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Abstract

This article analyzes the representation of al-Andalus and North Africa in medieval Islamic maps from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries. In contrast to other maps of the Mediterranean, which display a veneer of harmony and balance, the image of the Maghrib is by deliberate design one of conflict and confusion; of love and hate; of male vs. female; of desire vs rejection. This paper interprets and explains the reasons behind the unusual depiction of Andalus and the Maghrib by medieval Islamic cartographers. In addition, this article develops a new methodology of interpreting medieval Islamic maps employing a deconstruction of the forms through an analysis of different levels of gaze. The analysis unfolds into the use of erotic and nostalgic Hispano-Arabic poetry as a lens of interpretation for Islamic maps.

Keywords

medieval, Islamic maps, cartography, Maghrib

Disciplines

History | Islamic World and Near East History | Medieval Studies

9 Passion and conflict

Medieval Islamic views of the West

Karen C. Pinto

At first glance the typical medieval Islamic map of 'the West' – Surat al-Maghrib – strikes us as nothing more than a quaint abstraction of circles, triangles and oblong shapes ornately adorned with vivid pigments.¹ Closer study presents a more complex image, however, of passion and conflict; of attraction and revulsion; of love and hate. Indeed the Maghrib map is by far the most dissonant image in the extant collection of medieval Arabic and Persian maps and, as such, one of the most engaging. Whereas all the other images have a veneer of harmony and balance, this one is – by deliberate design – passionately conflicted. It is the discord of desire inlaid within the Muslim pictographs of the Maghrib that is the focus of this chapter, the over-arching question being how did medieval Islamic cartographers settle on such a strange-looking image as a representation of the western Mediterranean – in particular, North Africa, Islamic Spain, and Sicily? Answering this question requires immersing ourselves in the map-image itself, and takes us through a series of subliminal messages ranging from intra-Islamic imperial ambitions to erotic and nostalgic Andalusian poetry.

The bulk of the medieval Islamic cartographic tradition is characterized by emblematic images of striking geometric form that symbolize – in Atlas-like fashion – particular parts of the Islamic world to the familiar viewer. They comprise a major carto-geographic manuscript tradition known by the universal title of *Kitab al-Masalik wa al-Mamalik* (*Book of Roads and Kingdoms*) that was copied with major and minor variations throughout the Islamic world for eight centuries.² It was a stylized

¹ In Arabic, 'al-Maghrib' literally means 'far west'. As a geographical term it refers to the western extremities of the known world – North Africa and southern Spain.

² For the sake of brevity, I refer to this carto-geographic tradition as the *KMMS* series, an acronym based upon the universal title of the most popular Arabic and Persian carto-geographic manuscript in the series, namely al-Istakhri's work known by the universal title of *Kitab al-Masalik wa al-Mamalik* (*Book of Roads and Kingdoms*). This mapping tradition dates back to the tenth century, although the earliest extant manuscript containing maps is from the eleventh century. For more detail on this manuscript tradition see Karen

amimetic vision restricted to the literati and, specifically, to the readers, collectors, commissioners, writers and copyists of the particular geographic texts within which these maps are encased.³ The plethora of extant copies dating from the eleventh to the eighteenth centuries produced all over the Islamic world – including Iraq, Iran, Syria, Egypt, North Africa, Anatolia, and even India – testifies to the long-lasting and widespread popularity of a particular medieval Islamic cartographic vision.⁴ Each manuscript typically contains twenty-one iconic maps starting with an image of the world, then the Arabian Peninsula, the Indian Ocean, the Maghrib (North Africa and Andalusia), Egypt, Syria, the Mediterranean, upper and lower Iraq, as well as twelve maps devoted to the Iranian provinces, beginning with Khuzistan and ending in Khurasan, including maps of Sind and Transoxiana.

An examination of the icon that Middle Eastern cartographers used to symbolize the Mediterranean reveals the incongruence between our textually based, historiographic perception of conflict between the Christian and Muslim halves of the Mediterranean, and the counter-intuitive picture of perfect harmony that the Islamic maps seem to proclaim (Fig 9.1).⁵ This disjuncture between text and representation arises because of the curious bulbous form that the Middle Eastern cartographic artists employed to symbolize the Mediterranean. It is a perfectly symmetric form that deliberately does not match up mimetically with the actual coastline of the Mediterranean. Instead it presents the northern flank of the sea as a mirror image of the southern, as if to suggest that the Muslims conceived of the other side of the Mediterranean as a reflection of themselves. This is a reading that flies in the face of the dominant discourse that asserts that the Mediterranean was a

Pinto, 'Cartography', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam and the Muslim World*, Richard C. Martin, Said Amir Arjomand, Marcia Hermansen, Abdulkader Tayob, Rochelle Davis and John Obert Voll (eds.) (New York: Macmillan Reference, 2003), 128–31.

³ Although the recently discovered *Book of Curiosities* manuscript has received a lot of attention in the United Kingdom, it is, in fact, a later, single manuscript reflecting a medley of hybrid traditions. The scholars who originally discovered the *Book of Curiosities* advertised it as an early eleventh-century manuscript, but later revised their dating to thirteenth/fourteenth century. Exclusive focus on a unique manuscript diverts attention from the bulk of the tradition. In this chapter, and in my work generally, I focus on the most popular and widespread tradition that is – without doubt – the *KMMS* mapping tradition. While the *Book of Curiosities* manuscript contains some maps typical of the *KMMS* series it does not contain an exclusive map of the Maghrib and therefore does not warrant inclusion in this chapter.

⁴ Karen Pinto, 'The maps are the message: Mehmet II's patronage of an Ottoman Cluster', *Imago Mundi* 63 (2011), 155–79.

⁵ See Karen Pinto, "'Surat Bahr al-Rum' (Picture of the Sea of Byzantium): possible meanings underlying the forms', in *Eastern Mediterranean Cartographies* (Athens: National Hellenic Research Foundation, 2004), 223–41.

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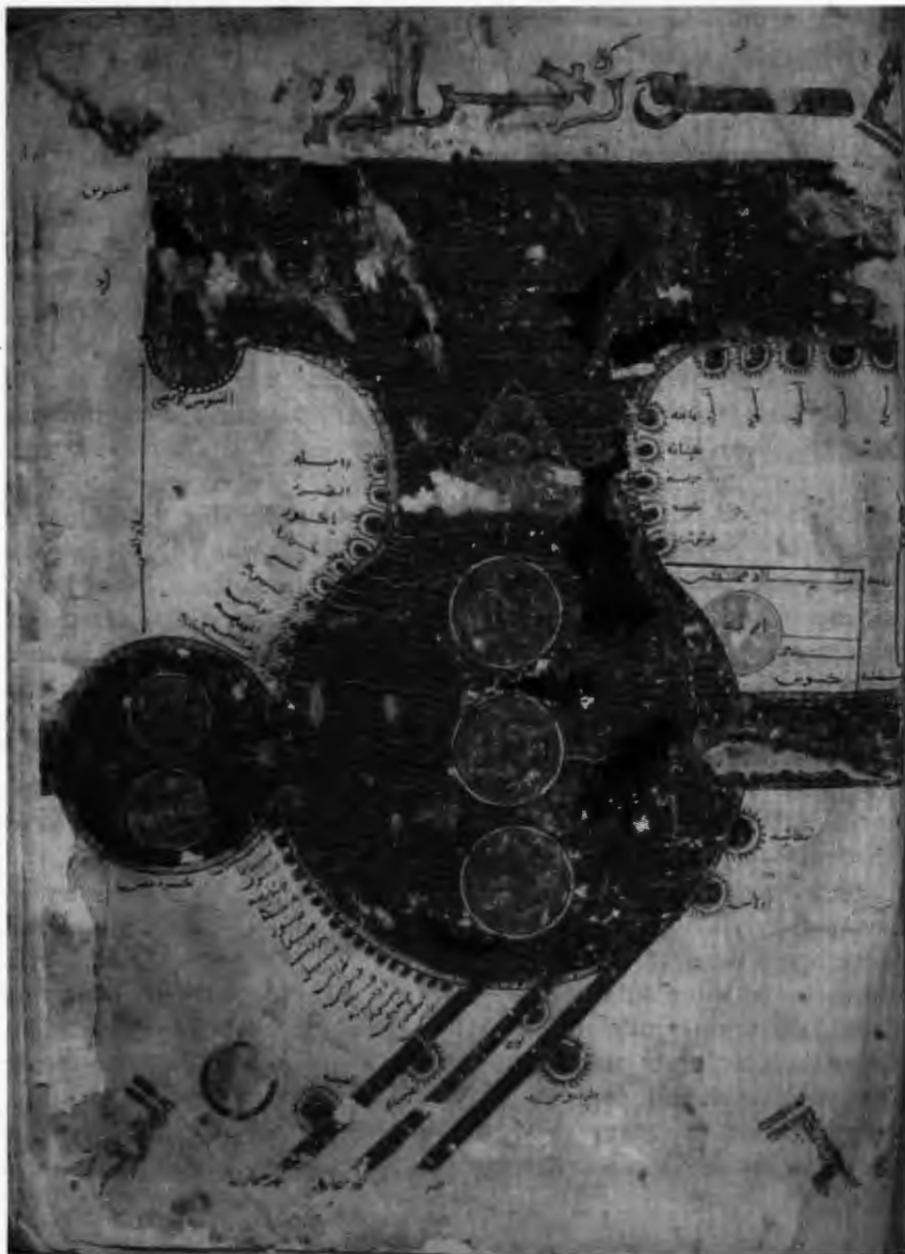


Figure 9.1 Map of the Mediterranean

Source: Leiden: Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, Or. 3101, Eastern Mediterranean (589 AH/1193 CE), f. 33r.

heavily contested zone and that Muslims and Christians were constantly at loggerheads across it.⁶

Comparison with other maps of the Mediterranean, the World, Egypt and Syria

In their world maps the Muslim cartographers employed a similar motif – an elongated tear-drop shape – to represent the Mediterranean. In these, the Mediterranean nestles like a bird between the landmasses of Africa, Asia and Europe, while the long wings of the Bosphorus and the Nile spread out perpendicularly from either side. Albeit elongated and of smaller scale, the Mediterranean retains its characteristic iconic bulbous form (Fig 9.2). But when the cartographer's lens zooms into the larger-scale depictions of individual regions around the Mediterranean one finds that the forms of representation change dramatically (Fig 9.3). Gone is the trope of the bulbous form. Instead we are faced with either a marginalized Mediterranean or a disruptive one, so while in the maps of Egypt and Syria, the Mediterranean is just an incidental boundary serving as trimming for the central focus that lies within the land, in the Maghrib map the emphasis is completely different: it plays a central – albeit disruptive – role in the image (Figs 9.4 and 9.5). The veneer of symmetric harmony has vanished. We are faced instead with two sides of the sea that are no longer mirror images of each other. The difference between this image of the Maghrib and the image of the Mediterranean is so stark as to leave no doubt that the disjuncture was deliberately imposed.

To a modern audience concerned with mimesis and accuracy in cartography, such a deliberate break in form will come as a surprise. How could the larger-scale, close-up view of the Mediterranean not match up with the smaller-scale view of the entire sea? Resolving this visual anomaly is quite simple: if one has no intention of providing a mimetically accurate map for navigation, but intends instead to create an easily memorized, cognitive picture of key geographical spaces, then that intention is better served through stark contrast rather than mimicry.⁷ As the anonymous author of *Ad Herennium* (one of the most

⁶ See, for instance, the work of Henri Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne* (n.p.: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 5th impression, 1968), 156–62, and Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations* (New York: Simon Schuster, 1996). For a novel approach to the discourse on the Mediterranean, see Miriam Cooke, 'Mediterranean thinking: from Netizen to Medizen', *Geographical Review* 89 (1999), 279–90.

⁷ Evidence for this can be found in psychological analyses of the recollection of shapes using colour and contrast. See, for instance, Richard N. Wilton, 'The structure of memory: evidence concerning the recall of surface and background colour shapes', *The Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology* 41A (1989), 579–98.



Figure 9.2 'World Map'.

Source: Istanbul: Sülemaniye Camii, Aya Sofya 2971a (1473), f. 3r.)



Figure 9.3 'Map of Egypt'.

Source: Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, A3348, Cairo (1258), f. 26r.)

popular books on rhetoric and memorization in the Middle Ages and early Renaissance) puts it:

We ought, then, to set up images of a kind that can adhere longest in the memory. And we shall do so if we establish likeness as striking as possible; if we set up



Figure 9.4 'Picture of the Maghrib'.

Source: Leiden: Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, Or. 3101, Eastern Mediterranean (589 AH/ 1193 CE), p. 20.

images that are not many or vague, but doing something; if we assign to them exceptional beauty or singular ugliness; if we dress some of them with crowns or purple cloaks, for example, so that the likeness may be more distinct to us; or if we somehow disfigure them, as by introducing one stained with blood or soiled with mud or smeared with red paint, so that its form is more striking, or by assigning certain comic effects to our images, for that, too, will ensure our remembering them more readily.⁸

⁸ *Ad Herennium*, Harry Caplan (tr.) (New York: Loeb Classical Library, 1968), 221.

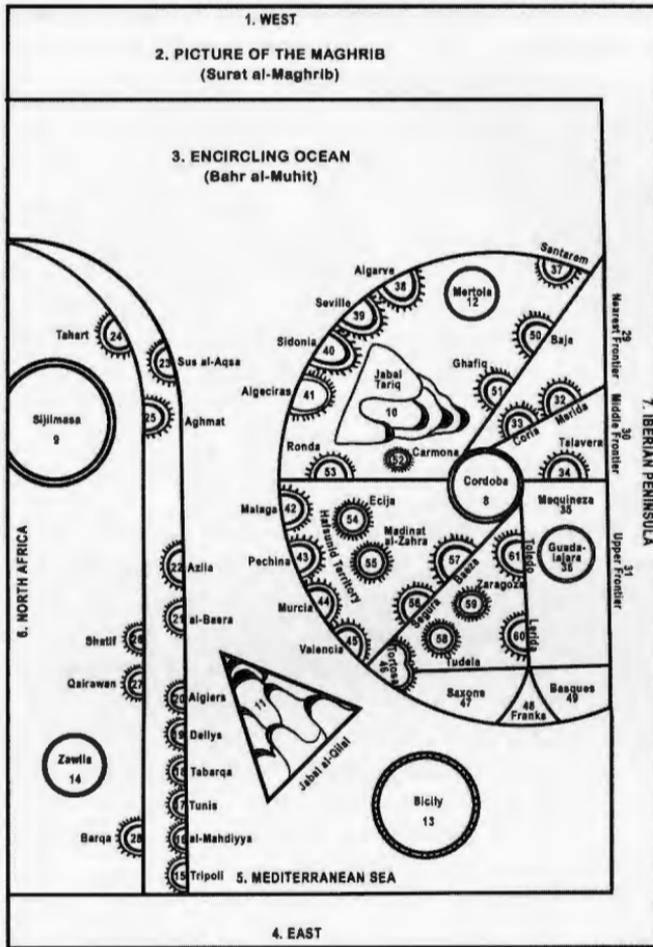


Figure 9.5 Line drawing of Figure 9.4 with transliterated names and numbers.

It is to the subtleties underlying the startling image of the Muslim West that this chapter turns through three levels of visual engagement, or ‘gaze’, focused on the Maghrib map. The aim is to go beyond the ‘carto-’ on the map’s material surface through to the graphic that lies behind, or beneath, which conceals within it a series of multi-layered subliminal messages. These levels of gaze provide a sense of the map’s powerful hold upon its viewers, as well as helping us expose the multiplicity of iconic meanings that lies within.⁹

⁹ For visual art theories on different levels of gaze, see, for example: Roland Barthes, ‘Rhetoric of the image’, in Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, Stephen Heath (tr.)

Analysing the gaze: Maghrib maps in cartographic perspective

This Muslim map of the Maghrib is not a simple rendering of geopolitical space.¹⁰ Rather it is a pictograph of very deliberate design made from the perspective of the eastern heartlands of the medieval Islamic world (Egypt, Syria, Anatolia, Iraq and Iran) graphically representing the reigning view among the eastern Muslim elite of the far West (Figs 9.4 and 9.5). Unlike most of the other *KMMS* maps, which face South, this map has West on top [1]. This deliberate switch in orientation serves to emphasize that the eye of the cartographer is from the bottom of the map [4] looking up: i.e. from the East looking West. One is struck immediately by the dramatic contrast between the forms that make up the image: the perpendicular North African landmass [6] jostling for attention with the semi-circular Iberian peninsula [7]. In between the two, the Mediterranean [5] intervenes, seizing centre stage. The Muslim map of the Maghrib represents a distinct departure from the symmetry of the full Mediterranean map (Fig 9.1). Whereas the Mediterranean map emphasizes a symmetrically harmonious balance of forms, the image of the Maghrib is asymmetric and unbalanced. The eye is drawn to a multitude of conflicting, off-centre focal points that form a patchwork of triangulated gazes laid haphazardly one over the other. Here I will focus on decoding each layer of 'gaze', starting with the layer of the most prominently marked sites and working through progressively more subtle planes demarcated by locations of lesser significance. The empirical basis of this analysis comes from the well-known *KMMS* example of MS. Or. 3101 housed at the Rijksuniversitat library in Leiden (Fig 9.4).¹¹ Firmly dated to 1193 CE and of eastern Mediterranean provenance,¹² this Maghrib map of Leiden's Or. 3101 is chosen here as the focus for discussion because of its dramatic stylized forms, which usefully facilitate analysis of how symmetry works in these portraits of 'the West'. Once the basic form

(New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 32–51; and Norman Bryson, *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).

¹⁰ Numbers in square brackets refer to a template of the Maghrib map with translations of the place names: see Figure 9.5.

¹¹ The maps from this manuscript in Leiden are the best known of the *KMMS* manuscript series. The world map was first printed in Leo Bagrow, *Die Geschichte Der Kartographie* (Berlin: Safari-Verlag, 1951). Subsequently more maps from this MS were reprinted in J. Brian Harley and David Woodward (eds.), *The History of Cartography: Cartography in the Traditional East and Southeast Asian Societies 2:2* (University of Chicago Press, 1994).

¹² The precise provenance of this map is still open to question. Stylistically it appears to be an eastern Mediterranean product – possibly Ayyubid given the 1193 CE date of the manuscript although Sicilian or Andalusí provenance is also a possibility.

and its successive layers are decoded it is then possible to fathom fully the implications of variations in other maps.

In looking at the Leiden Maghrib map, our eye is initially confused and uncertain and wanders between the three big red circles (Cordoba [8], Sijilmasa [9], Sicily [13]) and then the two smaller ones (Zawila [14] and Mertola [12]), hovering in the blank blue-coloured neck-like space (entrance/exit of the Mediterranean from/to the Atlantic) between the edge of the semi-circular shape (Iberia [6]) and the long tubular one (North Africa [7]). We are drawn along the trajectory of this vision to the curious scallop-adorned triangular shape (Jabal al-Qilal [11]) located right below the measured centre of the image. From the triangle our eye continues on to the second-largest red circle (Sicily [13]) of the image, nestled in the lower right-hand section of the blue space. From this our eye rises naturally to the alternative focus of this image: the prominent red circle (Cordoba [8]) at the centre of the large white/cream semicircular form that juts in from the right-hand edge of the map.

The label of 'Qurtuba' [8] indicates that it is the marker for the city of Cordoba, one of the most famous cities of medieval al-Andalus. As the capital of the rebel Umayyad Emirate (later Caliphate), established by 'Abd al-Rahman I in 756, Cordoba came to be ranked as one of the ornaments of the Muslim world.¹³ 'Abd al-Rahman was the only Umayyad prince to escape the massacre that followed the Abbasid overthrow of the Umayyad Caliphate in 747 in Iraq, Iran and Syria – the heartland of the early Muslim empire. Cordoba, which had been languishing economically until the first Muslim invasions of 711, reached its zenith under the Umayyads in the tenth century. The prominence accorded to Cordoba in this late twelfth century map is, however, a curious feature. This map was made during the period of the Almohads, one of the two North African Berber dynasties that governed Islamic Spain, two centuries after the city's heyday.¹⁴ By this time, other places, such as Seville [39], had superseded Cordoba in importance.

¹³ Maria Rosa Menocal, *The Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews, and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 2002), 32–5.

¹⁴ For background information on Islamic Spain during this period see David Wasserstein, *The Rise and Fall of the Party-Kings: Politics and Society in Islamic Spain 1002–1086* (Princeton University Press, 1984); Hugh Kennedy, *Muslim Spain and Portugal: A Political History of al-Andalus* (London: Addison Wesley Longman Limited, 1996); Anwar G. Chejne, *Muslim Spain: Its History and Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1974).

One explanation for Cordoba's exaggerated prominence on this twelfth-century map is that the *KMMS* image of the Iberian peninsula was frozen in time: possibly during the mid-tenth century or even earlier.¹⁵ Another explanation is that a romanticized memory of the greatness of Cordoba lingered on in spite of the fact that the city was no longer the centre of power in Andalus. At its apex during the tenth century, Cordoba had a population of around 100,000, some 900 baths, thousands of shops, seventy libraries, including the Caliphal library which is said to have housed around 400,000 books, and a reputation as one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the Islamic world. It was the cultural capital of the Muslim West. Poets and artists flocked to the city, and it gained a reputation as the third most splendid city and cultural centre in the Muslim world after Baghdad and Cairo. It was an emporium for gold and goods that was envied in the heartlands of the Muslim East and came to be known in European circles as 'the brilliant ornament of the world [that] shone in the west'.¹⁶

The complex matrix of the Maghrib map does not, however, permit us to linger on Cordoba. Other prominent markers draw our eye to locations all over the map. There is, for instance, the very large reddish-brown semicircle [9] beckoning from the upper left-hand section of the map. Even though it is incomplete and tucked away along the southern margin of the North African landmass, the marker signifying the southern Moroccan entrepôt, Sijilmasa, commands attention. Its exaggerated size and singular deep reddish-brown hue suggests that the cartographer considered Sijilmasa [9] one of the most important sites in the West. This raises the question of why the better-known North African sites, such as Algiers [20], Tunis [17], Tripoli [15] or al-Mahdiyya [16] – all bordering on the Mediterranean – were not accorded as much or more importance than a place like Sijilmasa at the edge of the Sahara desert, along the margins of the Maghribi world. The answer lies in the lucrative West African gold trade and the crucial role that Sijilmasa played as the gateway to this gold. The route to West Africa via the southern Sahara was dangerous and plagued with sandstorms. Thus the primary access to the gold-rich kingdoms of

¹⁵ Other places on the Maghrib map and the Mediterranean map reinforce my reading of the 'freezing of time' on *KMMS* maps. Take, for instance, the town of Nakur in North Africa, located opposite Malaga, in the present-day area of Morocco. Even though it is marked on the Mediterranean maps, according to al-Idrisi (1184), Nakur had ceased to exist by the late twelfth century.

¹⁶ Menocal, *Ornament of the World*, 32–5.

Awdaghust and Ghana was along a curve that skirted the northern Sahara from Cairo to Fez and then dropped down to the West African Gold Coast via Sijilmasa.¹⁷ Even during its twilight years in the mid-fourteenth century, Ibn Battuta used Sijilmasa as the central hub of his travels in the western Sahara.¹⁸

West African gold was prized as the highest-quality gold of the medieval period.¹⁹ Ronald Messier, a numismatist and reigning expert on Sijilmasa, notes that 25–30 per cent of the gold that circulated in the Middle Ages passed through Sijilmasa, and during the city's zenith, under the Almoravids (1056–1147), there was an abundance of gold coin mints.²⁰ During eleventh–thirteenth centuries, Sijilmasa was the financial and business capital of the Islamic West: 'it was a focal point where Africa, Europe, and the Middle East met during the Middle Ages.' Through Sijilmasa large quantities of African gold and slaves made their way to Europe and the eastern Muslim world.²¹ The map of the Maghrib makes no mistake about this. Sijilmasa may have been on the edge of the West, but it is still represented on the map as one of the most important places of the Maghribian realm. But how can we equate the signification of Sijilmasa on the map with the prominent presence of Cordoba?

As many of the Muslim chroniclers and geographers tell us, control of the city-state of Sijilmasa, ideally located at the head of the trade routes across the Sahara from West Africa, was the object of intense competition between the Umayyad rulers of Cordoba and the Shi'ite Fatimids of Egypt and Tunisia. Throughout the latter half of the tenth century, the Umayyad Caliphate of Cordoba controlled Sijilmasa, either directly or indirectly through client Berber tribes, wrestling constantly with the Fatimids for control of the Maghrib and the gold

¹⁷ Ronald A. Messier, 'The Almoravids, West African gold and the gold currency of the Mediterranean Basin', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 17 (1974), 31–47, map at 32.

¹⁸ In his travelogue, he repeatedly notes his need to go back to Sijilmasa to find a caravan to his next destination. See Ibn Battuta, *Tuhfat al-Nuzzar*, Said Hamdun and Noel King (eds. and trs.), *Ibn Battuta in Black Africa* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publisher, 1975; reprinted 1994), 29–30, 36, 73–4.

¹⁹ In spite of the fact that the median fineness of West African gold was less than their counterparts from Fatimid Egypt, Sudanese gold was still praised by the Muslim geographers as the best. See Messier, 'Almoravids', 36–7.

²⁰ John Lynch, 'Sijilmasa exhibit to tour USA', http://www.mtsu.edu/~proffice/Record/Rec_v07/rec0716/body.html. Messier notes that 'the Almoravid dinar was used eventually as a unit of currency within Christian Europe itself: see Messier, 'Almoravids', 30–3.

²¹ Lynch, 'Sijilmasa exhibit to tour USA'.

trade route.²² The Shi'ite Fatimid Caliphate, centred in Cairo, ruled a vast area from Tunisia to Palestine for two centuries from 910 to 1171. Being an Ismaili Shi'ite state they vigorously opposed the orthodox Sunni Caliphate of the Abbasids in Iraq and Iran and the Umayyads in Spain. Indeed, it is said that the Cordoban Umayyads made the transition from Emirate to Caliphate as a counterstroke to the imperialism of the Fatimids.²³

The first level of gaze could be read as emblematic of this tenth-century Fatimid-Andalusi struggle for control of Sijilmasa and the gold trade. This interpretation of the dominance of the Andalusi Umayyad and Fatimid Caliphate rivalry in the matrix of places on the *KMMS* Maghrib map is further reinforced by the third prominent place marker, Sicily [13]. Located in the lower right-hand section of the map, at the oblique centre of the Mediterranean Sea, it was also a heavily contested site. It was long admired and sought after by both Muslims and Christian conquerors, who recognized Sicily's pivotal position as one of the key islands of the Mediterranean whence traffic on the sea could be controlled. The prominence accorded to the island makes it clear that the illustrator of this map considered Sicily extremely significant. In 652 CE, barely twenty years after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, the first Muslim naval ships began raiding Sicily, then under Byzantine control. By the ninth and tenth centuries this turned into a full-blown struggle for control between North African Muslim ruling groups: in particular, the Aghlabids (800–909 CE), the Fatimids (909–1171 CE) and the Kalbids (948–1053 CE), who struggled first with the Byzantines, then among themselves, and later with the Normans for control of this key Mediterranean island. Following the Norman conquest of Sicily in 1061 a number of Sicilian Muslim families emigrated to Andalus, including the famous Sicilian poet, Ibn Hamdis, and Andalusi poetry was extremely popular in Sicily even after

²² In fact, the first Fatimid ruler, al-Mahdi, declared himself Caliph in Sijilmasa in August 909. Heinz Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi: The Rise of the Fatimids*, Michael Bonner (tr.) (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), 128–42 and 280–4. And, when the Cordoban Umayyad ruler 'Abd al-Rahman III declared himself Caliph in 929 he ordered the minting of special coins to commemorate the event that were made out of West African gold. See Hugh Kennedy, *Muslim Spain and Portugal: A Political History of al-Andalus* (London: Longman, 1996), 91.

²³ By the early tenth century the Abbasid Caliphate was crumbling in Iraq and the Fatimids had announced their Caliphate in North Africa. 'The matter was made more pressing by the growing influence of the Fatimids in the Maghreb: if the Umayyads were to counter this expansion, they too would have to boast an equal title': Kennedy, *Muslim Spain*, 90. See also, Menocal, *Ornament of the World*, 31–2; Halm, *Empire*, 281.

the Norman takeover.²⁴ The Sicilian fondness for and close cultural affiliation with Muslim Spain is reflected in the affectionate epithet 'daughter of Andalusia', which the twelfth-century Muslim Andalusī traveller of the Mediterranean, Ibn Jubayr, uses to describe Sicily in his travelogue.²⁵

Subliminal levels of gaze: visualizing worlds within the world

Seen together, Cordoba, Sijilmasa, and Sicily [8, 9, 13], form an obtuse triangle of gaze laid upon the basic template of the image, amid an oppositional balance of mountains and other site markers, which suggest alternative subliminal levels of gaze that conflict with the primary axis of Cordoba, Sijilmasa and Sicily (indicated by a triangle on Fig 9.6). Prominent among these other 'oppositional' site markers is the enigmatic mountain island marked on the maps as Jabal al-Qilal (Mountain of Qilal) [11] – a symbol for the Pillars of Hercules of yore adopted into the Muslim cartographic repertoire as a warning to readers of the dangers that lay beyond it.²⁶ They are presented in the Islamic geographical literature as an island containing pillars inscribed with warnings to sailors not to venture into the forbidding darkness of the Encircling Ocean where monstrous fish and the Devil and his helpers lurk.

Pushing its way into the narrow neck of water that separates Iberia from North Africa, the distinctly triangular form of the mythical island of Jabal al-Qilal disrupts the plane of the Cordoban–Sijilmasa–Sicilian–gaze outlined above. Through its odd placement and striking patterned form, it appears that the cartographer is suggesting that an alternative axis

²⁴ Alex Metcalfe, *Muslims and Christians in Norman Sicily* (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003), 29–30; William Granara, 'Ibn Hamdis and the poetry of nostalgia', in *The Literature of Al-Andalus*, Maria Rosa Menocal, Raymond P. Scheindlin, and Michael Sells (eds.) (Cambridge University Press, 2000), 288; and Karla Mallette, *The Kingdom of Sicily, 1100–1250: A Literary History* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).

²⁵ *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, R. J. C. Broadhurst (tr.) (London: Jonathan Cape, 1952), 339. In a recent article about the geometric designs in the pavement of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo, Jonathan Bloom asserts that there were closer artistic and architectural connections between Norman Sicily and Almoravid Spain than have hitherto been investigated. Jonathan Bloom, 'Almoravid geometric designs in the pavement of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo', in *The Iconography of Islamic Art*, Bernard O'Kane (ed.) (Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 61–80.

²⁶ For more detail on the Encircling Ocean and its association with death and the Devil see Karen Pinto, *Ways of Seeing* (University of Chicago Press, forthcoming).

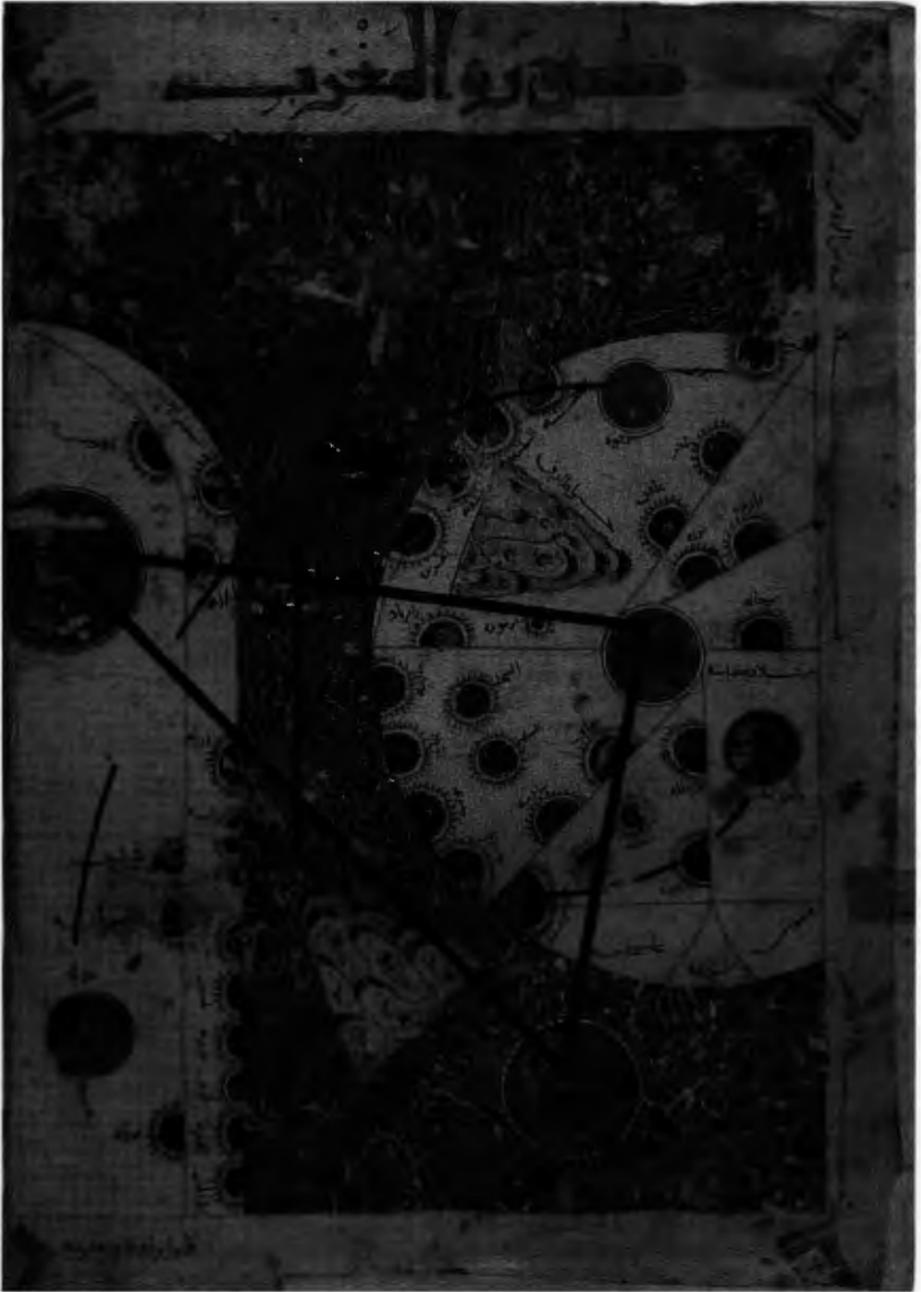


Figure 9.6 'Picture of the Maghrib', showing lines of gaze and emphasis.

Source: Leiden: Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, Or. 3101.

exists: that of Iberia and North Africa with Jabal al-Qilal as the linchpin. If the mountain island of Jabal al-Qilal is projected to the endpoint of its implied trajectory it would command the mouth of the Mediterranean and plug the sea gap that divides the two landmasses (indicated by dashed line with arrow on Fig 9.6). It is a visual suggestion that implies that whoever controls the island of Jabal al-Qilal will command the crucial sea route between the two landmasses and the entry and exit to and from the Atlantic Ocean (which is referred to in the Muslim maps and texts as the 'Encircling Ocean' – the 'Bahr al-Muhit'). What is strange about the placement of this mythical island of Jabal al-Qilal is that in the map of the entire Mediterranean it has achieved the endpoint of its trajectory and is centrally located between the two edges of the coast (see Fig 9.1). It is already centrally located at the mouth of the Mediterranean, equidistant between the North African and Iberian coasts. Why has this mythical island of Jabal al-Qilal achieved the location of its desire in the smaller-scale regional rendition of the entire Mediterranean and not in the larger-scale Maghrib map? Can this be read as a deliberate design by the artist to insert a conflicting paradigm into the map?

To reinforce this message of underlying conflict, Jabal al-Qilal's Andalusian twin, Jabal Tariq (Gibraltar) [12], is given a prominent berth on the southern flank of Spain. Together they create a subliminal line of gaze that cuts through the angles of the main Cordovan–Sijilmasa–Sicilian gaze, inserting an alternative visual axis into the image (indicated by a line with an arrow on Fig 9.6). What is this other conflicting paradigm? If we read the Cordovan–Sijilmasa–Sicilian gaze as representing the triangle of Andalusian Umayyad and Fatimid influence (possibly refracted through a Norman lens), then we can read the Jabal-al-Qilal–Gibraltar line as a contesting power forcibly inserting itself across the Umayyad–Mediterranean sphere. This is precisely what the overzealous North African Berber conquerors, in particular the Almoravids (454–541/1062–1147) and the Almohads (524–668/1130–1269), do. Fired up with messianic religious zeal and the temptation of a weak and fractured Andalus, conquerors from both groups crossed the sea and took control of most of Islamic Spain. This reading fits with the 1193 date of this map. The map can thus be read as reflecting the rise of North African Berber political aspirations against the backdrop of the Andalusian Umayyad heritage.

The main gaze of the image is deliberately unbalanced by additional site markers. Note, for instance, the prominent demarcation of two sites also indicated by red markers: Mertola [12] on the westernmost end of the Iberian peninsula and Zawila [14] on the easternmost end of the North African landmass. These need to be read as a further reinforcement of the conflict-ridden gold trading grid; superimposed – or rather

'sub-imposed' – below the layer of the main Cordoba–Sijilmasa–Sicily gaze. Mertola [12], a Berber stronghold, was protected from eastern Muslim interference by its location at the western extremity of the Iberian peninsula. It would have provided an alternative protected route for gold from North Africa to Cordoba.²⁷ Zawila [14], on the other hand, provided an alternative route from the Mediterranean through the Sahara to the gold reserves of the West African sites of Ghana and Kanem. The eleventh-century Andalusian Muslim geographer al-Bakri described Zawila as 'a town without walls ... situated in the midst of the desert ... the first point of the land of the Sudan ... [where] caravans meet from [and radiate out] in all directions'. These two smaller red sites locate alternative angles of gaze – 'key' routes of movement that exist at an intermediate level below the main triangle of focus but above the level of a plethora of smaller markers that dot the surface of the map.

What do the profuse array of smaller half- and full-moon markers outlined in red with ray-like hatchings radiating out from Cordoba on the Iberian mainland and hugging the coastal flanks of North Africa indicate? Within this third layer of sites the illustrator does not exploit the size of the marker to indicate the significance of places. That some places are provided a berth on the map at all, when many other sites were omitted, appears to be the extent of their visual privileging. For instance, even though al-Mahdiyya [16], founded by the Fatimids in 909 CE as their first capital in Tunisia, is a site of considerable importance in the history books, there appears to have been no attempt to distinguish its site marker on the Maghrib map. Its presence is acknowledged with a small semi-circular black marker squeezed in among other similar black markers on the North African flank. In deliberate contrast to the Iberian peninsula the map seems to suggest that there were no key towns in North Africa around which other places were situated. Instead a string of seemingly randomly selected coastal sites on the Atlantic coast²⁸ run along the Mediterranean coast or parallel to it, while significant historical sites such as Tangiers, Ceuta, Nakur and Malila are left out.

The inner line, running parallel to the coast, appears to be a demarcation for the chief commercial and military artery of the early Muslim

²⁷ There is very little information available on the site of Martula. Previous scholars who examined this map either left the site unidentified or misidentified it as Merida. Merida is already marked on the map, further inland, in keeping with its actual location. Susana Gómez, a specialist on Martula, and her colleague Claudio Torres are working to resurrect the history of this forgotten site. See Claudio Torres, *Mertola Almoravide et Almoahade* (Mertola: Museum of Mertola, 1988).

²⁸ Starting with Tripoli [15], al-Mahdiyya [16], Tunis [17], Tabarqa [18], Delys [19], Algiers [20], al-Basra [21], Azila [22], and ending with Sus al-Aqsa [23].

armies and traders. This route along the edge of the Sahara ran from Cairo to the far-west Moroccan city of Tahart [24]. It was preferred by early Muslim conquerors because it bypassed the coast where they were at the mercy of the Byzantine fleet. Known as the Qairawan corridor, the route is named for the city of the Qairawan [27], an important place of learning and culture, which began as a Muslim garrison and grew to become one of the central Muslim cities in the region.²⁹ Hence the naming of the route that ran all the way from Cairo, passing through Barqa [28], Shatif [26], to the far-western Moroccan city of Tahart [24] – with all except Cairo marked on the North African flank of the map. Tahart benefited from its location on the Qairawan corridor. Lying at the nexus of the West African gold route, and the North African point of trade with Muslim Spain, Tahart became one of the richest cities in the region. The sites on the Iberian peninsula, on the other hand, radiate out in all directions from the centre. In doing so, they stress the roundness of the form used to represent the Iberian landmass and weight the image towards a single central focal point: Cordoba [8]. All the places of Muslim space in Iberia are arrayed in triangular radial sectors around a central Cordoban node. The northernmost three sectors are a visual reference to the main frontier areas, which divided Muslim and Christian Spain. This was a crucial buffer zone between the Umayyad kingdom and the Rumiyya's – ie. Christians – lurking beyond the ever-shifting Duero line.³⁰

Below the three triangles representing the Christian–Muslim frontier border zones lies the prosperous heart of Muslim Andalus, from Santarem [37] to Tortosa [46] on the eastern flank of the Iberian peninsula,³¹ which is located right next to the three little triangles demarcating the land of the Saxons [47], land of the Franks [48], and land of the Basques [49]. We can presume that the selection of sites marked in this segment,³² with Cordoba [8] at the centre, were the places that

²⁹ In spite of the importance of the city of Qairawan, noted by the naming of the route, the cartographer made no attempt to distinguish the site marker.

³⁰ Sites in this frontier region include: al-Thagar al-Adna ('the Nearest Frontier') [29], which contains site markers for Merida [32] and Coria [33]; al-Thagar al-Awsat ('the Middle Frontier') [30], which contains the site marker for Talavera [34]; and al-Thagar al-A'la ('the Upper Frontier') [31] containing markers for Mequinezta [35] and Guadalajara [36].

³¹ In between Santarem and Tortosa are markers for Algarve [38], Seville [39], Sidonia [40], Algeciras [41], Malaga [42], Pechina [43], Murcia [44], and Valencia [45].

³² These sites are Baja [50], Ghafiq [51], Carmona [52], Ronda [53], Ecija [54], Madinat al-Zahra [55], Segura [56], Baeza [57], Tudela [58], Zaragoza [59], Lerida [60] and Toledo [61].

the cartographers considered most important in the Andalusi interior. They confirm that the map was modelled on a tenth-century geopolitical reality because Tudela was conquered by Christian armies in the 1110s, Zaragoza in 1118, Lerida in 1149, Toledo in 1185, and Madinat al-Zahra ceased to exist after 1030. The deliberate misplacement of Toledo [61] into the north-eastern quarter containing Tudela [61], Zaragoza [59] and Lerida [60], when it should have been placed in the region of the Middle Frontier just above Cordoba suggests that the Muslims saw the zone between Lerida and Toledo as a single but very large region. Note that two place markers in the interior of Andalus, in the north-eastern quadrant, are graced with larger black markers: Wadi al-Hijara (known today as Guadalajara) [36] and Turtusha (Tortosa – conquered in 1149) [46]. The two together create the line of yet another level of gaze (indicated by a line on Figure 9.6) tucked beneath the dominant Cordoba–Sijilmasa–Sicily gaze. The emphasis is related to the fact that both sites figured prominently as frontier towns with key fortresses protecting the northern boundaries of the Andalusi realm. Indeed, Tortosa is often referred to as the most important ‘outlying’ town, especially after the loss of Barcelona in 801.

Third gaze and beyond: the fundamental motif and the carnivalesque?³³

The visual is essentially pornographic, which is to say that it has its end in rapt, mindless fascination; thinking about its attributes become an adjunct to that ... all the fights about power and desire have to take place here, between the mastery of the gaze and the illimitable richness of the visual object; ... history alone, however, can mimic the sharpening or dissolution of the gaze.³⁴

In the end, after all the specifics of places and emphases, it is the underlying template of the map, upon which the landforms are conceived, that unites the disparate renditions of the Maghrib to provide a coherent conception of *the West* in the Islamic cartographic imagination: the perpendicular North African coast versus the circular Iberian peninsula with the Mediterranean gushing up in between them like a fountain. How should we read this fundamental motif? Is it nothing more than stylized geometry – a semicircle, a rounded rectangle, and a triangular bottleneck shape with a bunch of smaller circles thrown in for good

³³ Inspired by Roland Barthes’s essay on ‘The Third Meaning’, in Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, 52–68.

³⁴ Frederic Jameson, *Signatures of the Visible* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 1–2.

measure? If we strip the map of its clutter of place names, markers and islands, what do we see?

The iconic marker of the Maghrib map emerges: a decidedly phallic North Africa, jostling for attention with the semicircular, breastlike, Iberian peninsula. Between the two landmasses the Mediterranean intervenes, seizing centre stage between the two landforms. Once one has developed a familiarity with this mnemonic hallmark one can pick out the image anywhere, irrespective of embellishments, colours and other variations. This form is the essential motif at the heart of the classical Islamic *KMMS* cartographic expression of the Maghrib. It is in this form that the maps of the Maghrib reveal their innermost expression: that of competition and desire. The North African coast is overtly masculine in form, while Iberia is unquestionably feminine. This map can, therefore, be read in terms of the push-and-pull dynamics of lust and conquest and, ultimately, the necessity of rejection in order to retrigger the cycle of desire all over again. That the Muslims conceived of themselves as a masculine force is asserted by the phallic form that they ascribed to North Africa in their maps (as well as the form ascribed to the Arabian peninsula – the symbolic centre for Islam). What takes us by surprise is that they conceived of Iberia as female. Support for this reading comes from both Arabic poetry and history.³⁵

The tumultuous and bloody history of Andalus and the Muslim presence in Spain is well attested. The early conquests of 711 were intense and far-reaching – extending all the way to the Pyrennes. The Visigoths were pushed past the Cantabrian mountains of northern Iberia. Only the famous battle of Poitiers in 732 against Charles Martel was able to stem the tide. Quick though the Muslims were to conquer the Iberian peninsula, slow were they to colonize. Despite the fact that the conquests were followed by rapid conversions to Islam, external forces such as the Christian kings of Aragon, Leon and Navarre, and outside groups, such as the Berbers, proved impossible to quell. During the early years, Andalus was controlled by the central emirate through a series of governors. A formal state, however, was not established until the century after the last surviving Umayyad prince,

³⁵ Although there is no poetry embedded in the texts that accompany the *KMMS* maps, we do have a striking example of the interweaving of poetry and geographical text from the famous Arab navigator Ahmad ibn Majid al-Sa'di al-Najdi (866 AH/1462 CE), best known for guiding Vasco da Gama around the Cape of Good Hope. Ibn Majid liberally intersperses prose with nautical poetry in his *Kitab al-fawa'id fi usul 'ilm al-bahr wa al-qawa'id*, using poetry to elucidate geographical concepts. Of the 171 pages of his manuscript, approximately 70 are devoted to poems about themes such as navigating the Gulf of Aden, descriptions of the Persian Gulf and directions to Mecca. For more information, see Marina Tolmacheva, 'An unknown manuscript of the *Kitab al-Fawa'id*', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 114 (1994), 259–62.

Abd al-Rahman, arrived in Andalus as a mark of dissent for the bloody revolutionary Abbasid overthrow of his family. The emirate was centred on the cities of Seville and Cordoba, and although they lasted for almost three centuries, and established Cordoba as a cultural capital of the Muslim world, they were never able to completely control the outlying provinces. Eventually, thanks to the growth in power of groups whom the Umayyads of Andalus had brought in as mercenaries to help control their state – specifically Berbers from North Africa – and the growing strength of Christian kingdoms in northern Spain, the Umayyad Caliphate of Andalus collapsed in 1031.

Thus began a period of intense political fragmentation in Andalus engraved in Spanish history as the ‘Taifa Period’ – i.e. the age of the *Muluk al-Tawa’if* (Reyes de Taifa). No less than thirty-nine short-lived principalities have been identified, some better known and longer lasting than others, during a cataclysmic period of two centuries (from the eleventh to the early thirteenth) in which control of the kingdoms frequently changed hands between rival emirs and Christian challengers.³⁶ Eventually, only the Muslim Kingdom of Granada remained, which survived until 1492. In between, two major Berber dynasties, the Almoravids (al-Murabitun) 1062–1147 and the Almohads (al-Muwahhidun) 1130–1269 tried but failed to hold sway over Andalus and rein in the warring Muslim principalities. As the Christian *Reconquista* gained momentum from the north and the Berber conquest from the south, the Muslim *Taifa* rulers were killed or found themselves prisoners and refugees in North Africa. There began an intense period of nostalgia and romantic love and hankering for lost Andalus that is reflected in Hispano-Arabic poetry. Most of the extant Islamic map manuscripts that date from this period reflect the prevailing political tensions and thwarted desires.

The repertoire of nostalgic Hispano-Arabic poetry and prose is steeped in longing for Andalus, sometimes expressly stated, at other times metaphorical. ‘On Forgetting a Beloved’, a discussion of youthful passion for a slave girl by Ibn Hazm (d. 1064) in his famous discourse on love, ‘Ring of the Dove’ (*Tawq al-Hamama*), has, for instance, been read as an allegory about the loss of Cordoba.³⁷ The analogy can be expanded to represent a longing for the Andalusian homeland in general:

³⁶ David Wasserstein, *The Rise and Fall of the Party-Kings: Politics and Society in Islamic Spain 1002–1086* (Princeton University Press, 1985).

³⁷ Peter Scales, *The Fall of the Caliphate of Cordoba* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), 28–30; Alexander E. Elinson, *Looking Back at al-Andalus: The Poetics of Loss and Nostalgia in Medieval Arabic and Hebrew Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 3. Menocal, *Ornament*, 114.

No hopes of easy conquest were to be entertained so far as she was concerned; none could look to succeed in his ambitions if these were aimed in her direction; eager expectation found no resting-place in her . . .

She revived that passion long buried in my heart, and stirred my now still ardour, reminding me of an ancient troth, an old love, an epoch gone by, a vanished time, departed months, faded memories, periods perished, days forever past, obliterated traces. She renewed my griefs, and reawakened my sorrows . . . my anguish was intensified, the fire smouldering in my heart blazed into flame, my unhappiness was exacerbated, my despair multiplied. Passion drew forth from my breast all that lay hidden within it . . .

If I had enjoyed the least degree of intimacy with her, if she had been only a little kind to me, I would have been beside myself with happiness; I verily believe that I would have died for joy. But it was her unremitting aloofness which schooled me in patience, and taught me to find consolation. This then was one of those cases in which both parties may excusably forget, and not be blamed for doing so: there has been no firm engagement that should require their loyalty, no covenant has been entered into obliging them to keep faith, no ancient compact exists, no solemn plighting of troths, the breaking and forgetting of which should expose them to justified reproach.³⁸

Ibn Zaydun (d. 1070), a contemporary of Ibn Hazm, held by some to be the most outstanding poet of Andalus, is best known for his nostalgic love poetry. His fifty-two verse rhyming qasida, *Nuniyya*, is considered one of the masterpieces of eleventh-century Andalusī poetry:

Morning came – the separation – substitute for the love we shared,
for the fragrance of our coming together, falling away.

The moment of departure came upon us – fatal morning. The crier
of our passing ushered us through death's door.

Who will tell them who, by leaving, cloak us in a sorrow not worn
away with time, though time wears us away.

That time that used to make us laugh when they were near returns to
make us grieve.

We poured for one another the wine of love. Our enemies seethed
and called for us to choke – and fate said let it be.

The knot our two souls tied came undone, and what our hands
joined was broken.

...

O fragrant breath of the east wind, bring greetings to one, whose kind
word would revive us even from a distance.

Will she not, through the long pass of time, grant us consideration,
however often, however we plead?³⁹

³⁸ Olivia Remie Constable (ed.), *Medieval Iberia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 77–8.

³⁹ For the complete version, see Michael Sell, 'The Nuniyya (poem in N) of Ibn Zaydun', in *Literature of Al-Andalus*, 77–8.

The fourteenth-century philologist, literary critic and biographer al-Safadi tells us that, 'the *Nunniyya* became so emblematic of longing and exile that anyone who memorized the poem, it was rumored, would surely die far from home'.⁴⁰

Ibn Shuhayd (d. 1035), an older contemporary of the Cordoban poets cited above, adopts less romantic language in his nostalgic poetry, but the sentiment of Cordoba/Andalus as a seductive temptress remains:

A dying hag, but her image in my heart is one of a beautiful damsel.
She's played adultress to her men,
Yet such a lovely adultress!⁴¹

The famous Hispano-Arab poet Abu Ishaq ibn Khafaja (d. 1139), who is known for introducing themes of pastoral yearning into Arabic poetry, creating a whole new form, escaped to North Africa during the Spanish occupation of his home town of Valencia. There he wrote of his estrangement from his beloved homeland:

A garden in al-Andalus has unveiled beauty and a lush scene.
The morning glistens from its teeth and the night is overshadowed by
its scarlet lips.
When the wind blows from the East
I cry: O how I long for al-Andalus!⁴²

Two and a half centuries later, one of the viziers of Granada, Lisan al-Din ibn al-Khatib (d. 1375), exiled in Salé, Morocco, reminisces about al-Andalus employing similar bucolic natural motifs:

May the clouds water you with their showers,
O age of happy love in al-Andalus.
Your fulfillment was but a sweet dream
Of sleep or a thief's stolen pleasure.⁴³

Even more direct is the nostalgic poetry of Abu 'l-Baqa' al-Rundi (d. 1091), the poet prince of Ronda who was better known by the poetic nickname of al-Radi. More at home with his books than in battle, and often berated by his father for 'preferring the pen to the lance', al-Radi suffered through one of the worst and most tragic ends of a Taifa kingdom. His father, al-Mu'tamid, known as the 'poet-king', was betrayed by the very Almoravid Berber rulers he called upon to save his

⁴⁰ Devin J. Stewart, 'Ibn Zaydun', in *Literature of Al-Andalus*, 311.

⁴¹ Salma Jayyusi, 'Andalusi poetry: the Golden Period', in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, Salma Khadra Jayyusi (ed.) (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), 338.

⁴² Ross Brann, 'Judah Halevi', in *Literature of Al-Andalus*, 274.

⁴³ Yaseen Noorani, 'The Lost Garden of Al-Andalus: Islamic Spain and the poetic inversion of colonialism', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31 (1999), 243.

kingdom! After Seville fell and al-Mu'tamid was imprisoned, al-Radi was forced to put down his arms in Ronda, whereupon he was unceremoniously slaughtered by the Berber raiders along the ramparts of his own castle. But not before he penned some of the most famous nostalgic poetry of Andalus, of which the two examples below provide further corroboration of my interpretation of the fundamental image underlying Muslim cartographic representation of the Maghrib. In his 'Nuniyya' poem (based on the Nuniyya prototype established earlier by Ibn Zaydun), al-Radi opines:⁴⁴

So ask Valencia: What of Murcia and wherefore Játiva and Jaén
 ... Pillars of the country they were; why stay if the pillars are gone?
 Unblemished Islam weeps, as a lover would on separation,
 For lands of Islam bereft, gone to waste with the erection of
 Unbelief,
 Where mosques have become churches containing only bells and
 crosses.

In another poem, al-Radi is even clearer:⁴⁵

It is this home that deceives men and severs the ropes that bind us,
 We are distressed by it, without wine (to relieve us) and we choke
 from it without cool water.
 Even though we love it even more, however our striving for it is a
 delusion
 (*Like the striving*) for a beloved female whose love does not last and whose
 lover is ever wanting.⁴⁶

It is precisely this sentiment of nostalgia and Andalus as the lost lover that can be read into the fundamental iconic form underlying the typical medieval Islamic *KMMS* map of 'the West'. If we strip the medieval Islamic map of the Maghrib down to its pornographic essentials, Iberia appears akin to an attractive female who thrusts her breast seductively across the intercouring waters of the Mediterranean, tempting the Muslims to come and get her. Like a fickle lover, Iberia has no loyalties, switching allegiance back and forth between Muslims and Christians; seeding rivalry and intrigue amidst her conquerors; providing an enclave for rebels. The desire for her is insatiable because she can never be fully

⁴⁴ Al-Maqqari, *Nafh al-tib min ghusn al-Andalus al-ratib*, I. 'Abbas (ed.) (Beirut, 1968), vol. 4, 487-8. See also Aziz al-Azmeh, 'Northerners in Andalusian eyes', in *Legacy of Muslim Spain*, 264.

⁴⁵ Usamah ibn-Munqidh, *Kitab al-manazil wa'l-diyar*, Mustapha Hijazi (ed.) (Cairo, 1968), 299-300. I would like to thank Avraham Hakim of Tel Aviv University for pointing out this poem to me and assisting with the translation.

⁴⁶ Emphasis my own.

conquered. For precisely this reason, she cannot be admitted as the central focus of the image. Rather, she must be obliquely situated as the indirect object of Muslim desire.

Analysing the *KMMS* Maghrib map by peeling away the layered gazes proves that there is more to medieval Islamic maps than meets the eye at first glance. Moving from the obvious, such as the centrality of Cordoba, to an analysis of the positioning of other places reveals a secondary matrix of gazes that incorporate elements of synergy and conflict. These can be decoded and understood when we match them up with what we know of the history of the period. Finally, stripping the map of all its surface markers and visual clutter leaves us with the outlines of the basic template that undergirds all *KMMS* maps of the Maghrib. These point us in a surprising direction that the creators of the *KMMS* maps viewed al-Andalus/Spain/Europe as female. This fits within the context of post-*Reconquista* nostalgic discourse. When examining the European cartographic record for self-representation we find another surprising parallel: Europe routinely depicted itself in a female form.⁴⁷ The c. 1330 map of Europe and Africa by Opicinus de Canistris is a particularly good example of this phenomenon,⁴⁸ as is the late sixteenth-century map of 'Europe as Queen' in Sebastian Münster's *Cosmographia universalis*.⁴⁹ Can we begin then to posit a relationship between medieval Islamic and medieval/Renaissance Christian cartographic imaginations through a shared envisioning of Europe as woman?

⁴⁷ For a broad range of visual examples depicting Europe as female from the medieval to the modern/post-modern eras, see, Michael Wintle, *The Image of Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 111–13, 117, 119, 127, 134–5, 136, 149, 176, 248, 250–1, 253, 261, 267, 293, 304, 323–4, 336, 343, 358, 367–8, 373, 375, 381, 429, 457, Plates 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 30, 31, 33. (Note: I have referenced both cartographic examples and those found in paintings and sculptures because these can be seen as another form of mapping.)

⁴⁸ Opicinus de Canistris's suggestive anthropomorphic maps are discussed, in Wintle, *Image of Europe*, 175–7; and Denis Hué, 'Tracé, écart: Le sens de la carte chez Opicinus de Canistris', in *Terres Médiévales*, ed. Bernard Ribémont (Paris: Klincksieck, 1993), 129–57. Note that Opicinus de Canistris produced both male and female versions of Europe, and vice versa for Africa. In both versions, the Mediterranean Sea is depicted as a devilish persona suggesting the enabling vehicle of intercourse between the two figures of the opposite gender. This too would fit with an interpretation of the Mediterranean in the *KMMS* rendition as a sea of intercourse between the Muslim and Christian worlds. The difference is that since Islam does not see sexual intercourse as something evil the sea will not be depicted in a persona of the Devil.

⁴⁹ Sebastian Münster's depiction of 'Europe as Queen' is a well-known, much-reprinted and much-discussed image. See, for instance, Trevor Barnes and James S. Duncan (eds.), *Writing Worlds: Discourse, Text and Metaphor in the Representation of Landscape* (London: Routledge, 1992), xiv, plate 1. Wintle, *Image of Europe*, 247–52.