موجود بی‌نشان که تویی

آخر گفتم: ای سپیدرویِ شیرین‌گوی! از کجایی که بس زیبایی؟ که رایی که بس رعنایی؟ مگر صبحی که شب غم ما از تو به آخر رسید؟ وگرنه این غُرّه غرّا و چهره طرّا چیست؟

گر نه ماهی، چرا درفشانی؟

ور نه سروی، چرا خرامانی؟

به ریاض سیواس مانی در آوانِ دی و بیاض کرباس [fol. 21v] مانی در بزازان ری. اثر شیخوخیت در ظاهرت پیدا و تو هنوز از روی طراوت برنا، پنداری از گرد کافورت سرشته‌اند اگر چه به مشک نابت بنوشته‌اند. با این همه، اگر نامه‌ای سخن کو و اگر جامه‌ای تن کو؟ [1]

گفت: قصه دراز مکن. من میدان مراکب بیانم و آسمان کواکب بنیانم. قبای معنی بر قد من بریده‌اند و طراز فتوی بر دوش من کشیده‌اند. عرصهٔ عرضه‌گاه فضایل عِرض منست و صُفّهٔ جلوه‌جای فواضل عَرَض منست. عاشقان راز با من در میان نهند و صادقان جان بر سر من دهند. مَحرم اَبکارِ خواطرم و مَنبتِ انوار زواهرم. باطنم خزینهٔ عقل‌ست و ظاهرم سینهٔ نقل‌ست. خاتونان ختن غیب در من آرامند، و مه‌رویان تتّق فضل بر سر من خرامند. شاهدی‌ام که در مقام

22 This transcription from the manuscript is slightly modified in terms of adding the dots where missing, changing the frequent use of ذ to د where appropriate, adding quotations to the Qur'anic verses, and inserting punctuation marks where they could aid understanding. It is close to Imani's transcription, except for a number of words that he was not able to read or which he transcribed inaccurately. The bold and numbered passages are translated into English below.

23 Surah at-Takwir: 1.

24 Surah al-Anbiya: 107.

25 Surah al-Isra: 14.

26 »Between lovers there is a secret that is not revealed; no words or pen can describe it to humankind.« Attributed to al-Sha'bi (641-723 CE), the prominent Arab historian and jurist in Kufa. See Imam al-Sayyid Mahmud Alusi al-Baghdadi, *Rūh al-Ma'ānī*, vol. 1, 100.

عرض زلف، زلف سیاه در زیر کلاه دارم و قطرهٔ سیراب در زیر نقاب دارم. هنوز عنبر سارا، سایه بر عذار کافوروَشَم نیفکنده است و هنوز مورچه پای مشک‌آلود بر عذار سیم رنگم ننهاده است.

در جهان از من پخته‌تر بلک از من سوخته‌تر کسی نبینی چه پنج بار معاینه قیامت دیده‌ام و بلا و شداید بی‌شمار کشیده‌ام. از آن جهان می‌آیم، بدان سرّ غیب را می‌شایم. صوفی صافی مرا شاید [fol. 22r] خواند و تصوّف خود مرا زیبد که در پنجهٔ زمان و شکنجهٔ حدثان بغایت مرتاض شده‌ام.

شعر

چه بلا ماند که از تو نیامد به سرم؟

یا چه زخمست که ایام نزد بر جگرم؟

پنج بار بر مقتضای تقدیر و انقضای تصویر در پای نوایب فسخ گشته‌ام و بر دست مصایب مسخ شده و هر بار به شکلی متنوع گشته که پیش از آن نبوده‌ام. [2]

فی‌الجمله، قصهٔ من درازست که «فِي قِصَّتَی طُولٌ وَ أَنْتَ مَلُولٌ».

آخر گفتم هزار شادی به روی تو باد که هر چه گفتی نیکو می‌نماید و از تو خود جز راستی نیاید. اقوالت صدق‌آفرین‌ست و احوالت درخور آفرین‌ست و خود صورت حالت بر مصداق مقالت گواهی می‌دهد، ولیکن با این همه چون بر آتشم آبی برزن و چون نزدیک آوردی خویشتن دور میفکن. ازین غصه قصه‌ای و از این شکایت حکایتی برگوی تا بشنوم و بدانم که کاری بس غریب می نماید.

پس گفت بدان و آگاه باش که من در بدو خلقت و عهد فطرت که پای از دهلیز عدم در سراچهٔ عالم نهادم، دانه‌ای یگانه بودم، پاک‌تر از قطره ژاله بر اوراق لاله و نغزتر از آب گل در جام مُل. ناگاه، خردانديشی چند که مشغولان [fol. 22v] مهمّات عالم و مقبولان «وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِی آدَمَ»[27] بودند، آمدند و از بهر نفع خویش، روی به دفع من آوردند و از بهر انتظام مقصودِ وی، انهدام وجود من اختیار کردند و مرا گریبان گرفته در دامن خاک نهادند. [3]

بی گناهی آبم بردند و نامرده به لحدم سپردند. چون روزی چند برآمد از مجاورت آب و خاک، نداوتی و ثقلی در نهادم پیدا شد و مزاجم متغیر گشت [و]طبیعتم دگرگون شد. هر بخاری که از دل گرمم به تجاذب شعشعه آفتاب متصاعد می‌شد، بر هامهٔ همّتم منعقد می‌گشت تا آنگاهی که از ترادف آن مواد شعبه‌ای بر روی زمین ظاهر شد. پس از آن شعبهٔ شعب پدید آمد که آن را درخت پنبه نام کردند. همچنین بر حسب نشو و انتمام، روز [به روز] بار و برگم زیادت می‌گشت تا آنگاه که صدمت تندباد خریف با طبع زمان حریف شد. چون روزی چند در معرض آن تصادم بماندم، طراوت و نداوتم کم شد. صفرتی در اوراقم پدید آمد. دلم که از جور روزگار پُر شده بود، بشکافت. چون آوازه در ده افتاد که حال بر چه موجب است، مشتی بی‌دلان در تک و تاب افتادند [fol. 23r] که ما را از دل او نشانی باید، تا تب لرزه‌ای را که از عفونت سرمای مهرگانی بر ما افتد، تسکینی کرده شود. نبینی که هر که را تب گیرد، پنبهٔ نیم رشت در گردن بندند؟ پس هر یک می‌دویدند و از روی تبرّک، نصیبی از من حاصل می‌کردند. به حکم تقدیر ربّانی و قضای آسمانی، مدتی در دست پیرزنان بماندم. گاه به ناخن جفایی، دل مهربانم را از بر جدا می‌افکندند و گاه به کمان امتحان اجزای مجتمع را متفرق می‌کردند. هر شب به بهانهٔ فتیلهٔ چراغم می‌سوختند و هر روز به بازار خواری به کمتر چیزم می‌فروختند. این همه بود، اما از یمن مجاهده و شرف ریاضت کار به جایی رسید که مرهم خستگان، بی حضور من میسر نمی‌شد.

شعر

«بِكَدِّ النَّفْسِ تُكْتَسَبُ المَعالی وَمَنْ طَلَبَ العُلی سَهِرَ اللَّيالي»[28]

تا بداند که هیچ قدم طریق ریاضت از فایده خالی [نیست]. القصّه، چون در ذبابهٔ آن واقعه و فذلک آن حال ذات نحیف و نهاد ضعیفم چون سیم کشیده بر دوک زبان پیچیده شد، بعد از آن به دست گروهی افتادم که حاشا من السّامعین به سمت حمق معروفند و به صفت جهل موصوف. [fol. 23v] چون دو سه روز به صوابدید رای، به اصابت ایشان از شکنجه

27 Surah al-Isra: 70.

28 »It is through earnest effort that excellence is gained; whoever aims high must be willing to spend sleepless nights.« A verse by an unknown poet, quoted in Pasha (ed.), *Harābāt*, vol. 2, 501.

به شکنجه نقل افتاد، بعد از آن در چار میخم کشیدند و مصلحت کلی چنان دیدند که اجزام در یکدیگر پیوسته شود و راه خلاص بر من بسته آید. پس در تک و پوی افتادند و پود و تاری فرو نهادند و در آن شکنجهٔ جان سوز و ورطهٔ دل‌دوز، قوت من هم از من ساختند و به هر نواله‌ای که در دهانم می‌نهادند، سیلی گرم فرو می‌رفتند تا آنگاهی که امتلایی حاصل آمد. پس چون حال چنان شد، در آن محنتم نیز نگذاشتند. برداشتند و بردند و به دکان گازر سپردند که رویش بشوی و به ترک آزرم بگوی؛ در پای مذلتش افکن و گدینی چند بر سرش زن.

«فَسُحقاً لِدَهْرٍ سَاوَرَتْنِی هُمُومُهُ وَشُلَّتْ یَدُ الأَیَّامِ کم تتقلب»

چون هفته‌ای دیگر در آن عقوبات و صعوبات بماندم و آیت نوایب را به هزار روایت بخواندم، با خـــود گفتم: آیا گویی دگر چه محنت خواهم دید و چه شدّت خواهم کشید؟ بلایی دیگر مانده است که به سرم آید، یا غمی دیگر هست که به درم آید؟ ولیکن چه کنم که چاره نیست. در برینش آفرینش ذاتم قابل این محن آمده است [fol. 24r] و صفاتم حامل این فنن شده «لَن یُصِیبَنَا إِلاَّ مَا کَتَبَ الله لنا»[29]

ازین بار، جمعیتی در کیفیت احوال خویش دیدم و سلامتی در استقامت مآل خود اندیشیدم. گفتم اگر هیچ روی رستگاری خواهم دید و در ظل کامکاری خواهم آرمید این حالت‌ست که خویشتن به افاضت ریاضت و معاهدهٔ مجاهده، به جایی رسانیدم که صحبت عزیزان را شایم و ظاهر عروسان را بایم که «جاوِرُ مَلِکاً أو بَحْراً»[30]. قضا گفت: خه! «أفسدت حین أسندت». سختی‌ها این‌ست که خواهی اکنون دید و تلخی‌ها این‌ست که اکنون خواهی کشید.

«وقرب البحر محذورُ العواقب»

بعد از آن که نوش وصال چشیده باشی نیش زوال کشی.

آخر بر حسب این گفتار گردش روزگار کارم در بازار اِزار افکند. اتفاقاً با خیاطی اختلاطی افتاد. چنانک معهود است بی‌وفایی آغاز کرد و دست سوی من دراز کرد و گلوی عمرم را به مقراض انقراض ببرید و مرا از هم بر درید. من در غصّهٔ این جراحت سوزان و در ندبهٔ این نیاحت نالان، خیاط را دیدم که به پای جفا در شاه‌راه وفا می‌دوید و رشتهٔ بلا در سوزن ابتلا می کشید تا اطرافم را در هم دوزد و بدین دردی دیگرم پوزد. [4]

[fol. 24v] به چند گونه ام آخر ذلیل خواهی داشت؟ به چند محنتم آخر عذاب خواهی کرد؟

چون احاطت خیاطت به جوانیم شامل شد و الم ستم در مفاصلم حاصل گشت، گفتم همین خواهد بود و نه همانا که بیش ازین شاید بود. آخرِ غم‌ها و پایان الم‌ها این‌ست. من درین عشوه مانده و هیچ این نقش برنخوانده که آخر کار، سر در می‌باید باخت. فی الجمله تا چون شمع سر من بر نگرفت، کارم تمام نشد و عرض به انجام نرسید.

«بخشای بر دل آن کاندر کف زمانه

کارش نکو نگردد، الا به سر بریدن»

چون کار بدین درجه رسید و حال بدین جایگاه انجامید، پختگی مضاعف شد و سوختگی زیادت گشت.

ازین بار به برکت ریاضت و مجاهدت کارم بدانجا رسید که دست در گردن ماه‌رویان می‌کردم و بر تن مشک‌بویان می نهادم که «إِنّ مَعَ العُسرِ یُسراً».[31] اطلس با آن همه رنگ و زیبایی و طراوت و رعنایی، با بر سیمین معشوقان و تن نازنین ممشوقان آن قرابت نداشته که من. آری، تریاق آن کس خورد که زهر مار چشیده باشد و گوهر آن کس برد که قعر بحار دیده باشد. [5]

شعر

[fol. 25r] «عشق جانان را دلی باید به درد آراسته

وصل خوبان را تنی باید به هجران کاسته»

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29 Surah at-Taubah: 51.

30 Arabic saying found in Al-Amthāl by Abī ʿUbayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallam al-Haravī (c. 770-838 CE). He was an Arab-Greek philologist, lexicographer, and scholar during the Islamic Golden Age. Abū ʿUbayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām, *Kitāb al-amthāl*, 157.

31 Surah ash-Sharh: 6.

چون روزی چند درین شادکامی بودم و به کام دل آسودم، ناگاه چشم زخم روزگار درآمد و بازار نشاطم را بر هم زد فتوری ظاهر در احوالم پیدا و ظاهر گشت و قصوری موحش در جمالم پدید آمد.

شعر

«رَأَیْتُ الدَّهْرَ مُخْتَلِفاً یَدُورُ

فَلا حُزْنٌ یَدُومُ ولا سُرورا»

چون این صفت مستمر گشت و این سمت مستشر شد مرا از صحبت خویش مهجور کردند و از کنار خود دور افکندند. زینهار خوردند و صحبت دیرینه را فراموش کردند. روی از وفا گردانیدند و گردن از عهد پیچانیدند و مرا بگذاشتند و دل از من برداشتند.

«دَعْ ذِکْرَهُنَّ فَمَا لَـهُنَّ وَفاءُ

ریح الصَّبا وعُهُودُهُنَّ سَواءٌ»

بعد از آن به خدمت درویشان پیوستم و در صحبت ایشان چه می دانستم که ایشان قدر من بشناسند و از خشونت من نهراسند. و اگر مثلاً وقتی از تصاریف زمان و تکالیف حدثان رکنی از ارکان را خللی افتد، در مهّت آن ایستادگی نمایند و به کمتر عیبی سوی مفارقت نگرایند. [fol. 25v] چون دگرشان نباشد، با من بسازند و بر عشوهٔ بهتری مرا نیندازند. [6]

شعر

«تو به زمنی گزیدی و کم گشتی

من کم ز تویی گزینم و به باشم»

چون روزی چند بگذشت، تصرّف زمان نامهٔ قوامم را درنوشت. یکباره از دست شدم و در پای نوایب پست شدم. چستی به سستی بدل شد و هستی به گستی میل گشت. گرد نحوست بر عذارم نشست و دست ادبار به دامن روزگارم پیوست. پود بودم پوده گشت و اوتار تارم سوده شد. روی رونقم بی‌آب ماند و زلف قیمتم بی‌تاب شد. مرور ادوار دور عمرم را به آخر آورد و شرور روزگار بنیادم را زیر و زبر کرد. علامت رستهٔ خُلقان‌فروشان گشتم و ملامت زمرهٔ ژنده‌پوشان شدم. نه کسم به کمتر چیز می خرید و نه نیز وجودم پشیزی می‌ارزید.

«أَضاعَ نُقُودَنا صَرْفُ الزَّمانِ

وَأَتلَفَ عیشَنا فَقدُ الأَمانِ»

«کاری به فلک جفت زمین داند شد

سبحان الله چنان چنین داند شد»

چون حال چنان گشت و این همه وقایع بر سرم گذشت، درویشان نیز با من نساختند، عاقبتم هم انداختند. [fol. 26r]

«دیدی که دوستی تو ناپایدار بود

و این جمله عهدهات چو ابر بهار بود

جورت کشیدمی و همی گفتمی مگر

این محنت فراق، کرا در شمار بود

من خود فروشده به غم آنک روزگار

امسال نیست با من از آن سان که پار بود

تو نیز بر سر همه گفتی به ترک من

این هم ز ناموافقی روزگار بود»

پس، مطرود و مردود باز ماندم و مرثیهٔ روزگار خود برخواندم. نه کسی که از روی سازگاری لحظه‌ای جلیس من شود و نه همنفسی که از راه دلداری بمحله انس من گردد. از خجالت وجود بی‌حاصل خود، روی می‌نهفتم و زار زار با خود به خود می‌گفتم:

شعر

«در جهان کیست بدینسان که منم؟

اینت غمگین بی‌نشان که منم

هیچ کس دیــد زبونی هرگز

در کف دهر بدین سان که منم؟

آخرالامر، جماعتی تیزبصر دقیق‌نظر که در ابداع حرف سرّی دانستند و در اختراع طرف سعی توانستند، به من رسیدند و مرا دیدند. در ذات فرتوتم مبهوت ماندند [fol. 26v] و چنانک بود نقش احوالم برخواندند. با یکدیگر گفتند اگر چه به ظاهر ژنده است، به باطن زنده است. به چشم حقارت درو نباید نگریست. کسی چه داند که او چیست. آنچ به حس درمی‌توان یافت آثار رشد بر جبهتش هرچ واضح‌ترست و انوار یمن در حالتش هر چه لایح تر. جوهرش قابل سعادت می‌نماید و می‌توان دانست که ازو کاری بیاید. پس مرا برداشتند و ضایع نگذاشتند و در عشرت‌آباد بغداد که بنیادش بر داد نهاده‌اند و ابواب بهشت درو گشاده‌اند بردند و در پای مذلت فشردند و باز چندان ضربات نکبات بر سرم زدند که مرغ و ماهی بر سرم متأسف شدند. [7]

«إِنْ كانَ عِنْدَكَ يا زمانُ بقيّة

مما تسوء بها الكرام فهاتها»

چون آن عقبهٔ دیگر بریدم و به منزلی دیگر رسیدم، اعظام بر یکدیگر شکسته شد و احشام در همدیگر پیوسته گشت. پس از آن موضع به موضعی دیگر نقل افتاد و کار بلا دست بر هم داد. ازین بار با آب همخانه گشتم و از حد مزاج خود درگذشتم. [fol. 27r] راه صواب گرفتم و طبع آب گرفتم. چه گفته‌اند که «المخالطت یغیّر الطباع».

چون دوست را دوست محرم دیدم با او به کام دل آرمیدم. از وجود خویشتن پرداختم و خوش خوش با او درساختم.

مثل

«المصافات بین الماء والراح» مع الحدیث

از صحبت آن آب، آبی به روی کارم باز آمد و وقت زوال آن غمهای دراز آمد. شاخ سعادت برداد و اقبال روی به من نهاد.

شعر

دوران غم گذشت کنون کار کار ماست

ما و نشاط ازین پس که اقبال یار ماست

پس به رفق و مدارا و لطف و محابا مرا از آنجا برگرفتند و بر حصیر نظیف به وجه لطیف، مبسوط کردند چندانک بادی بر من جست و روحی در من پیوست. پس از آنجا برداشتند و بر دیوار خانه دوسانیدند و بعد از آن دیگرم نرنجانیدند. چون دو سه روز برآمد نشستند و مرا چون گل دسته بستند و به بازار فرستادند و به دکان عطّار نهادند. پس چون این خبر شایع شد و این اثر ساطع گشت، [fol. 27v] طغرای سلاطین و توقیع ملوک، چندین گاه ذکر من شنیده بودند و منتظر قدوم من بودند. چون پس از چندین مخبر منظر مرا از دل و جان استقبال و بر من اقبال نمودند که صحبت ما را تو می‌شایی و دولت ما را تو در می یابی. «یَوْمٌ لَنَا وَیَوْمٌ عَلَیْنا». تا این همه محنت ندیدم، بدین مرتبت نرسیدم. [8]

«لَم تَكُونُوا بِالِغِيهِ إِلاَّ بِشِقِّ الأَنفُسِ».[32]

شعر

«چون پروانه به وصل آن شمع طراز

می‌دان به یقین که تا نسوزی نرهی»

بسیار اجسام بینی که از روی بیاض بر من ترجیح دارند، اما چون تلخی مجاهده نکشیده‌اند [نچشیده‌اند] و مشقت ریاضت نکشیده‌اند، بدین شرف نرسیده‌اند و این درجه و مرتبت ندیده‌اند.

«لَوْلاَ المَشَقَّةُ سَادَ النَّاسُ كُلَّهُمُ

32 Surah an-Nahl: 7.

فالجُودُ يَفْقِرُ والإقدام قتال»[33]

پس گفت که صداع از حد رفت و دانم که ملالت گرفت اما چون در استکشاف حال خود از تو آن نیاز دیدم من نیز قصه دراز کشیدم و اگر نه ترا سر دمدمه نباشد و حکایت این همه نبود. سرگذشت من چنین است و شرح حال من این‌ست. والله اعلم واحکم.

[fol. 28r] پس چون این همه غرایب در اقوالش شنیدم و این همه عجایب در احوالش دیدم در تعجب ماندم و بسیار آفرین خواندم بر آن بغداد و داد که به محصلان مشتاق و سوختگان فراق چنین تحفهٔ عزیز و هدیهٔ شریف فرستادند. [9]

فی الجمله از انعام عمیم و اکرام جسیم مجلس أسمی الصدر الامام و الحبر الهمام، الأجل العالم، العامل الزاهد، المجاهد المکرم، المحق المحقق، تاج‌الدین شمس‌الإسلام، امام الأئمة، عزّ الأمة، زین الملة، ناصح الملوک و السلاطین، محی السنة، علم الهدی، قُدوة الافاضل، منبع الفواضل، حسان الشعراء، سلطان الشرع، ذوالمحامد و المناقب، افتخار خراسان، أدام الله جلاله وأبد إفضاله منت‌های بسیار داشته می‌آید، بدین مکرمت که فرمود و بدین عاطفت که نمود. چه اگر آن بزرگوار بدین طومار سپید انعام نفرمودی، این کاغذ نامه از کجا بودی؟ «فهذا السبیل من تلك الغمام».

همواره سعیش مشکور باد و دست آفت از دامن روزگارش دور باد. بمحمد و آله الأکرمین.

Translation of Select Passages

[1]

Finally, I said: »O pale-faced, sweet-tongued one! From where do you come, that you are so beautiful? To whom do you belong, that you are so graceful?«

»Are you the dawn itself, by whose coming the night of our sorrow has ended? If not, what is this radiant forehead and this luminous face?«

»If you are not the moon, why do you shine so? And if you are not a cypress, why do you sway so gracefully?«

»In the gardens of Sivas you are like the springtime in midwinter, and among the drapers of Ray you are like the purest white linen.«

»The marks of age appear upon your surface, yet you are still youthful in freshness – as though you were kneaded from camphor dust, though inscribed with pure musk.«

»Yet tell me: if you are a letter, where is your speech? And if you are a garment, where is the body you clothe?«

[2]

In this world you will find no one more tempered, indeed, more scorched, than I, for I have witnessed the Day of Resurrection five times, and have endured countless afflictions and hardships.

I come from that other world, and thus I am deemed worthy of the secret of the unseen.

A pure-hearted Sufi might I be rightly called, and mysticism befits me well, for in the grasp of Time and the torment of tribulations I have become supremely ascetic.

33 From a qasida by Abū al-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī (915-965 CE). Ibn Khallikan, *Wafayat al-Aʿyan*, ed. Ihsan al-Abbas, 265.

Verse
What sorrow is left that you have not brought upon me?
What wound remains that Time has not driven into my heart?

Five times, in the course of fate and the dissolution of form, I have been undone beneath the feet of calamities and transformed at the hands of misfortunes; each time born into a new shape such as I had never worn before.

[3]
Then it said: »Know and be aware that at the beginning of creation and in the covenant of my nature, when I stepped from the vestibule of non-existence into the chamber of the world, I was a single, unique seed – purer than a dewdrop upon the petal of a tulip, and more delicate than rosewater in a cup of wine.

Suddenly, a few rational beings – those occupied with the affairs of the world and honoured by the divine word *»We have indeed ennobled the children of Adam«* – came and, seeking their own benefit, turned toward my destruction. To fulfil their purpose, they chose the annihilation of my being. They seized me by the collar and cast me down into the lap of the earth.

[4]
In the end, as fate decreed, the turning of time cast my lot into the garment market. There, by chance, I came into acquaintance with a tailor. As is their custom, he began with faithlessness: he reached out his hand toward me, cut the throat of my life with the scissors of extinction, and tore me apart. In anguish over this burning wound, lamenting my destruction, I saw the tailor running along the highway of faithfulness, with the feet of treachery, drawing the thread of affliction through the needle of trial to stitch together my torn edges; and by this, to soothe and heal yet another of my pains.

[5]
This time, through the blessing of ascetic hardship and striving, my fortune reached the point where I would lay my hands upon the necks of moon-faced beauties and be placed upon the bodies of those fragrant with musk; for, indeed, *»with hardship comes ease«.* Even atlas, with all its colour, beauty, freshness, and grace, has never shared such intimacy with the silver-bodied beloveds and the delicate forms of their lovers as I have. For it is true: only he who has tasted the serpent's poison may drink the antidote, and only he who has seen the depths of the seas, may win the pearl.

[6]
After that, I entered the service of the dervishes and joined their company, for I knew that they would value me and would not shrink from my roughness. And if, by chance, through the turns of time and the burdens of circumstances, one of their supports were to be shaken, they would stand firm in that tribulation and would not turn toward separation over the slightest fault. And when they have none other, they make do with me, not casting me aside for the charm of something better.

[7]
Then, with gentleness, forbearance, kindness, and care, they lifted me from that place and spread me out delicately upon a clean mat, until a breeze stirred upon me and a spirit joined

within me. After that, they lifted me again and smoothed me against the wall of the house, and from then on, they troubled me no more. When two or three days passed, they gathered and bundled me like a bouquet of flowers, then sent me to the market and placed me in the shop of an apothecary.

[8]
Then, when this news spread and became widely known, the sultans' signatures and the rulers' decrees, having long heard of my renown, were awaiting my arrival. And when, after so many reports, they finally welcomed me with all their heart and turned toward me in favour, they said: »It is you who perfect our companionship, and you who truly appreciate our glory.« »*A day for us and a day against us*«; for had I not endured all these tribulations, I would never have reached such exaltation.

[9]
When I heard so many marvels in its words and witnessed such wonders in its state, I was filled with astonishment and uttered many praises for that Baghdad and its generosity, for sending such a noble offering, such precious gift, to the ardent seekers and the lovers consumed by separation.

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A Hitherto Unknown Universal History of the Early Eighth Century: Preliminary Notes on the *Maronite Chronicle of 713*

Adrian C. Pirtea*

This research note introduces the *Maronite Chronicle of 713*, a hitherto unknown Christian world chronicle in Arabic, recently identified by the author in the collection of manuscripts at St. Catherine's Monastery on Mt. Sinai. Extant in a single thirteenth-century manuscript (Sinai Ar. 597), this Arabic chronicle is a translation of a lost Syriac work, originally composed in 712-713 CE, probably in a Syriac Monothelete milieu with close ties to the Monastery of Mar Maron. The chronicle covers the history of the world from Adam to 692-693 CE and exhibits numerous parallels with the so-called »eastern source«, which informed the chronicles of Theophanes, Michael the Syrian, Agapius of Mabbug and the anonymous Syriac *Chronicle of 1234*. To demonstrate the links between these sources and the new chronicle, the note analyses, as a case study, a passage discussing the main events of the year 633-634 CE. The author argues that the *Maronite Chronicle of 713* provides an alternative chronology of events for this year and thus represents an independent source for the early stages of the Arab conquests. A more detailed study and a critical edition and annotated translation of this new chronicle are in preparation.

Keywords: Syriac historiography, Christian world chronicles, Syriac-Arabic translations, Christian Arabic manuscripts, Maronites, St. Catherine's Monastery Library, early Arab conquests, comet of 634 CE

Introduction: The Arabic Collection of Manuscripts on Mt. Sinai

The library of the Greek Orthodox Monastery of St. Catherine's on Mt. Sinai houses the oldest and one of the largest collections of Christian Arabic manuscripts in the world. Currently, the collection holds more than 750 items, including 155 Arabic manuscript fragments belonging to the so-called New Finds, a large group of manuscripts in several languages discovered in a walled-up room at the monastery in 1975.[1] The Sinai Arabic collection remains poorly catalogued. Existing catalogues and checklists by Margaret Gibson (1894), Aziz Atiya (1955),

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1 For a report on the discovery of the new finds, see Archbishop Damianos, Chronicle of the Recovery.

eISSN-Nr. 2412-3196
DOI 10.1553/medievalworlds_no23_2025s155

Murad Kamil (1970) and Yiannis Meimaris (1985) only contain brief (and often incomplete) descriptions.[2] A more detailed catalogue was published by Atiya in 1970, but it only covers the first three hundred items.[3] Fortunately, access to the Sinai collection has significantly improved in the last decade, first through the digitization of the microfilms produced by the American and Israeli Sinai expeditions,[4] and, more recently, thanks to the *Sinai Palimpsests Project* and the *Sinai Manuscripts Digital Library*.[5] The increased access to the Sinai manuscripts, including its numerous palimpsests, has already led to several groundbreaking discoveries that are rapidly changing our understanding of ancient and medieval history, theology, literature and science.[6]

The aim of this research note is to introduce another new discovery among the Sinai manuscripts: a hitherto unknown Arabic translation of a lost, and equally unknown, universal chronicle composed in Syriac in the early eighth century CE. For reasons I will explain below, this anonymous text can be designated as the *Maronite Chronicle of 713* (henceforth *Chron713*). The Arabic translation is extant in Sinai, St. Catherine's Monastery, Arabic 597, an overlooked thirteenth-century manuscript of the Old Sinai Collection. I will provide a short description of the manuscript, present the contents and main features of *Chron713* and highlight, by way of one case study, the significance of this newly discovered chronicle for the history of the Eastern Mediterranean in the late antique and early Islamic periods. A more detailed study and a critical edition and translation of the text are in preparation by the present author.[7]

The Manuscript Sinai Ar. 597

In its present state, Sinai Arabic 597 is bound together from two codicological units, both measuring c. 250 × 162 mm. The first part (henceforth Sinai Ar. 597/I, fols. 1-83, paper) was copied in the tenth century.[8] This part contains Arabic translations of the *Book of Daniel* (fols. 1r-37r) and the *Book of Proverbs* (fols. 38v-83r), based on the Syriac Peshitta.[9] The

2 Gibson, *Catalogue of the Arabic Mss.*; Atiya, *Arabic Manuscripts*; Clark, *Checklist*; Kamil, *Catalogue of All Manuscripts*; Meimaris, *Κατάλογος* (Katalogos). Note should also be made of the earlier checklist prepared during the visit of the Russian bishop Porfirij Uspenskij (1804-1885) to Sinai in 1850. See below, n. 15.

3 Atiya, *Catalogue raisonné.* An initiative by the *Centre de Documentation et de Recherches Arabes Chrétiennes* (CEDRAC) in Beirut to continue Atiya's cataloguing project has not been brought to completion.

4 For the Library of Congress, see: https://www.loc.gov/collections/manuscripts-in-st-catherines-monastery-mount-sinai/about-this-collection/ [last accessed 29 October 2025]; for the National Library of Israel, see: https://www.nli.org.il/en/discover/manuscripts/saint-catherine [last accessed 29 October 2025].

5 See: https://sinai.library.ucla.edu/ [last accessed 29 October 2025]; https://sinaimanuscripts.library.ucla.edu [last accessed 29 October 2025], registration required.

6 For a recent collection of studies, see Rapp *et al.*, *New Light*.

7 See Pirtea, Syro-Chalcedonian historiography. More than a year after my discovery of the text in January 2024 (and independently of my work), Alexander Hourani also examined the manuscript in April-May 2025 and provided a first draft transcription of the text on his academia.edu profile page: Hourani, Chronicle. I wish to thank Habib Ibrahim for drawing my attention to Hourani's research. See also below, n. 18.

8 A reader's note on fol. 83v is dated Ḏū l-Qaʿda 1, 392 AH, i.e. September 11, 1002 CE, which provides a *terminus ante quem*; see Treiger, From Theodore Abū Qurra, 39-40, n. 120.

9 One folio is missing at the beginning. Fols. 37v-38r are empty.

second part (Sinai Ar. 597/II, fols. 84-160, paper) is of later date and contains *Chron713*, to be discussed below. This second part can be dated palaeographically to the thirteenth century.[10] The final folios contain short texts by later hands (thirteenth-fourteenth centuries?): the beginning of the *Book of Rolls* (*Kitāb al-majāll*) on fol. 156v,[11] followed – in a different hand – by an incomplete calendar of Christian feasts (fols. 157r-160r).[12] The manuscript lost its binding, and there are no indications about when or how it reached Sinai. The second part suffered significant water damage, resulting in many of its leaves being stuck together. Some of these leaves had been opened already before the recent digitization campaign, causing further damage and making the script on these leaves almost illegible.[13]

So far, scholarship on Sinai Ar. 597 has focused exclusively on the first part, either on the *Book of Daniel* or, more generally, on the script.[14] The content of Sinai Ar. 597/II is only briefly mentioned in the catalogues.[15] Gibson describes the contents as a universal history (ἱστορία τοῦ κόσμου), but she provides no further details.[16] Atiya's *Handlist* mentions a historical treatise entitled »Book of the History of Years and Times«, adding that this part was defective and therefore not microfilmed.[17]

The Maronite Chronicle of 713

Although both Gibson and Atiya correctly identified the text in Sinai Ar. 597/II as a work of historiography, neither scholar undertook a detailed analysis of its contents. As a result, they

10 As Alexander Treiger has informed me, the script is very similar to Sinai Ar. 268, copied by the prolific scribe Poimen, active c. 1223-1237 CE (on which see Ibrahim, Poimen al-Sīqī). However, further research on the palaeographical features of the manuscript is needed in order to establish the identity of the scribe who copied Sinai Ar. 597/II.

11 On this text, also known as the Arabic *Apocalypse of Peter*, see Roggema and Burke, Book of the Rolls.

12 The calendar begins (fol. 157r) with the commemoration of St. Amphilochius of Iconium (23 November).

13 See folios 88v-89r, 89v-90r, 91v-92r, 98v-99r, 101v-102r, 104v-105r, 105v-108r (stuck together), 109v-110r (stuck together), 111v-112r (stuck together), 112v-113r, 113v-114r (stuck together), 115v-118r (stuck together), 119v-120r (stuck together), 121v-123r (stuck together), 124v-127r (stuck together), 128v-129r (stuck together), 131v-132r, 133v-134r, 134v-135r, 137v-138r, 138v-139r, 141v-142r, 145v-146r, 146v-147r, 147v-148r, 149v-150r, 151v-152r, 152v-153r and 154v-155r. On some of these folios, more than 50% of the text can be read; on others. only a few lines can be discerned. A digitized version of the manuscript is available in the Sinai Manuscripts Digital Library: https://sinaimanuscripts.library.ucla.edu/catalog/ark:%2F21198%2Fz1w10qj5 [last accessed 29 October, 2025, registration required].

14 See Hjälm, *Christian Arabic Versions*, 56-57, 84-86, 393-395; see also Hjälm, Paleographical study; Posegay, Early Arabic Translation.

15 It is possible that the manuscript was seen by the Russian bishop Porfirij Uspenskij (1804-1885) as early as 1850, since in the checklist prepared by his collaborators Nikolai Krylov and Faḍlallāh Ṣarrūf (1826-1903), one Arabic manuscript is described as »a book of history in old script with its pages stuck (*mulṣaq*) to one another«. See Syrku, *Catalogus librorum manuscriptorum*, 349 (cod. Porph. Ar. 312).

16 Gibson, *Catalogue of the Arabic Mss.*, 127. The same Greek title (ἱστορία τοῦ κόσμου) is provided on the library label on fol. 160v. Given the short amount of time Gibson and her sister, Agnes Smith Lewis (1843-1926), stayed at the monastery, the manuscript could only be examined in a cursory fashion, as Gibson herself admits (*ibid.*, vii).

17 Atiya, *Arabic Manuscripts*, 24. The second part of the manuscript is not mentioned at all in Clark, *Checklist*, 37. Kamil, *Catalogue of All Manuscripts*, 13, simply repeats Atiya's description. It is unclear if Atiya examined the manuscript in detail when preparing the second volume of his *Catalogue raisonné.*

were not in a position to appreciate the true significance of the find. Since my discovery and initial analysis of the text in January-February 2024, it has become increasingly clear that this was a previously unknown Christian universal chronicle, and the longest such text of the first millennium CE to come to light in decades.[18] As such, *Chron713* will be of utmost importance for Syriac and Arabic historiography and, more generally, for our understanding of the political and religious history of the late antique and early Islamic Near East.

1. The Title

The *Maronite Chronicle of 713* is a conventional title that can be assigned to the text, based on several distinguishing elements. In the manuscript, the work is introduced as follows:

> تاريخ السنين والازمنة المسمّا يوناني خرونيقون ويبتدى من انشا العالم بمعونة المسيح الإله الذي فوق الكل.
>
> The history of years and times, called in Greek *Chronikon*. It begins from the creation of the world, with the help of Christ, God who is above all.[19]

As the title already makes clear, the work stands in the tradition of Greek world chronicles established by early Christian authors such as Sextus Julius Africanus (third century) and Eusebius of Caesarea (d. 339 CE). In Syriac historiography, such works are often titled *maḵtaḇ* (or: *maḵtḇūṯ*) *zaḇnē*, which is possibly also the expression behind the Arabic title used here (*kitāb al-sinīn wa-l-azmina*).[20] With regard to the time of composition, the anonymous author fortunately provides an exact date. When mentioning that Seleukos I Nikator introduced the »era of the Greeks«, the chronicler adds that, according to this era, the *present day* (*al-yawm*) is the year 1024, which corresponds to October 712 – September 713 CE.[21] Although the chronicle ends abruptly on fol. 155v with the year 692-693 CE, it is preferable to refer to the work by the (latter part of the) year in which it was composed, i.e. twenty years after the last events described.

Several features of the Arabic text indicate that it is the translation of a lost Syriac model.[22] Although the Arabic version is not dated, we can reasonably posit a translation during the

18 I first discovered the text in January 2024 while examining Arabic saints' calendars and synaxaria in the Sinai collection. I presented the discovery on three occasions: at the conference »The Other Narratives of Early Islam. Contemporary Sources and Critical Readings« (University of Frankfurt, 22-23 March, 2024, organized by Hagit Nol); in the framework of the Tübingen Byzantine and Near Eastern Seminar (TBNES), University of Tübingen (10 July, 2025, organized by Federico Montinaro), and as part of the Gotha Manuscript Talks series (Gotha Research Library, 26 November, 2025, organized by Feras Krimsti and Konrad Hirschler). I would like to thank the organizers for the opportunity to present this discovery. I also wish to thank all the colleagues who were present on these occasions and with whom I discussed several aspects of the chronicle.

19 Sinai Ar. 597/II, fol. 85v. Transcriptions follow the orthography of the manuscript.

20 For the most comprehensive study of Syriac historiography to date, see Debié, *L'écriture de l'histoire*.

21 Sinai Ar. 597/II, fol. 100v.

22 A detailed analysis of the features indicating a translation from Syriac would require a separate study. To mention only one telling example, the Syriac particle *d-* in *d-ywsyps* (»of Josephus [Flavius]«) is misunderstood as part of the name: ذيوسيفس (fol. 101r).

eleventh century, an active period of Maronite translations into Arabic.[23] Given the long interval between the work's original composition (713 CE) and the surviving manuscript (thirteenth century), later expansions or modifications of the text remain a distinct possibility. While I have not found any evidence of such later interventions yet, future research on *Chron713* will certainly need to take this possibility into account.

Finally, the use of the term »Maronite« to describe the chronicle is justified by the fact that the anonymous author is (1) a Syriac Chalcedonian who (2) sympathizes with Monotheletism and (3) is close to the monks of the monastery of Mar Maron.[24] The monks of Mar Maron were well known as defenders of the Council of Chalcedon in their disputes with the Miaphysites, but also as advocates of Monotheletism during the seventh century.[25] Writing in the early eighth century, the chronicler probably belongs to the same intellectual circle(s) that produced other known Syriac Monothelete texts in this period, such as the *Syriac Maronite Chronicle* (which also features the monks of Mar Maron), the Syriac *Life of Maximus* and a number of shorter theological and polemical treatises.[26]

2. The Contents

As already noted, *Chron713* is a chronicle covering the history of the world from Adam until 692-693 CE, when the truce (*hudna*) between the Umayyad caliph ʿAbd al-Malik (r. 685-705 CE) and the Byzantine emperor Justinian II (r. 685-695, 705-711 CE) was broken.[27] Entries for each year are usually short and simply list the main political and religious events. Longer narrations or anecdotes related to specific events are exceptionally rare. Following a short preface (fols. 85v-86r), the chronicle rushes through biblical and ancient history (fols. 86r-99r), with occasional references to Greek mythology (e.g. fol. 91r). After summarizing Alexander the Great's conquests (fol. 99r-v), the chronicler lists the Seleucid, Ptolemaic, Hasmonean and Roman rulers (fols. 99v-108v). With the brief mention of Christ's Passion in the nineteenth year of emperor Tiberius (fol. 108v) the chronicle shifts its focus towards the history of the Church, while also following the political and military history of the Roman and Persian empires (fols. 108v-145r). The final part of the chronicle deals with the Byzantine-Persian war of 602-628 (fols. 145r-147v), Muḥammad's preaching and the appearance of Islam, the Arab conquests and the ensuing Byzantine-Arab wars (fols. 148r-155v). Church

23 See Graf, *Geschichte*, II, 94-102; Breydy, *Geschichte der syro-arabischen Literatur*, 151-178. However, nothing precludes a somewhat later dating of the Arabic translation (twelfth or early thirteenth century).

24 See Sinai Ar. 597/II, fols. 133r, 144v.

25 On Syriac Monotheletism in the seventh-eighth centuries, see Tannous, In search of Monotheletism.

26 See Brock, Early Syriac life; Brock, Monothelete Florilegium; Brock, Two sets; Conterno, Three unpublished texts. On the Syriac Maronite Chronicle, see Debié, *L'écriture de l'histoire*, 546-548. The links between *Chron713* and this source need further research, but a preliminary comparison already shows that *Chron713* is not an Arabic translation of the *Syriac Maronite Chronicle*. For a discussion of *Chron713* in the context of Monothelete and Maronite history writing, see my forthcoming study: Pirtea, Syro-Chalcedonian historiography.

27 This was mistakenly interpreted by Atiya as referring to a peace treaty between the Fatimids and the Byzantines (Atiya, *Arabic Manuscripts*, 24). Atiya probably mistook the *anno Graecorum*/Seleucid era dating in the text (»the year 1004«) for an *anno Domini*/Common Era dating.

history remains a concern for the seventh century, as shown by the references to the pressing theological disputes of the time, i.e. Monotheletism and the Council of Constantinople in 681 (fols. 153v-154r).

One of the most striking characteristics of *Chron713*, especially its last part, is the fact that it exhibits substantial parallels to a group of Greek, Syriac and Arabic chronicles that have long been known to depend on a common (now lost) »eastern« (i.e. Greek or Syriac) source. These are (1) the *Chronography* of Theophanes Confessor (d. 818), (2) the *Kitāb al-ʿunwān* of Agapius of Mabbug (tenth century), (3) the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian (d. 1199) and (4) the anonymous Syriac *Chronicle to the year 1234* (= *Chron1234*).[28] Several scholars have identified this »eastern source« with the equally lost *Chronicle* of Theophilus of Edessa (d. 785 CE), but this view has been repeatedly challenged in recent years.[29] While the precise nature of the links between *Chron713*, Theophilus and the »eastern source« remains to be determined by future research, there is an undeniable and systematic intertextual connection between Theophanes, Agapius, Michael, *Chron1234* and the new chronicle. This is especially evident for the seventh century, as exemplified by the following case study.

3. A Case Study: The Events of the Year 633-634 CE

In his account of the aftermath of the Byzantine-Sasanian war of 602-628 (fols. 146r-148r) and the early Arab conquests of the 630s, the chronicler lists the following three events for the year 945 AG (October 633 to September 634 CE):

وفي سنة تسع ماية وخمسة واربعين، ومن ملك هرقل سنة اربعة وعشرين، اتوا لصوص العرب ووقعوا في ارض القبلة. وانكوا بها نكاية عظيمة بالسيف والسبى.

حينيذ ثاوذوركي اخو الملك اخذ جيش الروم وسار للقا العرب فنلبوا30 الروم وانهزموا بين ايديهم ، وظهرت آية مذهلة في السما توضح عن الغضب الذي يحل بالارض على ايديهم.

And in the year nine-hundred forty-five and the twenty-fourth year of Heraclius's reign, the Arab robbers arrived and fell upon the land of the *qibla* [i.e. Palestine/the Holy Land],[31] inflicting great damage to it by sword and by enslavement.

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28 Literature on these works and their connection to the eastern source is extensive. To mention only a few recent publications: Hoyland, *Theophilus of Edessa*; Conterno, *Descrizione dei tempi*; Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*; Hilkens, *Anonymous Syriac Chronicle*. See also next note.

29 See, e.g., Conterno, *Descrizione dei tempi*; Conterno, Theophilos; Hilkens, Before the eastern source; Debié, *L'écriture de l'histoire*, 27-31; Debié, Theophanes' »oriental source«; Hoyland, Agapius, Theophilus and Muslim Sources; Hoyland, Agapius of Manbiğ.

30 The manuscript quite clearly reads فنلبوا, but the root *n-l-b* is, to the best of my knowledge, not attested in classical Arabic. One might conjecture a mistake for فنُكبوا (»they were afflicted/they suffered misfortune«) or فنُكوا (»they were harmed«), where the scribe forgot to add the horizontal stroke in *kaf* (which he does occasionally, cf. fol. 143v, 144v). Another possibility is فغُلبوا »they were defeated« (confusion of غـ and نـ), which would be a Qur'anic echo (Q 30). In any case, the context makes clear that the verb refers to the Byzantines' defeat.

31 The expression *arḍ al-qibla* is, to my knowledge, not a common designation for Palestine/the Holy Land in this period. However, from the overall context, this is clearly the region the chronicler refers to (a few lines later, the chronicler speaks of the *jihat al-qibla* in the same sense, fol. 148v). One possible explanation is

> Then, Theodoric, the emperor's brother, took the Roman army and marched against the Arabs, but the Romans were afflicted/defeated(?) and fled before them.
>
> And a marvellous sign appeared in the heavens, signifying the wrath that would befall the land at their hands.[32]

This passage follows immediately after Abū Bakr's dispatching of the four generals and precedes the note on Heraclius's assembly of the Byzantine army under the command of Bahnas/Baanes and Theodore the *sakellarios*, which led to the battle of Jābiya/Yarmūk in 636 CE. The entries are admittedly short and provide few details, but the passage is highly relevant in at least two respects: on the one hand, it shows clear parallels to the dependants of the »eastern source«, with the same events, including the preceding and following notes on Abū Bakr and Heraclius, appearing – sometimes with similar wording – in Theophanes, Agapius, Michael the Syrian and *Chron1234*.[33] On the other hand, there are some discrepancies, especially with regard to the *order of events*, which strongly suggest that *Chron713* represents an independent strand of the historiographic tradition linked with the »eastern source«.

The first event mentioned in the cited passage refers to the earliest Arab-Byzantine military encounters in southern Palestine in the first months of 634 CE.[34] For the same year, Theophanes, Agapius, Michael and *Chron1234* mention a battle between the Arabs and the patrician Sergius, although no precise location of the encounter is given.[35] Like *Chron713*, Theophanes mentions that the Arabs took numerous captives on this occasion.[36] The same battle is alluded to in the contemporary *Doctrina Iacobi nuper baptizati*, which mentions a Byzantine official (the *candidatus*, usually identified with Sergius) being killed in battle.[37] Further details are provided by another contemporary Syriac source, the composite *Chronicle of 640 (Chronicle of 724)*, which locates the battle twelve miles east of Gaza and dates it to Friday, 4 February 634 CE. The same source also mentions the massacre of 4000 villagers and the »devastation of the entire region«, an expression that echoes the »great damage by the sword« in our text.[38] This confrontation is usually identified with the battle of Dāthin

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that the author (or the Arabic translator?) alludes to the notion that Jerusalem was the original *qibla* of the Muslims. Alternatively, it may refer to Jerusalem as the central destination of (Christian) pilgrimage (I owe this suggestion to Bishara Ebeid).

32 Sinai Ar. 597/II, fol. 148v.

33 For a translation of the relevant passages, see Hoyland, *Theophilus of Edessa*, 92-98.

34 On these early stages of the conquest of Syria, see: De Goeje, *Mémoire*, 1-63; Caetani, *Annali dell' Islam*, II/2, 1119-1192; Donner, *Early Islamic Conquests*, 111-148; Kaegi, *Byzantium*, 88-97; Hoyland, *In God's Path*, 39-49.

35 Hoyland, *Theophilus of Edessa*, 93-94 (with references).

36 Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. de Boor, 336: πολλοὺς αἰχμαλώτους λαβόντες.

37 On this passage in the *Doctrina Iacobi*, see Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 55-61; Shoemaker, *A Prophet has Appeared*, 37-44.

38 *Chronicon ad 724*, ed. Brooks, 147-148. On this chronicle, see Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses*, 59-66; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 118-120; Debié, *L'écriture de l'histoire*, 543-545, with further bibliography.

(al-Dāthina) known from Islamic sources.[39] We can thus very plausibly date the first event in *Chron713* to early February 634 CE and place it in the vicinity of Gaza.

The second battle, involving the brother of Heraclius Theodoric, also finds parallels in Theophanes, Agapius, Michael and *Chron1234*, as well as in the Armenian *History* of Sebeos and the Latin *Chronicle* of Fredegar.[40] Most scholars identify this encounter with the battle of Ajnādayn, c. 9 km north-east of Bayt Jibrīn (Eleutheropolis) in Palestine.[41] This was the first major confrontation between the Arabs and the Byzantines, in which the Arab commanders were joined by Khālid ibn al-Walīd and his troops, who had marched from Iraq to Syria in spring of the same year.[42] The presence of Heraclius's brother at Ajnādayn is confirmed by Muslim historians (e.g. Ibn Isḥāq, Sayf b. ʿUmar, cited by Ṭabarī), who moreover provide a variant of his name very similar to *Chron713*, i.e. *Taḏāriq* (Theodoric) rather than Theodore.[43] According to most Muslim sources, the decisive battle occurred on 28 Jumādā I, 13 AH/ 30 July 634 CE, shortly before the death of Abū Bakr in Jumādā II/August of the same year.[44]

While similar, the accounts in Theophanes, Michael, Agapius and *Chron1234* are unclear on the date of this battle.[45] Agapius mentions a battle between Theodoric and Khālid b. al-Walīd, but places it in the second year of ʿUmar (635-636 CE).[46] Similarly, Theophanes and Michael place the battle after the death of Abū Bakr and during ʿUmar's reign.[47] *Chron1234* notes that Theodoric's army and the Arabs »were encamped side by side between May and October«, but no year is mentioned and it is not clear from where the author draws this information.[48] It is thus difficult to reconcile the different accounts, and it may well be that Theophanes, Michael, Agapius and *Chron1234* conflate and/or confuse several confrontations between the Byzantines and the Arabs.[49]

Further insights into the chronology of events may be gained from the third element listed in *Chron713*, the »heavenly sign«, which almost certainly refers to a comet. *Chron713* places

39 See Kaegi, *Byzantium*, 88-97.

40 For the parallels, see Hoyland, *Theophilus of Edessa*, 96-98. On the relevant passages in Sebeos, see: Thomson, *Armenian History*, 240-243 (historical commentary by James Howard-Johnston). On Fredegar, see Kaegi, *Byzantium*, 98; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 216-219.

41 On the battle of Ajnādayn, see Caetani, *Annali*, III, 24-81; Donner, *Early Islamic Conquests*, 128-148; Kaegi, *Byzantium*, 98-100.

42 On Khālid's march from Iraq, see Donner, *Early Islamic Conquests*, 119-127.

43 al-Ṭabarī, *Annales*, ed. de Goeje *et al.*, I/4, 2125: تذارق اخو هرقل لابيه وأمّه »Theodoric, the full brother of Heraclius«. On Theodore/Theodoric, see Martindale, *Prosopography*, 1279-1277. While Theophanes refers to Heraclius's brother as Theodore (Θεόδωρος, Theodorus), Syriac and Arabic sources agree on the form *Theodoric* (*Tawdūrīqī*, *Ṭāwuḏūrikī* or *Taḏāriq*).

44 See Caetani, *Annali*, III, 22-23; Donner, *Early Islamic Conquests*, 129-130; Athamina, Ajnādayn.

45 Hoyland, *Theophilus of Edessa*, 96-98 (with references).

46 Agapius, *Kitāb al-ʿunwān*, ed. Vasiliev, 454, 469. Agapius apparently summarizes or conflates here a series of events between 634 and 636.

47 Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. de Boor, 336-337; Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle*, 11.5, ed. Chabot, IV, 414.

48 *Chron1234*, ed. Chabot, 242-244. *Chron1234* is clearly dependent on Islamic sources for this section. See Hoyland, Arabic, Syriac and Greek.

49 Hoyland seems to place the battle between Theodoric and the Arabs in the region of Damascus-Emesa, thus regarding it as distinct from the battle of Ajnādayn (*Theophilus of Edessa*, 93, n182; 96, n191).

the comet immediately *after* the battle fought by Theodoric, interpreting it as an indication of God's wrath.[50] A comet is also mentioned by Theophanes and Agapius, while Michael also provides September 634 CE as the date of its appearance.[51] However, unlike *Chron713*, all these sources place the comet some time *before* the battle between Theodoric and the Arabs, which complicates the attempt at establishing an exact chronology. Fortunately, the comet can be dated with precision thanks to independent accounts in the Chinese historical records of the Tang dynasty (*Jiu Tang shu*, *Xin Tang shu*, *Tang Huiyao*) and the eighth-century Japanese imperial chronicle *Nihon Shoki*. These records all mention a comet (彗孛 *xingbei*, or 長星 *changxing* »long star«) visible in the southern sky in late August/September 634 CE,[52] thus confirming the date provided by Michael the Syrian.

Taken together, the evidence discussed above suggests that *Chron713* provides a coherent and plausible chronological framework for the main events between October 633 and September 634 CE, one that is corroborated by other sources:

(1) early Arab raids in Southern Palestine (battle of Dāthin) – early February 634 CE

(2) the battle of Theodoric and the Arabs (battle of Ajnādayn) – late July 634 CE

(3) the appearance of a comet – September 634 CE

This sequence differs from Theophanes, Agapius, Michael the Syrian and *Chron1234*, who reverse the order of (2) and (3), or – in the case of *Chron 1234* – omit the latter altogether, and are unclear on the dating of Theodoric's battle against the Arabs. While this does not necessarily mean that *Chron713* offers the »correct« timeline of what »actually happened«, it does indicate that the new source proposes an alternative (and perhaps better informed) chronological sequence to the events of 633-634 CE than the later chroniclers.

Conclusions and Future Research

As this case study shows, *Chron713* represents a valuable independent source for the main events of the 630s and provides additional insights into the complicated chronology of the early Arab conquests in Syria-Palestine. Given that *Chron713* covers the history of the world until 692-693 CE, the same type of comparative research into the relevant historical sources will certainly prove illuminating for all the other events mentioned therein, especially for the sixth and seventh centuries CE. Therefore, the planned publication of an edition and annotated translation of the complete chronicle will open up several promising avenues for research: it will hopefully encourage new studies on the sources of Theophanes, Michael, Agapius and *Chron1234*, and potentially lead to a re-evaluation of the problematic »eastern source« and the lost chronicle of Theophilus. Moreover, *Chron713* can shed light on the early

50 A few lines later, *Chron713* states that Heraclius's decision to leave Syria was also influenced by this heavenly portent (fol. 149r). This may be an oblique reference to Heraclius's interest in astrology, a trope that is already found in Fredegar's *Chronicle* (Fredegarius, *Chronicarum Libri IV*, IV, 65, ed. Krusch, 153) and other sources.

51 Hoyland, *Theophilus of Edessa*, 94-95. *Chron1234* does not mention a comet at all.

52 Ho, Ancient and medieval observations, 168; Pankenier *et al.*, *Archaeoastronomy*, 70-71; Sicoli *et al.*, *Medieval Comets*, 103-106.

history of Syriac Monotheletism and the emergence of a Syro-Chalcedonian identity in the early Islamic period, on the earliest interactions between Christian and Muslim historiography, and on the history of Syro-Arabic translations in the medieval Maronite context.

Acknowledgment

I would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for several helpful comments. This publication is part of the research project »Reviving the Ascetic Ideal in the Eastern Mediterranean. Entangled Memories of Early Egyptian Monasticism in Medieval Syriac, Arabic, and Armenian Christianity (969-1375 CE)« (*RevIdEM*, ERC Starting Grant, hosted by the Austrian Academy of Sciences, 2023-2028). The project has received funding from the European Research Council under the European Union's Ninth Framework Programme »Horizon Europe« (Grant agreement no. 101078631). Views and opinions expressed are those of the author only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Council Executive Agency. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

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