

Viking Magians in Arabic Sources from al-Andalus:

Revisiting the use of al-majūs in Muslim Spain



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Summary

The Arabic word *majūs*, while initially used as an exonym for Zoroastrians in the Middle East, was used in al-Andalus, medieval Muslim Spain, for a variety of people. It became best known, however, as the appellation used by Andalusis for the Viking parties attacking the Iberian Peninsula in the 9th and 10th centuries. Previous attempts at explaining the use of *majūs* for Scandinavians produced varied conclusions. Mikel de Epalza deems it to be legal jargon, while Omeljan Pritsak touted a Celtic origin for the word. The theory that has garnered most recognition is Arne Melvinger's, who suggests that it was given to Scandinavians due to a perceived similarity between their cremation ceremonies and Zoroastrian cults of fire. The word retained a firm connection to Zoroastrians in the Middle East. Zoroastrians, while accepted as a protected people, *ahl al-dhimma*, alongside Christians and Jews, and thus allowed to practice their religion within Islamic lands, were still regarded as 'second-class' *dhimmīs* (members of *ahl al-dhimma*) due to their perceived polytheism, idolatry and lack of holy scripture. The negative view of Zoroastrians gave *majūs* a negative connotation and was used as a term of abuse against peoples, religions or other Islamic sects, comparing them to Zoroastrians. In al-Andalus, the connection to Zoroastrianism was lost, and *majūs* underwent a semantic widening to mean 'pagan.' Scandinavians, then, were only one of the myriad groups Andalusis called *majūs*. This pejoration has a parallel in Greek and Latin literature, where *mágos/magus* underwent a similar process, whereby its use for Persian priests transformed into a variety of sorcerers and magical practitioners. The hybrid culture of al-Andalus, where Arabic-, Latin/Romance- and Hebrew-speaking populations coexisted and exchanged ideas and vocabulary allowed *majūs*, already carrying connotations of idolatry, to widen its semantic range. The dual meaning of the term has caused some confusion for both medieval authors as well as modern scholars. The attribution of fire-worship and incest Ibn Diḥya gave to Scandinavians in his story of al-Ghazāl, a source Melvinger used to justify his theory on fire-worship, is a case of an erroneous transfer of Zoroastrian tropes to them on the merits of the common term used for both. The Castilian author/s of the *Primera Crónica General* also struggled with interpreting *majūs* in the Arabic sources; rendering it as *almuiuces*, they combined multiple uses of the word. In modern times, Évariste Lévi-Provençal misinterpreted the use of *majūs* for Zoroastrians in an Andalusis legal manual that forbade the consumption of Zoroastrian-produced cheese, leading to a conclusion that some of the Vikings harrying in Seville settled there and produced cheese.

Foreword

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Needless to say, any mistakes and inaccuracies in this thesis are purely my own.

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A note on transliterations, translations and dates

In transliterating from Arabic, this thesis will be using the transliteration standard set by the *Encyclopedia of Islam, 3rd edition* (EI³), *Encyclopedia of Women & Islamic Cultures* (EWIC) and *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān* (EQ), all published by Brill. For more information about this transliteration standard, visit:

<https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/pages/help/transliteration-islam>

Some secondary sources cited may be using other transliteration standards. For the sake of uniformity and to avoid confusion, all transliterations in citations will be changed to the standard mentioned above. An exception is reserved for cases where the transliteration is in the title of an article, book, or chapter.

Where relevant, dates will be given in both the Islamic calendar, Hijrī, marked as A.H., and the Common Era, marked as C.E.

Unless otherwise stated, all translations from all languages are mine.

1. Introduction

Arabic literature from the Middle Ages used the word *majūs* to refer to a wide range of people. Apart from its original use for Persian Zoroastrians, the term is widely known for its use for the ‘Vikings’ that attacked Spain and Portugal in the 9th and 10th Centuries in Arabic literature from al-Andalus, Medieval Muslim Iberia. The use of this term for Scandinavians is unique to al-Andalus; Arabic sources from the eastern realms of the Muslim world, those based in the cities like Baghdad and Damascus, used the ethnonym Rūs, as seen in what is perhaps the best known Arabic text about Scandinavians, Ibn Faḍlān’s *Risala*. Modern scholarship has consistently translated *majūs* to ‘fire-worshippers’, with the assumption that Andalusians linked the cremation ceremonies performed by the Scandinavians to the fire ceremonies performed by the Zoroastrians. However, the term *majūs* was not used exclusively for Scandinavian raiders and contemporary authors and, in some cases, the very same authors who wrote about the attacks on al-Andalus, used it for a variety of other peoples. Arne Melvinger (1986) concluded that the term ‘was used for tribes living in the north, even when we know for certain that it does not apply to the Vikings’ and that ‘the Arabic authors were thinking about the religion in which fire in some form played a prominent part’. This statement, however, becomes problematic when looking at its use for peoples to which none of those attributes apply. The first hypothesis of this study, then, is that the misunderstanding of the term in modern scholarship led to a series of false assumptions about its meaning, upon which dubious conclusions were reached. The study will reassess the assumption of its meaning as fire-worshippers in the Andalusian context and addresses its virtually exclusive association with Scandinavians.

In the primary sources themselves, nonetheless, the picture is less than clear. The dual function of the term to mean both a specific group of people, i.e. Zoroastrians, as well as generic, vaguely identifiable religious practices and their practitioners may have led to a conflation of the two. One such example of this is al-Ghazāl’s embassy to the king of the *majūs*, which is an event attested to only in Ibn Dihya’s (1955) *Al-Muṭrib min Ash‘ār Ahl al-Maghrib*. Ibn Dihya claims that although some the *majūs* have become Christian, some living ‘on islands which are isolated in the sea’ have retained their ‘previous belief of fire-worship and marrying mothers and sisters’ (pp. 140-141). The claim of incestuous relationships is of

particular interest here because of its widespread use when referring to Zoroastrians. Interestingly, the attribution of incest is associated with fire-worship as the two main features of their ‘previous religion’. The practice of incest was forbidden in Viking Age Scandinavia (Jesch, 1991, p. 23), and it is clear that this is a transfer of tropes about Zoroastrianism to the Scandinavians. Similarly, the attribution of fire-worship in this relatively late, 13th-century text may also be a case of transferring Zoroastrian tropes, rather than the reason for the use of the term in the first place. The second hypothesis of this study, therefore, is that, much like in modern scholarship, the diverging and ambivalent meanings of the term *majūs* led to some confusion by medieval authors who conflated the two, with tropes about the one applied to the other.

The scope of this study, therefore, is to analyse the term that became synonymous with Viking activity in al-Andalus. Analysing its shifting definitions will allow us to understand what the term means in the contexts in which it is used and the historical and cultural baggage that it carried. This analysis will thus equip us with the ability to filter the descriptions of the Scandinavian *majūs* through the net of *topoi* that term carries. This thesis will thus attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What does *majūs* mean, and why was it used for Scandinavians?
2. Why is the use of *majūs* for Scandinavians limited to al-Andalus?
3. How did medieval authors engage with the dual meaning of *majūs*, and how can this inform our understanding of those for whom they used it?
4. How did modern scholars engage with the term *majūs*?

1.1 Interdisciplinary and transcultural approaches

The nature of this study as an investigation on intercultural encounters must necessarily take an interdisciplinary and transcultural approach. Although chronologically and geographically speaking it deals with Medieval Europe, the cross-road between the status of most of the Iberian Peninsula at the time as an Arabophone, Islamic region, and the Viking Age places the study in a virtual limbo between traditional Medieval Studies on the one hand and Oriental Studies on the other. The study into the use of the term *majūs* in the Middle East will also necessitate venturing outside of Europe as far east as Pakistan. Perhaps due to these specificities, the study of Arabic texts, particularly of the texts from al-Andalus, is

conspicuously absent or given limited attention in the fields of Viking Age and Medieval Scandinavian Studies. Before looking at the current scholarship on this corpus, it is worth looking at the state of Medieval Studies and the possible cause for this neglect. At the same time, an analysis of modern approaches to the Global Middle Ages will place this study within this emerging discipline.

The field of Medieval Studies, regardless of its focus on history, historiography, philology or archaeology, tends to be predominantly eurocentric, even though it is increasingly heading towards a more inter- and transdisciplinary approach. This phenomenon has been observed and thoroughly discussed over the past four decades, particularly from the lens of postcolonial studies which, according to Lampert-Weissig (2010), ‘challenges Eurocentric geographic and temporal paradigms and also critiques cultural hegemonies and inequalities’ (p. 3) which has, for the most part, painted a picture of ‘a medieval Europe that is commensurate with Christendom’ (p. 2). Published since 1995, the Brill-published journal *Medieval Encounters* addresses this issue, focusing on ‘Jewish, Christian and Muslim culture in confluence and dialogue’ (Brill, n.d.). More recently, two journals have seen the light of day which aim at having a more global outlook on the period and encouraging views on intercultural relations in the period. The first is *Medieval Worlds*, published annually by the Austrian Academy of Sciences since 2015. In 2019, the *Journal of Medieval Worlds* by the University of California Press published four issues of its first volume at the time of writing. The first issues of both journals include an article on the state of the Eurocentric nature of Medieval Studies today and the significance of the move towards a more globalised view of the period. In the introduction to the inaugural issue of *Medieval Worlds*, editors Walter Pohl and Andre Gingrich (2015) open by saying that ‘[b]ooks, web-sites or university courses entitled *The Medieval World* usually deal with Medieval Europe, sometimes only with its ‘Latin’ or Western parts” (p. 2). In *Journal of Medieval Worlds*, Peter Frankopan (2019) echoes this thought and gives a more specific example of this phenomenon taking place. In that article, he points at the *Medieval Academy of America’s* (2017) journal *Speculum*, whose guidelines for submissions specify that ‘The primary emphasis is on Western Europe, but Arabic, Byzantine, Hebrew, and Slavic studies are also included.’ (para. 1). Despite the possibility to submit articles that fall outside of what is perceived as traditionally ‘Western European’, Frankopan’s (2019) analysis of a selection of *Speculum* issues shows that ‘[o]f the books about the Middle Ages reviewed [...] in 2018, just 2% were about subjects not related

to Western Europe’, and ‘[n]ot a single article was published over the last five years that focused on the Byzantine Empire, Eastern Europe, or the world beyond the Mediterranean.’ (p. 7). He identifies this neglect to a ‘narrow geographical focus’ (Frankopan, 2019, p. 8) of the field, with the geographical limitation ‘overwhelmingly focused on core areas of the continent of Europe—namely on what is now Italy, Germany, France, Britain, and Spain’ (Frankopan, 2019, p. 6).

The geographical element, however, is only part of the story. *Speculum*’s treatment of Hebrew as falling outside of the ‘primary focus’ of Western Europe, for example, belies the presence of Jews in the region throughout the period or gives credence to the idea of their presence as outsiders or temporary ‘guests’, or an ‘alienated minority’ in a monolithically Christian Europe to use Kenneth Stow’s (1992) definition. The same treatment given to Arabic by *Speculum* also highlights the exclusion of al-Andalus as not being considered part of Western Europe. Stow (1992) focuses on ‘that region which is today called Western Europe,’ but excludes Spain because ‘geographically, politically, socially, and structurally, they lived in a world apart’ (p. 1). Its seven centuries of Islamic rule has placed the region outside of the traditional understanding of Medieval Europe, becoming orientalised and thus losing its status as a European region. John Dagenais and Margaret Rich Greer (2000) attribute this attitude towards al-Andalus to ‘the colonized nature of the Middle Ages itself’ (p. 439), in which ‘England and France represent some sort of norm for the Middle Ages from which all other instances simply deviate to a greater or lesser degree’ (p. 440). All of this, then, suggests that ‘Western Europe’ is not used so much in its definition of geographical delimitation, as Frankopan suggests, as in its cultural one. This idea is more in line with Stow’s (1992), Pohl’s and Gingrich’s (2015) inclusion of ‘Latin’ as an added definition of the primary focus of the study of Medieval Europe. In franker terms, Medieval studies are overwhelmingly interested in Catholic Europe, or what Lars Boje Mortensen refers to as ‘papal Europe’ (Mortensen, 2015, p. 25-39).

This discussion, however, must come with the caveat that the terms ‘Medieval’ and ‘Middle Ages’ are bound to their European context. Although attributing European timeframes to non-European histories defeats the purpose of de-colonising historical inquiry (Lampert-Weissig, 2010, p. x), attempts have been made to define a ‘Global Middle Age’ which is more inclusive and takes into consideration the historical developments on a global

scale (Holmes and Stranden, 2015). Discussing the start- and endpoints of a more inclusive Middle Age is beyond the scope of this study. However, with its interdisciplinary nature, drawing from scholarship that would traditionally be within the realms of Arabic/Middle Eastern/Oriental Studies and European Medieval Studies, its place within the vision of a Global Middle Ages is of utmost importance.

It is important to note that these discussions regarding the narrowness of Medieval Studies relate primarily to the broader scope of what falls under that banner, rather than to how each sub-field tackles the issues relevant to their specificities. The specific circumstances of one region would naturally tip the scale of what is deemed necessary. The fact that Medieval Scandinavia was Christianised with a Western Christian tradition, and influenced by the related cultural and political developments that come with it, would place Christian texts at the forefront of its core corpus of primary material. One, therefore, expects that the vast majority of studies in that particular field would centre around texts in Latin, Old English and Irish, in addition to the obligatory works in the vernacular.

When focusing on the pre-Christian Viking Age, however, the situation is somewhat more complicated. The disconnect between the concept of a Christian Western Medieval Europe and the paganism of Scandinavia is, in fact, reflected in the common usage of Viking Age as being a separate period from the Scandinavian Middle Ages, with the latter only starting in the 11th Century with the widespread Christianisation of the region.¹ Nevertheless, with its position as a sub-division of the wider Medieval Studies macro-field, the same virtual exclusion of the non-Latin-Christian world permeates it, even when proving to be relevant to the study of the Viking Age Scandinavia and its people's activities and the diaspora. With no written texts in the vernacular (if one excludes the runic record), the primary contemporary sources utilised for the period tend to be overwhelmingly in Latin, Old English and Irish. This tendency can be seen from the various courses on the Viking Age taught at universities as well as the extensive academic literature on the period. The edited book *Scandinavia and Europe 800-1350: Contact, Conflict, and Coexistence*, to make one, albeit representative,

¹ See for example Hedeager, 2008: 'What is known as the Middle Ages in Scandinavia begins around AD 1000, half a millennium later than the rest of western and central Europe' (p. 11).

example, which covers the Viking and Middle Ages up to the establishment of the Kalmar Union, avoids discussing Spain or Arabic sources altogether. There is not a single mention of al-Andalus in any of the papers, and Spain only features in the context of the Crusades (Møller Jensen, 2004), and possible identification of the toponym *Gríslupollar* in stanza 11 of *Víkingarvísur* (Jesch, 2004). This suggests an inheritance of the sidelining of the Iberian Peninsula when discussing Europe from the wider Medieval Studies field. Indeed, ‘contact, conflict and coexistence’ with the Eastern Roman Empire is hardly mentioned, and Varangians are given a short mention in Jesch’s paper as it relates to runic material. Even in its pre-Christian period, then, the scholarship places a heavy focus on the Latin-Christian dimension, to the detriment of texts in Old Church Slavonic and Greek from the Eastern Christian Slavic kingdoms and the Eastern Roman Empire and the Arabic material.

1.2 Structure

The use of *majūs* for peoples other than Zoroastrians, particularly in its use seemingly wholly divorced from any reference to them, is a specifically Andalusí phenomenon. The shift from its original meaning to the Andalusí use, and the reasons for it, has attracted some interest in the scholarship. In chapter 3, I will be looking at the various theories put forward to this date, providing a comprehensive, albeit not exhaustive, look at the arguments behind these conclusions. This will provide a framework for the study to tackle some of the issues raised and examine the claims made in-depth.

Chapter 4 of this study is an assessment of the use of *majūs* in the Middle East not only in terms of the *topoi* and views associated with Zoroastrianism but also in the way it was used as a descriptor or as a container for any attributes for any other peoples other than Zoroastrians. After looking at its etymological background as an Old Iranian term, the chapter delves into an analysis of its use in Arabic, from its presence in Islamic scripture to its rhetorical use.

The shift in meaning undergone in al-Andalus is the focus of chapter 5. Here, I will look at how its meaning in the Iberian Peninsula had widened to encompass people of all non-Abrahamic faiths. First amongst the developments to investigate is the reason why even though Zoroastrian *majūs* were considered to be *dhimmi*s, a protected group of non-Muslims who are allowed to practice their religion in exchange for the payment of a special tax known

as *jizya*, a status usually only enjoyed by *ahl al-kitāb* (People of the Book), i.e. Christians and Jews), *majūs* was used for pagans and idolators who could not conceivably be considered *ahl al-kitāb*. Secondly, references to *majūs* in Andalusī texts will be examined to extract any common factors amongst them. Particular attention will be given to Mozarabic literature, i.e. Arabic language literature of the Christian community in al-Andalus, due to its value in providing us with works translated from Latin, which allow us to assess the meaning of *majūs* by analysing its use as a translation for Latin vocabulary.

In chapter 6, I will contextualise the ambivalent meaning of *majūs* within the history of the semantics of the Greek *mágos* and Latin *magus*. Apart from being cognates of *majūs*, both words have experienced a similar semantic shift from their original meaning of Persian priests, to its meaning as ‘sorcerer’ and assorted magical practitioners. In addition, Latin authors like Pliny the Elder subsequently merged the two meanings, giving rise to the legend that Zoroaster, the founder of Zoroastrianism, was the founder of sorcery. In this chapter, I will argue that the similarities between the semantic shift in *mágos/magus* and *majūs* are not coincidental, but is a product of the cultural hybridity and linguistic contact of a multicultural al-Andalus.

Finally, in chapter 7, armed with the contextual background gathered in the previous chapters, I will address the two hypotheses outlined above and examine various cases of confusion caused by the dual meaning of *majūs*. Firstly, the chapter will revisit Melvinger’s assessment of the term being used for Scandinavians due to the perceived similarity between Zoroastrian and Scandinavian fire-based religious practices. Second, I will look at another case of medieval confusion of the term, where the term was used in an Old Spanish chronicle to describe a pre-Roman civilisation that conquered Spain. At the same time, I will assess modern scholarship’s approach to its interpretation and its focus on the Scandinavian attacks in the 9th and 10th Centuries. Finally, I will examine the oft-made claim of ‘Viking cheesemakers’ in al-Andalus as an example of modern misinterpretation of the word *majūs*.

2. Historical and textual background

2.1 Al-Andalus

Before the establishment of al-Andalus and after the fall of the Western Roman Empire, the Iberian Peninsula had been ruled by various Germanic aristocracies, including the Vandals, Suevi and Visigoths since the early 5th Century C.E. The Visigothic kingdom conquered and consolidated the whole of the peninsula under the rule of King Leovigild (r. 569–586 C.E.), except for a small Byzantine enclave in the south. At this time, Leovigild attempted to establish Arianism, a Christian denomination that rejected the Trinitarian doctrine, as the official religion of the kingdom, with limited success. Under the rule of his successor and son Reccared (r. 586–601 C.E.), Catholicism became the official religion of the kingdom following his conversion in 587 C.E.. It is within this environment that Isidore of Seville (560–636 C.E.), having been appointed as the bishop of Seville by Reccared himself, lived and worked, composing his *Etymologiae* in around 600 C.E.. As will be seen later in this study, Isidore's works continued to be influential in the peninsula, including in al-Andalus.

Across the Straits of Gibraltar in North Africa, the Islamic forces under the Umayyad Caliphate, ruled by the Umayyad dynasty of the *Banū Umayya* clan and based in Damascus, conquered the whole coast by 708 C.E.. The turning point in Spanish history came in 711 C.E., when Ṭāriq ibn Ziyād, the Amazigh (Berber) governor of Tangier, invaded Gibraltar, which to this day retains his namesake.² Over the next few months, Ṭāriq's forces swept over some of the major cities on mainland Spain, including Toledo, the Visigothic capital. The governor of Ifrīqīya (central North Africa), Mūsā ibn Nuṣayr, learning of Ṭāriq's victories, sent an army of his own. Within a few years, most of the Iberian Peninsula came under the control of the caliphate. Back in Damascus, the 'Abbasids, descendants of al-'Abbās ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib staged a revolution in 747–750 C.E., overthrowing the Umayyad rulers and establishing the new 'Abbasid caliphate based in Baghdad. The remaining Umayyad nobility

² Gibraltar is a corruption of *Jabal Ṭāriq*, Mountain of Ṭāriq.

in Damascus was executed, while some managed to escape, including a grandson of Caliph Hishām (691–743 C.E.), ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (731–788 C.E.). With the help of Umayyad loyalists in al-Andalus, he entered Córdoba in 756 C.E. and was proclaimed Emir, thus establishing the independent Umayyad Emirate of I-Andalus. Although divorced from the political authority of ‘the ‘Abbasid caliphate, the latter still held religious authority as the gatekeeper of Islam under the Caliph.

Under ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s successors, Hishām I and al-Ḥakām I, al-Andalus continued to develop its identity. Under the former, the Mālikī *madhhab* (school of jurisprudence, pl. *madhāhib*), one of the four *madhāhib* of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) in Sunni Islam, was adopted as the official legal system. Al-Andalus bloomed under ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II (r. 822–852 C.E.): the Emirate develop a well-organised bureaucracy ‘and took on the structures it retained until the end of the Umayyad rule in the early eleventh century’ (Kennedy, 1996, p. 44). In addition, the arts, science and architecture flourished under his patronage, partially as a reaction to the artistic output of ‘Abbasid Baghdad and his desire for ‘Córdoba to become the Baghdad of the West’ (Makkī, 1992, p. 25). Amongst other things, he is credited with fortifying Seville in the aftermath of the Scandinavian attack in 844 C.E. (see below 2.2.1), as reported by the Córdoba Muḥammad Ibn al-Qūṭīya (d. 367 A.H./ 977 C.E.) in his *Ta’rīkh iftitāḥ al-Andalus* (History of the Conquest of al-Andalus).³ As Kennedy (1996) notes, this Scandinavian attack is one of the most notable events of his reign, as it ‘shows the effectiveness of the Cordovan state when faced with an unexpected attack by an unknown enemy’ (p. 47), a testament to the organisational prowess brought about by his bureaucratic reforms.

As the ‘Abbasid caliphate in Baghdad weakened and the Faṭimid dynasty in Kairouan, in present-day Tunisia, founded a new, Shi‘ite Faṭimid caliphate, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III (r. 912–961 C.E.) declared himself Caliph and founded the Umayyad Caliphate of Córdoba in 929 C.E. This move completed the independence from the ‘Abbasid caliphate: while the

³ Wa- ‘Abd al-Raḥmān banā al-jāmi‘ b-ishbiliyya, wa-banā sūr al-madīna bisabab taghallaba al-mājus ‘alayhā ‘inda dukhūluhum sana 230, wa-kāna dukhūluhum fī ayyāmihi (‘Abd al-Raḥmān built the Great Mosque of Seville. He also built the walls of that city, because of the seizure of Seville by the *mājus* when they invaded, during his reign, in the year 230/844’) (Ibn al-Qūṭīya, after 977/1989, p. 78; trans: James, 2009, p. 100).

establishment of the Emirate gave al-Andalus political independence, the establishment of the Caliphate gave it religious autonomy. The technological, scientific and artistic advancements, particularly under ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III and his son and successor al-Ḥakam (r. 961–976 C.E.), brought about a golden age for al-Andalus. It is during this period that Ibn al-Qūṭīya and the Razīs, who give us some of the earliest accounts of the Scandinavian campaigns, operated (see 2.2.1). Al-Ḥakam’s caliphate was also the stage for the third and final *majūsī* campaign (see 2.2.3).

Following a lengthy Amazigh rebellion, the caliphate was abolished in 1031 C.E., causing al-Andalus to split into around forty minor, independent states known as taifas (*tā`ifa*, pl. *tawā`if*), ushering in the first Taifa period (Wasserstein, 2000). It is during this time in 1085 C.E that the Taifa of Toledo, then one of the largest of the taifas, was lost to the unified kingdoms of León and Castile under Alfonso VI (d. 1109 C.E.). The competitiveness of the taifas also brought with it another artistic and scientific boost as each ‘sought to imitate [the] cultural brilliance’ of the previous emirate and caliphate by ‘competing to attract the best poets, artists, and scientists’ (Fairchild Ruggles, 2007, 2. Taifas section). This is the period when the prolific historian Ibn Ḥayyān (987–1075 C.E.) and the historian and geographer al-Bakrī (ca. 1040–1094) operated and wrote their works, both important sources for our understanding of the *majūs* and their campaigns in al-Andalus.

By 1094, al-Andalus became ‘simply a province in an Almoravid empire’ (Makkī, 1992, p. 64) of Morocco. By the mid-12th Century, Andalusians grew discontent with the Almoravid rule, and several regions gained independence in a second Taifa period. Most taifas survived only for a handful of years, with the Taifa of Murcia lasting until 1172 C.E.. Al-Andalus was subsequently conquered by a new power formed in the Maghreb that was rapidly expanding its power over North Africa, the Almohad Caliphate. During the Almoravid and Almohad period, the frontier between al-Andalus and the Christian North was fluid, as cities were conquered and re-conquered by both sides. However, al-Andalus was haemorrhaging land to the Reconquista, and by the mid-13th Century, the Emirate of Granada

remained as the sole Muslim domain in the Iberian peninsula. In 1492 C.E., the Reconquista was complete as Granada fell to the Catholic Monarchs,⁴ spelling the end of al-Andalus.

2.2 Scandinavian attacks

2.2.1 The first attack – 229–230 A.H/ 844 C.E.

The first Scandinavian attack on al-Andalus in 844 C.E. was part of a more extended campaign that saw the raiding party terrorising their way along the river Garonne down to Toulouse, before sailing onto the Iberian Peninsula. Once there, they attacked Gijón in Asturias and *Farum Breccantium*, possibly A Coruña in Galicia where the Roman Tower of Hercules lighthouse stands, then both part of the Kingdom of Asturias ruled by King Ramiro I, whose army repelled the marauders. The party then sailed down to al-Andalus, attacking Lisbon before heading up the Guadalquivir river and laying siege on Seville. The earliest account of this campaign is found in the Frankish *Annales Bertiniani*, with the contemporary entry for that year written by the Spanish Prudentius, bishop of Troyes (d. 861 C.E.) who took over the duty of continuing the annals in 835 C.E. until his death:

The Northmen sailed up the Garonne as far as Toulouse, wreaking destruction everywhere, without meeting any opposition. Then some of them withdrew from there and attacked Galicia, but they perished, partly because they met resistance from missile-throwers, partly because they were caught in a storm at sea. Some of them, though, got to the south-western part of Spain, where they fought long and bitterly with the Saracens, but were finally beaten and withdrew to their ships⁵ (trans: Nelson, 1991, p. 60)

⁴ The Catholic Monarchs is the appellation used for the joint rule of Queen Isabella I of Castile and King Fernando II of Aragon in 1474–1516 C.E.

⁵ *Nordomanni per Garrondam Tolosam usque proficiscentes, praedas passim inpuneque perficiunt. Unde regressi quidam Galliciamque adgressi, partim ballistariorum occursum partim tempestate maris intercepti dispereunt. Sed et quidam eorum ulterioris Hispaniae partes adorsi, diu acriterque cum Saracenis dimicantes, tandem victi resiliunt* (Waitz, 1883, p. 32).

Two Asturian Latin chronicles from the 9th Century also briefly record these events. The earliest of these annals, the *Cronica Albeldense*, mentions the arrival only as *Ingressi sunt Lothomanni in Spania era DCCCLXXXII Kalendas Augustas*, ‘The Lothomanni entered Spain in the era 882 on the Kalends of August [*i.e. 1st of August, 844 C.E.*].’⁶ The other chronicle, *The Chronicle of Alfonso III*, written during the reign of the eponymous Alfonso III (866–910 C.E.), is preserved in two redactions, the *Cronica ad Sebastianum* and the *Cronica Rotense*, both of which report the attacks. The *Cronica ad Sebastianum* reports:

Sometime later, the armies of the Nordomanni arrived from the Northern Ocean to the shore of the city of Gijón, and from there they went to the place named *Farum Brecantium*. When Ramiro, who had by now been made king, learnt of the attack, he sent an army against them with his dukes and counts, and slaughtered a multitude of them and burned several of their ships. Those who managed to flee rushed to the Spanish city of Seville and seized wealthy spoils, and killed many Chaldeans (Muslims) by the sword and by fire.⁷

The first Arabic sources on these attacks, contemporaneous with the Asturian chronicles, come not from an Andalusí historian, but Aḥmad al-Ya‘qūbī (d. 284 A.H./897–898 C.E.), the Baghdad-born historian, geographer and traveller, in his *Kitāb al-Buldān* (Book of Countries) in 278 A.H./891 C.E. Much like in the *Cronica Albeldense*, the description of the attack is rather terse, saying that ‘the *majūs*, who are known as *al-Rūs*, entered it [Seville] in the year 229 and they robbed, plundered, burned and killed’ (*dakhalaha al-majūs alladīna yuqālu*

⁶ The calendar system used in Visigothic Spain and in the Christian kingdoms of the North is known as the Hispanic era. The era started in 38 B.C.E., thought to coincide with the Roman conquest of the peninsula by Emperor Augustus. For dates to be converted from the Hispanic era to C.E., 38 must be subtracted. See Neugebauer, 1981.

⁷ *Itaque subsequenti tempore Nordomannorum classes per septentrionalem oceanum ad litus Gegionis ciuitatis adueniunt et inde ad locum qui dicitur Farum Brecantium perrexerunt. Quod ut conperit Ranimirus iam factus rex, misit aduersus eos exercitum cum ducibus et comitibus, et multitudinem eorum interfecit hac naues igni combusit. Qui uero ex eis remanserunt cinitatem Spanie Yspalim inruperunt et predam ex eis capientes plurimos Caldeorum gladio atque igni interfecerunt* (Gil Fernández, Moralejo & Ruiz, 1985, pp 148–149).

lahum al-Rūs sana 229 fa-salabū wa-nahabū wa-ḥaraqū wa-qatalū) (al-Ya‘qūbī, 891/2002, p. 194).

In contrast, the earliest surviving Andalusī account of the attack, described in Ibn al-Qūṭīya’s *Ta’rīkh iftitāḥ al-Andalus*, is rich in details and ornamentations, covering three pages in the MS Arabe 1867 of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (folios 27 recto–28 recto), the only manuscript of the work (James, 2009, pp. 1, 38).⁸ Unlike in the Frankish and Asturian sources, Ibn al-Qūṭīya only mentions the attacks on al-Andalus, ignoring the incursions into the Christian kingdom in the North; this is typical of Arabic histories, as ‘historians writing in Arabic rarely recorded the deeds of Christians’ (Christys, 2015, p. 34). In this account, we learn that the first landfall in al-Andalus was in Lisbon, before proceeding up the Guadalquivir and attacking Seville. The Emir ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II recruited forces from ‘Córdoba and its neighbouring provinces’ to defend the city. Failing to attack the Scandinavian onslaught, he enlisted the help of Mūsā ibn Qasī, the leader of the Banū Qasī clan, a clan of Muslim converts (*muwallad*) who had, until earlier that year, led a rebellion against the Emir from their semi-autonomous emirate in the Upper Ebro region. The *Ta’rīkh* continues by giving a detailed account of the Andalusī strategy, climaxing with an ambush at Kintush Mu‘āfir, to the south of Seville. Another band of Scandinavians besieging Seville learnt of this loss and incoming reinforcements and fled to meet two other bands, before sailing downstream in retreat. The *Ta’rīkh* then claims that the Scandinavian party attacked Nākūr in North Africa and headed to the Eastern Roman Empire (*balad al-Rūm*) a voyage that took 14 years (James, 2009, p. 101). This coincides with the date of the second attack in al-Andalus, in 859 C.E. (see below), and thus it is probable that Ibn al-Qūṭīya conflated the two events, assuming that the latter attack was launched by the same party that raided Seville in 844 C.E.

In his work *Kitāb al-muqtabis fī ta’rīkh rijāl al-Andalus*, probably completed after 1058 C.E., Ibn Ḥayyān provides us with a wealth of information on the campaign cited from

⁸ David James points out that there exist four other manuscripts, MS 996 Leiden, MS 987 Munich, MS 4996 Madrid and MS *Ta’rīkh* 2837 Cairo, all of which are ‘derived from that unique manuscript’ (2009, p. 1).

multiple sources. As the name suggests,⁹ the *Muqtabis* is compilatory in nature, citing numerous earlier texts to elucidate on the topic at hand, which may be complementary or even contradictory (Christys, 2015, p. 37). Amongst the texts that he included in the compilation is an abbreviated version of Ibn al-Qūṭīya's account, as well as the accounts given by the Razīs. The historian Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Razī (d. 955 C.E.) composed a history of al-Andalus, *Akḥbār mulūk al-Andalus* (History of the rulers of al-Andalus), that purportedly predates that of Ibn al-Qūṭīya's,¹⁰ which however does not survive in its entirety. Neither is his son's 'Īsā ibn Aḥmad al-Razī's (d. after 977) work. Excerpts from their works, however, survive as citations in later Arabic texts like the *Muqtabis*, as well as in an incomplete, 15th-century Spanish translation known as *Crónica del Moro Rasis*, which was, in turn, translated from a now lost 14th-century Portuguese translation by Gil Peres. Ibn Ḥayyān's compilation of accounts of the attack on Seville, introduced by the heading *Khabar khurūj usṭūl al-majūs min al-Urdumāniyīn la 'anahum Allāh*, 'Account of the exit of the fleet of the Norman *majūs*, may God curse them' (Ibn Ḥayyān, ca 1060/2003, p. 450), opens with Aḥmad al-Razī's text. Al-Razī gives us some more details over Ibn al-Qūṭīya, saying that *marākib al-Urdumāniyīn, alladhīna 'urifū bi-l-Andalus bi-l-majūs*, 'the ships of the Normans, known in al-Andalus as *al-majūs*' (Ibn Ḥayyān, ca 1060/2003, pp. 450-451), made the first landfall in Lisbon at the beginning of the month of *Dhū al-Ḥijja*, the 12th month of the Islamic calendar, in 229 A.H., which corresponds to the period from 20th of August to the 17th of September 844 C.E.. The siege lasted for 13 days, before the Scandinavian fleet headed first to Cádiz and Medina Sidona, both in the province of Cádiz in present Spain. On the 15th of *Muḥarram* 230 A.H. (2nd of October 844 C.E.), they sailed into Seville and laid siege for 40 days. 'Abd al-Raḥmān II's army finally won the siege in a final battle in *Talyāṭa* on the 25th of *Ṣafar*, 230 A.H. (11th of November, 844 C.E.), which led to the Scandinavian fleet to retreat. Those captured were beheaded, and 30 ships were set on fire in a final show of

⁹ *Muqtabis* is the active participle of the VIII form of the root *q-b-s*, related to the act of taking something from another thing. In its VIII form, *iqtabasa*, it may literally mean 'to take or seek fire' and 'kindle a fire from another fire', and metaphorically 'to seek knowledge from something/someone' or 'to borrow or adopt from a book/text'.

¹⁰ While a work written by Aḥmad al-Razī would suggest its completion before his death in 955 C.E., Echevarria suggests that 'Īsā al-Razī completed his father's work posthumously.

triumph (Ibn Ḥayyān, ca 1060/2003, pp. 450-452; Christys, 2015, pp. 37-38; Aguirre, 2013, pp. 24-28).

‘Īsā al-Razī’s account follows his father’s in Ibn Ḥayyān’s compilation, providing more granular details of the siege. In his account, we are told that the Scandinavians used *Qabtīl*, an island on the Guadalquivir river known today as Isla Menor, as their base from where they launched the attacks. ‘Īsā also gives a wealth of detail on the dates and movements of specific attacks, and in some cases fleshing out his father’s account. This can be seen, for example, when he mentions that the Scandinavian fleet arrived in *Qabtīl* on the 12th of *Muḥarram* 230 A.H. (29th of September 844 C.E.), from where they launched a minor skirmish on *Qawra* (Coria del Rio) two days later, and only headed to Seville on the 3rd day. Later on, he specifies that the fleeing Scandinavians abandoned the 30 ships that Aḥmad al-Razī mentioned were burnt after the retreat.

As Christys (2015) points out, most later Arabic sources on the campaign rely primarily on the Razīs’ work, rather than Ibn al-Qūṭīya’s, whose reputation as a historian was less than stellar. The other accounts compiled in the *Muqtabis* either quote the Razīs, like the account by al-Qurashī which quotes ‘Īsā al-Razī, or al-Shabīnasī, which seem to be ‘essentially the same narrative as that of Aḥmad al-Razī’ (Christys, 2015, p. 39) with some adaptations. As Christys (2015) notes, however, al-Qurashī’s account stands out for its mentions of the attacks in the Christian North. Apart from the aforementioned *Crónica del Moro Rasis*, later Latin chronicles also relied on Arabic sources for information about the attacks on Seville. Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada’s (1170–1247 C.E.) *Historia Arabum*, written between 1243 and 1245 C.E., covers the history of al-Andalus from the Umayyad invasion in 711. The *Historia Arabum*’s account of the attack has some striking similarities to the account of Aḥmad al-Razī, reporting the same number of ships and some other details, albeit in a garbled fashion.¹¹

¹¹ In *Historia Arabum*, the itinerary of the campaign is a garbled version of al-Razī’s. While the latter reports the Scandinavian fleet going to Cádiz and Medina Sidona after Lisbon and before Seville, Rodrigo reports that they went to Cádiz and Medina Sidona after the siege in Seville. Furthermore, Rodrigo reports that the siege of Seville lasted 13 days, which is the length of the siege on Lisbon reported by al-Razī (Christys, 2015, p. 44).

2.2.2 The second attack – 245 A.H/ 859–861 C.E.

The second Viking raid on the Iberian peninsula started in 859 C.E. and may have been part of an even longer campaign than the one 15 years prior which saw the Scandinavian party sailing through the Straits of Gibraltar and into the Mediterranean. For the first mention of the attack in Spain, we have to turn to the Asturian chronicles. The *Chronicle of Alfonso III* provides no information regarding the events in Asturias and Galicia, only saying that, during the reign of Ordoño I, *Nordomani piratide per his temporibus ad nostris litoribus peruenerunt*, ‘the Norman pirates came once again to our shores’. After that, it reports that they attacked all over Spain before crossing over to North Africa and attacked the city of *Naacor*, the historic city of Nekor in present-day Morocco, followed by an attack in Mallorca and Minorca. The entry ends with: *Postea Grecia aduecti post triennium in patriam sunt reuersi*, ‘Afterwards, they headed to Greece and returned to their homeland after three years’. These details exhibit remarkable concordance with Ibn al-Qūṭīya’s report mentioned above, albeit the latter confusing it with the first attack 15 years prior. According to that account:

They departed from Seville and made for Nakūr. [...] They devastated the coasts on both sides of the Mediterranean, until they reached Byzantine territory. On that expedition they reached Alexandria¹² (trans: James, 2009, p. 101).

Once again, we turn to Ibn Ḥayyān’s *Muqtabis* for further details. Possibly citing Aḥmad al-Razī (Christys, 2015, p. 49), the *Muqtabis* fleshes out the itinerary of the campaign. In this account, the Scandinavia fleet encounters Andalusí ships deployed on the eastern border between al-Andalus and *Jilīqīya* (Galicia, but commonly used to mean the Christian North) to patrol the region. The patrolling fleet looted two of their ships, while the rest continued along the coast, reaching Seville and Algeciras, the latter of which marks the first mention of the Scandinavians crossing the Straits of Gibraltar and into the Mediterranean. Subsequently, having limited success in al-Andalus, they sailed to North Africa, possibly to the Nakūr mentioned by Ibn al-Qūṭīya and in the *Chronicle of Alfonso III*. They then sailed back to al-

¹² *Wa-inṣarāfū ‘an Ishbilīya wa-tawjjahū ilā Nākūr [...] thumma hatakū al-sāḥilayn jamī‘an ḥattā balaghū balad al-Rūm, wa-balaghū al-Iskandriya fī tilka al-safra* (Ibn al-Qūṭīya, ca. 977/1989 , p. 81).

Andalus, heading to the south-eastern coast of the peninsula and attacking Orihuela, before going to *Ifranja* (Francia) to harry and over-winter there. The *Muqtabis* mentions some further attacks in al-Andalus following the campaign in *Ifranja*, ending with an attack on Pamplona, in the Basque country in northern Spain.

Unlike Ibn Ḥayyān, some later accounts of this campaign by al-Bakrī, Ibn al-Athīr and Ibn Khaldūn explicitly mention Nakūr when recounting the attack in North Africa. As with the campaign of 844 C.E., Rodrigo's *Historia Arabum* provides a translation of an Arabic source that bears considerable similarities with Ibn Ḥayyān's, again in a garbled fashion.¹³ Otherwise, they provide little in terms of additional information, and a discussion on the granular differences, such as the differing amounts requested for ransoming Garcia Iñiguez whom the Scandinavians captured during the attack on Pamplona, is beyond the scope of this short overview of the historical context. Furthermore, some studies have questioned the accuracy, or even veracity, of the attacks on Nakūr¹⁴ and Pamplona.¹⁵ The extension of the campaign into Francia and the Mediterranean, however, seems to be corroborated by independent sources not related to Iberian sources that mention attacks up the Rhône and on the Italian peninsula. Although the *Annales Bertiniani* did not mention any attacks on Galicia, Asturias or al-Andalus, the entry for 859 C.E. does mention their entry through the Straits of Gibraltar:

¹³ *Eodem anno [anno Arabum CCXLV] LX naues a Normania aduenerunt et Gelzirat Alhadra et mezquitas undique deductis spoliis cede et incendio consumpserunt; deinde in Affricam processerunt, ubi exterminia grauia exercuerunt, et reuersi in maritimis Hispanie hyemarunt et in uere ad propria redierunt.*

‘In the same year (245 A.H.), sixty ships came from the North and Gelzirat Alhadra [*Algeciras*] and mosques wre altogether despoiled and consumed by fire; then they proceeded to Africa, where they drove out many people from their homes an they returned to the coasts of Hispania, where they spend the winter, and in spring they returned to their country’ (Rodrigo, 1999, pp. 124-125; trans: Christys, 2015, p. 52).

¹⁴ See Melvinger, 1955, pp. 129-177; Christys, 2015, pp. 53-55.

¹⁵ See Aguirre, 2013, pp. 64-47; Christys, 2015, pp 63-64; Morales Romero, 2015, pp. 220-221.

Danish pirates made a long sea-voyage, namely, they sailed through the straits between Spain and Africa and then up the Rhône. They ravaged some *civitates* and monasteries, and made their base on an island which is called the Camargue (trans: Nelson, 1991, p. 90)¹⁶

The entry for the following year, 860 C.E., picks up their activities:

The Danes who were still on the Rhône got as far as the city of Valence, laying waste as they went. From which place, with everything around having been destroyed, they turned back to the island on which they had made their base. [...] The Danes who had been on the Rhône made for Italy, where they took Pisa and other *civitates*, sacked them and laid them waste (trans: Nelson, 1991, pp. 92-93).¹⁷

The final mention of this campaign in the *Annales Bertiniani* is the first mention of an attack in Spain. In the entry for the year 862 C.E., Hincmar, archbishop of Reims who had taken over the responsibility of the annals after Prudentius' death in the previous year, reports that the Scandinavian ships that Charles the Bald repelled from the Seine 'were joined by the ones who had been in Spain' (*quibus et illi junguntur, qui in Hispania fuerant*) (MGH SS rer. Germ. 5, p. 57; trans: Nelson, 1991, p. 99).¹⁸ These details seem to corroborate the *Muqtabis*' assertion that the *majūs* who had attacked al-Andalus over-wintered in *Ifranja*.

This second attack is also notable for the claim that the campaign was led by Hásteinn and Bjoṛn Ironside,¹⁹ claims that need to be taken with considerable caution. In around 1000

¹⁶ *Pyratae Danorum longo maris circuitu, inter Hispanias videlicet et Africam navigantes, Rodanum ingrediuntur, depopulatisque quibusdam civitatibus ac monasteriis, in insula quae Camarias dicitur sedes ponunt* (Waitz, 1883, p. 51).

¹⁷ *Hi vero Dani qui in Rhodano morabantur, usque ad Valentiam civitatem vastando perveniunt; unde direptis quae circa erant omnibus, revertentes ad insulam in qua sedes posuerant, redeunt. [...] Dani qui in Rhodano fuerant, Italiam petunt, et Pisas civitatem aliasque capiunt, depredantur atque devastant* (Waitz, 1883, pp. 53-54).

¹⁸ It is worth noting that the *Annales Fuldensis*, the Eastern Frankish counterpart to the Western Frankish *Annales Bertiniani*, is silent on these events.

¹⁹ See for example Price, 2008, p. 465.

C.E., well over a century after the campaign, Dudo of St-Quentin (ca. 1000/1865) in his *Historia Normannorum* named Alstingus (Hásteinn), whom he claimed to be ‘the most infamous [Dane] of all’ (*omnium [...] nequissimus*) (p. 132), as one of the commanders of a planned raid on Rome. The party, the story continues, mistakenly attacked the town of Luni, in Liguria, Italy, thinking it was Rome. This protagonist is possibly identified as the same Hásteinn named in various Frankish chronicles as the commander of attacks on Francia, and possibly the Hæsten of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* who led 60 ships into the Thames in 893 C.E.. His exploits in Francia made him ‘a notorious leader at the end of the ninth century’ (Coupland, 2003, p. 197), and it is not inconceivable that Dudo chose him as an archetypal ‘Dane’ based on his infamy, as he mentions himself. William of Jumieges reworked Dudo’s story in his *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* and adding Bjoṛn Ironside to the narrative. Like Hásteinn, Bjoṛn was somewhat notorious in Frankish chronicles, mentioned in the *Annales Bertiniani* as ‘chief of one group of the pirates on the Seine’ (*Berno dux partis pyratarum Sequanae*) (Waitz, 1883, p. 49; trans: Nelson, 1991, p. 86) in the entry for 858 C.E., one year before the Mediterranean campaign started. William of Jumieges probably conflated the two campaigns, assuming that the same party that entered the Seine in 858 C.E. went on to sail through the Straits of Gibraltar. Simon Coupland (2003) dismisses the story, saying that ‘Dudo’s eleventh-century account of Luna’s capture is a marvellous story, but it is utterly unreliable as history’ (p. 197). Christys (2015) suggests that the attack on Luni was ‘inspired by [Dudo’s] knowledge of the Muslim attack on Rome in 846’ (p. 61), as well as a Muslim attack on Luni in the *Annales Bertiniani*.

2.2.3 The third wave of attacks – 960s and 970s C.E.

Following the campaign in 859–861 C.E., the sources are silent about any Scandinavian attacks on the peninsula for a century. Reports of and references to Scandinavian incursions in both Latin and Arabic sources point towards flourishing of activity in the 960s C.E., with frequent confrontations reported until the early 970s C.E.

The earliest attack reported in the Arabic sources comes from 14th-century Ibn ‘Idhārī’s *Bayān*. Ibn ‘Idhārī (ca. 1312/1983) reports that ‘on the first day of *Rajab* of that year [355 A.H. = 23rd of June, 966 C.E.], a letter arrived from the castle of Abī Dānīs [Alcácer do Sal] for *al-Mustanşir bi-l-lāh* [al-Ḥakam II], which informs [him] of the appearance of the

fleet of the *majūs* in the western sea close to this place' (*Wa-ft̄ awwal Rajab minnaha, warada kitāb min qaṣr Abī Dānīs 'alā l-Mustanṣir bi-llāh, yadhkuru fīh zuhūr uṣṭūl al-majūs bi-baḥr al-gharb bi-qurb hādha al-makān*) (pp. 238-239). He continues that several other letters followed from towns along the western coast informing the Caliph that the *majūs* had attacked and that they reached Lisbon. A fleet from Seville was then dispatched to the Arade river, in present-day Portugal, and confronted the Scandinavian fleet at *Shilb* (Silves), which retreated after the Andalusians 'destroyed many of their ships' (*ḥaṭamū 'idatan min marākibihim*) and 'killed a large number of the heathens' (*qatalū jumlatan min al-mushrikīn*) (Ibn 'Idhārī, ca. 1312/1983, p. 239). The *Bayān* also includes a curious anecdote from this attack, saying that al-Ḥakam II ordered an admiral by the name of Ibn Fuṭaīs to trick the *majūs* by deploying copies of the Scandinavian ships along the Guadalquivir to lure them 'in the hope that they would sail there' (*ta'mīlan li-rukūbihim ilayha*) (Ibn 'Idhārī, ca. 1312/1983, p. 239). Ibn 'Idhārī does not explicitly clarify if this stratagem worked and if the Scandinavian fleet ever attempted to sail up the Guadalquivir. As Christys (2015) notes, the section of Ibn Ḥayyān's *Muqtabis* that covers this year is sadly lost, and until a manuscript surfaces, we are unsure of whether, and if so, how, he reports this attack.

The surviving manuscripts of the *Muqtabis*, however, cover the years 971–974 C.E., which report the details of the attacks of 971 C.E. and 972 C.E. Ibn 'Idhārī's seems to have taken the account the 971 C.E. attack from Ibn Ḥayyān's or used the same source, which is possibly 'Īsā al-Razī's (see García Gómez, 1967). In this account, the Caliph al-Ḥakam II is once again informed of a fleet of *al-majūs al-ardumāniyīn* ('Norman/Northmen *majūs*') roaming the western coast of al-Andalus 'as was their custom' (*'alā 'ādatihim*) at the beginning of the month of *Ramaḍān* of the year 360 A.H. (corresponding to the 28th of June – 27th of July 971 C.E.) (Ibn Ḥayyān, ca. 1060/1965, pp. 23-24; Ibn 'Idhārī, ca. 1312/1983, p. 241). The Caliph sends his admiral 'Abd al-Raḥman Ibn Rumāḥis and this vizier Ghālīb ibn 'Abd al-Raḥman to prepare a fleet in Almeria to confront the *majūs* at Algarve. On their return to Córdoba on the 26th of *Dhū al-Qa'da* (20th of September, 971 C.E.), they reported that no Scandinavians were encountered. The *Muqtabis* claims that the 'enemies of God' (*a'dā' Allāh*) must have known of the 'heavy fleets' (*al-asāṭīl al-thaqīla*) sent out to meet them which discouraged them from proceeding and fled (Ibn Ḥayyān, ca. 1060/1965, p. 57). Although the *Muqtabis* reports no further sightings or attacks, the threat of the Scandinavian fleets to the west coast seems to have been a constant issue, which prompted al-Ḥakam II to

send another fleet which left on the 11th of *Ramaḍān* of the year 361 A.H. (26th of June, 972 C.E.) (Ibn Ḥayyān, ca. 1060/1965, p. 78). As in the previous year, on their return on the 5th of *Dhū al-Ḥijja* (17th of September, 972 C.E.)²⁰, the Andalusī fleet reported that the *majūs al-ardumāniyīn* ('Norman/Northmen *majūs*') caught wind of their arrival, and spies sent to the Galician city of Santiago de Compostela 'confirmed their escape' (*lam yakhtalifu 'alayhim fī firārihim*) (Ibn Ḥayyān, ca. 1060/1965, p. 78). Unlike the attacks in the 9th-century and 966 C.E., the wave of *majūs* sightings in the early 970s seems not to have caused disruption or led to destruction and saw the Córdoba forces well-prepared for any potential confrontation. As Christys (2015) points out, however, the actions of the Scandinavian fleets take the back seat in these narratives, with the focus shifting to the preparations and preemptive actions taken by al-Ḥakam II, propping up the might of Córdoba by suggesting that the mere presence of an Andalusī fleet is enough to detract 'enemies of God' from attacking the caliphate.

The Latin sources from the Christian North are relatively lacklustre with regards to the Viking activity in the 10th Century. The *Annales Castellani Recentiores*, which Christys (2015) refers to as *Anales Complutenses* (p. 89), about which little information is known, is preserved in a 12th-century manuscript (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, 1358 (olim F.86 & Vitr. 5-6, ff. 1v.-4v.)). It reports that in Era 1008 (970 C.E.), 'Northmen came to Campo' (*uenerunt lordomani ad campo*) (Martín, 2009, p. 216). The memory of the 10th-century attacks, nonetheless, make their way into later chronicles and *vitae*. Dudo of St-Quentin makes the campaign the backdrop for his accolades for Duke Richard of Normandy; following an audience with him, the *Northmannos* headed for Spain where they 'conquered eighteen cities' (*bis novem civitates devicerunt*) and 'attacked Spain and began to afflict it with fire and plunder severely' (*hispaniam hostiliter aggredientes, caeperunt incendio et rapinis affligere eam severiter*) (Dudo, ca. 1000/1865, p. 287). Galician victories against Muslims and

²⁰ The Al-Ḥajjī (1965) edition used here says that date was the 5th of *Dhū al-Qa'da* (18th of August, 971 C.E.), although García Gómez's (1967) Spanish translation fixes this to the 5th of *Dhū al-Ḥijja* (p. 116). It is unclear whether Al-Ḥajjī's edition reflects the date on the manuscript, or whether it is a mistake in that edition. However, I am here agreeing with García Gómez's interpretation for two reasons. The first is the fact that this section of the *Muqtabis* is organised in an annalistic fashion, with the events reported in chronological order, and the previous paragraph reported events at the end of *Dhū al-Qa'da*, the month preceding *Dhū al-Ḥijja*. The second is that the text claims that this was a Tuesday, which corresponds to the 5th of *Dhū al-Ḥijja*, whereas the 5th of *Dhū al-Qa'da* was in fact a Sunday.

Scandinavians are attributed to miracles by Saint Rosendo in his *vita* (Christys, 2015, p. 85). The *Historia Silense*, which includes a redaction of the chronicle written by Sampiro (d. 1041 C.E.), attributed the death of bishop Sisnando Menéndez in 968 C.E. to a raid by *Normanni*, who arrived on a hundred vessels and ‘plundered all of Galicia’ (*totam Galleciam depredaverunt*) (Santos Coco, 1921, p. 57). This text is remarkable for two details not found anywhere else. The first is the alleged name of the king of the Scandinavians, Gunderedo, which Neil Price (2008) interprets as Gunnrauðr (p. 467); the second is the claim that the campaign lasted for three years, suggesting the possibility that the Scandinavians established a semi-permanent settlement in Galicia from where they launched attacks. Recent studies of toponyms referring to Scandinavians or containing Scandinavian elements in this region may support this theory (García Losquiño, 2018). A long-term overwintering camp may also explain the relatively frequent attacks on al-Andalus over the five years reported in the Arabic sources.

This campaign is also of note for being the first Spanish campaign to be mentioned in indigenous Scandinavian literature. Two of these are Norwegian synoptic histories: the Latin *Historia Norvegiae*, written sometime between the late 12th to mid-13th Centuries (Ármann, 2007; Ekrem & Boje Mortensen, 2006), and the Old Norse *Ágrip af Noregskonungasogum*, written c. 1190 C.E. (Driscoll, 2008) probably in or around Niðaróss (present-day Trondheim). Both of these texts claim that Eiríkr blóðøx (d. 954 C.E.), died while on a campaign in Spain.²¹ These two texts are the only two that suggest that Eiríkr died there, with other sources placing his death in England (Phelpstead, 2001, p. 94; Ekrem & Boje Mortensen, 2006, p. 197; Driscoll, 2008, p. 91). Although the veracity of this claim is disputed, it is nonetheless evidence for the memory, albeit vague and distant, for the 10th-century campaign in the Iberian Peninsula.

²¹ *Af því réðsk hann í hernuð ok í víking víða í Vestrlandum, ok fell Eiríkr í Spánialandi í útilegu* (‘Because of this, he went harrying and raiding widely in the western lands, and Eiríkr died in Spain during the raid’) (Driscoll, 2008, p. 16);

At ille in Hispanie finibus, cum piraticam excerceret, bello temptatus occubuit (‘And while Eirik was pursuing a viking expedition in Spanish territory, he suffered an armed attack and met his end’) (Ekrem & Boje Mortensen, 2006, pp. 82–83)

3. Literature review

3.1 Arabic texts on Scandinavians

Several compilations of Arabic texts dealing with the North and its people have been published, starting with Seippel's *Rerum Normannicarum Fontes Arabici* (1896–1928). This work is a collection of the relevant excerpts from around fifty texts, reproduced in the original Arabic and an introduction in Latin, which includes a short biography of the authors and bibliographical information. The texts are organised thematically, with the first chapter concerning the *majūs*, followed by *al-Urdumāniyīn* ('Normans') and its various renderings, *al-Warank* ('Varangian'), *al-Rūs*, the Frankish conquest of Sidon, and finally geographical treatises. Contemporary reviews of Seippel highlight some of the issues with his volume. One of the issues flagged is that Seippel failed to provide a translation of the texts, which David Samuel Margoliouth (1931) argues renders it unusable for those readers. Margoliouth also laments the lack of indices, which makes it less accessible to the Arabic speaking scholar as a reference. Regardless of these shortcomings the work is a pioneering attempt at bringing the Arabic sources on Scandinavia and the North to the forefront, rendering them available to the scholarship and inspiring further study into the area. For the non-Arabophone scholar, Birkeland's (1954) and Samarra'i's (1959) translations into Norwegian and English respectively rectify one of the primary issues with Seippel's work. These volumes make these texts available to a broader audience of non-Arabophone scholars, in many cases for the first time, making it a worthy companion volume to Birkeland's and Seippel's works.

These three works, however, suffer from the same disadvantage of only presenting the relevant sections of these works, which may be as long as several pages or as short as few lines, and out of the contexts of the sources as a whole. As Þórir Jónsson Hraundal (2013) has pointed out, the compilatory nature of these works means that each relevant passage is plucked out of its historical, textual and, to a certain extent, cultural context, which leads to a limited value in terms of 'potential for elaborating a historiographical narrative' (p. 7). Of particular interest to this present study is the fact that the use of *majūs* as an exonym for Scandinavians in the Iberian texts may give the impression that this was a term exclusively used for that group, ignoring the broader scope of the use of that term even within a single

source text. This can be seen, for example, in the entry for *al-Madjūs* in *Encyclopaedia of Islam 2nd Edition (EI²)*, written by Arne Melvinger (1986), which primarily relates to sources on the *majūs* as they are used for Scandinavians, with a short discussion on the possible reason for the use of this term. Interestingly, *EI²* has separate articles for *Madjūs* and *al-Madjūs*, with the former concentrating solely on its use to refer to Zoroastrians (Morony, 1986). The implications of this division and the interpretation presented by Melvinger will be discussed in further detail below (see 3.2.1).

Pórir Jónsson Hraundal's (2013) doctoral thesis tackles a similar issue with regards to sources on the *Rūs* in the Arabic corpus, building on the Seippel/Birkeland/Samarra'i compilations by fleshing out contextual details. That thesis remains to date the most in-depth study of the texts seen in their context, albeit focusing solely on the Eastern Arabic corpus dealing with the *Rūs*. In it, he starts by setting the foundations and theoretical framework of the study, where he contextualises the use of the term *Rūs* against other sources, including Slavic, Latin and Byzantine texts, and an etymology of the term. This is followed by a detailed look at the primary sources in Arabic, presenting the content and particular context for each, where the Ibn Faḍlān text is given a separate chapter 'due to its volume [and] the complexity and multifariousness of the account' (p. 42). Pórir presents these texts against a background of Arabic literary tradition, which he divides into 'different 'strands' of accounts' (p. 90). He then sets these accounts against the archaeological and numismatic evidence from the region and Scandinavia. Finally, he concludes with a discussion on the contact between *Rūs* and the Turkic people living in the region, such as the Khazars and the Ghuzz.

When it comes to the texts on the *majūs*, there is a notable lack of dedicated studies in the same vein as Pórir's. The first significant work on Viking activity in Iberia was Reinhard Dozy's *Les Normands en Espagne* (1860) in which he translated texts from Arabic to French and compared them to Latin texts. In many works, the texts are often used as sources for historical events on the Viking attacks on the Iberian Peninsula along with Latin texts. In 1955, Melvinger published his doctoral thesis, *Les premières incursions des Vikings en Occident d'après les sources arabes* (The first Viking incursions in the West according to Arabic sources), in which he analysed the Arabic texts on the attacks on al-Andalus and the Maghreb. In it, he also included a discussion on the meaning and origin of *majūs*, which he updated and reworked into the *EI²* article mentioned above. One of the latest works in

English is Ann Christys' *Vikings in the South: Voyages to Iberia and the Mediterranean* (2015), in which she reconstructs the events of the Viking attacks in Spain and Portugal by using both Arabic texts, primarily from al-Andalus, and Latin and Romance texts from Christian Northern Spain.

A similar study has also been published in Spanish by Eduardo Morales Romero entitled *Historia de los Vikingos en España* (2004). The first third of this book gives an abridged history of medieval Scandinavia, before giving an overview of the Iberian Peninsula in the same period and then going through the history of the Viking incursions. Like Christys, the author uses a range of sources, including the ones in Arabic, alongside Christian Spanish, Frankish, Anglo-Saxon and Irish sources, and focuses on the texts as sources to narrate the history of these events. Although some consideration is given to the context of the sources, this is given minor attention in favour of the content. Morales Romero has also contributed two chapters to the edited book *Los Vikingos en la Península Ibérica* (Bramsen, 2004a), which was also published in Danish as *Vikingerne på Den Iberiske Halvø* (Bramsen, 2004b). These publications feature a series of essays covering different areas in the peninsula (al-Andalus, Galicia and the Basque country), one about a Scandinavian-produced deer-andler container at San Isidoro, León, and two about Viking age society and ship-building. The region-specific papers provide a summary of the history of the Scandinavian attacks, utilising Arabic and Latin sources available. The Morales-penned paper on al-Andalus is a condensed version of his monograph, going over the main details of the timeline of the incursions. Similarly, Neil Price's chapter in *The Viking World* (2008) provides a summary of the attacks on al-Andalus and the northern Christian kingdoms.

Otherwise, a substantial amount of studies has been undertaken focusing on individual texts. Apart from the Arabic editions of most of these sources, a good number of them have been published in French, Spanish and English. Regrettably, some of the French and English translations are somewhat dated, as might be expected with translations that were produced in the 19th Century, such as Dozy's French translations and Pascual de Gayangos' translations into English, to name a few. A notable exception to this is the work done by David James, whose English edition of Ibn al-Qūṭīya's history was published in 2009 and has contributed significantly to the spread of these texts to the Anglophone world. The editions in Spanish are currently the most updated sources not only in terms of translation but also in terms of

offering the most up-to-date scholarship on them. Of particular note is the Spanish edition of Ibn Ḥayyān's *Al-Muqtabis fī Tārīkh al-Andalus* by Federico Corriente and Maḥmūd 'Alī Makkī (2001).

Apart from Ibn Faḍlān's text, another passage that has attracted considerable attention in the field of Viking studies is the one written by Ibn Diḥya (d. 633 A.H./ 1235 C.E.) in *Al-Muṭrib min ash'ār ahl al-Maghrib* (Amusing Book of Poetry of People from the West) about the Andalusian poet al-Ghazāl. According to Ibn Diḥya, 'Abd al-Raḥmān II sent al-Ghazāl on a diplomatic mission to the king of the *majūs* to broker a peace deal following the attack in 844 C.E.. William Edward David Allen's study of this text, *The Poet and the Spae-Wife* (1960) is one of the earlier ones dealing with this at some length and includes the first English translation. A more recent article by Sara Pons-Sanz (2004) rebuts Allen's claims of the text's veracity, pointing out the similarities with al-Ghazāl's diplomatic mission to Constantinople found in Ibn Ḥayyān's *al-Muqtabis*. This study will take a more detailed look into Ibn Diḥya's account in chapter 7.1.

3.2 *Majūs*

3.2.1 Fire-worshippers

The development of the word *majūs* as used in al-Andalus has attracted some interest in the scholarship. The most commonly cited source in contemporary studies is the article written by Melvinger in the second edition of the *Encyclopedia of Islam (EI²)*. In *EI²*, two articles cover the same term: one presented as simply *Madjūs* by Michael G. Morony (1986), and Melvinger's (1986) *Al-Madjūs*, adding only the definite article. Morony's article covers the history of Zoroastrianism, thus covering the term's original meaning. Melvinger's article defines it as 'the term used by Arabic historians and geographers writing about the Maghrib and Muslim Spain with the sense of Northmen, Vikings, denoting the participants in the great Viking raids on Spain' (1986, para. 1). The rest of the article offers a summary of the history of these raids as presented in the Arabic sources. Melvinger offers a possible explanation for the use of the term *majūs* when referring to Scandinavians. In this explanation, he points out the use of the word *majūs* as fire-worshippers, indicating the Zoroastrian use of fire in their ritual. Melvinger claims that '[t]he religion of the Scandinavians and other Germanic peoples was essentially the same' (para. 4), referring to the use of cremation, and thus 'their religion

reminded the Arabs of that of the Persian Magians' (para. 4). He substantiates this claim by referring to two Arabic texts that equate the *majūs* attacking Seville with al-Rūs, namely al-Mas'ūdī in his *Murūj al-dhahab* (Meadows of Gold) and al-Ya'qūbī in his *Kitāb al-buldān*. Melvinger then refers to Ibn Fadlān's text which details a *Rūs* cremation ceremony. He thus suggests that the known use of cremation by the *Rūs* and the known link between the *Rūs* and the Scandinavians attacking al-Andalus lead to their association to fire-worship and thus the association with the Zoroastrians. Melvinger also refers to al-Waṭwāṭ's (d. 718 A.H./ 1318 C.E.) *Mabāhij al-fikar wa-manāhij al-ibar* (The Joys of Ideas and the Methods of Examples), which links the *Rūs*, the *majūs* and cremation explicitly, writing that the *Rūs* 'believe in the *majūs* religion and burn their dead in fire' (para. 4). One of the primary sources Melvinger uses for the attribution of fire-worship amongst the Scandinavian *majūs* who attacked al-Andalus is al-Ghazāl's embassy. Ibn Dihya (ca. 1200/1955) explains that although some of the *majūs* al-Ghazāl encountered had converted to Christianity and 'have left the practice of fire-worship' (*taraku 'ibādat al-nār*), some retained 'their previous religion with fire-worship' (*'alā dīnihim al-awwal min 'ibādat al-nār*) (pp. 140-141).

Melvinger does provide a caveat in this theory. As he admits in his article, Zoroastrians never cremated their dead, and therefore their association with the Scandinavians could not have centred on cremation itself. To solve this quandary, Melvinger suggested that, unlike the authors in the East, Andalusians were unfamiliar with Zoroastrian religious practices apart from 'the dominant element of the fire itself' (para. 8). He suggests that, in their struggle to understand the Scandinavians' non-Abrahamic religion, they assimilated them to Zoroastrians based on their shared use of fire and their ignorance on how they respectively used it.

In the sixth section of the article, Melvinger refers to texts by Ibn 'Idhārī, Ibn al-Athīr and Ibn Ḥayyān which refer to *majūs* in Iberia decades before the first Scandinavian attack in 844 C.E.. The first instance, recounted by Ibn 'Idhārī, is a reference to an Andalusī attack on Christian lands in 793 C.E., during which the party passed through a 'land of the *majūs*' on the way from Girona in Spain to Narbonne in France (para. 6). The second is recounted in both Ibn 'Idhārī and Ibn al-Athīr, and describes an Andalusī attack on Galicia in 795 C.E. during which King Alfonso of Galicia assembled troops from the Basques and their neighbours the *majūs*. In the third instance, Ibn Ḥayyān writes of a campaign against the

Prince of Pamplona in 816 C.E. in which a certain *majūsī* called Ṣaltān was killed. The same Ibn Ḥayyān mentions an attack on Alava in 825 C.E. which happens near *Jabal al-majūs* (the mountain of the *majūs*) (para. 6). Melvinger expresses uncertainty over the identity of these *majūs* but cites Lévi-Provençal's and Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz's theories that they may have been Basques who had not yet converted to Christianity. Melvinger thus suggests that 'the term *al-majūs* was used for tribes living in the north' (para. 7). In this case, however, Melvinger does not clarify how, or even whether, fire played any prominent part in Basque paganism. With this, he fails to substantiate whether his theory of assimilation with Zoroastrians due to the use of fire applies to Basques. By not addressing this issue, his argument falls short of considering the implications of the use of *majūs* without any association to fire-worship on his theory. As will be shown in this thesis, the use of *majūs* without any allusion to pyrolatry or cremation was more widespread in Andalusī literature than what Melvinger presents.

3.2.2 Alternative provenances

Other scholars cast doubts on Melvinger's theory of fire-worship playing a role in the use of *majūs* for Scandinavians, proposing alternative theories for the term's provenance. One theory that has garnered some support in the scholarship is Mikel de Epalza's, in which the possible use of *majūs* for Basques plays a central role. His argument asserts that the meaning of *majūs* underwent two semantic shifts. While originally meaning a Persian priestly caste in Old Iranian, the meaning shifted to mean Zoroastrian by the time it entered Arabic. In the second extension of the term, Epalza argues that the term took on a juridical meaning to refer to non-Muslim, Christian or Jewish peoples living 'on the edges of the Muslim Empire' (Epalza, 2007, p. 66) who are 'integrated into the Islamic society for the payment of *jizya*' (Epalza, 2008, p. 414). In this second semantic shift, *majūs* became a juridical term to refer to peoples who are not *ahl al-kitāb*, people of the book, like Christians and Jews, but are given *dhimmī* status, i.e. given the protection to practice their beliefs against the payment of a poll tax, *jizya*. While *dhimmī* status was initially given to *ahl al-kitāb*, Zoroastrians were considered *ahl al-dhimma*, protected people, and thus afforded *dhimmī* status, despite their lack of holy scripture and their dualistic belief system as a 'political and theological solution'

(Epalza, 2007, p. 66).²² Epalza argues that this semantic extension allowed for *majūs* to be used for any ‘peoples and ethnic minorities who were still not Christian on the edges of the Muslim Empire in the 8th century, and not only to the mid-7th century Persians, who, with their enormous population mass, had provoked this political and theological solution’ (2007, p. 66).

Robert Brunschvig has previously made this claim by saying that since jurists in the Awzā‘ī school of Islamic jurisprudence ‘declared as *Madjūs* all heathen with whom they wanted to become [*sic*] to an agreement’ (Melvinger, 1986), the term had thus taken on the meaning of the legal status of followers of non-Abrahamic religions to whom *dhimmī* status can be given (Brunschvig, 1975, p. 133). This argument was picked up by Victor F. Büchner (1974) in the entry for *Madjūs* in the *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* (initially published in *EI*¹ in 1913-1936). Furthermore, de Epalza points out that Islamic jurisprudence viewed Zoroastrians as ‘being a kind of inferior *ahl al-kitāb*’ (Büchner, 1974, p. 299), a claim corroborated by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (691–751 A.H./ 1292–1350 C.E.) in his *Aḥkām ahl al-dhimma* (Laws Regarding the People of the *dhimma*). In his discussions on the laws regarding intermarriage between *ahl al-dhimma* and Muslims, he declared that ‘the religion of the *ahl al-kitāb* is better than the religion of the *majūs*’ (*dīn ahl al-kitāb khayr min dīn al-majūs*) (Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, 1997, p. 767; Epalza, 2008, p. 413).

Epalza expands on the thesis that some Basques were considered *majūs* in this juridical sense by using one specific campaign as recounted in Ibn ‘Idhārī in his *Kitāb al-bayān al-mughrib* (‘Book of the amazing story’). The campaign was led by governor Badr in 150 A.H./ 767 C.E. against Álava, a Basque territory, which Ibn ‘Idhārī reports:

In it [the year 150], Badr launched a raid onto the frontier [of al-Andalus]. He proceeded to Álava and launched an attack on it. Álava submitted to him and paid him *jizya*. He ordered that an examination (*imtiḥān*) be carried out on the men of that

²² For a more detailed look at the *dhimmī* system, the discussions around Zoroastrians’ eligibility for this status, or lack thereof, and the semantic shift of *majūs*, see 4.2.

region, and test their insight; he took with him those who were revealed to him to have ill intentions and be suspicious in the frontier (Ibn 'Idhārī, 1312/1984, p. 54)²³

Epalza explains that the examination (*imtiḥān*) mentioned in this account refers to a juridical and religious test to determine whether a person is not really Christian or Jewish and thus correctly classify them within the Islamic juridical system. Thus a person determined to fall within the parameters of being considered a second class *dhimmī*, i.e. a *majūs*, according to Epalza, is integrated into the fiscal system and *jizya* imposed on them. He continues by saying that the need to carry out this form of examination indicated that there were 'no other political and religious authorities to represent them, as was the case in other similar expeditions from that era against populations to the north of al-Andalus' (Epalza, 2008, p. 410). Ibn 'Idhārī's account, he continues, does not mention that they were Christian; neither does it mention that local authorities, religious or secular, stepped in to negotiate the terms as was the case in the campaign in Granada (Epalza, 1985; 2008). Epalza concludes that the Basque inhabitants of Álava were still not Christianised. By reaching a pact that allows them to pay *jizya* despite being pagan meant that they were given the status of *majūs* (in Epalza's definition of the term), despite Ibn 'Idhārī not using the term explicitly.

Epalza's conclusion, then, is that this account shows al-Andalus' willingness to invoke the legal precedent of providing non-*kitābī* (a member of the *ahl al-kitāb*) peoples with *dhimmī* status. As the *majūs*, Zoroastrians, of Yemen and Bahrain, were given legal protection despite not being *ahl al-kitāb*, so were the pagan Basques, thereafter also deemed *majūs*. The reason for not deeming them as idolators, *mushrikūn*, was due to it not being 'fiscally useful for the Islamic society and could provoke hard-to-control rebellions' (Epalza, 2008, p. 412). Subsequently, Andalusians applied the term in its juridical meaning to others, including Scandinavians, who were 'linked by the same political-religious status in their integration into Muslim society but not by similar ethnological characteristics (beliefs, worship, customs and culture)' (Epalza, 2007, p. 68). By decoupling the term from Zoroastrians, Epalza thus refutes Melvinger's claim that Andalusians called Scandinavians 'fire-worshippers.' Despite not

²³ *Wa-fihā ghazā Badr ilā al-thaghr, wa-taqaddama ilā Alaba; fa-ḥārabaha; fa-adh 'anat lihu, wa-addat ilayhi al-jizya. Wa-amara b-imtiḥān al-rijāl bi-tilka al-nāḥiya, wa-ikhtibār basā' irihim; fa-astaqdama minhum man utli 'a lihu 'alā sū' sarīra wa-shubha fī l-thaghr.*

directly addressing Ibn Diḥya's attribution of fire-worship to the Scandinavian *majūs*, he does claim that some misconceptions on the term's meaning in modern scholarship are 'certainly inspired by certain medieval Arab authors, who ignored its eminently juridical, religious and political character (second-class *dhimmi*) and not necessarily ethnic' (Epalza, 2008, p. 414). Here, Epalza is perhaps hinting at a process whereby some medieval authors like Ibn Diḥya, ignorant of its juridical meaning, attribute characteristics of the *majūs* they are familiar with, i.e. Zoroastrians, onto other *majūs*.

Omeljan Pritsak also reaches similar conclusions in terms of *majūs* being separated from its implication of fire-worship in al-Andalus, along with the suggestion that some medieval authors had mistakenly reconnected them. In a paper presented at the 7th International Saga Conference held in Spoleto in 1988 and published in the conference proceedings (1990), he presented an original, albeit exotic or, as Ann Christys calls it, 'too creative' (2012, p. 450), argument on the origin of the term *majūs* in the western Islamic world. Like Epalza, Pritsak hinges his argument around an account of an Andalusī campaign as reported in Ibn 'Idhārī's *Kitāb al-bayān al-mughrib*. The account in question is of the aforementioned 793 C.E. campaign to *arḍ al-Rūm*, 'the land of the Romans (Christians)' led by 'Abd al-Malik ibn 'Abd al-Wāḥid ibn Mughīth. In the course of this campaign, they attacked Gerona in modern Catalonia, then within Charlemagne's domain.²⁴ Before attacking Narbonne, they approached *bilād al-majūs*, the lands of the *majūs*. Pritsak hones in on this mention of unidentified *majūs* that in his analysis of its meaning.

Citing the 9th-century *Carmina in honorem Hludowici Caesaris* by Ermoldus Nigellus, Pritsak claims that it shows that 'the main goal of the Arab raid of 793, the *bilād al-majūs*, was *pagus Rotinicus* [...], the modern department of Aveyron' (1990, p. 466). He then points out that some toponyms in that region have retained Celtic elements, including the component *-magus*, deriving from the 'Celtic' *magos*²⁵, meaning 'field' and 'corresponding

²⁴ The account identifies the city as *Ifranja*, Frankia, which was usually used to refer to the Frankish lands in general, rather than a single city.

²⁵ Pritsak does not specify what he intends with 'Celtic'. I assume, considering the geographical location in question, that he is referring to the Gaulish *-magus*, derived from the Proto-Celtic **magos-*. See Matasović, 2009, p. 253.

to the Latin *forum* [...] meaning marketplace' (Pritsak, 1990, p. 466). From this, Pritsak postulates that *bilād al-majūs* in Ibn 'Idhārī is not so much a reference to a place inhabited by a people identified as *majūs* as it is 'the land of the *magos*'es', i.e. the lands with many *fora* named *magos*. The people associated with the term *majūs*, therefore, 'were neither ethnic nor political bodies, but a professional association for profit and booty' (Pritsak, 1990, p. 474) operating within these '*magos*'es' or *fora*. According to this theory, the designation of *majūs* as participators in a commercial activity led to its use for the Scandinavians attacking al-Andalus some 70 years after 'Abd al-Malik's campaign to Gerona and Narbonne. This use of *majūs*, however, was relatively unknown in the Islamic East, which retained its use for Zoroastrians. Due to the two terms being homonyms, Pritsak claims, the two became entangled in later literature, leading to, for example, Ibn Diḥya's claim of fire-worship.

Ann Christys agrees with the arguments made by Epalza and Pritsak that confusion on the meaning of the term played a role in the association of Scandinavian *majūs* with fire-worship. The breadth of the term's use for a variety of groups, from Zoroastrians to followers of unspecified, non-monotheistic beliefs, lead to 'echoes of all these meanings of *majūs* [...] incorporated into descriptions of the Viking *majūs*' (Christys, 2012, p. 451). Thus she refers to *Kitāb akhbār al-zamān wa-ajā'ib al-buldan* (The book of the History of Time and Wonders), which is commonly, although erroneously (Christys, 2015), attributed to al-Mas'ūdī (d. 345 A.H./ 956 C.E.). The author attributes heliolatry and pyrolatry to the *majūs* of the North²⁶, perhaps having been lead to 'attribute some of [the Zoroastrians'] practices to the men of the North just because they too are labelled *Majūs*' due to 'false etymology and the desire to include all the information at his disposal' (Christys, 2015, p. 23). One source for this confusion, she argues, may be continued use of *majūs* as Zoroastrians in Andalusi legal texts due to their inclusion of *masā'il*, legal questions, from the Eastern Islamic world. She thus agrees with Epalza's and Pritsak's conclusions that *majūs* had at least two meanings. However, she warns against the futility of looking 'in vain for terminological precision'

²⁶ It must be noted that the author of *Kitāb akhbār al-zamān wa-ajā'ib al-buldan* refers to these people as a subset of the *Ṣaḡālība*: *Wa-ammā al-Ṣaḡālība fa-hum 'adda umam fa-minnuhum qawm naṣāra wa-qawm yaqūlūn bi-l-majūsiya wa-ya'badun al-shams* ('As for the *Ṣaḡālība*, they are made up of many peoples, and some of them are Christian folk and a folk adhering to the *majūs* belief and worship the sun') (Seippel, 1896–1928, p. 127). The term *Ṣaḡālība* initially meant Slav, but later 'spread to neighbouring peoples as well' (Golden, 1997)

which risks '[missing] the point that although nearly all Vikings are labelled *majūs*, not all *majūs* are Vikings' (Christys, 2012, pp. 449-450; 2014, p. 305; 2015, pp. 19-20). Instead, she proposes that *majūs* was one of the various vague labels used for non-Muslims and those not adhering to Abrahamic faiths, akin to 'pagan'. Sammara'i (1959) interpreted it similarly when translating it, opting to use 'Heathen', clarifying that 'it was applied as a general term to non-Jewish, non-Christian, non-Muslim peoples who did not have a particular national or tribal name' by extension of its use for 'the fire-worshipping Magi of Persia' (p. 1). König (2015) also characterises *majūs* as a 'multi-faceted term used for a variety of non-monotheistic peoples' (p.208), which 'covers a wide semantic field' (p. 107) that makes identification difficult. While they both discuss the use of *majūs* at some length and dismiss the arguments brought forward by Melvinger (König, 2015, p. 107) and Pritsak (Christys, 2012, p. 450), neither Christys nor König attempt to offer a reason for this semantic shift. Andrew David Magnusson (2014) also doubts Melvinger's assessment that fire played an important role in adopting it due to the caveat Melvinger himself pointed out, i.e. the lack of cremations in Zoroastrian funerary rites. Instead, he deems it 'more likely that Muslims ascribed fire worship to the Vikings because they hailed from the frozen climes of the north' (Magnusson, 2014, p. 192). He also rejects Epalza's theory because 'the people referred to as "Zoroastrians" were not subject to Islamic law' (Magnusson, 2014, p. 195), that is to say, Scandinavians who attacked al-Andalus were not subject to be integrated into the *dhimmī* system. Instead, he proposes that *majūs* 'was the preferred rhetorical description of the early Islamic Other' in al-Andalus and part of a broader phenomenon of 'medieval Muslims [using] the term "Zoroastrians" to describe Others—groups perceived as unfamiliar, pagan, or heretical' (Magnusson, 2014, pp. 196, 207).

3.2.3 Conclusion

After taking a bird's eye view of the proposed theories and the resulting discussions on the meanings, implications and derivations of the term *majūs*, one can begin to draw some general commonalities and the major points of contention. With the exception of Pritsak's original, yet unlikely, theory, all agree that medieval Andalusī Muslims used *majūs* as a label for non-*kitābī* people, whether as a pejorative term or a legal designation. While Melvinger accepts accounts ascribing fire-worship to Scandinavians as evidence for *majūs* being an allusion to the Zoroastrian use of ritual fire, all of the other scholars mentioned above agree

that this is more likely to be a later confusion. With the word being used for both Zoroastrians and Scandinavians, they ascribed tropes about Zoroastrians onto Scandinavians. This common disagreement with Melvinger, however, ties into the primary cause for disagreement, i.e. the explanation behind the use of *majūs* and the reason for its localised ubiquity in al-Andalus. While Epalza and Pritsak offered specific derivations for it and attempted to seek ‘terminological precision’, Christys, König and Magnusson acknowledge its broad semantic range and its rhetorical function. Magnusson goes a step further by examining its use in other contexts and links the Andalusī use to its rhetorical function in the broader Islamic world. This range of opinions and the lack of consensus highlights the fact that the term remains relatively misunderstood in the fields of both Andalusī studies and Viking age studies, compounded by the fact that the studies on the term *majūs* is universally given minor attention, featuring either as single papers or as short discussions within the paper or monograph. Both of these approaches lead to the scope being necessarily narrow and omitting the wider context of its use. Epalza’s and Pritsak’s wildly different conclusions come in spite of their use of the same source material, i.e. Ibn ‘Idhārī’s *Kitāb al-bayān al-mughrib*, both choosing to focus on one short extract from it. Melvinger’s assertion that medieval authors used *majūs* ‘for tribes living in the north’ ignores the evidence for the contrary including its use for Sub-Saharan Africans by al-Bakrī (Akasoy, 2013; König, 2015). While Christys, König and Magnusson considered the wider context, the descriptions were rather summary and secondary to the scope of their respective works.

4. The Eastern Muslim World

As we have seen in chapter 2, the Andalusī sources that recorded the Scandinavian attacks on the Iberian Peninsula consistently referred to them as *al-majūs*. Although the term was widespread throughout the Muslim world, its use in al-Andalus differs considerably from its use in the East. In addition, by employing *majūs* for the Scandinavians, Andalusī authors separate themselves from their Eastern counterparts who used the ethnonym *al-Rūs*. Before delving into the Andalusī use of *majūs* in the context of the Viking attacks on al-Andalus, therefore, it is worth looking into the origin and development of the term.

4.1 Etymology

Although the exact etymology of the word is not fully known, it is believed that it entered Arabic from the Syriac *mgušā* or (Imperial) Aramaic **magūš*, ultimately from the Old Persian *maguš*. Avi Bachenheimer (2018) defines *maguš* as ‘adjective, singular masculine in nominative form for the meaning (priest) and (member of the magi)’ (p. 190). The meaning in Old Persian is reconstructed using its utilisation in the Greek borrowing *Μάγος* (*Mágos*) and is only attested for in one inscription, the cuneiform Behistun inscription, used as a title for a priest called Gaumāta (De Marchi, 2013). It is ultimately cognate with the word *magician* in English via Latin and Greek, which in turn derives from an undetermined language in the Old Iranian language family, which also included Old Persian. The ultimate derivation of the Old Iranian is not precisely known, but a proposed derivation is from the Proto-Indo-European root **meg^h-*, a common root to the word ‘might’ in English (Ito, 1987).

In the context of the pre-Achaemenid and Achaemenid (8th-4th Centuries B.C.E.) periods of Persian history, the role of the *maguš* seems to have been related to a class of Persian priesthood practising a variety of religious rites and functions (Boyce, 1982). As mentioned above, the word’s status as an *hapax legomenon* makes its interpretation somewhat difficult, and its use in other languages which have borrowed it and external sources on the *maguš*’s role have been analysed to infer its meaning. In fact, one of the primary sources for our knowledge on the Magi during this period is Herodotus’s *Historíai*, written in the mid-5th Century B.C.E. and thus contemporaneous with the Achaemenid

Empire's rule in Persia (see chapter 6.1 for a more in-depth discussion on the Magi in Classical literature). The religious beliefs of these ancient Magi, however, is a contested detail in the scholarship. As Desirée De Marchi (2013) notes, 'dealing with the argument of the religious beliefs of the Magi is undoubtedly difficult, since it becomes almost impossible to distinguish their original thought from the strong Zoroastrian influences that the priestly caste came under' (p. 50). That is to say that, at this early stage, the link between *magoi* and Zoroastrianism is not as pronounced as it was by the time the Qur'ān and early Muslims came to define *majūs* (see below). De Marchi (2013) argues that their beliefs were not uniform and were in continuous flux as several internal and external influences transformed their theology, with Zoroastrianism imparting a significant influence in later stages (pp. 50–56). Conversely, Ilya Gershevitch (1961) argued that they were not 'the representatives of one particular religion, but technical experts of worship,' (p. 25), i.e. professional priests who would perform any religious function for any religion as requested by a client, including Zoroastrian rites. Centuries later, during the Sassanid Empire's rule over Persia in the 3rd to the 7th Century C.E., Zoroastrian orthodoxy was enforced as the official religion, giving Magi priesthood both religious as well as political powers within that belief system (Boyce, 1996).

4.2 Arabic

In his reassessment of the term *majūs*, Mikel de Epalza (1985, 2007, 2008) identifies two stages of development of its meaning (see 3.2.2). In the first extension, he notes a move from being a Persian term for a priest to a general term for Zoroastrians. It is during the period of Sassanid Zoroastrian orthodoxy, which was to become the last pre-Islamic culture in Persia, that the term *maguš* became synonymous with practitioners of Zoroastrianism, and it is within this context that the term entered Arabic and Islamic thought as *majūs*. The term can be seen used at the very dawn of Islam, as it features in the Qur'ān. There, it is attested for only once, in Sūra 22 verse 17 (22:17), where *al-majūs* are listed along with "believers" (i.e. Muslims), Jews, Christian, Sabians and idolators as people who will be judged in the end-times:

Surely, they that believe, and those of Jewry, the Sabeans, the Christians, the Magians and the idolators – God shall distinguish between them on the Day of Resurrection, assuredly God is witness over everything (Qur'ān 22:17; Arberry, 1971, p. 335).

This line is subject to much discussion in both Islamic exegeses as well as in the scholarship. Although a full history of this discussion is beyond the scope of this study, an understanding of its general ideas is essential to understand the development of the perception of Zoroastrians and the use of the term *majūs*.

The primary theme of the discussion of 22:17 is the status of the four intermediary religions that stand between Muslims on one end and idolators on the other, and where Zoroastrianism falls in this list. This centred around the discussion on whether *al-majūs* could be considered *ahl al-kitāb*, ‘people of the book’ like Jews and Christians, *mushrikūn* ‘idolators’ or literally ‘associators’²⁷, or somewhere in between (Muhibbu-Din, 2000). This is related, on the one hand, to the phrasing of the verse itself, where it is unclear whether ‘the Magians and the idolators’ are to be grouped together, or whether ‘Jewry, the Sabeans, the Christians, and the Magians’ form part of one group (Magnusson, 2014). On the other hand, the discussion regarded the theology of Zoroastrianism and whether their dualistic belief system could be classified as polytheism, whether their use of fire in fire-temples constituted fire-worship and thus idolatry, and whether they had a scripture (Magnusson, 2014; Sakrani, 2018). The problem of fire-worship was a central issue in the interpretation of Zoroastrian religious beliefs. Al-Maqdisī, in his *Kitāb al-bad’ wa-l-ta’rīkh* (Book of creation and history), equates fire-worship with the Arab polytheists’ worship of idols:

[The Persians] claim that the adoration of the fire reconciles them with the creator [...] The Arab polytheists explained their adoration of idols in the same manner.²⁸
(edited from Bürgel, 1999, p. 205)

²⁷ *Mushrik* (pl. *mushrikūn*) means someone who commits *shirk*, or the act of placing someone or something on an equal standing with God, thus associating that divinity with God Himself (Gimaret in *EF*²). The Qur’ānic verse in 22:17 refers to them in the phrase *alladhīna ashrakū* ‘those who associated’.

²⁸ *Wa-yaz’umūna anna ‘ibādathum al-nār yuqrabu ilā al-bāri’ [...] kamā qāla mushirkū al-‘arab fī ‘ibādathum al-awthān* (Al-Maqdisī, ca. 966/1899, p. 62).

On the other hand, Al-Mu'ayyad al-Shīrāzī (d. 1078 C.E.), himself of Persian stock, defended Zoroastrians, and

he compares the veneration of fire with the Muslim veneration of the Ka'ba²⁹ and makes the point that both fire and Ka'ba are symbols for the light of guidance, but that the Zoroastrians, as well as the Muslims of later days retained only the symbol without the reality it represents. (Bürgel, 1999, p. 204)

Although different interpretations of the Zoroastrians' use of fire emerged, their association to fire-worship endured. This possible element of idolatry, along with their belief in two gods, i.e. dualism, rendered them suspect in the eyes of Muslims, who questioned whether they were, in fact, polytheists.

This inquiry into Zoroastrian beliefs, however, is not only related to purely theological discussions, but also to Islamic jurisprudence. According to Islamic law, a category of people known as *dhimmīs*, or as the collective *ahl al-dhimma* 'protected people', are non-Muslims who are provided protection to practice their religion against an acknowledgement of Islam's dominance and payment of a poll-tax known as *jizya*. In Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), the rights and obligations of *dhimmīs* were strictly regulated, including the terms of marriage, inheritance and conducting business. The status of Zoroastrians as *dhimmīs* was subject to much debate in *fiqh*. Although they were afforded such status based on Prophetic tradition (Magnusson, 2014; Sakrani, 2018), their contested status as *ahl al-kitāb* made them an exception. This exception was reflected in the law books; while Muslims were allowed to marry Jewish and Christian women and consume meat slaughtered by them, marrying Zoroastrian women and the consuming their meat was forbidden (Zorgati, 2012; Magnusson, 2014). In addition, a Zoroastrian's *diyya*, the blood price attributed to a man in cases of homicide and equivalent to the Old English *weregeld*, was lower than that of Christians and Jews, and in some cases could be as low as 1/15th that of a Muslim (Waardenburg, 1999, p. 36; Magnusson, 2014, pp. 79–81). As Magnusson (2014) points out, although Zoroastrians

²⁹ The *Ka'ba* is a sanctuary at the centre of the Great Mosque in Mecca. During daily prayers, *ṣalāt*, one of the five pillars of Islam, Muslim pray in the direction of the *Ka'ba*.

were given *dhimmī* status, these exceptions in law signified the boundary between *ahl al-kitāb* and non-scriptural people.

In the second extension of the term *majūs*, Epalza argues that it took on a juridical meaning to refer to non-Muslim, Christian or Jewish peoples to whom was given a second-class *dhimmī* status in the same vein as afforded Zoroastrians (see 3.2.2). Apart from Epalza's claim that this was used for Basques, one other use of *majūs* outside of for Zoroastrians was in Sind, in modern-day Pakistan. Upon the conquest of this region in 93 A.H./ 711 C.E. by Muḥammad bin al-Qāsim al-Thaqafī, Muslim jurists were faced with the dilemma of the status of the local populace and their religious beliefs. Similarly to the situation with regard to Zoroastrians in Persia upon its conquest, the standing of the native Hindus and Buddhists as *ahl al-kitāb* and thus *ahl al-dhimma* was called into question. This 'precedent for perceiving and dealing with non-Muslims' (MacLean, 1989, p. 40) was used in Sind to assimilate the non-Muslim inhabitants of Sind, thus becoming 'a further extension of the assimilation of the Zoroastrians to the *ahl al-kitāb* of the two great monotheistic faiths' (Gabrieli, 1965, p. 288).

Derryl MacLean points towards 'Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Jābir al-Balādhurī's history *Futūh al-Buldān* 'Conquest of the Lands' as a source for this association. MacLean (1989) quotes al-Balādhurī as saying 'He [al-Thaqafī] said "The *budd* [temple]³⁰ will be considered similar to the churches of the Zoroastrians [*majūs*]." He imposed the tribute [*kharāj*]³¹ in al-Rūr [Aror]³² and built a mosque' (p. 41). This translation is, however, incomplete and may prove deceptive in the context of identifying the use of *majūs*. The source from which he

³⁰ The identification of what a *budd* is has been the subject of much discussion in academia. The word's similarity to Buddha was used by some as a suggestion that it referred to Buddhist temples. Its use for both Hindu and Buddhist temples, however, puts into question that etymology. While some have suggested that this was a result of some confusion distinguishing the two on the part of the authors, an alternative etymology was put forward. The word *budd*, it is suggested, is an Arabisation of the Persian word *but* meaning idol. For an analysis of this academic discussion see Maclean, 1989, pp. 1-5. See also Carra de Vaux, 1960.

³¹ In this case, *kharāj* is used synonymously with *jizya*. See Cahen, Lambton, Orhonlu & Subhan, 1978, and Khalfaoui, 2019.

³² Modern day Rohri in Sindh Province, Pakistan.

translates this excerpt does not equate the *budd* exclusively with the Zoroastrian temples; the full quote in *Futūh al-Buldān* (Conquest of the Lands) reads:

He [*al-Thaqafī*] said: ‘The *budd* are like the churches of the Christians and the Jews, and the fire-houses of the *majūs*.’ He imposed the *kharāj* in al-Rūr and built a mosque.³³ (al-Balādhurī, ca. 850/1866, p. 439).

When quoted in full, it is clear that al-Thaqafī was equating Hinduism and/or Buddhism with the three religions that were previously given *ahl al-dhimma* status, thus assimilating them into the *dhimmī* system. There is no indication of the term *majūs* being used explicitly as a juridical term as suggested by de Epalza.

Regardless of this, the association of the term *majūs* with Hindus is present elsewhere in the literature on Sind. In *Kitāb al-Majālis w-al-Musāyarāt* (The Book of Sessions and Excursions), al-Nu‘mān (d. 363 A.H./ 974 C.E.) writes of a rogue *dā‘ī*³⁴ in Multān who converted a large number of *majūs* to Islam while allowing them to syncretically retain elements of their previous religion against *Ismā‘īlī*³⁵ doctrine:

One of the missionaries was in a remote location in a distant region proselytizing on behalf of the Friends of God [i.e., the Shi‘i Imams] [...] Most of its people are *majūs* but Islam had spread among them previously. The Commander of the Faithful, al-Mu‘izz li-Dīn Allāh, heard that this last missionary had caused mischief among them. Specifically, [the missionary] proselytized many of the *majūs* (*‘āliman kathīran min al-majūs*) who kept their religion and did not convert to Islam. He let them continue doing things forbidden by God, which they deem lawful; they used to deem lawful that which God prohibited. They practised consanguineous marriage and consumed

³³ *Wa-qāla: mā al-budd illā ka-kanā ‘is al-naṣārā wa-l-yahūd wa-buyūt nīrān al-majūs wa-waḍa ‘a ‘alayhim al-kharāj bi-l-rūr wa-banā masjidan.*

³⁴ From *da‘wa*, meaning an invitation to conversion to Islam. In the political and historical context, particularly within the *‘Ismā‘īlī* branch of Islam (see note below), a *dā‘ī* is effectively a Muslim missionary for religio-political purposes. See Canard, 1965.

³⁵ *Ismā‘īlism* is a denomination of Shi‘i Islam that was adopted by the Fatimid Caliphate.

that which is unlawful to drink and eat, transgressing thereby the ordinances and statutes of God. (Magnusson, 2014, pp. 203-204).

This attribution of *majūs* to Hindus has been misunderstood in modern scholarship. As Andrew Magnusson (2014) and MacLean (1989) point out, this particular passage in al-Nu‘mān’s account has led to some, like Abbas Hamdani (1967), to assert that both Buddhists and Zoroastrians lived in Multān. Steven Stern rejects (1949) this categorically, saying that al-Nu‘mān uses the term ‘a vague denomination for Hindus’ (p. 299). MacLean (1989) agrees that al-Nu‘mān ‘in this instance clearly refers to the Hindu community’ (p. 150), but warns against Stern’s complete rejection, pointing out that Multān was the site of the most prominent sun-temple and centre for heliolatry practised by Maga Brahmins. The association of Maga Brahmins with Magi from Persia immigrating to Sind, bringing Mithraic³⁶ heliolatry with them, is a long-standing belief in scholarship, one which, however, according to the renowned Indologist Johannes Bronkhorst needs to be examined carefully (Bronkhorst, 2016). MacLean (1989) thus postulates that the association of these Maga Brahmins with the sun temple in Multān, and the association of that belief with Persians, led to the blanket association of ‘Hindus of Upper Sind’ with *majūs* (p. 132). Although Bronkhorst (2016) asserts that the earliest attestation for the term *maga-brāhmaṇa* in Indic sources is in a 9th-century C.E. inscription (p. 127), he also points out that one of their earliest mentions can be found in Ptolemy’s 2nd-century C.E. *Geography* as *brakhmanoi magoi* (p. 132). *Magoi* has a common derivation from an Old Iranian (see 6.1). Ptolemy’s influence on Arabic-Islamic geography was immense. As Cristina D’Ancona (2016) mentions, his works would have been amongst the texts introduced to Islam already in the 7th Century C.E. with the conquest of Syria, and amongst the texts translated into Arabic during the golden age of Arabic translation during the first two centuries of the ‘Abbāsīd period starting from 749 C.E.. Al-Nu‘mān would probably have been familiar with Ptolemy, and it is possible that he was acquainted with *Geography*; however, it is, perhaps, impossible to conclude whether al-Nu‘mān or his source recognised a similarity between Zoroastrian beliefs and heliolatry in Multān, whether

³⁶ Mithra, in a Persian context, is a divinity worshipped in the pre-Zoroastrian pantheon and later incorporated into Zoroastrian theology and is often associated with the sun. See Schmidt in EIr.

the name *maga* led to the association with *majūs*, or whether they were familiar with Ptolemy's reference to them as *magoi*.

Magnusson (2014) gives a different interpretation of this association, pointing out that comparison to *majūs* was a standard rhetorical device against peoples they deemed to be theologically devious. This device forms parts of the common trope of using 'a religious Other to make inclusions and exclusions within a large religious community' (Alfonso, 2007, p. 32), giving rise to the formula 'the X are the Y of our *umma* [community]' (Wasserstrom, 1995, p. 97). As Steven Wasserstrom (1995) shows, this formula is used primarily to compare an Islamic sect as X with a non-Islamic religion as Y. The medieval historian of religions al-Shahrastani, in his monumental study of religions *Kitāb al-milal w-al-nihal* 'Book of Creeds and Sects', wrote:

The Prophet, peace be upon him, compared each of the misguided sects of his community with a misguided people of former times. Thus he said, 'the Qadarites are the *majūs* of this *umma*, the Mushabbiha are the Jews of this *umma*, and the *rāfiḍa* [Shi'ites] are its Christians.'³⁷ (edited from Wasserstrom, 1995, p. 98).

The attribution of this formula to the Prophet comes from the *ḥadīth* (pl. *āḥādith*) literature, sayings attributed to him. The most frequently quoted *āḥādith* that use *majūs* within this formula are, as seen in the al-Shahrastani quote, directed towards Qadarites, an early Islamic sect that believed in free will and self-determination, as opposed to predestination:

It was narrated from Ibn 'Umar that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "The *Qadariyyah* are the Zoroastrians [*majūs*] of this *Ummah*. If they get sick, do not visit them, and if they die, do not attend (their funerals)." (*Sunan Abu Dawud*, *ḥadīth* 4691)

It was narrated that Hudhaifah said: "The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: "Every nation has its Zoroastrians [*majūs*], and the Zoroastrians of this *Ummah* are those who say that there is no *Qadar* (divine decree). Whoever among them dies, do not

³⁷ *Wa-shabbaha al-nabi, ṣallā llāhu 'alayhi wa-sallama, kull firqa ḍālla min hādhihī al-umma bi-umma ḍālla min al-umam al-sālifa fa-qāla, al-qadariya majūs hādhihī al-umma, wa-qala al-mushabbiha yahūd hādhihī al-umma wa-l-rāfiḍa naṣārāha* (Al-Shahrastani, ca. 1129/1968, p. 19).

attend his funeral, and whoever among them falls sick do not visit him. They are the partisans of the *Dajjāl* [Antichrist], and Allāh will surely join them with the *Dajjāl*.”
(*Sunan Abu Dawud*, *ḥadīth* 4692)

A common interpretation is the understanding of self-determination as a form of dualism. The commentary accompanying these two *āḥādīth* in the bilingual edition of the *ḥadīth* collection published by Dar-us-salam Publications reads:

Zoroastrians believe in a god of light, or good, and a god of darkness or evil. Similarly, the *Qadariyyah* held the view that Allāh did not know what creature would do before they do it, so if the creatures do evil, it is by their own initiation. While belief in *al-Qadar* [predestination] means that we believe that Allāh has pre-ordained all matters in every detail, with complete knowledge of it all before its existence, the good and the bad. (Abū Dāwūd, 2008, p. 5:205)

Thus, while determinists attribute all of creation to God, self-determinists attributed evil to man, which is compared to the Zoroastrian belief that good is the creation of the god Ahura Mazda while evil is the domain of the god Angra Mainyu. The interpretation of these *āḥādīth* is non-uniform in the scholarship, and many have analysed alternative reasons for the comparisons between the Qadarites and Zoroastrians. Josef van Ess (1975) takes issue with the dualist interpretation, pointing out that Zoroastrians themselves were determinists and thus would have little in common with Qadarites (p. 148). Perhaps this misses the point that self-determinism is not the crux of the comparison as much as it the attribution of a part of creation to someone other than God. Magnusson (2014), while agreeing with van Ess’s statement that the comparison was initially made as a rhetorical device, proposes that the likening hinges on the second part of the *āḥādīth* in question, i.e. the prohibition of association with Qadarites. He argues that as Zoroastrians were seen as inferior *ahl al-dhimma* with whom associating was discouraged, as discussed above, the Qadarites, while technically Muslim, were not to be associated with (Magnusson, 2014, pp. 200-202). Regardless of the interpretation, it is evident that the use of *majūs* as a term of abuse against the Qadarites is rooted in comparison to Zoroastrians rather than as a generic, pejorative term of abuse that had been decoupled from its meaning as Zoroastrians, as was the case with other terms used to describe heretical and deviant sects like *zandaqa* and *khawārij* (see

5.1). The use of the formula ‘the X are the Y of our *umma*’ to draw a literal comparison between a sect and another religion, rather than being purely rhetorical, can be seen in other cases. Indeed, as Wasserstrom (1995) shows, a similar comparison by al-Sha‘bi (d. 103 A.H./721 C.E.) which states that ‘the *rāfiḍa* [Shi‘ites] are the Jews of this *umma*’ (p. 101) was followed by a list of nine similarities between Shi‘ites and Jews, a list which was later expanded by Ibn Taymiyya (d. 729 A.H./1328 C.E.) to twenty-nine similar attributes.

4.3 Conclusion

As seen in this chapter, the use of *majūs* in the Middle East was used to mean Zoroastrians. Zoroastrianism was the subject of much debate in Islamic heresiology and jurisprudence, which questioned whether the religion’s practices could be deemed akin to idolatry due to what was perceived as fire-worship and whether dualism implied polytheism. These discussions were relevant in terms of their legal status. Ultimately, they were granted *dhimmī* status, albeit enjoying a lower status than *dhimmīs* of *ahl al-kitāb*. The interpretation of Zoroastrianism was imbued into the term *majūs*, and was subsequently used to compare other religions and their adherents to Zoroastrians. Rather than it becoming a legal term as Epalza suggested, *majūs* was used to either justify the inclusion of other religious groups into the *dhimmī* system, and thus giving the Caliphate the license to charge them *jizya*, or discredit other Islamic sects/denominations. *Majūs* thus retained a strong reference to Zoroastrians, even when used as a rhetorical device and as a term of abuse.

5. Al-Andalus – *majūs* as ‘pagan’

After establishing the theory that *majūs* was used as a juridical term to refer to adherents to non-scriptural religions to whom *dhimmī* status is given, Epalza (2007) suggests that it was imported into al-Andalus to be used for ‘mountain Basques in the northern Iberian Peninsula, mountain Berbers in the Maghreb and the Norse Viking, Norman and Briton sailors’ (p. 62). Although the inclusion of Berbers and Basques in that list may carry some weight on the basis that they were permanent residents in lands under Muslim control, the inclusion of ‘Norse Vikings’ raises some questions on the validity of the claim. Büchner (1974) certainly saw the problem with this issue and qualified his definition by claiming that ‘occasional peace treaties were concluded’ with these Scandinavian attackers (p. 300). This claim is unfounded and exposes some fatal flaws in Büchner’s and Epalza’s hypothesis. *Dhimmī* status is, by definition as ‘protected people’, granted to people to whom protection is provided to practice their own faith under the dominance of Islam against the payment of *jizya*. This can only be applicable to non-Muslims permanently residing within the confines of Islamic lands and thus amounts to domestic policy. Even if any peace treaties were concluded with Scandinavians as an act of diplomacy with a foreign power, the status of *ahl al-dhimma* would not have been applicable. Therefore, granting *dhimmī* status to Scandinavians would suggest a permanent settlement within al-Andalus, a claim which would require further investigation and evidence beyond the hypothetical meaning of the term *majūs*.³⁸ In addition, non-resident, temporary travellers passing through al-Andalus for the purpose of, for example, trade were not incorporated into the *dhimmī* system, as Olivia Remie Constable (1994) summarises:

Non-Muslim foreigners traveling within the *dār al-Islām* are required to obtain a certificate of safe-conduct (*’amān*), and adhere to guidelines set for all non-local merchants. An *’amān* was generally valid for between four months and a year, and

³⁸ A permanent settlement of Scandinavians along the coast of the Guadalquivir following the first Viking attack in 844 has been suggested by Levi-Provencal. For a discussion against this claim, see chapter 7.3).

allowed a non-Muslim to live and work in Islamic territories during this period without assuming the status of a resident non-Muslim (*dhimmi*). (p. 64)

This rules out the possibility of the status of *majūs* as a means for justifying the *dhimmī* status of any trading parties. Furthermore, Christian Müller (2013) notes that ‘[t]he non-payment of *jizya* and waging war against Muslim authorities is regarded as a breach of the *dhimmī*-contract’ (p. 34). The nature of the activities which are generally described when using the term *majūs* for Scandinavians, i.e. attacks on Muslims in Islamic territory, would therefore automatically nullify their juridical status as *dhimmīs*, if any was granted in the first place. This means that the use of *majūs* in a juridical sense would be inconsistent with these activities, rendering the idea of *majūsī* attackers an oxymoron. Its use for Scandinavians, therefore, either refutes Epalza’s claim or would justify a further, third step in the development of the word’s meaning.

5.1 Glossarium Latino-Arabicum

For evidence of this extension, we turn to the MS Leiden UB Or. 231, a 12th-century Latin-Arabic dictionary better known by the name of the only modern edition published: *Glossarium Latino-Arabicum* (*Glossarium*). The work consists of more than 10,000 Latin words, arranged in alphabetical order, and glossed in Arabic. Pieter van Koningsveld (1977), whose doctoral thesis on the manuscript remains its most authoritative study, concluded that the author was most likely a Mozarab³⁹ living in Toledo, who wrote the dictionary as an aid to the Arabic-speaking Christians reading Latin. Toledo came under Christian rule in 1085, becoming part of the Kingdom of Leon-Castile. It is within this new (re)Christianised Toledo that the anonymous author of the *Glossarium* compiled this dictionary, with the intent, according to van Koningsveld (1977), to assist Arabic-speaking Christian clergymen in learning and reading the ecclesiastical, and in the case of native Spanish, ancestral language. While most Arabic definitions are single words, phrases or longer explanations, some have multiple glosses separated by the conjunction *wa-* ‘and’. Thus, while *mensis* ‘month’ is glossed as *shahr* ‘month’, the following word *mensura* ‘measure’ is glossed as *kayl wa-qays*,

³⁹ Mozarabs were Arabic-speaking Iberian Christians. For the possible etymology of the word and its usage, see Chalmeta, 1993.

with both *kayl* and *qays* translating to ‘measure’ (Seybold, 1900, p. 312). Van Koningsveld’s (1977) in-depth analysis of this text also shows how the anonymous author used a variety of sources for his glosses, including, amongst others, Ishāq ibn Balashk’s Arabic translation of the four Gospels and Isidore of Seville’s *Etymologiae*. These sources and their significance in understanding some of the gloss choices will be analysed below. The use of *majūs* as a reference to Scandinavians is not attested for in Mozarabic literature, which is primarily of a religious nature. The utilisation of Arabic by this Christian community, however, proves indispensable to understanding the word’s use due to two factors. The first is that a significant amount of translations to Arabic of canonical and biblical texts done by Mozarabs allows us to see the use of *majūs* against the source material in Latin, thus allowing us to understand its meaning with ample context rather than as isolated in Arabic-only texts. The second factor, which is the subject of chapter 6, is that Mozarabic culture is emblematic of the cultural and linguistic hybridity of al-Andalus, which may provide the context for the unique usage of *majūs* in the region.

The evidence provided for the first factor by the unique manuscript of the *Glossarium* is the use of *majūs* as a gloss for three Latin words. As Christys (2015) has noted, *majūsī*, the adjectival form of *majūs* in Arabic, is given as a gloss for *gentiles* (sing. *gentilis*) and *paganus*. Upon further investigation of the text, I have found that *majūsī* is also used as a gloss for *ethnicus*, a Latinisation of the Ancient Greek *ethnikós* (ἔθνικός).⁴⁰ *Gentiles* and *ethnicus* are glossed simply as *majūsī*, while *paganus* is glossed as *majūsī khārijī*. The lack of the conjunction *wa-* here suggests that this gloss is meant as a phrase, rather than two glosses for *paganus*, thus further qualifying a *majūsī* as a *khārijī*. The term *khārijī* may carry multiple meanings in Arabic. As a nominal form of the verb *kharaja* ‘to go out’ or ‘to leave’, the word *khārij* may take on the meaning of ‘exterior’ or ‘a foreign country’, while as the active participle (*ism al- fā’il*) it takes on the meaning of the agent of the verb *kharaja* in its nominal usage or as ‘external’ in its adjectival use. The *nisba*, or relative adjectival form, of that noun,

⁴⁰ Both *gentilis* and *ethnikós* are semantic loans from the Hebrew *goi* (גוי). With *goi* originally meaning ‘nation’ before transitioning to refer to non-Jews, the words *gentilis* from gens ‘a people’, and *ethnikós* from *éthnos* ‘nation’, especially in its Latinised form *ethnicus*, were used to refer to pagans or heathens in Ecclesiastical Latin.

khārijī, may, in turn, mean ‘foreign’ or ‘external’. From an Islamic point of view, however, the term *khārijī*, particularly in its plural form *khawārij*, was the term used for members of an early branch of Islam, representing the first schism predating the Sunnī/Shī‘ī split, the name of which is rendered in English as Kharijites. The exonym *khawārij* was given to them as a reference to their dissent from ‘Alī’s army⁴¹ and their exit from the city of *Kūfa* (in modern-day Iraq) following the Battle of *Ṣiffīn* in 37 A.H./ 657 C.E.. Eventually, due to their theological differences from the more mainstream branches of Islam, this exonym was reinterpreted to express ‘the idea that they had gone out of the community of the faithful’ (Levi Della Vida, 1978, I. The origins of the *Khārijī* movement), thus deemed a heretical movement.

An in-depth discussion on the vast matter of heresy in Medieval Islamic thought is impossible in this present study due to space limitations. Acquiring an understanding, albeit superficial, of the main ideas, however, is indispensable to understand the context within which *majūs* was used in the *Glossarium* and beyond. As it is often pointed out, pinning down an Arabic word for heresy or heretics, or even uniformly defining heresy, in that period is not an easy task. This is, in no small part, attributed to the fact that, while heresy can be seen as any ‘heterodox’ movement at odds with the ‘orthodoxy’, defining Islamic ‘orthodoxy’ is, in itself, problematic.⁴² The issue of ‘orthodoxy’, or rather the lack thereof, is the subject of a paper by Alexander Knysh (1993) in which he laments the Eurocentric and Christian-centric nature of this dichotomy, an attempt to redress and compartmentalise Islamic thought and history within a Western, normative framework (pp. 48-50, 66-67). Ignaz Goldziher (1910/1981) succinctly summarised the issue as such:

There is no parallel between dogma in Islam and dogma in the religious system of any Christian church. In Islam there are no councils and synods that, after vigorous

⁴¹ ‘Alī ibn ‘Abī Ṭālib (d. 40 A.H./ 661 C.E.) was a cousin and son-in-law of Prophet Muhammed and one of his companions, or initial followers. His legitimacy, or lack thereof, of his role as the successor to Prophet Muhammed as the caliph is a major reason for the *Sunnī* and *Shī‘ī* division within Islam. See Vecca Vaglieri, 1960 and Gleave, 2008.

⁴² Regarding the use of quotation marks when using the terms ‘orthodoxy’ and ‘heterodoxy’: ‘As an indication of its somewhat questionable status in an Islamic context it is a common practice to put it in quotation marks.’ (Langer and Simon, 2008, p. 274).

debate, fix the formulas that henceforth must be regarded as sound belief. There is no ecclesiastic office that provides a standard of orthodoxy. There is no exclusively authorized exegesis of the sacred texts, upon which the doctrines of a church, and the manner of their inculcation, might be based. The consensus is the highest authority in all questions of religious theory and practice, but it is a vague authority, and its judgment can scarcely be precisely determined. Its very concept is variously defined. In theological questions it is especially difficult to reach unanimity about what is to be accepted without dispute, as the verdict of consensus. Where one party sees consensus, another may be far from seeing anything of the sort. (pp. 162-163)

One of the first issues that come with this situation is that any ideology currently prevalent in a region and supported by the ruling elite will become the ‘orthodoxy’ and any movement, group or ideology that is at odds with it could be seen as ‘heretical’. An oft-cited example of a clear, rapid switch of favoured ideology is the case of Mu‘tazilīs in the 9th Century in the ‘Abbasid Caliphate. With Mu‘tazilī dogma becoming the official dogma of the Caliphate under the Caliph al-Ma‘mūn (r. 196 A.H./ 812 C.E. – 218A.H./ 833 C.E.), the establishment of the *miḥna*, the religious persecution or, as it is sometimes translated, inquisition, allowed for all dissidents and ‘heretics’ to be suppressed. These dissidents could be anyone who did not fully conform to Mu‘tazilī ideals, amongst others the dogma that the Qur‘ān was created (*makhlūq*) by God rather than being His uncreated, eternal word. Thus was Mu‘tazilī ‘orthodoxy’ established and heresy defined as the opposition to that particular ‘orthodoxy’. Barely two decades later, with al-Mutawakkil as Caliph, the *miḥna* was abolished and Sunnī ‘orthodoxy’ reestablished and Mu‘tazilīs themselves regarded as heretics (see Lewis, 1953, pp. 60-61; Knysh, 1993, p. 55; Henderson, 1998, pp. 50-51). Politics and religion were one and the same, indivisible from each other, and ‘[o]rthodoxy meant the acceptance of the existing order, heresy or apostasy, its criticism or rejection’ (Lewis, 1953, p. 62). ‘Heresy’ was seen, thus, both an affront to theological dogmas and political stability. With a multitude of ‘sects’, traditionally numbering to 73 based on some prophetic traditions (*ḥadīth*) only one

of which is destined for heaven with the other 72 awaiting hell⁴³, ample reasons for the accusation of ‘heresy’ were easily acquired.

Despite this preoccupation with heresy, as evidenced by the rich tradition of heresiology and the wealth of heresiographical works of al-Shahrastānī, Ibn Ḥazm and al-Baghdādī, there was no one word in Arabic that could encompass the full meaning of “heresy”. Indeed, as Bernard Lewis (1953) notes, the modern Arabic word for heresy, *hartaqa* (*hurtūqī* – heretic), is a loan word via Syriac and is of Christian origin, coming into general use in the 19th Century. There are, however, several concepts that are commonly translated to “heresy”, albeit not fully capturing the semantic meanings and nuance (Lewis, 1953). The Encyclopedia of Islam Second Edition lists five entries, referencing five articles within itself, under the heading of heresy: *bid‘a*, *ghulāt*, *ilhād*, *takfīr* and *zandaqa*. The first, *bid‘a* (pl. *bida‘* or *bid‘āt*), or the concept of innovation, refers to the idea of introducing ‘a belief or practice for which there is no precedent in the time of the Prophet’ (Robson, 1960). The second, *ghulāt*, or people accused of *ghulū* ‘exaggeration’ or ‘overshooting’, are those who take their diversions from the “orthodoxy” to extreme levels. While differing opinions were generally welcome and ‘a certain measure of diversity of opinion is harmless, and even beneficial’ (Lewis, 1953, p. 53), *ghulāt* were considered to be those who take that diversity to dangerous levels. Sunnīs made early use of this accusation against certain factions of Shī‘ites whose veneration for ‘Alī bordered on the adoration, attributing divinity to him and thus being considered polytheists (Lewis, 1953). Other forms of *ghulū* have included syncretic variations that introduced concepts from outside of Islam such as reincarnation and thus seen as *bid‘a* that have crossed the line to *ghulū* (Hodgson, 1965). As mentioned above, opinions on where the line was to be drawn significantly varied and was subject to interpretation (Lewis, 1953). Although accusation of *bid‘a* and *ghulū* carry significant weight in theological disagreements, ‘in the eyes of the theologians, he is a Muslim though a sinner, and may

⁴³ ‘It was narrated from ‘Awf bin Malik that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: “The Jews split into seventy-one sects, one of which will be in Paradise and seventy in Hell. The Christians split into seventy-two sects, seventy-one of which will be in Hell and one in Paradise. I swear by the One Whose Hand is the soul of Muhammad, my nation will split into seventy-three sects, one of which will be in Paradise and seventy-two in Hell.” It was said: “O Messenger of Allah, who are they?” He said: “The main body.”’ (Sunan Ibn Mājah Book, 36, Hadith 67). On the significance of this *ḥadīth* and its influence on heresiography, see Montgomery Watt, 1970 and Gömbeyaz, 2018.

aspire to salvation in the life to come’ (Lewis, 1953, p. 58). *Ilhād*, *takfīr* and *zandaqa* carried more serious connotations of departure from Islam. In modern Arabic, *ilhād* is used primarily to signify ‘atheism’, and it is derived from *mulhid* ‘atheist’. Although used for this meaning in medieval Islam, its semantic meaning of ‘deviator’ led to its use as ‘deviator in religious beliefs’ and ‘rejection of religion as such, materialist scepticism and atheism’ (Madelung, 1991, para. 3). *Takfīr* is the accusation of someone as being a *kāfir*, or infidel, who ‘is not only damned in the world beyond; he is outlawed in this world’ (Lewis, 1953, p. 59). The etymology of *zandaqa* is disputed; it was initially used to refer to Manicheanism, an Iranian dualist religion known in Christian tradition as the religion from which St. Augustine converted to Christianity. Later, it was broadened to refer to a ‘criminal dissident - the professing Muslim who holds beliefs or follows practices contrary to the central dogmas of Islam, and is, therefore, to be regarded as an apostate and an infidel’ (Lewis, 1953, p. 56). The broadened usage of *zandaqa* and *khawārij* form an interesting parallel with the way *majūs* was used as a term of abuse to draw a comparison to Zoroastrians, as mentioned above; the meaning of a term initially describing a specific group changed to encompass a broader idea that could be attributed to multiple groups.

Turning our attention back to al-Andalus, as María Isabel Fierro (1992) shows, accusations of heresy, in many of its forms, were directed towards several other branches of Islam in that Sunnī and Mālikī ‘orthodoxy’. Ibn Ḥazm (384 A.H./ 994 C.E.–456 A.H./ 1064 C.E.), in *Kitāb al-Fiṣal fī-l-milal wa-l-aḥwā’ wa-l-niḥal* (The Book of Judgement regarding the Confessions, Inclinations and Sects), lists Kharijites along with Mu‘tazilīs, Ash‘arīs and Ṣūfīs as heretics whose presence is unwanted in al-Andalus (Fierro, 1992). The Palestinian geographer al-Muqaddasī (d. ca. 380 A.H/ 990 C.E.) claimed that Mu‘tazilīs and Shī‘ites would be sometimes executed if discovered in al-Andalus (Fierro, 1992). In the Mālikī legal school of thought, which was prevalent in Iberia, a *zindīq*, someone accused of *zandaqa* is considered a hypocrite, or ‘an apostate who has secretly fallen away from Islam under the cloak of outward conformity’ (Fierro, 1987, p. 252) and should thus be executed. This law was implemented to its full extent against a number of people, and of the six accusations made between 138 A.H./755 C.E. and 422 A.H./1031 C.E. flagged by Fierro (1987), two were executed; two still were accused of *zandaqa* due to their being Mu‘tazilīs or sharing Mu‘tazilī views. However, despite the wide range of ideologies being deemed heretical to the Mālikī “orthodoxy”, the etymological value of the word *khawārij* that implies an exit or

departure from the community led to the comparison of any rebellion to *khawārij* (Clarke, 2013, pp. 517-519, 521). *Khawārij*, therefore, was added to the catalogue of accusations against dissenting parties.

It is unsurprising, then, to see that the *Glossarium* lists the word *khawārij* as a gloss to the Latin *hereses* and *ypocrisi*. Possibly due to the complex nature of Islamic heresiology, and the lack of a single word that could satisfy all the semantic needs required to translate heresy in a Christian sense, the Mozarabic author needed to pick one word that could approximate its meaning. In the 17th-century Arabic-Latin dictionary by Franciscus Raphelengius (1613), considered to be the first Arabic-Latin dictionary to be ever printed, *khārijī* is glossed as *Hæreticus*, *glos. qui discessit à vera religione* (‘Heretic, glos. he who dissents from the true religion’) and *khārij* as *Egressus ab ecclesia vel fide* (‘departure from the church or faith’) (p. 93). Alastair Hamilton (1989) claims that the *Glossarium* was ‘Raphelengius’ main lexicographical source’ and ‘remains the work quoted with greater frequency than any other’ (p. 559). With the word built on the root for ‘to go out’, Raphelengius perhaps deduced that the *Glossarium*’s author’s intention was to convey a departure from Christianity and the Church, much like the Kharijites were seen as those who exit the community, on its etymological strength. The use of *khawārij* to refer to heretics is not limited to the *Glossarium*, however. The *Mozarabic Collection of Canon Laws*, or as it is known in Arabic, *Qānūn*, uses the term on various occasions to refer to assorted heretics and, occasionally, Jews. Another form of the word, *khārija* ‘heresy’ is also used when referring to specific heresies, as is the case with *khārija Nistūr* ‘the Nestorian heresy’ (Echevarria, 2013, p. 350). Ana Echevarria (2013) attributes the use of this term to the idea of ‘religious heresy as a primary form of deviance and expression of dissent’ (p. 350). The assimilation of Islamic terminology in Christianity in Mozarabic circles is a well-attested-for phenomenon in al-Andalus. Most notably, early Arabic translations of the Bible show a high degree of Islamic and Qur’ānic language (Kassis, 1997). The use of the term *khawārij*, then, despite its origin in Islamic thought, was part of a broader phenomenon of assimilation, which will be examined further below.

All of this, however, raises the question of why pagans are given the attribute of being *khārijī* in the *Glossarium*’s gloss. Why is it that, while *gentiles* and *ethnicus* are simply *majūsī*, *paganus* is a ‘heretical’ *majūsī*? Furthermore, what does this association of *majūsī*

with *khārijī* tell us about *majūs* itself? There may be two answers to this dilemma. The first is the possibility of an equivalence between paganism and heresy, where any Christian who partakes in idolatrous or pagan rites can be regarded as a heretic. As I have discussed above, an accusation of infusing non-Islamic ideas, even those imported from other religions, into Islam was a valid basis for the accusation of *ghulū*. Indeed, as discussed earlier, being called, or compared with, a *majūsī* was a common accusation that implied dualist ideas and therefore an accusation of rejecting monotheism or reverting to pre-Islamic beliefs. This form of insult has survived to this day, with *majūsī* being used as a derogatory term for Shī‘ites due to their link with Iran, suggesting that they are not really Muslim but Zoroastrians in disguise, much like the accusation of *zandaqa*.⁴⁴ In Islamic jurisprudence, various forms of heresy discussed above could be regarded as apostasy (*ridda*). The Mālikī scholar Ibn Rushd al-Jadd (d. 520 A.H./1126 C.E.) treats *zandaqa* in a section of his *Kitab al-bayān wa-l-taḥṣīl* entitled *Kitāb al-murtaddīn wa-l-muḥaribīn* (Book of the Apostates and the Warriors) (Fierro, 2001, pp. 463-464; Ibn Rushd al-Jadd, 1988, pp. 16:359-445). In Isidore’s *Etymologiae*, under the heading *De paganis* ‘On pagans’, apostates are defined as ‘who, after the baptism of Christ has been received, return to the worship of idols and pollution of sacrifice’ (*qui post baptismum Christi susceptum ad idolorum cultum et sacrificiorum contaminationem revertuntur*) (Isidore, 1911, 8.10:5; 2006, p. 183). It is plausible, then, albeit speculative, that the equation of heresy with apostasy in Islamic heresiology and jurisprudence, which would have provided the *Glossarium*’s compiler with the related vocabulary in Arabic, combined with the equation of apostates with pagans as in Isidore, led to the concept of equating heretics with Christians who have reverted to, or partake in rituals associated with, their pre-Christian, pagan roots. Indeed, the bundling up of heretics and pagans alongside Jews is not unknown in Latin Canon laws (Freidenreich, 2014) as well as Visigothic Canon laws in pre-Muslim Spain (Thompson, 1969). The *Qānūn* mentioned above contains a translation of canon 37 from the collections of canons from the Council of Laodicea (363–364 C.E.) regarding the prohibition of receiving gifts from or celebrating feasts with heretics and Jews. Where the original Greek text reads ‘That it is not allowed to receive festive gifts from Jews

⁴⁴ The best known case of the use of *majūs* in modern times is its use by Saddam Hussein in the events leading to and during the Iraq-Iran war in 1980-1988. The state media in Iraq referred to the Iranians as *furs al-majūs* ‘the *majūs* Persians’ as a derogatory term to imply that the Iranians are covertly Zoroastrians disguised as Muslims. See Al-Marashi, 2003 and Smiles, 2008.

or heretics or to celebrate holidays with them’ (Linder, 1997, p. 463), the word αἰρετικὸν (*airetikon*) ‘heretic’ is translated to *majūs* (Echevarria, 2013, p. 352). In another, taken from the fourth Council of Carthage (399 C.E.), the translation for ‘gentiles’ is rendered as *majūs*, while ‘infidels’ is rendered as *kāfirūn* ‘infidels’ (Echevarria, 2013, p. 352). It seems, then, that in translating Latin and Greek ecclesiastical texts, the words for heretics, pagans and gentiles could be interchanged, with *majūs* being used as an intermediary, yet vague, word that could encompass the various meanings necessary for these translations.

The second possible explanation for using the word *khārijī* as a qualifier for *majūsī* in the gloss for *paganus* may be related to the etymology of *paganus* itself. As mentioned above, one of the primary sources used by *Glossarium*’s author was Isidore of Seville’s *Etymologiae*. Van Koningsveld (1971) has shown that a single, known, Latin manuscript of Isidore’s text was used in the process of compiling the *Glossarium*: MS. Vitr. 14-2 (olim. Tol. 15.8) of the Biblioteca Nacional de España in Madrid. This manuscript contains around 1500 glosses in Arabic, ‘almost all of [which] have been incorporated into the Leiden glossary’ (van Koningsveld, 1971, p. 63). This shows that the compiler was not only familiar with Isidore’s work but had access to at least one copy that could inform the *Glossarium*’s glosses, possibly the very manuscript that we have in Madrid. The wholesale incorporation of Isidore’s Latin text itself is also attested for in the *Glossarium*, and van Koningsveld singles out two cases where sentences or phrases from the *Etymologiae* have been incorporated into the Latin gloss. In one case, the Latin entry is given as *olasummi*, to which the gloss given is *aṭrāf al-mankabayn* ‘the tips of the shoulders’. Van Koningsveld shows how this was taken from *Etymologiae* 11.1:62, a part that describes the human shoulder, which closes with the sentence ‘*Ola summi humeri pars posterior*’. The compiler seems to have misread *ola summi* as one word, ‘olasummi’. Apart from this mistake, this entry indicates that the compiler translated Isidore’s explanations and definitions where necessary, here translating *humeri pars posterior* to *aṭrāf al-mankabain*.⁴⁵ In the *Etymologiae*, in the section entitled *De paganis*, we get the following set of definitions by Isidore:

⁴⁵ The other example given by Van Koningsveld is the entry ‘*Tutor qui pu - ḥāḍīn, ḥāris, ‘āṣim.*’ This must be a defective copying of *Tutor, qui pupillum tuetur* from *Etymologiae* 10:264. Cf. See Van Koningsveld, 1977, pp. 18-19, 36.

Pagans (*De paganis*)¹Pagans (*paganus*) are named from the districts (*pagus*) of the Athenians, where they originated, for there, in rural places and districts, the pagans established sacred groves and idols, and from such a beginning pagans received their name.²Gentiles are those who are without the Law, and have not yet believed. And they are called ‘gentiles’ (*gentilis*) because they remain just as they were born, that is, just as they descended into the body governed by sin, in other words, worshipping idols and not yet reborn.³Accordingly, they were first named gentiles. In Greek they are called *ethnici*. The Latin word *gentiles* is translated as *ethnici* in Greek, for the Greek ἔθνος means “tribe” (*gens*).⁴But after their conversion, those from the tribes who believe ought not to be called *gentes* or *gentiles*, just as after conversion a Jew can no longer be called a Jew, as the apostle Paul testifies when he says to the Christians (I Corinthians 12:2): “That when you were heathens (*gentes*),” that is, infidels.⁵Those people are called apostates (*apostata*) who, after the baptism of Christ has been received, return to the worship of idols and pollution of sacrifices. And this is a Greek term⁴⁶ (trans: p. 183; emphasis mine).

It is noteworthy that all three words that have been glossed as *majūsī*, i.e. *paganus*, *gentiles* and *ethnicus*, are defined in this section of *Etymologiae*, which deals with vocabulary related to pagans. It is also here that we see a reference to the association of *pagani* with rural activity and idolatry in the districts outside of the cities, of which Athens is singled out. It is likely, then, that in glossing *paganus*, seeing that Isidore defined pagans as gentiles living in the *pagi*, the author further qualified *majūsī* as *khārijī* ‘external’. Regrettably, this section of MS. Vitr. 14-2, along with the rest of book 8, is devoid of any glosses that could conclusively link the use of *majūsī khārijī* to Isidore’s definition.

⁴⁶ *De paganis*. ¹*Pagani ex pagis Atheniensium dicti, ubi exorti sunt. Ibi enim in locis agrestibus et pagis gentiles lucos idolaque statuerunt, et a tali initio vocabulum pagani sortiti sunt.* ²*Gentiles sunt qui sine lege sunt, et nondum crediderunt. Dicti autem gentiles, quia ita sunt ut fuerunt geniti, id est, sicut in carne descenderunt sub peccato, scilicet idolis servientes et necdum regenerati.* ³*Proinde gentiles primitus nuncupantur: ipsi dicuntur Graece Ethnici. Ethnici ex Graeco in Latinum interpretantur gentiles. ἔθνος enim Graece gens dicitur.* ⁴*Post fidem autem non debere vocari gentes sive gentiles eos qui ex gentibus credunt; sicut post fidem dici iam non potest Iudaeus, testante Paulo Apostolo et dicente iam Christianis: “Quoniam cum gentes essetis”, hoc est, infideles.* ⁵*Apostatae dicuntur, qui post baptismum Christi susceptum ad idolorum cultum et sacrificiorum contaminationem revertuntur. Est autem nomen Graecum (Isidore, ca. 625/1911, 8.10)*

5.2 *Majūs* as ‘pagan’ in practice

While the *Glossarium* provides us with a clear indication that *majūs* is used to mean pagan and as was considered adequate translation for *paganus*, *gentiles* and *ethnicus*, its nature as a dictionary lacks the context of the word’s use. A brief example of its use in the *Qanūn* has already been mentioned above. In this section, the use of *majūs* is examined in a broader range of literature to understand for what and for whom it was used apart from Scandinavians.

As mentioned earlier, the Mozarabic literary corpus provides us with a myriad translations from Latin that allows us to compare the use of *majūs* to the source texts and see the context in which it is used. Although canonical and biblical translations make up a large share of these works, there are examples of other kinds of works being translated into Arabic. Van Koningsveld briefly touches on the theory that Isidore’s *Etymologiae* was translated to Arabic in its entirety, a theory which so far continues to remain theoretical due to the lack of any manuscript or fragment conclusively proving its existence. This theory is substantiated by the use of extracts from *Etymologiae* being used in other Arabic works, from Ibn Juljul (d. 944 C.E.) and al-Rāzī (d. ca. 955 C.E.) (Van Koningsveld, 1977, pp. 59-60), to al-Bakrī (d. 1094), as shown more recently (Ducène, 2009). Van Koningsveld (1977) adds that other exemplars of Visigothic Latin manuscripts with Arabic glosses as marginalia draw from translations of those texts, thus leading to the possibility that the aforementioned glossed *Etymologiae*, MS. Vitr. 14-2, may have similarly been glossed using a hypothetical Arabic translation.⁴⁷ The concordance above between *Etymologiae* 8.10 and the three words glossed as *majūs* in the *Glossarium* mentioned above allows us to speculate that, had a translation of

⁴⁷ ‘Likewise it seems probable that the numerous Arabic glosses in the Isidorus MS are not the result of a painstaking original effort of the glossator of this MS, but rather have been copied by him from a (partial) Arabic translation available to him. The lack of corrections and improvements in the Arabic glosses, together with the quick, “mechanical” way the Arabic was written, confirm this.’ (Van Koningsveld, 1977, p. 60).

His use of ‘partial’, in this case, may be a reference to the fact that large swathes of MS. Vitr. 14-2, including book 8, as mentioned earlier, lacks any glosses, with a large concentration of glosses in books 4 and 9–17 (Van Koningsveld, 1977, p. 46).

Etymologiae existed, it might have featured a section dealing with *al-majūs* where Isidore’s *De paganis* stands in the original Latin.

Although the Arabic *Etymologiae* eludes us, the translation of Orosius’ *Historiae adversus paganos* into Arabic is perhaps the best-known translation from Latin into Arabic undertaken in al-Andalus, and to this day the only western work translated in its entirety into Arabic in existence. The authorship of the translation is a continuing discussion in the scholarship due to conflicting accounts given by later authors who attribute the translation to different translators. While this discussion is beyond the scope of this study, the theories indicate that it was translated sometime between the late 9th and mid-10th Centuries.⁴⁸ According to Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808 A.H./ 1406–1407 C.E), the translator was a *qāḍī l-naṣārā* (‘judge of the Christians’), which indicates that it is the work of a Mozarab. The work itself, known in Arabic as *Kitāb Hurūshiyūsh*, is not a mere translation of the *Historiae*, but rather an adaptation of the original work interspersed with passages taken from other works to supplement it. Amongst the other texts used are Isidore’s *Etymologiae* and *Chronica Maiora*, the Bible, and Julius Honorius’ *Cosmographia*. In addition, the preamble to the seventh and final book states that Orosius’ narrative is expanded to include the history of al-Andalus until Ṭāriq’s entry, although the only extant manuscript does not include this addition. As Christys (2014) points out, the *Historiae*, even in its translated version, does not mention Vikings, but ‘history against the pagans is a central theme of writing about the Scandinavian sea raiders’ (p. 298). The word *majūs* features in 16 pages of the manuscript. Although there is one occasion where it is used to refer to Zoroastrians, thus utilising it in its original meaning, the other occurrences refer to pagans in general. Of particular note is that the use of *majūs* to refer to Greek and Roman pagans quells the notion that *majūs* was used to refer to people of unknown, non-*kitābī* religions. In fact, one paragraph in the *Kitāb Hurūshiyūsh*, interpolated into the translation of *Historiae* from Isidore’s *Chronica Maiora*, concerns the story of Triptolemus in Greek mythology, opening with ‘And in that time, the story was fabricated by the *majūs* and in it is described the story of a man who was called Triptolemus’ (*Wa-fī dhālika al-zamān lufīqa al-ḥadīth alladhī ‘inda al-majūs wa-fīh yūṣafu khabar rajul kāna*

⁴⁸ For discussions on the authorship, see Van Koningsveld (1977), Penelas’ study in her edition of *Kitāb Hurūshiyūsh* (2001a) and ‘A possible author’ (2001b), Christys (2002), Sahner (2013) and König (2015).

yusammā R.bṭ.lāmū) (Penelas (ed.), 2001a, p. 70). The original Latin in *Chronica* opens with ‘in these times, stories were invented about Triptolemus’ (*his temporibus fabulae fictae sunt de Treptolemo*) (Isidore, ca. 600/2003, 66). The author of *Kitāb Hurūshiyūsh* adds the specification that this is a heathen story, using the word *majūs* to refer to the pagan Greeks. This attribution of *majūs* to Greeks is seen in other parts of *Kitāb Hurūshiyūsh*, referring to Greek philosophy as *falsafa al-majūs*.

Multiple scholars noted the idea of *majūs* being used to mean pagan. Penelas (2001b) translated an extract from *Kitāb Hurūshiyūsh, fī dhālika qāla markūsh al-shā‘ir al-rūmāni wa-kāna majūsīan*, as ‘The Roman poet Markush⁴⁹, who was pagan, wrote about that’ (p. 123). König (2015) says that the term was used ‘for paganism in general’ (p. 107). Christys (2014), while discussing the use of the term, says that ‘as far as the Arabic authors are concerned, all Vikings were pagans – *majūs*’ (p. 305). In another paper, she lists *majūs* as one of the synonyms for ‘pagan’ and ‘ancient’ used for the inhabitants of Hispania before the Islamic conquest, alongside enemy of God (‘*adū Allāh*), infidel (*kafir*), polytheist (*mushrik*), tyrant (*taghīa*) and uncivilised (*ilj*) (Christys, 2018, p. 381). In a footnote to his *Religious Polemic and the Intellectual History of the Mozarabs*, Thomas E. Burman curiously concluded that this was a particularly Mozarabic innovation, while Muslim sources must have seen a connection between Scandinavians and Zoroastrians, echoing, and indeed citing, Melvinger’s article in *EP*². He cites the *Glossarium* as the source for this, saying that *paganus* is glossed as *majūsī* ‘and’ *khārijī*, the latter of which he interprets as ‘foreigner’, missing the fact that the gloss does not include the conjunction *wa-* ‘and’. He concludes, thus, that ‘Mozarabs appear to have taken this a step farther, using the term to refer to any pagan or, perhaps, non-Christian, European or otherwise’ (Burman, 1994, p. 73, note 126). In doing so, however, he fails to acknowledge the inclusion of *gentiles* and *ethnicus* glossed as simply *majūsī* without any allusion of foreignness. In addition, he does not substantiate the reason for the assumption that this was a particularly Mozarabic phenomenon rather than a generally Andalusī development.

⁴⁹ The name of this poet is not found in the original Orosius, and cannot be identified. As Penelas (2001b) notes, the first verse of the the poem immediately following it is by Virgil’s *Georgics*.

The use of *majūs* to refer to Greeks is not unique to the *Kitāb Hurūshiyūsh*, or indeed, Mozarabic literature. Abū ‘Ubayd al-Bakrī (d. 487 A.H./ 1094 C.E.), in his geographical work *Kitāb al-masālik wa-l-mamālik* (The Book of Routes and Countries), explains how Crete got its name, citing its traditional etymology as deriving from an eponymous character: ‘It is called after a man from the *majūs* known as *Q.rātī*, also named *Iqrītish*⁵⁰’ (*summiyat bi-rajul min al-majūs yuqālu lihu Q.rātī, wa-yusammā ayḍan Iqrītish*) (al-Bakrī, ca. 1086/1968, p. 212). It is likely that al-Bakrī got this information from Isidore’s *Etymologiae*,⁵¹ which reads ‘thereafter it was called Crete, after one of its inhabitants, a certain Cres, who people say was one of the Curetes (*deinde Creta dicta a Crete quodam indigena, quem aiunt unum Curetum fuisse*) (Isidore, ca. 625/2006, p. 295; ca. 625/1911, 14.6:15). Much like in the above-cited example about the story of Triptolemus, the original Latin does not include the mention of paganism while the Arabic translation inserts the specification that the Greeks were *majūs*. Like in *Kitāb Hurūshiyūsh*, which was in itself a source for al-Bakrī’s work, *majūs* was used extensively, including in its original meaning for Zoroastrians, as well as for a variety of people who could comfortably fall under the umbrella of ‘pagan’. Indeed, *Kitāb al-masālik wal-mamālik* is one of the sources for the Scandinavian attack on al-Andalus. König (2015) provides the following list of peoples and practices for whom al-Bakrī used the terms *al-majūs* and *al-majūsiyya*:

for Zoroastrianism, for religious cults practised in India, among the Alans, the pre-Christian Romans, the pre-Christian Franks, the Pechenegs, for the king of the Khazars before his conversion to monotheism, the people ‘al-Burjān’, the eponym of Crete, as well as the non-Muslim populations of Sudan and Ghana. (p. 107).⁵²

⁵⁰ *Iqrītish* is the Arabic name for Crete in that period, and the name by which al-Bakrī refers to the island. In modern Arabic, Crete is known either as *Krīt* or as *Iqrītish*.

⁵¹ Jean-Charles Ducène (2009) has shown that the al-Bakrī made extensive use of *Etymologiae* in compiling *Kitāb al-masālik wal-mamālik*, particularly in the sections pertaining to Mediterranean islands.

⁵² König provides the following chapter numbers and pages from the van Leeuwen and Ferré edition of *al-Masalik* (1992) as a source for the list: § 5, p. 51; § 43, p. 66; § 72, p. 80; § 175, p. 136; § 227, p. 170; § 241, p. 176; § 365, p. 248; § 401, p. 265; § 490, p. 308; § 567, p. 340; § 750, p. 445; § 752, pp. 446–7; § 759, p. 450; § 811, p. 482; § 1449, p. 868; § 1459, p. 873.

The sheer diversity of peoples for whom al-Bakrī used *majūs* allows us to revisit Melvinger’s assertion that ‘the term *al-majūs* was used for tribes living in the north, even when we know for certain that it does not apply to the Vikings’ (Melvinger, 1986, para. 7).

5.3 *Majūs* as Zoroastrians in legal literature

As seen in al-Bakrī’s example above, although the term *majūs* had changed to encompass a much wider semantic range, it has retained its original meaning of Zoroastrians. This indicates a degree of ambivalence in its usage, where both the original and Andalusī meanings continued to co-exist. One area where the original meaning endured is in Mālikī *fiqh*, Islamic jurisprudence. The inclusion of Zoroastrians in legal literature in al-Andalus is a known phenomenon.

The Mālikī *madhhab*, which as seen in chapter 2.1 was introduced to al-Andalus under the rule of Hishām I, was founded by Imām Mālik ibn Anas (d. 179 A.H. /795 C.E.) in Medina. His doctrine flourished in the Middle East and spread throughout the Muslim world. One characteristic of Mālikī *fiqh* is its ‘[exclusive attachment] to the study of manuals of jurisprudence (*furū*)’ (Cottart, 1991, 2. The expansion of Mālikism, para. 10). This means that the study of legal precedents and commentaries on legal rulings were at the forefront of its legal practice, and legal literature played an essential role, both in its codification, as well as its interpretation. What is ‘expected by the Mālikī judicial system’, then, is ‘to take cognizance of existing Mālikī dictums’ (Kassis, 1999, p. 123). The inevitable consequence of this is that any law, commentary or legal precedent codified and recorded in the Middle East, e.g. in Medina, would be transmitted *verbatim* throughout the whole of Mālikī scholarship. The result is that any legal decisions that involved Zoroastrian *majūs* in the East were consulted and cited in al-Andalus, even if mostly irrelevant for its local specificities and needs.

One such collection of legal rulings is *Al-Mustakhraja min al-asmi’a* (The Selection from what is Heard), more commonly known as the *‘Utbiyya* after its compiler the Cordovan *al-‘Utbi* (d. 254A.H./ 868 C.E), which compiles *masā’il* (legal questions; sing. *mas’ala*) related to Mālik and his students. In discussing this collection, Ana Fernández Félix (2003) chooses not to include rulings on the *majūs* due to them not being relevant to the topic since ‘they refer exclusively, in my opinion, to Zoroastrians’ (p. 414). The irrelevance of rulings on

Zoroastrians is due to the lack of Zoroastrians living in al-Andalus. One example given by Hanna Kassis is a question on the legality of building Christian churches in Tlimsān, in modern-day Tunisia. In dispensing his decision, the *muftī* (jurist) had to consult Saḥnūn’s (d. 240 A.H./ 854–5 C.E.) collection of Mālik’s rulings, *al-Mudawwana*, which states that ‘it is not permitted for a Muslim to rent or sell his house to someone who would turn it into a church/synagogue or a (Zoroastrian) fire temple’ (*lā yajūzū li-muslim an yukrī dārahu aw yabī‘ahā mimman yattakhidhuhā kanīsa aw bayt nār*) (in Kassis, 1999, p. 123). In this case, in order to consult the relevant *mas’ala* pertaining to Christian churches, the *muftī* used one that also included the legality of Zoroastrian temples, even if that latter part is not particularly relevant to the question at hand. It is within this context, therefore, that the use of *majūs* in legal literature retains the original meaning of Zoroastrian, even when the semantic shift in other forms of Andalusī literature had already taken place. As will be seen later, in chapter x of this thesis, understanding the difference between *majūs* in *fiqh* and the same word in other contexts is crucial in using the available literature to reconstruct the history of the Scandinavian attacks in al-Andalus and the aftermath of those campaigns.

5.4 Conclusion

The semantic range of *majūs* expanded greatly in al-Andalus. The *Glossarium Latino-Arabicum* provides us with the proof that, in translating from Latin to Arabic, it was used to approximate the Latin *paganus*, *ethnicus* and *gentiles*, all of which mean pagan or heathen. Mozarabic literature provides us with a great resource for the meaning of *majūs*, as it allows us to compare instances of its use to the original Latin and Greek source material from which they were translated. Works like the *Qānūn* reflect the *Glossarium*’s glossing as it renders *gentiles* to *majūs*. The *Kitāb Hurūshiyūsh* and al-Bakrī’s *Kitāb al-masālik wal-mamālik* provide ample evidence for *majūs* being used for a wide range of peoples, including for ancient pagans like Greeks and Romans. Al-Bakrī is significant in this case as it quells Burman’s claim that this was a uniquely Mozarabic phenomenon. Epalza’s claim that *majūs* was legal jargon for non-*kitābī dhimmīs*, then can be dismissed for two reasons. The first is that its use by Mozarabs in non-legal literature shows its use outside of the Islamic legal sphere. The second is that it was used to refer to people who could not conceivably be *dhimmīs* either because they did not fulfil the criterium of being residents within the *dār al-Islām*, the Muslim world, or, like pagan Greeks and Romans, did not exist anymore. In

addition, this dismisses Melvinger’s claim that *majūs* was used due to Scandinavians’ ‘fire-worship’ or that it was used for tribes living in the north as it was also applied to people for which neither could apply. The *majūs*, then, was the ‘Other’ that did not fit in the recognised categories. The Zoroastrian meaning of *majūs*, however, lingered in the Mālikī juridical manuals. The eastern origin of some manuals and the reproduction of *masā’il* from those manuals in Anadlusi-produced literature meant that the Zoroastrian connotation became fossilised in the context of jurisprudence.

6. *Majūs, μάγος & magus: a shared history*

In the previous chapter, we have seen how *majūs* underwent a semantic shift in al-Andalus. While it was initially used as an ethnographic, neutral, and specific term for Zoroastrians, a process of pejoration and widening led to its use as a negative, non-specific term for non-monotheistic, pagan people. In addition, the term retained a certain level of ambivalence where both the original and pejorative meanings co-existed within al-Andalus in certain contexts. This process, however, is not unique and has a precedent in the Classical world. The use of the Greek term *mágos* (μάγος, pl. *mágoi*), and the subsequent import into Latin as *magus*, both of which are cognates with *majūs*, also went through a semantic shift similar to that undergone in Andalusī Arabic.

It is also worth noting that the *jīm* (ج), the Arabic letter which is represented by a ‘j’ in the transliteration standard used here, can represent a multitude of sounds in various Arabic dialects. In Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), the phoneme [dʒ] is normally used. However, the letter is notoriously flexible and could be pronounced as, amongst others [dʒ], [g], [gj], [d], [ʒ], [z], [j], [ʝ], [ʧ] and [ʦ], depending on the dialect, all of which can be considered allophones in Arabic (Woidich & Zack, 2009, p. 42). The phoneme [g] is mostly associated with the Egyptian dialect. In Andalusī Arabic, the *jīm* was resolved as a Prepalatal Voiced Affricate [d͡ʒ] (*Descriptive and Comparative Grammar*, p. 27). When incorporating loanwords from other languages, it is commonplace in Arabic to render a [g], a phoneme that is not present in Classical Arabic, as a *jīm* (al-Qinai, 2000). This process can be seen in the word *majūs* itself; in the process *maguš* > *mgušā* > *majūs* or *maguš* > **magūš* > *majūs* (see chapter 4.1), the /g/ was changed into a /j/. This phenomenon suggests that, although *majūs* is technically not a homophone of the Latin *magus*, the [g]/[dʒ] allophony allowed the two to be seen as approximates. In addition, there is evidence that [g] was imported into al-Andalus by Yemenites who participated in the Ummayyad invasion (*Descriptive and Comparative Grammar*, pp. 27–28), which suggests that some Andalusians pronounced *majūs* as *magūs*, making it virtually identical to the Latin *magus*.

In this chapter, I will argue that the phonological similarity between the two words and their similar semantic widening is not coincidental, but rather a product of the hybridisation of Arabic/Muslim and Latin/Christian culture in al-Andalus.

6.1 Greek and Latin use of μάγος/magus

As is the case with *majūs*, the Greek *mágos* is derived from the Old Persian *maguš* (see 4.1). In the Greek sources, the term and its derivatives ‘either denote (the activities of) Persians priests, or (the activities of) sorcerers, quacks, magicians’ (De Jong, 1997, p. 387). On the one hand, already in 5th-century B.C.E. Greece, the tragedians Sophocles, Aeschylus and Euripides used the word *mágos* in a pejorative manner, although not specifying their function. On the other hand, the historian Herodotus referred to them exclusively as an Iranian *genos*, or tribe (De Jong, 1997; Graf, 2001; De Marchi, 2013). As mentioned in 4.1, the role of Persian *mágoi* in the Classical world may have been that of itinerant ritual practitioners not bound to a single belief system, or practitioners of a pre-Zoroastrian religion that incorporated Zoroastrian elements over time. A century later, Plato (4th Century B.C.E./1892) equates the *mágoi* to Zoroaster, saying that a young, Persian prince would be educated in the ‘magianism [*mageia*] of Zoroaster, the son of Oromasus’ (p. 122). The association of *mágoi* and Zoroaster became common in the hellenophone world. Over three centuries later, Plutarch (d. 125 C.E.) calls Zoroaster a *mágos* whose teachings on dualism became the beliefs of the *mágoi* (De Jong, 1997). The technical use of *mágoi* in the Greek-speaking world finds its way into early-Christian tradition; Matt. 2:1–12 tells of the ‘*mágoi* from the East’ (*mágoi apó anatólón*) who visit Jesus prompted by a star in the East. As Marco Frenschkowski (2015) notes, these *mágoi* are presented in a positive light, as opposed to the pejorative connotation seen in the tragedians’ accounts (p. 457). In addition, Matthew gives them attributes that are reminiscent of those allegedly possessed by Persian *mágoi*, namely astrology in their interpretation of the star as a portent⁵³ and interpretation of dreams in Matt. 2:12, an attribute already reported by Herodotus. A discussion on whether the Biblical *mágoi* were Persian, Zoroastrian or otherwise is beyond the scope of this study.

⁵³ For the Zoroastrian and Persian practice of astrology, see De Jong, 1997, pp. 397–398 and Panaino, 2015.

However, its use is indicative of the figure of the *mágos* in the Hellenic imagination and the arsenal of *topoi* it carries.

The evidence for *mágos* acquiring a meaning beyond that of Persian priests is as old as the term itself. Although only reported in Clement of Alexandria's (d. 215 C.E.) *Protrepticus*, Heraclitus of Ephesus (d. ca. 475 B.C.E.), writing in the late-6th Century to the early-5th Century B.C.E., lists *mágoi* along with bacchants and maenads, i.e. 'adherents of different ecstatic cults, especially Dionysian ones' (Graf, 2001, p. 31), selling magical items and services to the rich (Graf, 2001, p. 32; De Marchi, 2013, p. 18). If the authenticity of Heraclitus's text is to be believed,⁵⁴ by 6th Century B.C.E. the meaning of *mágos* had already departed from the presumably original, Persian one. Athenian tragedians incorporated *mágoi* of the non-Persian sort in their narratives. Sophocles (d. 406/405 B.C.E.) calls the blind seer Tiresias a *mágos*, a 'hatcher of plots' and 'crafty beggar' (in Graf, 2019, p. 118) in his *King Oedipus*; Franz Graf (2019) identifies *mágos* as an 'expression of his divinatory profession' (p. 118). Euripides (d. 406 B.C.E.) blames Helen's disappearance on 'drugs (*phármaka*), the art of the *mágoi* or the secret attack of the gods' (in Graf, 2019, p. 119) in *Helen*; Graf (2019) highlights the supernatural nature of the *mágoi*'s powers, 'to which a human cannot resist' (p. 119). In addition, some Greek authors have equated *mágos* and *mageía*, i.e. the activities of the *mágos*, to the *goēs* and their activities *goēteía*, the latter carrying the meaning of 'divination' and 'sorcery' (Graf, 2001; Collins, 2008). In fact, Derek Collins (2008) explains that '*mágos* and *goēs* [...] are roughly interchangeable terms of abuse in Greek rhetoric' (p. 59). One example of the equivalency of the two can be seen in *Encomium of Helen* by the Greek sophist Gorgias (d. 375 B.C.E.) that speaks of 'the twin arts of wizardry (*goēteía*) and magic (*mageía*) that consist of errors of soul and deceptions of opinion' (in Graf, 2019, pp. 119-120). The term *mágos*, then, took on an additional meaning beyond its original ethnographic value and merging with, or displacing, to a certain degree, the already established terms (Graf, 2001, p. 35).

⁵⁴ While Graf (2019) asserts that '[t]here can be little doubt that the entire list of people to whom Heraclitus prophesies is really Heraclitus's' (p. 117), De Jong (1997) acknowledges that 'the authenticity of this fragment is debated (p. 387). See Andrew Dinan (2004) for a more in-depth study of Clement's citations of Heraclitus.

From the contemporaneous nature of the sources cited above, it is clear that the two meanings existed at the same time. De Jong (1997) laments that ‘[t]he main problem in dealing with the [Greek] texts concerning the Magi is evidently the double meaning of the word as “Persian priest” and “magician”’ and that ‘[i]n many places it is unclear which of the two meanings is intended’ (p. 393). The Ancient Greeks themselves shared this sentiment of confusion; the Pseudo-Aristotelian treatise *Magikós* (On the *Mágoi*), possibly written around the 4th Century B.C.E. but existing in a fragment cited by Diogenes Laertius in the 3rd Century C.E., defends Persian *mágoi*, saying that they ‘do not know magical sorcery (*goētikē mageía*)’ (in Graf, 2001, pp. 35–36; 2019, p. 121), viewing this equivalency between the two forms of *mágoi* as a ‘defamation of Persian religion’ (Graf, 2001, p. 36). This text indicates an awareness of the two diverging meanings of the word used concurrently and an acknowledgement of its etymology contrasting the degenerative semantic shift it underwent.

This two-pronged meaning of *mágos* entered the Latin language and the Roman consciousness in the form of *magus* (pl. *magi*). The earliest Latin sources attesting for *magus* seem to retain its ethnographical quality, but it eventually degenerated to encompass a variety of practitioners of the occult arts (De Marchi, 2013, p. 29). Cicero (44 B.C.E./2016) mentions the *magi* as ‘considered among the Persians a class of wise and learned men’ (*quod genus sapientium et doctorum habebatur in Persis*) (p. 60) (*De Divinatione* 1.24.46). Other Latin prose sources from the period continued to use *magus* in this sense (Rives, 2010, p. 61). In later years, while the consciousness of the ethnographic meaning of *magus* remains, it takes on the meaning of wizards, occult practitioners and quacks. Perhaps no other source for the coexistence of the two meanings is more illuminating than Apuleius’ *Apologia* in response to the accusation of being a *magus*. The charge of ‘magic’ or ‘wizardry’ exposes its inherent negative connotations, and it is used ‘specifically as a legal charge, a *crimen*, and thus by definition connotes something undesirable and socially unacceptable’ (Rives, 2010, p. 55). In his defence, however, Apuleius (ca. 159/1909 C.E.) defends the term and says that ‘*magus* is Persian for what we call a priest’ (*Persarum lingua magus est qui nostra sacerdos*) (p. 55). He subsequently quotes Plato’s definition of the *mágoi*’s functions and their origin in Zoroaster’s teachings. Apuleius (ca. 159/1909 C.E.) then defends Zoroaster by claiming that ‘[m]any yet held Pythagoras to have been a pupil of Zoroaster, and, judged him to have been similarly skilled in magic’ (*Pythagoram plerique Zoroastri sectatorem similiterque magiae peritum arbitrati tamen memoriae prodiderunt*) (p. 64). As Costantini (2019) notes, Apuleius

was exploiting the term's ambivalence and aimed 'to confuse the audience by playing with the semantic ambiguity of *magus*' (p. 65). This text is reminiscent of the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Magikós* mentioned above in its acknowledgement of the dual meaning and its defence of the Persian *magi*.

The negative connotations of *magus* and its use for occult practitioners are fully formed by the time of Pliny the Elder (d. 79 C.E.) a century before Apuleius. In his encyclopedic *Historia Naturalis* (HN), Pliny provides a bewildering array of activities in which the *magi* allegedly partook, from astrology to botany to necromancy, activities he declared to be *magicae vanitates* ('lies of magic') and *fraudentissima ars* ('most fraudulent art') (HN 30.1). Most notably, Pliny was not ignorant of the ethnographical and etymological background to the term. Rather than distinguish the two, however, the 'semantic ambiguity' led to an assimilation of the two; he asserts, with absolute certainty, that 'without a doubt, [magic] arose in Persia with Zoroaster' (*sine dubio illic orta in Perside a Zoroastre*) (HN 30.2). Although, as De Marchi (2015) notes, Pliny's xenophobia may have prompted him to reframe the *magi* as foreigners and their activities as a foreign infection on Roman culture, the attribution of 'magic' as originating from Zoroaster remained a strong *topos* that endured for centuries after *Historia Naturalis*.

This leads us back to Isidore of Seville. In composing the *Etymologiae*, Isidore relied substantially on Pliny's work (Oroz Reta, 1987). The definition of *magus* as found in Pliny's *Historia Naturalis* made its way into *Etymologiae* 8.9, in a chapter entitled *De Magis* (On the Magi). The chapter opens with 'The first of the magicians was Zoroaster, king of the Bactrians' (*Magorum primus Zoroastres rex Bactrianorum*) (Isidore, ca. 625/1911, 8.9:1; trans: 2006, p. 181). Following an ethnographical description, he attributes a widespread geographical range of the *magi*, including amongst Assyrians, the sorceress (*maga*) 'Circe, who turned the companions of Ulysses into beasts' (*Circe, quae socios Vlixis mutavit in bestias*) (Isidore, ca. 625/1911, 8.9:5; trans: 2006, p. 181), and the Pharaoh's sorcerers who countered Moses' transformation of Aaron's staff into serpents. For the latter, it is interesting

to point out that, while the Vulgate⁵⁵ refers to them as ‘wise men and sorcerers/evil-doers’ (*sapientes et malefici*) (Exodus 7:11), Isidore uses the story as an example of the ‘trickery of the magicians’ (*magorum praestigia*) (Isidore, ca. 625/1911, 8.9:4; trans: 2006, p. 181). There is thus an equivalence of the *magi* with *malefici* which, although meaning ‘wicked’ or ‘evil-doer’ could also take on the meaning of ‘sorcerer’,⁵⁶ an equivalence he makes explicitly when he later states that ‘[t]here are magicians who are commonly called evil-doers by the crowd because of the magnitude of their crimes’ (*magi sunt, qui vulgo malefici ob facinorum magnitudinem nuncupantur*) (Isidore, ca. 625/1911, 8.9:9; trans: 2006, p. 182). What follows is a detailed classification of various forms of sorcery and divination, arranged to form a taxonomy of the activities, including, amongst others, necromancy, elemental divination (geomancy, hydromancy, pyromancy and aeromancy) and fate-reading (Klingshirn, 2003). Amongst these is included astrologers (*mathematicus*), on whom he writes: ‘[t]he first interpreters of the stars were called Magi, as we read of those who made known the birth of Christ in the Gospels’ (*primum autem idem stellarum interpretes magi nuncupabantur, sicut de his legitur qui in Evangelio natum Christum adnuntiaverunt*) (Isidore, ca. 625/1911, 8.9:25; trans: 2006, p. 183). Acknowledging the conundrum of counting the *magi* who visited Jesus amongst those he called “evil-doers” a few lines prior, he clarifies that ‘[k]nowledge of this skill was permitted only up until the time of the Gospel, so that once Christ was born no one thereafter would interpret the birth of anyone from the heavens’ (*cuius artis scientia usque ad Evangelium fuit concessa, ut Christo edito nemo exinde nativitatem alicuius de caelo interpretaretur*) (Isidore, ca. 625/1911, 8.9:26; trans: 2006, p. 183). As William Klingshirn (2003) shows, Isidore took this explanation from Tertullian’s *De Idolatria* (p. 88). In this criticism of idolatry, Tertullian (ca. 220/1954) expands on this concept, saying that coming of Christ rendered *magia*, of which astrology is a *species*, obsolete and anyone who subsequently retains such beliefs and practices is condemned (9.7–8). According to Graf

⁵⁵ To my knowledge, there are no editions of the *Vetus Latina* versions of the Exodus, and therefore I cannot, at this time, verify how the pre-Jerome translations translated Exodus 7:11.

⁵⁶ In Exodus 7:11, *malefici* is a translation from the Hebrew מכשפים (*mekhashefim*), meaning ‘sorcerer’.

(1999), '[m]agic, then, is nothing more than the various methods of pagan divination' (p. 284), a vestige of pre-Christian beliefs.

Moving forward to 9th and 10th Century C.E. Spain, the question that arises is whether the terms *magus*, *magi* and *magia* were in use to signify or imply “pagans” or “paganism”. As we have seen in 2.2, the Latin accounts of the Scandinavian attacks on the peninsula referred to them as *Dani* or a variation of *Nordomanni*. In the account of the first attack of 844 C.E., The *Cronica Rotense* redaction of *The Chronicle of Alfonso III* qualifies the *Normannorum gens* as ‘a pagan and very cruel people’ (*gens pagana et nimis crudelissima*) (Gil Fernández, Moralejo & Ruiz, 1985, p. 142). The account in the *Cronica Albadense*, however, is anomalous in its reference to an attack on *magi* the same year as the Scandinavian attack. As Víctor Emanuel Aguirre (2013) shows, the *Cronica Albadense* and *Cronica Rotense* may be derived from a common archetype, with the *Cronica ad Sebastianum* descending from the *Cronica Rotense* (pp. 11–13). While the *Cronica Rotense* and *Cronica ad Sebastianum* say that Ramiro burnt the ships of the *Nordomanni*, the *Cronica Albadense* says:

He put an end to the *magici* by means of fire and overthrew and slaughtered the rulers with remarkable speed. First, he defeated Nepotian on the bridge at Narcea and took over the kingdom. At that time, the first Lordomanni arrived in Asturias. Later, he gouged the eyes out of the heads of Nepotian and another tyrant Aldroitto and victorious, he killed the proud Piniolo⁵⁷ (Gil Fernández, Moralejo & Ruiz, 1985, p. 103)

Graciela Mérida De Jayo (1998) notes how scholars have used this reference to a slaughter of *magici* as possible proof for the practice of *magia* in Asturias at that time, although she questions the veracity of ‘such drastic, official repression of magical practices’ (p. 14). Similarly, Jennifer Corry (2005) is ‘doubtful that secular rulers at this early date actively pursued magical practices’ (p. 79). Moreover, both Mérida De Jayo (1998) and Aguirre (2013) point out that this event is only accounted for in the *Cronica Albadense*. As a solution

⁵⁷ *Magicis per ignem finem inposuit, sibique tyrannos mira celeritate subuertit atque exterminauit. Prius Nepotianum ad pontem Narcie superauit et sic regnum accepit. Eo tempore Lordomani primi in Asturias uenerunt. Postea idem Nepotiano pariter cum quodam Aldroitto tiranno oculos ab eorum frontibus eiecit, superbumque Piniolum uictor interfecit.*

of this inconsistency, Aguirre (2013) suggests that the *magici* referred to in this account could very well be the *Lordomanni* and that the burning of these ‘sorcerers’ could be in reference to the burning of the ships mentioned in the two redactions of *The Chronicle of Alfonso III*. He cites Juan Gil Fernández who points out that the sentence about the *Lordomanni*, which was interpolated in the middle of the narrative about Nepotian, was originally a marginal annotation that the scribe incorrectly integrated into the main text (Gil Fernández, Moralejo & Ruiz, 1985, p. 175). This use of *magici* for Scandinavians, if Aguirre’s theory is correct, would be the only witness in Latin that parallels the use of *majūs* in Arabic on the other side of the Iberian Peninsula.

The semantic shift that *majūs* underwent in al-Andalus, therefore, cannot be seen in isolation as an Arabic-specific process that occurred independently from its Greek and Latin counterparts. Instead, it could be seen as a continuation and product of the process by which *mágos/magus* underwent a pejoration and widening that gave it its ambivalent meaning.

6.2 Cultural and linguistic hybridity

The cultural and linguistic situation in al-Andalus made it possible for mutual lexical exchange to occur among Latin and Latinate languages and Arabic, providing a milieu where the previously specific use of *majūs* in Arabic could merge with the semantics of *magus* in Latin. It is within this hybrid culture, particularly in the linguistic dimension, that *majūs* needs to be examined. As seen in chapter 5.1, the *Glossarium* provides ample evidence for the hybridity of Andalusí culture. As mentioned earlier, the Christian use of Islamic linguistic formulae and terminology was a common occurrence that shows widespread acculturation (Penelas, 2006). Evidence of cultural and linguistic hybridity, however, can be traced back to the very beginnings of al-Andalus. In fact, the earliest coinage post-conquest, which is often referred to as ‘transitional coinage’, and dates to the very year of the conquest in 93 A.H/ 711-712 C.E., were minted with the inscription *IN Nomine DomiNI Non DeuS NiSi DeuS SoLuS cui Non SIMILIS*, which is a translation of the first part of the *basmala* (*Bi-smi llāhi* ‘in the name of God’) and the first part of a variant of the Islamic confession of faith, the *shahāda* (*lā ilāha illā Allāhu waḥdahu lā sharīka lahu* ‘There is no god but God, Alone, He has no partner’) in Latin (type Vives 2, fig. 1; Ariza Armada, 2017, p. 70). In addition, this form of coinage included the Eastern Roman Empire’s indiction number and the Hijri date in Roman numerals. Five years after the conquest in 98 A.H/ 716-717 C.E, during the

governorate of *wāli* al-Thaqafī, bilingual coins were minted in al-Andalus, bearing inscriptions in both Arabic and Latin (Vives 10, fig. 2).⁵⁸ Both of these formats were also in use in Ifrīqiya, or the Maghrib, contemporaneously, although the Andalusī coinage had unique stylistic differences, most notably the eight-rayed star⁵⁹. This change was a first, transitional step to fall in line with the coinage reforms of 77A.H./ 699 C.E. of the Caliph ‘Abd al-Malik, which called for purely epigraphical designs to conform to Islamic iconoclasm (Goodwin, 2015; Ariza Armada, 2017). From 720 C.E. onwards, the standardised Arabic-only coinage, known as post-reform coinage, replaced both the Latin and bilingual coinage, cementing Muslim and Arabic dominance in the region.

While the above examples show the use of Latin in a Muslim context, there are a few examples of coins that show an opposite development, i.e. the use of Arabic in a Christian context. These set of coins, collectively known as Alfonsian morabetins, were first minted in the late 12th Century, starting from 1173 C.E. (1211 of the Hispanic era) during the reign of King Alfonso VIII of Castile (1155-1214 C.E.) in Toledo, and continued for another 45 years until 1218 C.E. (1256 of the Hispanic Era) (Mozo Monroy & Søvsvø, 2019, p. 330). This makes them contemporaneous and from the same city as the authorship of the *Glossarium*. Although many of the earlier coins were monolingual in Arabic, some later types included the legend *A.L.F.*, the initials of King Alfonso VIII, making them technically bilingual (Vives 2034, fig. 4). For the purpose of this study, I will be using one of the most recent finds of a coin of the monolingual kind, found in Gørding, Denmark, around 20km from Ribe, in 2018, although the same basic formula is used in all of the coins dated 1211 to 1221 of the Hispanic era (1173-1183 C.E.) (Mozo Monroy & Søvsvø, 2019; fig. 3). The coin, dated 1218 *al-ṣafar*, i.e. Hispanic era (1180 C.E.), bears a Christian inscription in Arabic emulating the coins of the emirs of the Taifa of Murcia, who had recently been deposed by ruling Almohads in al-Andalus. Here we can see Islamic formulae and terminology used in a Christian context similar to the examples discussed above. The obverse face of a coin issued in Murcia in the

⁵⁸ Incidentally, this coin is also the first attestation of the use of the name al-Andalus. Cf. García Sanjuán in EI³.

⁵⁹ For a discussion on the significance of the star as a symbol in Andalusī coinage, see Ariza Armada, 2016, pp. 147-153.

time of Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Sa‘d ibn Mardanīsh (518 A.H./1124-5 C.E. – 567 A.H./ 1172 C.E.) in 558 A.H./ 1162-1163 C.E. reads *al-imām ‘abd Allāh amīr al-Mu‘minīn al-‘abbāsī*, ‘The Imam ‘Abd Allāh, Commander of the Faithful, the Abbasid’ (fig. 5). The obverse face of the Alfonsian morabetin reads *Imām al-bī‘a al-masīḥiyya, bābā rūma al-‘uzmā*, ‘The Imam of the Christian Church, Pope of Rome the great’. Here, the Pope is given the Islamic title of *imām*, which in this case is used in its sense as ‘supreme leader’ of the Islamic *umma*, ‘Islamic community’ (Madelung, 1971). On the obverse of the Murcian coin, the issuing ruler is shown as *amīr Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Sa‘d*, while the Alfonsian morabetin shows *amīr al-qatūliqīn Alfūnsh ibn Shanja*, ‘Emir of the Catholics, Alfonso son of Sancho’. The morabetin does not only give Alfonso the title of Emir, but is presented as *Ibn Shanja* ‘son of Sancho’ in the Arabic onomastic system.

These two examples represent the polar ends of the history of al-Andalus, from the year of its establishment to the final period as the Reconquista starts to make headway. Their polarity represents the process of linguistic and cultural change; on one end is the use of Latin to exhibit Islamic ideas in the newly conquered land; on the other is the complete acculturation of the Mozarabs which made it feasible and acceptable for Toledo to issue Christian coinage in Arabic despite it being ruled by the Romance-speaking Kingdom of León-Castile. The process of Arabisation and Islamisation of the Mozarabic community in the four centuries in between these two events can be seen in the various translations of biblical texts in al-Andalus. Hanna Kassis (1997) has shown that this process of acculturation, particularly Arabisation, was ‘quick to evolve’ due to increased pressure to conform to the language and culture of the new conquerors or face marginalisation (p. 139). The translations of the Bible, then, came as a natural progression of this Arabisation. Many of these translations show a high degree of acculturation, with distinctly Islamic and Qur‘ānic vocabulary being used (Urvoy, 1994; Kassis, 1997).



Fig. 1: Monolingual Latin solidus minted in SPN = Spania. Indiction CXI. Year XCIII = 93 A.H. (711-712 C.E.). 3.52gr. 13mm.



Fig. 2: Bilingual Arabic-Latin dinar minted in Al-Andalus. Year 98 A.H. (716-717 C.E.). 4.08gr. 14mm. Vives 10. Tonegawa Collection



Fig. 3: Monolingual Alfonsian morabetin minted in Madīnat Ṭulayṭula (Toledo). Year 1218 of ṣafar era (1180 C.E.). 3.65gr. 26mm. Collection of the Sydvestjyske Museer in Ribe (Denmark). Finds number SJM679x4. Reproduced from Mozo Monroy & Søvnsø, 2019, p. 336.



Fig. 4: Bilingual Alfonsian morabetin. This type replaces the text 'Rome the great' in the monolingual type with ALF on the reverse face. Minted in Madīnat Ṭulayṭula (Toledo). Year 1237 of ṣafar era (1199 C.E.). 3.82gr. 25mm. Vives 2034. Tonegawa Collection



Fig. 5: Dinar minted in Mursiya (Murcia). Year 558 A.H. (1162-1163 C.E.). 3.90gr. 25mm. Vives 1957. Tonegawa Collection.

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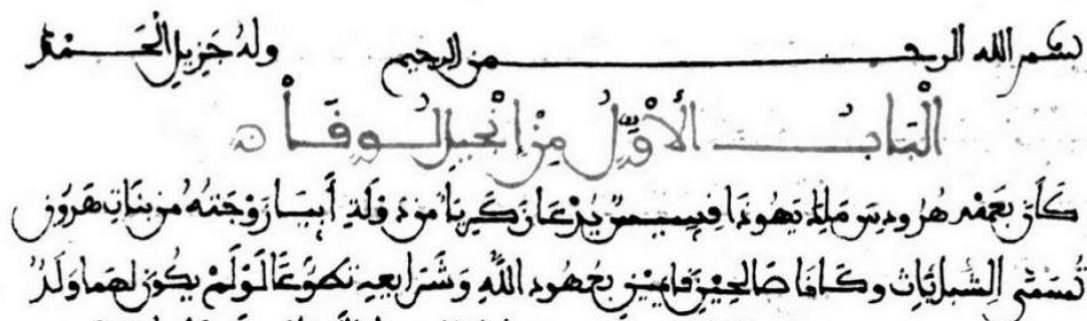


Fig. 6: Beginning of the Gospel of Luke, with the *basmala* written across the top. MS Munich Cod.arab. 238, fol. 47r

⁶⁰ *Bi-smi llāhi r-rahmāni r-rahīm* ‘In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful’.

What the *Glossarium* and these biblical translations highlight is the degree of multilingualism present in al-Andalus. The linguistic situation made the region ripe for what König (2019) refers to as ‘entanglement’ between Latin and Arabic, understood here as ‘linguistic systems comprising a large variety of written and oral registers including derivate languages and dialects’ (p. 31). Although I have, so far, focused on the acculturation of Mozarabs to the Arabic and Islamic culture(s), the linguistic and cultural exchange and transfer was not a one-way street, thus König’s choice of the term ‘entanglement’. The encounter of Arabic and Latin is attested for from the dawn of al-Andalus, as shown above with the monolingual Latin and bilingual Latin-Arabic Islamic coins of the early 8th Century. This encounter, however, did not cease with the establishment of Arabic as the administrative language, the switch to monolingual Arabic coinage, and the Arabisation of the Christian community.

The linguistic situation in al-Andalus, then, needs to be examined to understand the milieu within which the use of *majūs* expanded beyond its meaning in the Middle East. Before the Ummayyad conquest in 711, the Iberian peninsula operated within a diglossic framework, where Latin enjoyed a high-status position as a literary, administrative and liturgical language. The vernacular was comprised of a variety, or varieties, of colloquial Latin language/s generally referred to as Romance, evidence for which is scarce beyond the occasional colloquialisms finding their way into Latin texts. (Gallego, 2003, pp. 108-109). After the conquest, the linguistic diversity and situation became increasingly crowded and complex. As mentioned above, the acknowledgement of Latin’s status as the formal language by the conquerors is shown in their decision to mint coins in Latin. However, the rapid change to the bilingual and eventually monolingual Arabic coinage shows an effort to push Arabic as the new administrative language of the region, kickstarting the slow decline of Latin’s status. For the next few centuries, al-Andalus operated within a multi-layered system of diglossic frameworks, with each diglossic system drawn along religious lines, with an overarching diglossic framework which placed Arabic in the ‘position of a superficial superstratum’ (König, 2019, p. 59) as the administrative, literary and liturgical language of the ruling elite.

Within the borders of Islam, the diglossic system saw the high status of Classical Arabic, used in literature, religious literature and administrative affairs, and Colloquial

Arabic. As María Angeles Gallego points out, ‘Arabs that came to the peninsula spoke a variety of Arabic dialects that gradually evolved into one main linguistic variety, known as Andalusí Arabic’ (Gallego, 2003, p. 125). Within the Christian community, a continuation of the diglossic framework from the pre-conquest period survived for a few centuries, with Latin being used as a formal language and Romance being used in informal settings. The written evidence, however, shows a gradual degradation of the status of Latin in favour of Arabic. This degeneration did not go unnoticed by some elements of the Christian community in al-Andalus; Álvaro of Córdoba (d. 861 C.E.), a Mozarabic theologian, wrote:

The Christians forgot their language to the point that you would not find among a thousand of them one person who could write a letter to a friend in Latin which is free from error. As for writing Arabic, you will certainly find a large number who master that language (in Kassis, 1997, p. 141).

Information about utilisation of Romance and Andalusí Arabic is hard to assess due to their nature as “vulgar” forms of Latin and Classical Arabic, respectively (Gallego, 2003, p. 127). Their “low” status means that they are generally not attested for in the written literature, which continued to be written in the “high” status forms.

While Latin/Romance remained the domain of the Christian community in al-Andalus, the overarching influence of Arabic which Álvaro lamented may have led to a degree of bilingualism. As König (2019) notes, the scholarship on the matter is largely divided; while some suggest that Romance remained in use throughout the Muslim rule, others suggest bilingualism was a common phenomenon, and others still propose that a hybrid ‘Romance-influenced form of Andalusian Arabic’ became the primary *lingua franca* in informal settings (p. 59). Literary sources commenting on the linguistic situation give us accounts that may give credence to any of the suggestions. The 10th-century Palestinian geographer al-Muqaddasī tells us that Arabic and ‘another language close to Roman’ (*lisān ākhar yuqārib al-rūmī*) (in König, 2019, p. 57) were spoken in al-Andalus. The same al-Muqaddasī and Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406) comment on the divergence of Andalusí Arabic from

Classical Arabic, with the latter attributing this divergence to the foreign lexicon that had entered the language (König, 2019, p. 59)⁶¹.

Both König (2019) and Gallego (2003) warn of oversimplification in analysing the linguistic situation, especially when considering the more than seven-century-long history of al-Andalus; both agree that linguistic change may have happened at different speeds in rural as compared to urban areas, and changing geopolitics probably had lasting impacts on the process. Fairchild Ruggles (2004) also suggests that the contribution of women, whose history is often overlooked, had a defining impact on the hybridisation of culture and language. Inter-marriage between Arab, or Arabic-speaking, men and Iberian women was a relatively common occurrence. The previously mentioned Ibn al-Qūṭīya is one example of a descendant of one such union; his name means ‘son of a Goth woman’, owing his appellation to his membership in the *Banū al-Qūṭīya* clan, descendants of ‘Īsā ibn Muzāḥim and Sara the Goth, granddaughter of the Visigothic king Witiza (Christys, 2002, pp. 158–159). Such mixed marriages would inevitably result in bilingual households, thus contributing to societal bilingualism (Fairchild Ruggles, 2004).

Whatever the case may be, there is overwhelming evidence for the presence of some degree of bilingualism, whether in society at large or amongst literati. The exchange between Arabic and Latin as seen in the examples of translations of the Bible, *Kitāb Hurūshiyūsh* and the *Qānūn* is an indication of this phenomenon. In addition, the mixing of Arabic and Romance can be seen in some example of the *muwashshaḥ* poetic tradition. The final verses of these compositions, known as *kharja*, ‘constitute a ludic, frivolous element, in contrast to the poem in which they are inserted’ (Gallego, 2003, pp. 129–130). While the main body of the poem were written in Classical Arabic, the *kharjas* were written in Andalusī Arabic or Romance, albeit in Arabic letter. These poems, according to König (2019), show that ‘Latin and Arabic—understood again as linguistic macro-systems—mingled creatively in the linguistic and literary landscape of Muslim al-Andalus’ (p. 59).

⁶¹ For the influence of Romance on Andalusī Arabic, see Corriente, 1992 and *A descriptive and comparative grammar of Andalusī Arabic*, 2013.

6.3 Translating *magus*

As we have seen in chapter 5, Andalusis commonly used *majūs* as a translation for *paganus*, *ethnicus* and *gentiles*. If this uniquely Andalusi use of *majūs* is a result of such cultural hybridity, the ambivalent nature of the term in Arabic forms a continuation of the Graeco-Latin development. If this is the case, one would expect witnesses for *majūs* being used in translations for *máγos* or *magus* in translations from Greek or Latin respectively. The *Glossarium*, however, contains an anomaly in glossing the lemma *magus maleficus*; rather than the expected *majūs*, the gloss provided is *munajjim*, meaning ‘astrologer’. Van Koningsveld attributes this gloss to a translation of the Gospel of Matthew made by a Cordovan by the name of Ishāq ibn Balashk (Isaac ibn Velasquez) in 946 C.E., which the compiler of glossary made use of in providing definitions. In translating Matt. 2, Ishāq translated *magi ab oriente* to *munajjimū al-mashriq*, ‘Eastern astrologers’ (MS Munich Cod.arab. 238, fol. 7r) (fig. 7). As van Koningsveld notes, Anton Baumstark (1936) proved that the Ishāq translation is based on the Vetus Latina text, i.e. an “Old Latin” translation separate from the Vulgate translations. The Arabic translations from the Vulgate, however, translate *magi ab oriente* to *majūs min al-mashriq*, ‘*majūs* from the East’, or as in the case of MS Madrid 4971, *majūs wāfaw min al-mashriq*, ‘*majūs* who arrived from the East’ (fol. 2r; fig. 8). Although the MS Madrid 4971 was written sometime in the 15th Century, it is considered to be part of the Ishāq ibn Balashk tradition of manuscripts, of which six exemplars exist today (Busic, 2018). As Baumstark (1936) shows, the Madrid manuscript was possibly edited to be closer to the Vulgate text. By the 9th Century, however, half a century before Ishāq’s translation, ‘Arabic translations of the Bible were commonly available among Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike’ (Griffith, 2013, p. 216). It is possible, then, that in earlier Arabic translations of the Gospels in al-Andalus, *magi* was translated to *majūs* in concordance with the Arabic Vulgate translations. Such a translation shows a concrete equivalence made between the two words. Nevertheless, Ishāq’s decision to use *munajjim* instead of the *majūs* as a translation for the cognate *magi* may say something about the development of *majūs* itself in 10th-century al-Andalus. With *majūs* being used to mean “pagan” and to approximate the Latin *paganus*, *ethnicus* and *gentiles*, all of which carry negative connotations, Ishāq may have had to consider mitigation similarly to what Isidore and Tertullian before him did when they needed to clarify the harmlessness of *astrologia* and the arts of the *mathematici* before the coming of Christ to sanitise the *magi*. If this is indeed

the case, it could still indicate that Ishāq was well aware of the link between *magus/magi* and *majūs*. As mentioned in chapter 5.1, *majūs* was used to translate ‘heretics’ in canon 37 of the Council of Laodicea. The previous canon, canon 36, which was also included in the canons of the Council of Toledo, over which Isidore presided, as canon 29, prohibits clergy from consulting with *magi* (Klingshirn, 2003; Sanzo, 2019). Regrettably, there are, to my knowledge, no digitised versions, nor editions, of the *Qānūn* currently available at the time of writing.

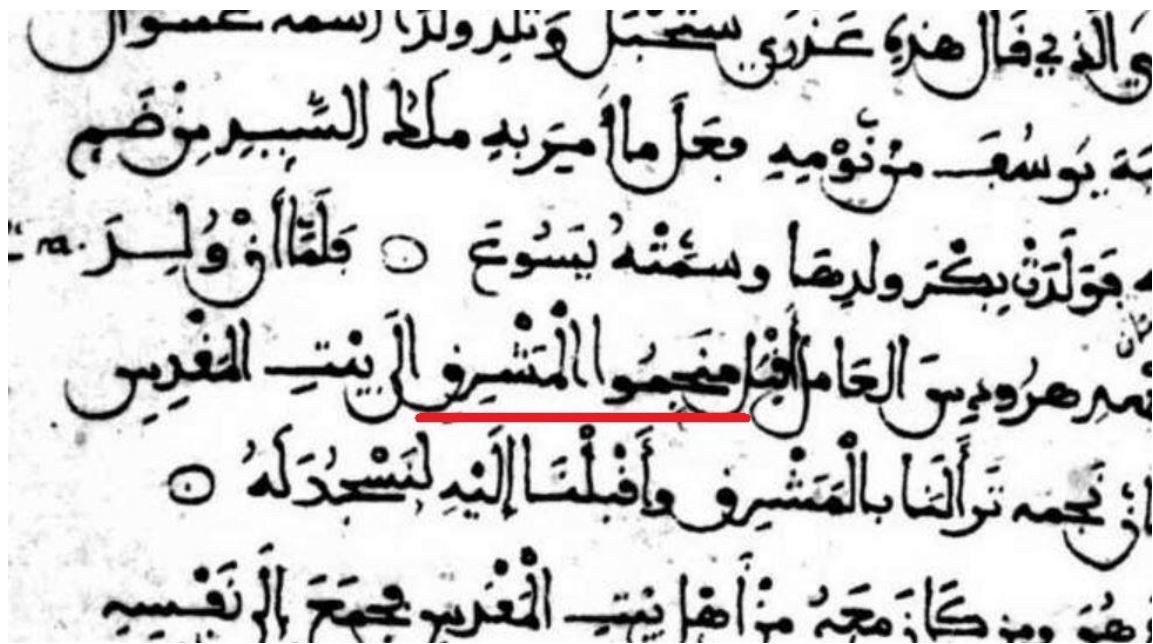


Fig. 7: Highlight from the Gospel of Matthew, showing *magi* translated as *munajjimū al-mashriq*. MS Munich Cod.arab. 238, fol. 7r.

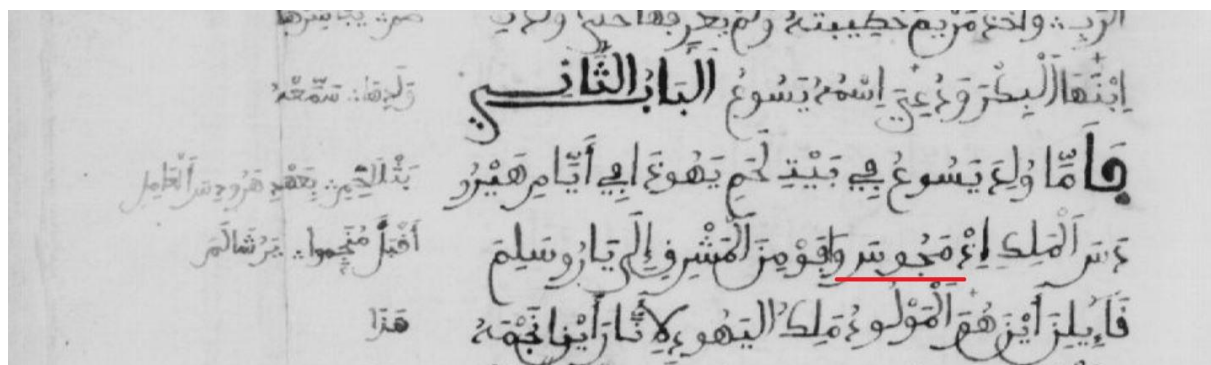


Fig. 8: Highlight from the Gospel of Matthew, showing *magi* translated as *majūs wāfaw min al-mashriq*. MS Madrid 4971, fol. 2r

The equivalence between *majūs* and *magus/magi*, however, was not always made. This seems to be especially the case when the source in Latin is interpreted to mean “wizard” or “sorcerer”. As we have seen earlier, *majūs* was used liberally in *Kitāb Hurūshiyūsh* to denote pagans of all sorts, including Greeks and Romans. However, in translating *magus* and its various forms, the Arabic word *sāḥir* (sorcerer, pl. *saḥara*) and its derivatives are used. Most notably, this is used even when Orosius mentioned *magi* in a Persian, even Zoroastrian, context, where there is an expectation that *magus* is used in its ethnographically correct context. In the account of the Persian king Cambyses II’s conquest of Egypt, Orosius says that ‘*magi* [...] dared to overthrow the kingdom’ (*magi* [...] *regno obrepere ausi*) (*Historiae* 2.8:3). In *Kitāb Hurūshiyūsh*, these *magi* are rendered as *saḥara* (Penelas, 2001a, p. 139). Similarly, Zoroaster is mentioned twice in *Kitāb Hurūshiyūsh*, the first time being an interpolation taken from Isidore’s *Chronica Maiora*, and the second time from Orosius’s *Historiae* (Penelas, 2001a). In both cases, where the Latin sources characterise him as the one who invented the *ars magicae* (*Historiae* 1.4:3; *Cronica maiora* 36), he is mentioned in *Kitāb Hurūshiyūsh* as the inventor of *siḥr* (sorcery) (Penelas, 2001a, pp. 52–53). This may be an indication that by the time *Kitāb Hurūshiyūsh* was written, the use of *majūs* meaning “pagan” was already well established enough that it was preferable to disambiguate its two meanings. Rather than follow the example of the Vulgate Arabic translation, *magus* in the *Historiae* was interpreted in its Latin meaning of ‘sorcerer’ and translated accordingly in Arabic, similarly to Ishāq’s decision to render it as *munajjim*.

6.4 Conclusion

The etymological history of *majūs*, as used in al-Andalus, cannot be seen in isolation. In the East, the accusations of idolatry and polytheism against Zoroastrians already gave the term associations with those activities, even though it was not explicitly used to mean ‘pagan’ or used interchangeably with already the established Arabic word *mushrik* (pagan). In al-Andalus, however, this already established connotation of idolatry was combined with two further factors. The first is that *máγos/magus* and *majūs* are cognate, ultimately deriving from the same Persian source, and share a history of retaining their Persian connotations while widening their semantic range. In Greek and Latin sources, the ambivalence between the two meanings was so that the confusion between the words was addressed by the author/s of the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Magikós* and Apuleius; Pliny and subsequent authors conflated the two

to give rise to the idea of Zoroaster being the first of the *magi*, a concept which was not foreign in Hispanic Christendom as seen in Isidore's *Etymologiae*. The second is that the hybrid, multilinguistic and multicultural situation in al-Andalus allowed for mutual lexical exchange between Arabic and Latin/Romance. As seen from the examples of the numismatic evidence, the 'Islamicised' Bibles, and *muwashshah* poetic tradition, intercultural and interlinguistic contact gave rise to a hybrid culture. The combination of these factors made *majūs* ripe for a partial semantic merger with *magos/magus*.

7. Interpretations, misinterpretations and reinterpretations

7.1 Revisiting fire-worship

In the previous chapters, we have seen how the term *majūs* went through a series of semantic shifts throughout the centuries from its original Persian term for a priest, to ‘Zoroastrian’, to ‘pagan’ in al-Andalus. As mentioned in chapter 5, even in al-Andalus, the two latter meanings remained in use contemporaneously, albeit in different contexts. However, the meaning of *majūs* in the Eastern Muslim world never went through the same semantic shift seen in al-Andalus and retained the meaning of Zoroastrian, although as seen in chapter 4.2, its use as a rhetorical device became common. These diverging meanings may have been the cause of some confusion.

Following its political, and eventually religious, independence from the eastern Caliphate, al-Andalus developed its own cultural and literary environment. Nevertheless, ‘Muslim Spain under the Umayyad dynasty still looked upon the East for intellectual and spiritual nourishment’ (Sanni, 1995, p. 92). Already in the 9th Century, the movement of poets, authors and scholars between al-Andalus and the East was commonplace. Andalusis who travelled eastwards, like Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Salām (d. 286 A.H./899 C.E.) and ‘Abbās ibn Nāṣiḥ al-Jazīrī (d. 229A.H. /844 C.E.), returned with the literary works of Baghdad and are credited with transmitting the Eastern works in al-Andalus (Sanni, 1995; Molina, 1998). At the same time, easterners like Abū Yusr al-Riyāḍī (d. circa 277 A.H./890 C.E) settled in al-Andalus, bringing with them the literature and literary traditions of their native lands (Sanni, 1995).

The richness of literature available in al-Andalus by the 11th Century and the scholars’ access to it, inevitably exposed Andalusī authors to the modes, styles, as well as vocabulary of the East. The eastern use of *majūs* is no exception. Although many of the Andalusī literati would likely have already been aware of the two meanings of *majūs* as used in al-Andalus and as used in the Qur’ān, *ḥādīth* and *fiqh* literature, eastern literature

(re)introduced the *topoi* associated with the Zoroastrian *majūs*. As mentioned in chapter 4.2, the most dominant of these *topoi* were fire-worship and dualism, both of which were used to discredit Zoroastrians as polytheists and idolators. The association of Zoroastrians with fire-worship, however, became a standard *topos* that made its way into secular and non-legal literature. In the *Tale of the Oldest Lady in Thousand and One Nights*, the protagonist goes to a town in which the inhabitants ‘were all Magians, worshipping fire in the place of God’ (*wa-qad kānū majūsan ya ‘budūn al-nār dūna al-malik al-jabbār*⁶²) (Bürgel, 1999, p. 205). Apart from those about their beliefs, though, there are other *topoi* related to Zoroastrians’ activities and customs. The most common amongst these is incest.

The practise of incestuous marriage amongst the Persians was already noted in Greek and Roman literature (Bigwood, 2012). Diogenes Laertius (3rd Century C.E./2018), quoting Sotion of Alexandria (fl. 2nd Century B.C.E.), says that ‘They hold discussions about justice, and consider cremation impious; they think it pious to sleep with one’s mother or daughter’ (p. 7). This accusation of incest can be found in Arabic literature, including in ethnographic, historical and geographical treatises, legal texts and poetry. Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 1201 C.E.), in *Talbīs Iblīs* (The Deception of the Devil), says how Zoroaster (*Zarādasht*), who was ‘the founder of the *majūs*’ (*ṣāhib al-majūs*), ‘prescribed for his followers ritual ablution with urine, copulation with mothers, worshipping fires, and other disgusting things’ (*shara ‘a li-aṣḥābihi al-tawaddu’ bi-l-abwāl wa-ghashayāni al-ummaḥāti wa-ta ‘zīma al-nīrān ma ‘a ‘umūrin samijatin*) (Van Gelder, 2005, p. 73; Ibn al-Jawzī, 12th Century C.E./2001, pp. 57–58). In *fiqh* literature, incestuous relations amongst Zoroastrians are mentioned in concerns primarily related to marriage and inheritance laws (Van Gelder, 2005, pp. 109–112). Such concerns can be seen in the Andalusī Malīkī scholar Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr’s (d. 1071 C.E.) *Al-kāfi fī fiqh ahl al-Madīna* (The Sufficiency in the jurisprudence of the people of Medina), in which the division of inheritance in incestuous relations amongst the *majūsī* is codified (Müller, 2013). Poetry, anecdotes and jokes about incest often attribute such acts to Zoroastrians (Van Gelder, 2005). Furthermore, incest can be utilised in isolation, disconnected from fire-worship, as an indication of Zoroastrianism, or Zoroastrian-like

⁶² *Al-malik al-jabbār* literally means ‘The Omnipotent king’. *Al-jabbār* is the 9th of the 99 names of God in Islam.

behaviour. Al-Mas‘udi relates a story of a Copt in Egypt who called a Jewish doctor a Zoroastrian because he claimed that ‘they allow marrying their daughters in some situations’ (*yarawna nikāḥ al-banāt fī ba‘ḍ al-ḥālāt*) (Van Gelder, 2005, p. 63; al-Mas‘udi, 947/1863, p. 388). This example indicates that *majūs* did not automatically mean ‘fire-worshipper’, but rather a label to which were attached several characteristics.

It is in within this context that Ibn Diḥya’s 13th-century account of al-Ghazāl’s journey to Scandinavia or a Norse settlement needs to be examined. As mentioned in chapter 3.2.1, Melvinger’s (1986) assertion that *majūs* was used for Scandinavians on account of the use of fire, which reminded Andalusis of Zoroastrians, is based primarily on Ibn Diḥya’s story. In this story, however, fire-worship is not mentioned in isolation but is coupled with the claim that they partook in incestuous relations:

All of their inhabitants are *majūs*. The mainland close to them, a few days’ journey away, are also related to them, and they are *majūs*. Today they are Christian and have left the practice of fire-worship and the religion they practised before, and returned to Christianity, apart from a few living on some islands isolated from them out at sea. They practice their previous religion with fire-worship, marriage with mothers and sisters, and other kinds of disgraceful acts.⁶³ (Ibn Diḥya, ca. 1200/1955, pp. 140-141)

The grouping of fire-worship, incest and ‘other’ acts is reminiscent of Ibn al-Jawzī’s characterisation of Zoroastrians seen above. Melvinger (1986) acknowledges that ‘the information about marriage with a near relative seems suspicious’ but dismisses it as ‘a misunderstanding on the Arabic side’ (para. 4). However, in this context, it is somewhat arbitrary which of the two practices is to be dismissed as ‘a misunderstanding’. Rather than seeing a similarity between Zoroastrian fire cults and Scandinavian religious practice, it is, therefore, more likely that Ibn Diḥya’s ‘misunderstanding’ and failure to distinguish between the two uses of *majūs*, led to his utilisation of stock *topoi* of the Zoroastrian *majūs* in writing of the Scandinavian *majūs*. Therefore, rather than calling Scandinavians *majūs* because of

⁶³ *Ahluḥā kulluhum majūs, wa-mā yalīhum min al-barr aydan lihum masīrat ayyām, wa-hum majūs, wa-hum al-yawm ‘alā dīn al-naṣrāniya wa-qad taraku ‘ibādat al-nār, wa-dīnuhum alladhī kānū ‘alayhim, wa-raja ‘ū naṣārā illā ahl jazā’ir munqaṭi ‘a lahum fī al-baḥr hum ‘alā dīnihim al-awwal min ‘ibādat al-nār, wa-nikāḥ al-umm wa-l-ukht wa-ghayr dhālika min ‘aṣnāf al-shanār.*

their fire-worshipping, as Melvinger suggests, it is rather more likely that he ascribed fire-worship because they were also called *majūs*.

Here we can see a parallel to Pliny the Elder's confusion and merging of the two meanings of the term *magus*; while Pliny's confusion caused him to merge sorcery with Zoroastrians and make Zoroaster its founder, Ibn Diḥya's confusion merged Zoroastrian *topoi* to other, unrelated *majūs*. Ibn Diḥya's text is the earliest of the Arabic accounts that ascribe fire-worship to Scandinavian *majūs*, albeit being relatively late compared to the accounts by the Razīs and Ibn al-Qūṭīya. The only other text that Melvinger (1986) refers to that explicitly links Scandinavian *majūs* to fire is al-Waṭwāt's late 13th-/ early 14th-century *Mabāhij al-fikar wa-manāhij al-ibar*, saying that the *Rūs* 'believe in the *majūs* religion and burn their dead in fire' (para. 4). The earlier Andalusī texts that mention Scandinavian *majūs* never make any reference to fire-worship or cremation; had fire-worship been so apparent as to warrant using the appellative *majūs* for that reason, one expects that they would mention it in the same manner as *Thousand and One Nights* and Ibn al-Jawzī did when mentioning the *majūs* in the examples above. In addition, the two accounts of eye-witnesses of Scandinavians never use the term *majūs*. In his *Risāla*, which contains a detailed account of a cremation ritual, Ibn Faḍlān never used the word *majūs* despite the apparent use of fire in a religious context. In the Tortosī al-Ṭurṭūshī's visit to *Shalshawīq* (Slesvig, i.e. Hedeby) in the late 10th Century, quoted in the Persian al-Qazwīnī's (d. 1283 C.E.) *Āthār al-bilād wa-akhbār al-ibād* (Monuments of countries and news of worshippers), there is no mention of fire-worship, despite mentioning other religious practices. In the part attributed to al-Ṭurṭūshī, he does not call the inhabitants *majūs*, and al-Qazwīnī, in the introductory opening before that, calls them 'Sirius worshippers' (*'abdat al-shi'rā*) (al-Qazwīnī, 13th Century C.E./2005, pp. 601–602), a reference to pre-Islamic Meccan paganism as mentioned in the Qur'ān⁶⁴ (Gibb, 1962). The connection between Scandinavian *majūs* and fire, then, seems to be a later conjecture due to the widespread availability of, and exposure to, eastern literature in al-Andalus, which brought with it the Zoroastrian *topoi* used there.

⁶⁴ 'And that it is He who is the Lord of Sirius' (*wa-annahu huwa rabbu al-shi'rā*) (Qur'ān 53:49).

By the 17th Century, the understanding of the term *majūs* as used in Spain had degenerated. In his *Nafh al-īb* (The breathe of perfume), a history of al-Andalus, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Maqqarī (d. 1632) seems to struggle to interpret it. While, in most of the cases, the stories of the attacks on Spain were taken directly from other sources, one case that has no clear derivation. In describing the nations north of Spain, he mentions that there are ‘The Lucky Islands’ (*jazā’ir al- sa’ādāt*) inhabited by a people ‘called the *majūs* who are Christian’ (*yuqālu lahum al-majūs ‘alā dīn al-naṣārā*), one of which is Britain (*Britānya*) (al-Maqqarī, 1617/1968, p. 167). Al-Maqqarī interprets *majūs* as an ethnonym, divorcing it from either the pagan or Zoroastrian meaning.

7.2 *Almuiuces* and the *majūs* in Castillian chronicles

As Arabic literature made its way to the Christian kingdoms in the north of the Iberian Peninsula, they started to form part of the corpus of sources upon which the Latin and Romance chronicles drew. In chapter x we saw the use of the Aḥmad al-Razī’s account in Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada’s *Historia Arabum*. Aḥmad al-Razī’s work was also translated into Portuguese in ca. 1300, and eventually translated into Castillian in the 15th Century as *Crónica del moro Rasis* (Chronicle of the Moor Razī). Starting from 1274, under the patronage of the Castillian king Alfonso X ‘the Wise’ (r. 1252–1284) continued by his son Sancho IV in 1289, a series of versions of a general history of Spain was written. This chronicle is known today by the name of its first modern edition by Ramón Menéndez Pidal, *Primera Crónica General* (The first General Chronicle). It covers the story of Spain starting from the Biblical flood and population of Europe by the descendants of Japheth, son of Noah, down to the reign of Fernando III of Castile (r. 1217–1252). These three chronicles deal with the interpretation of *majūs* drastically differently.

In *Historia Arabum*, the passage that deals with the first Scandinavian attack on al-Andalus in 229 A.H./844 C.E. does not name the attackers. The account of the second attack identifies the 60 ships that arrive at ‘Gelzirat Alhadra’ as *naues a Normania* (ships from the North/Normandy) (Jiménez de Rada, 1214/1999, p. 124). In both cases, in the original Arabic, as quoted in Ibn Ḥayyān, they are referred to as ‘the Norman *majūs*’ (*al-majūs min al-Urdumāniyīn*) or simply *majūs*. While acknowledging the *Urdumāniyīn* in translating it to *Normania* in the second attack, Jiménez de Rada steers clear of the term *majūs*. In *Crónica del moro Rasis*, which only includes an account of the first attack, the attackers are referred to

as ‘heretics’ (*herejes*) (Gayangos, 1850, pp. 98). The translation of *majūs* as ‘heretics’ is noteworthy insofar as we see the same equivalence between the two already made in the *Qānūn*, where *majūs* is given as a translation for *airetikon* (heretic) in canon 37 of the Council of Laodicea (chapter 5.1). Unfortunately, the Portuguese translation on which this Castilian translation is based is lost and, at present, it is impossible to determine what the translation for *majūs* in that version looked like and whether an equivalent of ‘heretic’ was also used there.

The *Primera Crónica General* records all three waves of Scandinavian attacks on al-Andalus. Like the *Historia Arabum* and *Crónica del moro Rasis*, the attacking party during the first attack of 844 C.E. is not identified but only referred to as *unas yentes estrannas* (‘a foreign people’) (Menéndez Pidal (Ed.), ca. 1289/1955, p. 362). For the second and third campaigns, it follows suit and calls them *normanos* (Menéndez Pidal (Ed.), ca. 1289/1955, pp. 366, 424–425). The details in these accounts follow closely those found in the Arabic sources and the third account also shows evidence for the use of Latin accounts; like in *Historia Silense*, the commander of the Scandinavian fleet is named *Gunderedo rey de los normanos* (‘Gunderedo king of the Normans’) (Menéndez Pidal (Ed.), ca. 1289/1955, p. 424–425). Like in *Historia Arabum*, the author/s steer clear from translating *majūs*. The term *majūs*, however, is not absent from this chronicle, providing us with a unique, yet bewildering interpretation. In chapter 14 of the chronicle, *al-majūs*, rendered as *almuiuces*, are attributed with settling Spain in its pre-Roman period. These *almuiuces*, we are told, who ‘worship fire’ (*aorar el fuego*) are originally from Chaldea (Mesopotamia) but were forced to flee because of persecution by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar and the Persian Xerxes. Following this exodus, they settled in the ‘cold islands of Norway, Denmark and Prussia’ (*yslas frias assi cuemo Nuruega e Dacia e Prucia*), and subsequently to ‘England and all its islands: Scotland, and Ireland and Wales’ (*Inglaterra con todas essas yslas: Escocia, e Yrlanda, e Galas*). Later still they settled in Spain and ruled it for forty years until they were defeated by ‘those from Flanders and England’ (*los de Flandes e dInglaterra*) (Menéndez Pidal (Ed.), ca. 1289/1955, pp. 14–15)

There have been many attempts to identify these *almuiuces* and the source of this account in the scholarship. Although the *Primera Crónica General* mentions their settling of Scandinavia, considering that the account deals with events in the first millennium B.C.E,

this topic that is beyond the scope of this study. The use of *majūs*, however, may provide valuable details on the misinterpretation of this term. As many scholars agree (Dubler, 1951; Irving, 1959; Wikander, 1966; González García, 2012), the account of the Scandinavian attacks in the 9th and 10th Centuries C.E. have played a significant role in its composition, anachronistically lifting snippets of information from the medieval campaigns and transposing them to a prehistoric setting to ‘give a fantastical prehistory to their own nation’ (Wikander, 1966, p. 114). Furthermore, the same scholars agree that the ‘Chaldean’ origin and attribution of fire-worship is a product of a failure to distinguish between the Zoroastrian *majūs* and the Scandinavia *majūs* in the Arabic sources. The sources used, however, are disputed since no single text contains the exact account as found in *Primera Crónica General*, and it may be a pastiche of several sources. Inés Fernández-Ordóñez (1992) claims that there can be no doubt that the story was taken from al-Bakrī’s account of the early history of Spain due to some parallels between the stories. Although al-Bakrī does not mention any *majūs* in this account, the story is immediately followed by the Scandinavian attack of 844 C.E. Fernández-Ordóñez (1992) thus claims that the author of the *Primera Crónica General* took elements from al-Bakrī’s geography in writing the story of the *almuiuces*, confusing the pre-Roman history with the Scandinavian campaign. Stig Wikander (1966) notes that the story may have been, in part, a folk history of Spain that circulated in the time of al-Andalus, which has been recorded by multiple Arabic authors. He mentions the accounts in al-Ḥimyarī’s (d. 1495) *Kitāb al-Rawḍ al-mi‘īn* (Book of the Fragran Garden) and al-Maqqarī’s *Nafh al-ṭīb* as being of particular note. Both of these authors record the story of a drought that turned Spain into a desert during the reign of a people they call *Andalush*, from which the name al-Andalus is derived; the *Primera Crónica General* includes a similar story of a drought just before the arrival of *almuiuces* (Menéndez Pidal (ed.), ca. 1289/1955, p. 14), a connection that is also noted by Menéndez Pidal (1955, p. lxxv) and Fernández-Ordóñez (1992, p. 194). Moreover, in these chronicles, the *Andalush* are described as ‘a *majūs*-ied people’ (*ahl tamajjus*⁶⁵) (al-Ḥimyarī, ca. 1462/1980, p. 33) and following a

⁶⁵ *Tamajjus* is a verbal noun of the V pattern *tafa‘ul* of the word *majūs*. Despite its non-semitic origin, *majūs* is here being reanalysed as a word of the root m-j-s, and semitic declensions applied to it.

‘*majūs*-ied religion’ (dīn al-*tamajjus*) (al-Maqqarī, 1617/1968, p. 133).⁶⁶ Notably, however, all of the studies mentioned seem to miss out some possible links between these Arabic sources and the dubious Mesopotamian and Persian origin of the *almuiuces* in the *Primera Crónica General*. Al-Bakrī (ca. 1086/1968) recounts the story of Ishbān, who conquered Spain thus giving it its name, and is credited with joining Nebuchadnezzar (*Bukhta Naṣṣar*) in the destruction of Jerusalem (pp. 109–112). In addition, al-Maqqarī (1617/1968) gives an etymological derivation of Ishbān, saying that ‘he was born in Isfahan’ (*kāna mawlidihu bi-aṣbahān*), in modern-day Iran, but it changed to Ishbān ‘in the language of the foreigners/barbarians/Persians’⁶⁷ (*bi-lisān al-‘ajam*) (p. 134). He also reiterated the claim made by al-Bakrī that Ishbān possibly participated in the attack on Jerusalem with Nebuchadnezzar (al-Maqqarī, 1617/1968, pp. 134–135), thus making a connection with both Nebuchadnezzar and Persia. Although both al-Ḥimyarī’s and al-Maqqarī’s accounts postdate the *Primera Crónica General*, they claim that they obtained these details from previous authors; al-Ḥimyarī credits al-Rāzī, while al-Maqqarī credits a certain Abū Bakr ibn al-Nazzām, about whom nothing is known. Dubler (1951) and Irving (1959) mention that the *almuiuces*’ conquest of Italica, the ancient Roman city in the Seville area, is also of note as a parallel to the Scandinavia *majūs*’ attack on Seville. Both miss the fact that Italica is mentioned in the Arabic sources in connection with the pre-Roman history; al-Bakrī (ca. 1086/1968) mentions it in connection with Ishbān (p. 111) and al-Maqqarī (1617/1968) says that Ṭāliqa, as it is rendered in Arabic, was the capital of the Africans who settled after the drought (p. 134).

It is clear that the author/s of the *Primera Crónica General* used Arabic sources to inform their account of the pre-Roman history of Spain, patching together various elements

⁶⁶ It must be noted that while Wikander (1966) has correctly noted the use of *ahl tamajjus* in al-Ḥimyarī, albeit incorrectly rendered as *ahl tamajjūs*, he claims that al-Maqqarī uses *majūs* as an ethnonym, which he claims is of note. This is incorrect since al-Maqqarī also uses *tamajjus*. It is possible that he confused this with al-Maqqarī’s use of *majūs* as an ethnonym as noted earlier in the previous section.

⁶⁷ Interpreting the word ‘*ajam*’ is problematic. The root of the word, ‘-j-m, although related to the concept of chewing, could be used, in its different forms, to speaking unclearly or having a speech impediment, as in a ‘*jam*. Historically, it was used for Persians as a reference to their unintelligible language from an Arabic point of view. Its meaning evolved to include all non-Arabs and foreigners, and by extension barbarians. This is similar to the semantic change in the Greek *bárbaros*.

of information to create this unique account. Although it is possible that the author/s used the reports on the Scandinavian *majūs*, as suggested by most scholars, many of the details could have been lifted from the accounts of pre-Roman Spain in al-Bakrī and intermediary sources that also informed al-Ḥimyarī and al-Maqqarī. The use of the term *almuiuces*, however, shows signs of confusion between the Andalusī use of *majūs* as pagan and Zoroastrian *majūs*. The claim of fire-worship and baptisms of fire amongst the *almuiuces* shows a clear sign of the latter, perhaps exacerbated by the links between the Middle East and Ishbān made in the Arabic sources. As for the claim that they settled in the British Isles and Scandinavia, this may be the result of a merger of Zoroastrian *majūs* and the various peoples referred to as *majūs* in Arabic sources. Apart from the ‘Norman’ *majūs*, which gives a justification for the settlement of *Nuruega e Dacia e Prucia*, al-Bakrī (ca. 1086/1968) mentions ‘the *majūs* known as the English’ (*al-majūs al-ma’rūfīn bi-l-inqilish*) (p. 145), as does al-Maqqarī as seen at the end of the last section. The failure to distinguish between the different meanings led to the collage that is the story of the *almuiuces* in the *Primera Crónica General*. At the same time, the focus on the accounts on the Scandinavian *majūs* in finding possible sources for it by modern scholars is also a sign of misunderstanding the term *majūs*. As Christys (2015) puts it, many ‘miss the point that although nearly all Vikings are labelled *majūs*, not all *majūs* are Vikings’ (p. 20).

7.3 Viking cheesemakers?

One example of *majūs* being erroneously associated with Scandinavians is the commonly cited story that some of the those attacking Seville in 844 remained there, converted to Islam and started producing cheese in the lower Guadalquivir area. This assertion seems to have been first made by the Arabist Évariste Lévi-Provençal in his seminal, 3-volume study of Islamic Spain *Histoire de l’Espagne musulmane*. In the first volume, *La Conquête et l’Émirat hispano-umayyade (710-912)*, in the chapter regarding the first Scandinavian incursion, he asserts that some of the attackers failed to embark in the retreat and that:

They adopted Islam and devoted themselves in the low valley of the Guadalquivir, downstream of Seville, to herd raising and the milk industry. In addition, the little colony of *muwallads* of Norman origin had to replenish Seville and even Courdoue in reputable cheeses (Lévi-Provençal, 1950, p. 224)

The only reference he provides in these two sentences is after the end of the first sentence, where he cites his book *La Civilisation Arabe en Espagne*, in which he discussed the possibility of Scandinavians settling in Seville following the raid despite the lack of evidence. Unfortunately, he does not provide any sources for the second sentence, primary or otherwise, even though in *La Civilisation Arabe en Espagne* he claims that this is based on ‘what is reported in some Arabic texts’ (Lévi-Provençal, 1961, p. 113). There, once again, he failed to provide any references to these texts. Despite the questionable origin of this assertion, the narrative found itself being quoted time and again to the present day. In his study of al-Ghazāl’s embassy to the king of the *majūs*, Allen (1960) quotes and translates the above excerpt by Lévi-Provençal in his footnotes to suggest that the *majūs*’ embassy to Cordoba to broker a peace deal with the Emir ‘Abd al-Raḥman II may have also had the secondary purpose of ‘bringing aid and comfort to some of the bands scattered about the Algarve and the Gaditarian hinterland’ (pp. 11, 74). In his otherwise excellent book *Muslim Spain and Portugal: A Political History of al-Andalus*, the Kennedy perpetuates this narrative, saying that ‘[s]ome, however, remained and settled in the lower Guadalquivir area, where they converted by and by to Islam and lived reformed and blameless lives, selling cheeses to the Sevillanos’ (Kennedy, 1996, p. 47). Inevitably, this leaked into the realms of mass-market history books and online articles and listicles. The monograph *Vikings at War* by Kim Hjarðar (2016), to use one recent example, claims that ‘[t]here is a lot of evidence’ that they settled on Isla Menor⁶⁸, converted to Islam and became ‘cheesemakers’ (p. 341). In the Norwegian version of the same book, *Vikinger i krig*, the same boxout says that they ‘settled on the island’ (Hjarðar, 2017, p. 341)⁶⁹, leaving out any reference to cheese production, which shows how this narrative morphed into becoming dubious evidence for the permanent settlement of Scandinavians in Spain. As for online articles, they often cite an article on *MuslimHeritage.com* by Omar Mubaidin which, despite being well researched and

⁶⁸ The pinpointing to Isla Menor as the area of settlement is very likely confusion with the fact that the Scandinavian attackers in 844 set up base on the island, from which they launched the skirmishes in Seville. Lévi-Provençal’s suggestion for a possible settlement area is the more vague ‘low valley of the Guadalquivir’.

⁶⁹ Another Norwegian monograph by the same author, *Vikingenes verden*, reproduces the text of the boxout verbatim with the added reference to cheese production: ‘slo seg ned som osteprodusenter på øya’ (Hjarðar, 2017 (2), p. 145).

includes a comprehensive bibliography, includes no specific references in any of the entries in the timeline. However, the inclusion of Rolf Sheen's article *Viking Raids on the Spanish Peninsula* (1996) in the bibliography suggests this as his source, which in turn cites Lévi-Provençal. The entry for 'Viking raid on Seville' on Wikipedia cites the abovementioned Kennedy monograph as its source. It seems that in all of the cases where cheese-making Muslim Scandinavians make an appearance, the ultimate source is always Lévi-Provençal's unsubstantiated claim, with very little in the way of any attempt to question its provenance.

Aguadé (1986) published a short, three-page article questioning the provenance of this statement. There he also lamented the lack of references apart from the rather inconsequential one to Lévi-Provençal's own previous publication and the fact that all known texts about *majūs* known to refer to Scandinavians never give cheese production any mention (Aguadé, 1986, p. 472). Aguadé proposed that Lévi-Provençal may have taken this from a treatise on *ḥisba* by Ahmad ibn 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abd al-Ra'uf entitled *Risāla fī Ādāb al-Ḥisba wa-l-Muḥtasib*, which Lévi-Provençal published in 1955 as part of a three-text edition. This text includes a citation of an Andalusī jurist, 'Abd al-Malik ibn Habīb (ca. 790-853), which is also preserved in a text by Ibn Abī Zamanīn (d. 1008) in his *Qidwat al-Ghāzī* (The Fighter's Exemplar). The excerpt in Ibn Abī Zamanīn's (1989) text reads:

Ibn Habīb said: It is not harmful to make *sawīq* [a dish made with grains] with butter of the enemy and their honey, and likewise, it is not harmful to eat the cheese of the *Rūm* and those like them amongst the People of the Book, but the cheese of the *majūs* is not to be eaten⁷⁰ (p. 203)

This kind of ruling in Islamic jurisprudence cannot be seen in isolation. As seen in chapter 5.3, although *majūs* was used for pagans in general in al-Andalus, and was used to refer to the Scandinavians who attacked it, it retained the meaning of Zoroastrian in legal literature. This ruling is most likely a citation of a legal precedent in Islamic law in the Middle East, where the issue around the allowance to eat the cheeses produced by the Zoroastrians has a long history. The contention is centred around the slaughter of animals which is regulated under

⁷⁰ *Qāla Ibn Habīb: wa-lā ba'asa bi-mā luttā min al-sawīq bi-saman al-'adū wa-'asalihim wa-ka-dālika lā ba'asa bi-akl jubn al-rūm wa-ashbāhihim min 'adū ahl al-kitāb wa-lā yu'kalu jubn al-majūs.*

Islamic law. In the case of food derived from animals, it is considered *ḥalāl* if the animal is slaughtered ritually following strict guidelines, while carrion, pork, blood and animals not slaughtered ritualistically or dedicated to a deity other than God is considered *ḥarām* (Ersilia, 2012, para. 1). When it came to meat slaughtered by non-Muslims, the different legal schools of thought and different denominations disagreed on what to consider *ḥalāl*. While most schools of thought allowed meat slaughtered by *ahl al-kitāb*, that slaughtered by Zoroastrians was not, which is a consequence of their second-class *dhimmī* as discussed in chapter 4.2 (see also Freidenreich, 2010).

Although the milk required to make cheese can also be rendered unsuitable to consume under certain circumstances according to some schools of thought, it is the use of rennet, which is extracted from the stomachs of slaughtered livestock, that brings into question whether non-*ḥalāl* slaughtering would also render the rennet *ḥarām*. Michael Cook (1984) has outlined the history of this issue in Islamic jurisprudence, using an impressive array of primary texts. He does point out the fact, however, that there is a ‘geographical distinction- one which influences not so much the position taken on the issue, as whether it is considered at all’ (Cook, 1984, p. 460). He continues to say that this is a primarily Baghdadi issue, where Zoroastrian presence remained strong in the period, rather than a Hijazi one, and thus the perceived ‘threat’ of eating ‘Magian’-produced cheese was a reality that required addressing. Cook does not address the attitude towards cheese in the Andalusian sources, possibly due to the even larger distance from the epicentre of where the issue was most relevant. Ibn Habīb, however, studied Islamic jurisprudence under Mālikī scholars in Egypt and Medina and thus it is likely that he became familiar with the discussions on Zoroastrian cheese (Muranyi, 2009). Unfortunately, both sources for Ibn Habīb’s ruling are cited out of context, and it would be misguided to confidently attempt to reconstruct a single, likely scenario for such a ruling to take place in 9th-century al-Andalus. It is possible, however, that the response given by the jurist was in response to a question regarding the consumption of cheese produced by Christians and Jews living in al-Andalus, with the added caveat on *majūs* deriving from a legal precedent that he is quoting *in toto*. If this was indeed the case, the mention of *majūs*, therefore, is collateral to the ruling on *ahl al-kitāb*, and may be added for Qur’ānic completeness (Christys, 2015), reflecting the mention of *majūs* in 22:17. With his knowledge of Eastern jurisprudence and, to use Cook’s characterisation, the ‘archaic

problem' of the Magian cheeses in legal discussions, Ibn Habīb probably uses *majūs* in its original meaning of Zoroastrians rather than for Scandinavians.

7.4 Conclusion

The case studies in this chapter show that the modern misunderstanding and confusion surrounding the term *majūs* is not a modern phenomenon due to its meaning being lost to time. Medieval Arabic authors like Ibn Diḥya and the Castilian author of the *Primera Crónica General* struggled with understanding it and distinguishing between the two meanings it carried. Ibn Diḥya conflated the two meanings and attributed two characteristics associated with Zoroastrians to Scandinavians. In the *Primera Crónica General*, the multiple uses of *majūs* found in the Arabic source material were merged into a single entity, *almuiuces*.

The confusion in modern scholarship stems from two intertwined issues. The first issue is that, like for their Medieval counterparts, the imprecise use and semantic range of *majūs* make its interpretation problematic. This is the case with Lévi-Provençal's claim that Scandinavians settled in al-Andalus to produce cheese. By missing the fact that the presence of *majūs* in legal literature refers to Zoroastrians, he failed to differentiate between the two and applied the one meaning to a context that utilises the other. The second is that the confusion experienced by the Medieval authors is not acknowledged or recognised, thus taken as an authentic use and perpetuating the confusion further. Melvinger's use of Ibn Diḥya as proof for the association of Scandinavian cremations and Zoroastrian 'fire-worship' is one such case.

The peril that comes with such a misunderstanding is that it may lead to flawed conclusions that may permeate through the scholarship, exacerbating the problem. Lévi-Provençal's cheesemaking Vikings are mentioned matter-of-factly in many subsequent publications, and Melvinger's exclusive association of *majūs* with Scandinavians caused the term to be equated with them. We can see an effect of this in the fact that studies of the *Primera Crónica General* consistently cite the account of the Scandinavian attacks on al-Andalus as a possible, even exclusive, source for the construction of the *almuiuces*' entry into pre-Roman Spain.

8. Conclusion

This thesis sought to shed light on the use of the term *majūs* throughout the Arabic-speaking world in the Middle Ages, understood here within the context of the Global Middle Ages. The study showed that the term could not be considered to be uniform in meaning within a perceived monolithic Arabo-Islamic world, but rather requires region-specific considerations. The study led to an examination of the semantic shift that it underwent specifically in al-Andalus.

The meaning of *majūs* in al-Andalus is of particular importance in the context of Viking Age Scandinavia as it was the appellation of choice used in Andalusī literature to refer to the Scandinavians who attacked the Iberian Peninsula on multiple occasions in the 9th and 10th Centuries. This thesis thus attempted to contextualise the use of the term across the Andalusī corpus to understand its meaning better and be able to place the account of Scandinavian *majūs* within that context.

After outlining the scope of this study, chapter one looked at how the limited studies on this topic is a consequence of the intersectional nature of the geopolitical situation of al-Andalus. Despite being geographically European, its religious, linguistic and cultural alignment with the rest of the Arabo-Islamic world has rendered it relatively understudied in the context of Medieval Studies more generally, and Viking Age Studies more particularly. This short survey highlighted the importance of a more holistic and interdisciplinary approach towards the Scandinavia activities in al-Andalus to reflect the intersectionality of the region. Acknowledging its place between the Islamic world and Europe warrants us to open up the scope of research to allow for the inquiry to venture into a broader geographical landscape than is the norm in Medieval Studies.

Chapter two went over the history of al-Andalus and the three waves of Scandinavian attacks. This chapter sought to explore the historical and textual contexts for *majūs* as an appellation for Scandinavians. It also served the purpose of introducing some concepts relevant to the medieval Arabic historiography, such as the practice of citing and reproducing whole passages from previous authors, which proves relevant for the analyses of the Arabic

sources later in the study. Moreover, the chapter familiarised the reader with the corpus of primary Arabic sources and their authors.

Following an overview of scholarly work on Arabic sources for Scandinavia and the Viking Age, chapter three introduced the previous scholarship on the term *majūs* and the various attempts at rationalising its use for Scandinavians. Melvinger's solution that it was used because of the perceived similarity between the Zoroastrian fire-cult and Scandinavian cremations remains the most influential and oft-cited one. Alternative solutions like Epalza's claim that it was a juridical status and Pritsak's Celtic origin, in contrast, have garnered mixed responses. Nonetheless, these three very diverse solutions to the problem of defining *majūs* highlight the fact that the term remains relatively misunderstood in the fields of both Andalusian studies and Viking age studies. In addition, this chapter has shown how the utilisation of a narrow selection of texts while ignoring the corpus at large led to scholars missing the semantic range that *majūs* exhibited, something Christys, König and Magnusson noted. This chapter also provided a frame of reference for the rest of the thesis.

Chapter four delved into the use of *majūs* in the Eastern Muslim world. Deriving from the Old Persian word for a priest, *maguš*, *majūs* became the term used for Zoroastrians in Arabic, a use attested for already in the Qur'ān. Using Epalza's analysis of its semantic shifts as a starting point, the chapter gives an overview of the theological and legal discussions pertaining to Zoroastrians and their status, or lack thereof, as *ahl al-kitāb* and *ahl al-dhimma*. The case study of its use to refer to the religions in Sind shows a probability that the appellation was used primarily due to a recognition of the Persian origins of Maga-Brahmins or recognition of common practices, rather than purely juridical jargon. As seen in its use as a rhetorical device, the comparison of other religious groups and Islamic sects/denominations to Zoroastrians was based on recognised attributes of Zoroastrians rather than a generic term of abuse. In the Eastern Muslim world, then, *majūs* retained a strong connection to Zoroastrianism.

Chapter five explores the use of *majūs* in al-Andalus and its semantic widening. It is clear that the term had lost its exclusive association with Zoroastrians and was used as an equivalent to pagan. While Mozarabic literature allows us to draw a direct comparison between *majūs* and the Latin words for which it is used as a translation, evidence for this can be seen in other literature like al-Bakrī's. This also allows us to dismiss Epalza's claim that it

was technical legal terminology for second-class *dhimmi*s since it was used for a range of people for whom *dhimmi* status would not have been applicable. *Majūs*, then, was used as a general term for the ‘Other’, the non-Muslim, non-Christian, and non-Jew who defies classification. Nevertheless, *majūs* retained its original meaning of Zoroastrian in the legal literature, a vestige of the eastern origin of the legal material.

Following the analysis of how *majūs* was used in the East and al-Andalus, chapter six looks at the possible reason for the semantic change. Going through the history of the *mágos* and *magus*, in Greek and Latin respectively, both cognates with *majūs*, this chapter shows that they underwent a similar shift from referring to Persian priests to ‘sorcerers’ and magical practitioners of all sorts. Like with *majūs*, the two meanings continued to coexist and caused some confusion, leading to the conflation of the two by Pliny the Elder and later authors who claimed that Zoroaster was the first sorcerer, an idea that made its way into Spain via Isidore who repeats this claim in his *Etymologiae*. The chapter argues that this similarity is not coincidental. The multilinguistic and multicultural society of al-Andalus, which brought Arabic, Latin/Romance and Hebrew in close contact, created a hybrid culture that allowed an exchange of ideas and vocabulary. The already negative view of Zoroastrian *majūs* as possible idolators and polytheists combined with the Latin *magus* coming together in this multilingual environment may have been the catalyst for the specifically Andalusí use of *majūs*.

Finally, chapter seven presents three case studies of how the misunderstanding of the word *majūs* is not limited to modern scholarship, but that it is also present in medieval literature. Ibn Dihya’s account of al-Ghazāl’s diplomatic mission to the *majūs* following their attack in 844 C.E., which was used by, amongst others, Melvinger as proof for the role of fire-worship in Andalusis using *majūs* for Scandinavians, shows signs of confusion between the two meanings of the word. His attribution of both fire-worship and incestuous relations, both common *topoi* for Zoroastrians, to the Scandinavian *majūs* shows that he transferred attributes for the former onto the latter. The case study of the *Primera Crónica General* shows how its author/s struggled with interpreting *majūs* in their Arabic sources; the narrative about the pre-Roman *almuiuces*, a corruption of *al-majūs*, draws from multiple instances of its use in the source, combining them into one story. The final case study concerns the claim that some of the Scandinavians who partook in the attacks on al-Andalus settled along the

Guadalquivir river to produce cheese. By misinterpreting the use of *majūs* in a legal manual as referring to Scandinavians rather than Zoroastrians, Lévi-Provençal's made the same mistake that Ibn Diḥya made centuries earlier of not distinguishing the two meanings of *majūs*.

These findings, then, can allow us to answer the questions posed at the begging of this thesis. In the context of al-Andalus, *majūs* was used to mean 'pagan' and to refer to anyone who could fall under that category. Thus al-Bakrī used it not only for contemporary pagans like the Scandinavians and some African peoples but also for ancient pagans like the Greek and Romans, a pattern also seen in *Kitāb Hurūshiyūsh*. The range of peoples from whom it was used eliminates the assumption that the Andalusis drew any connection between the religious practices of Scandinavians and Zoroastrians, as Melvinger did with fire-worship. The specifically Andalusī meaning of this term is a product of the interlinguistic contact in, and multicultural environment of, al-Andalus. The phonetic and semantic similarity of *majūs* to the Latin *magus*, which also retained a reference to Zoroastrians, led to *majūs* undergoing a widening of its semantic range to match, or approximate, that of *magus*. With both meanings of *majūs* being used in al-Andalus, as well as the increased exposure to eastern literature that did not exhibit this semantic shift, Andalusī authors were presented with two diverging meanings of the word, which caused some confusion. Therefore, the failure to acknowledge the difference between the Zoroastrian *majūs* and the pagan *majūs* caused authors like Ibn Diḥya to merge the two, thus ascribing elements of the former to the latter. Modern scholars are not immune to the confusion that the dual meaning causes; the story of Scandinavians engaged in caseiculture put forward by Lévi-Provençal is one such case. Moreover, while we see and acknowledgement of a dual meaning in the fact that there are two entries for *majūs* in the Encyclopedia of Islam, one for Zoroastrians and one for the Andalusī meaning, the latter focuses almost entirely on Scandinavians. The effect of this is that, in examining other instances of *majūs*, scholars have erroneously placed disproportionate weight on the Scandinavian element, as seen in the scholarship on the *Primera Crónica General*.

In reaching these conclusions, I have sought to use a wide range of material; as mentioned in chapter 3, one of the issues at the root of the various attempts at understanding *majūs* is that using a limited corpus may skew the conclusions due to the limited evidence it may provide. Nevertheless, it would be false to claim that the selection is exhaustive. The

ideal situation would be to catalogue all uses of *majūs* in al-Andalus. Such a project would allow us to see not only by and for whom it was used but also track its use by genre. The use of *majūs* for Zoroastrians in legal literature already shows that genre plays a role in the usage of vocabulary, and it is not inconceivable that a more comprehensive and granular examination could result in similar phenomena in other genres. Such a task, however, would have proven to be unfeasible due to time and length limitations. In addition, editions of many texts are either not readily available or non-existent, with texts available only in their manuscript form and scattered around the world, many of which are not yet digitised.

The increased interest in intercultural relations in the Middle Ages has opened up exciting possibilities for new knowledge and new perspectives that have, until now, been sidelined in the scholarship. The acknowledgement that Europe was neither an island cut off from the rest of the world nor a monolithically Christian culture allows us to look at the material available in a new light. Al-Andalus, alongside Sicily, provides us with excellent case studies for a Europe that does not fit the mould of exclusively Christian hegemony. One hopes that this thesis proves to be a worthy addition to our knowledge of an interconnected Medieval Europe and may lead to further research.

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Abbreviations

- CCSL Corpus Christianorum Series Latina
- EI² *Encyclopedia of Islam* (2nd ed.) (1960–2005). P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel & W.P. Heinrichs (Eds.). Brill.
- EI³ *Encyclopedia of Islam* (3rd ed.) (2007–). K. Fleet, G. Krämer, D. Matringe, J. Nawas & E. Rowson (Eds.). Brill.
- EIr Encyclopædia Iranica (online ed.) (1996–). <http://www.iranicaonline.org/>
- MGH Monumenta Germaniae Historica

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