

# 962: Al-Maqqarī on the Oath of Allegiance Given by the Rulers of León to al-Ḥakam II al-Mustanṣir

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**Abstract:** The Islamic oath of allegiance (*bay'a*) is traditionally regarded as a political tool that formalises a relationship of dependency between a Muslim ruler and his Muslim subjects. This article discusses a case from fourth/tenth-century al-Andalus, in which the *bay'a* is used to formalise a relationship of dependency between the Umayyad caliphate of Córdoba and different representatives of the kingdom of León. It shows that this extraordinary use of a tool of internal policy in a foreign policy context can be explained against the backdrop of the Umayyad caliphate's strategy in North Africa. There, it tried to gain a foothold by employing the same measures used vis-à-vis the kingdom of León.

## Source

al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-tīb min ġuṣn al-Andalus al-raṭīb*, ed. Iḥsān 'Abbās, 8 vols (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1968), vol. 1, p. 384, trans. Alejandro Peláez Martín.

ثمّ كانت وفادة أردون بن أذفونش ملك الجلالقة، وذلك أن الناصر لما أعان عليه شانجة بن رذمير - وهو ابن عمّه، وهو الملك من قبل أردون - وحمل النصرانية على طاعته، واستظهر أردون بصهره فرذلد قومس قشتالية، وتوقع مظاهره الحكم لشانجة كما ظاهره أبوه الناصر، فبادر إلى الوفاة على الحكم مستجيراً به، فاحتفل لقدمه، وعي العساكر ليوم وفادته، وكان يوماً مشهوداً وصفه ابن حيان كما وصف أيام الوفادات قبله، ووصل إلى الحكم وأجلسه، ووعده بالنصر من عدوّه، وخلع عليه، وكتب بوصوله ملقياً بنفسه، وعاقده على موالاة الإسلام، ومقاطعة فرذلد القومس، وأعطى على ذلك صفقة يمينه. ورهن ولده غرسية،

This was followed by the arrival of Urdūn b. Aḏfūnš, king of the Galicians. This is because al-Nāṣir supported Šānġa b. Ruḏmīr, cousin of and king before Urdūn, against him and subjected the Christians [in fact: "Christianity" (*al-naṣrāniyya*)] to his obedience. This is when Urdūn sought the help of his father-in-law Farḏaland, count [Arab. *qūmis* > Lat. *comes*] of Castile. Fearful that al-Ḥakam would demonstrate to Šānġa the same support that his father, al-Nāṣir, had shown him, he [Urdūn] rushed to present himself to al-Ḥakam with an embassy, seeking his protection. He [the caliph] celebrated his arrival splendidly and the troops were mobilised for the day of his arrival. It was a memorable day. Ibn Ḥayyān described it just as he described the days of the delegations that preceded it. He came to al-Ḥakam who let him sit down, promised to help him against his enemy, bestowed a robe of honour upon him, and, on the occasion of his arrival, himself drew up a document, which concluded a contract of clientage (*muwālāt al-islām*), thus breaking [his alliance] with Farḏaland, the count. He [Urdūn] consented to this by clasping his right hand and

ودفعت الصلّات والحملان له ولأصحابه،  
وانصرف معه وجوه نصارى الذمة ليوطدوا له  
الطاعة عند رعيته، ويقبضوا رهنه.

وعند ذلك بعث ابن عمّه شانجة بن رذمير  
بيعته وطاعته مع قواميس أهل جليقية وسمورة  
وأساقفتهم، يرغب في قبوله، ويمت بما فعل أبوه  
الناصر معه، فتقبل بيعتهم على شروط شرطها  
كان منها هدم الحصون والأبراج القريبة من  
ثغور المسلمين.

giving his son Ġarsiya as security. Gifts and transport animals were handed over him and his companions. The Christian notables subjected to *ḍimma* departed with him to consolidate obedience among his subjects, and they took charge of the hostage.

Then his cousin, Šānġa b. Ruḍmīr, sent his oath of allegiance (*bayʿa*) and his obedience on his behalf as well as that of the counts (*qawāmīs*) and bishops of Galicia and Zamora, craving that [the caliph] would accept it and the continue what his father, al-Nāṣir, had done with him. He [the caliph] accepted their oath of allegiance (*bayʿa*) on [several] conditions. One of them was the demolition of the fortresses and towers near the Muslim border zones (*tuġūr*).

## Authorship & Work

[§1] Šihāb al-Dīn Abū l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Maqqarī al-Tilimsānī al-Mālikī al-Ašʿa (d. 1041/1632) was a famous North African scholar, historian, and man of letters. Al-Maqqarī was born in Tlemcen (986/1578) into a family of scholars. They had moved there from al-Maqqara, in north central Algeria, in the sixth/twelfth century. In Tlemcen he received his first lessons in the study of the Qurʾān, Mālikī law, and *ḥadīth*, fields in which he later became well-known. In 1009/1600, he went to Fez to continue his studies, visiting the cities of Marrakesh and Aġmāt a year later. He returned to Tlemcen in 1010/1602, but then decided to take up residence in Fez two years later. In this city, he read numerous Andalusī texts, frequented its great scholars, eventually held important posts (as *mufīṭī*, *imām*, and preacher of the famous al-Qarawīyyīn Mosque), and composed important works. However, for reasons that are not entirely clear, al-Maqqarī departed for the East (1027/1618), leaving behind his family and his library. He was very well received in the Mašriq, for it is said that students flocked to his classes wherever he went. Al-Maqqarī first went to Egypt, then to Medina and Mecca for the pilgrimage (1028/1618). Shortly afterwards, he settled permanently in Cairo, although he continued to travel frequently to the Ḥiġāz and the Levant. He was planning to move permanently to Damascus when he was surprised by death in 1041/1632.<sup>1</sup>

[§2] Al-Maqqarī was the author of numerous books, but his most important work is “The Fragrant Scent Emanating from the Succulent Branch of al-Andalus and the Remembrance of its Vizier Lisān al-Dīn bin al-Ḥaṭīb” (*Nafḥ al-ṭīb min ġuṣn al-Andalus al-raṭīb wa ḍikr wazīrihā Lisān al-Dīn bin al-Ḥaṭīb*). Due to the enormous amount of information and the disciplines it brings together, this encyclopedia is considered an indispensable source for the history of al-Andalus. Al-Maqqarī recounts the reasons that led him to compose this work in his extensive introduction, which also includes an account of his travels. In Damascus, he astonished scholars with his passionate description of Andalusī history and its scholars, particularly Lisān al-Dīn b. al-Ḥaṭīb (d. 776/1374). Consequently, the litterateur and poet Aḥmad b. Šāhīn (d. 1053/1643) asked him to write a biography of the Granadian polygraph, a task he finalised in 1039/1630.

<sup>1</sup> Fischer, al-Maqqarī; Kacimi, Análisis crítico, pp. 29–32.

The result, however, exceeded the framework of a biography: it had become a voluminous compendium of Andalusī history and literature.

[§3] Two parts can be distinguished. The first and longer part is devoted to the geography, administration, legislation, customs, and history of al-Andalus from its beginnings until the expulsion of the Moriscos (1609–1614). In accordance with his own interests and those of his audience, al-Maqqarī emphasised the cultural, especially architectural and literary achievements of the people of al-Andalus. It is truly a nostalgic ode to the glory of Andalusī culture, especially its sciences, poetry and literature. In the second part, al-Maqqarī produced an extensive biography of Ibn al-Ḥaṭīb, which also contains selections from his works. For modern historians, the *Nafḥ al-ṭīb* is particularly important, because it cites fragments of older works, many of which no longer exist. As Mourad Kacimi has pointed out, reading this work is equivalent to consulting dozens of books. All this makes it a key source for dealing with the history of the Islamic West.<sup>2</sup> In the words of Maribel Fierro and Luis Molina “al-Maqqarī’s *Nafḥ al-ṭīb* is a monument built to the memory of that lost world.”<sup>3</sup>

[§4] The main source used and cited by al-Maqqarī is the Cordovan chronicler Ibn Ḥayyān (d. 469/1076).<sup>4</sup> His most famous work, “A Compilation of Extracts on the History of the People of al-Andalus” (*al-Muqtabis fī ta’rīḥ riḡāl al-Andalus*), covers the period between the Muslim conquest of the Peninsula to the early time of the Taifa kingdoms and undoubtedly represents the most important and influential source for the early history of al-Andalus. It probably consisted of ten volumes, but only four incomplete volumes have survived. The passage reproduced here by al-Maqqarī must have been part of the lost sixth book, which provides an account of the later ruling period of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III (r. 300–350/912–961). Alternatively, it may have been found in the unpreserved part of the seventh volume, dedicated to the caliphate of al-Ḥakam II (r. 350–366/961–976). There remains some doubt as to whether al-Maqqarī really cited Ibn Ḥayyān verbatim, rather than only paraphrasing his chronicle. Yet if one compares al-Maqqarī’s excerpt with the same quote in the work of the Tunisian historian and thinker Ibn Ḥaldūn (d. 808/1406), the differences are few.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, Ibn Ḥaldūn’s universal history (*Kitāb al-Ibar*) is another important source used by al-Maqqarī.<sup>6</sup> However, there is evidence that the Tlemcen scholar made use of the Cordovan historian Ibn Ḥayyān directly. The account of Ordoño’s embassy to Córdoba (351/962) is more detailed in al-Maqqarī’s work than in that of Ibn Ḥaldūn.<sup>7</sup> This indicates that both made use of Ibn Ḥayyān’s *al-Muqtabis*, but that al-Maqqarī included different parts than Ibn Ḥaldūn. In short, the passage can be considered an interpolated paraphrase with some direct quotations from Ibn Ḥayyān.

## Content & Context

[§5] The extract is taken from the first part of *Nafḥ al-ṭīb*, from the chapters devoted to the history of al-Andalus in the early ruling period of al-Ḥakam II.<sup>8</sup> However, the cited passage takes us back to the reign of al-Ḥakam’s father, i.e. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III, also named “the Victorious for the religion of God” (*al-Nāṣir li-dīn Allāh*). It describes the relations that

<sup>2</sup> Fischer, al-Maqqarī; Kacimi, Análisis, pp. 36–46; Fierro and Molina, al-Maqqarī, pp. 273–283.

<sup>3</sup> Fierro and Molina, al-Maqqarī, pp. 281.

<sup>4</sup> Mohedano Barceló, Ibn Ḥayyān, pp. 356–374; Chalmeta Gendrón, Historiografía, pp. 353–404; Marín, Halcón maltés, pp. 543–549; Martínez Enamorado, Ibn Hayyan, pp. 30–34; Molina Martínez, *Crónica Anónima*, pp. 19–30; Molina Martínez, Historiografía, pp. 3–27; Soravia, Ibn Ḥayyān, pp. 99–117; Meouak, Ibn Ḥayyān; Huici Miranda, Ibn Ḥayyān.

<sup>5</sup> Ibn Ḥaldūn, *Tārīḥ*, ed. Zakkār and Ṣaḥāda, vol. 4, pp. 186–187.

<sup>6</sup> Ito, *Writing the Biography*, p. 528; Talbi, Ibn Ḥaldūn.

<sup>7</sup> Al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-ṭīb*, ed. ‘Abbās, vol. 1, pp. 388–393; al-Maqqarī, *History*, trans. Gayangos, vol. 1, pp. 161–165.

<sup>8</sup> Huici Miranda, al-Ḥakam II.

Córdoba maintained with the kingdoms and counties of the Christian north in a period, in which the Umayyad caliphate was the hegemonic power on the Iberian Peninsula.<sup>9</sup>

[§6] Under the rule of Ramiro II (r. 931–951), the kingdom of León had become a formidable power in the Christian north. Ramiro’s death, however, gave way to a period troubled by dynastic disputes. He left two adult sons: Ordoño (*Urdūn*) and Sancho (*Šānġa b. Ruḍmīr*). The former, older in age, came to power as Ordoño III (r. 951–956). However, he had to face the rebellion of his half-brother Sancho, who was supported by the Count of Castile, Fernán González, and the king of Pamplona, García I Sánchez (r. 925–970), in 952. Although the rebellion failed, Sancho came to power when Ordoño died only four years later. His government was not stable at all. In fact, he spent a good part of his reign fighting to keep the lands he had inherited.<sup>10</sup>

[§7] In 958, after only two years in power, Sancho I was dethroned by a large part of the nobility of León and Galicia and, possibly, with the tacit support of the Count of Castile, Fernán González (*Farḍaland*). Sancho had not respected the agreement established between the Caliph of Córdoba and the previous king, his brother Ordoño III. The pact had stipulated the demolition of some fortresses on the border, and his failure to comply with this clause had provoked Muslim raids in the summer of 957. Adding to this, Sancho was not able to fulfil the requirements expected from a king in this period. His extreme obesity, which earned him the nickname “the Fat” (*el craso / el gordo*), prevented him from riding a horse, from commanding his troops, and thus from leading his kingdom in war.<sup>11</sup>

[§8] In view of the king’s bad reputation, the nobility raised a new pretender to power: the *infante* Ordoño, son of Alfonso IV (*Urdūn b. Aḍfūnš*) and cousin of Sancho. Crowned in Santiago de Compostela in March 958, the newly proclaimed king headed for León and subjected the capital to a three-month siege. Although deposed Sancho was forced to seek refuge in the kingdom of Pamplona with his maternal grandmother, Queen Toda (d. c. 965), Ordoño IV (r. 958–960) encountered no little opposition in León and in Castro del Rey, which he only managed to take in August of the same year. While the new monarch, nicknamed “the Wicked” or “the Bad” (*el malo*) in later historiography, focused on rewarding his most prominent supporters with donations, the dispossessed Sancho set out to Córdoba.<sup>12</sup>

[§9] His grandmother Toda, in fact a relative of the Umayyad caliph,<sup>13</sup> had sent an ambassador to ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III (r. 300–350/912–961) asking for help.<sup>14</sup> The caliph’s favourable response led to the transfer of both to the Andalusī capital. There they negotiated an agreement that would allow Sancho to regain power with Cordovan support in exchange for handing over a series of fortresses on the border. The caliph, who saw this dynastic war as an opportunity to strengthen his position, commissioned the Jewish physician, Ḥasdāy bin Šaprūt (d. ca. 970), to cure Sancho’s obesity.<sup>15</sup> The troops of Pamplona began to harass Fernán González, Ordoño IV’s father-in-law and main supporter, while Sancho, now able to ride, was finally able to assume command of his forces. When the caliphate’s armies conquered Zamora at the beginning of March 959, the challenge of fighting on different fronts convinced Ordoño IV that it was best to abandon León, where Sancho was triumphantly received in April 959. Ordoño first moved to Asturias and then sought refuge in Castile in early 961. His situation, however,

<sup>9</sup> Lévi-Provençal, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān.

<sup>10</sup> Earenfight, Sancho I, p. 729; Torres Sevilla-Quiñones, Ordoño III.

<sup>11</sup> Torres Sevilla-Quiñones, Sancho I; Earenfight, Sancho I, p. 729.

<sup>12</sup> Torres Sevilla-Quiñones, Ordoño IV; Rodríguez Fernández, Monarquía leonesa, pp. 308–313, 321–328.

<sup>13</sup> König, *Arabic-Islamic Views*, p. 303, on the basis of Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V*, ed. Chalmeta and Corriente, fol. 226–27, AH 322, p. 336.

<sup>14</sup> Martín Duque, Toda Aznárez.

<sup>15</sup> *Historia Silense*, p. 170: “Sancius quidem rex cum esset crassus nimis, ipsi Agareni herbam attulerunt, et crassitudinem abstulerunt a ventre eius.”

did not improve as his protector, Fernán González, had fallen prisoner to the monarch of Pamplona. In order to obtain his release, Fernán González was forced to accept several marriages with the royal family of Pamplona and to agree to Ordoño's banishment in 962. The deposed ruler, alone and without support, headed for Córdoba.<sup>16</sup> In the Andalusī capital, Ordoño encountered al-Ḥakam II al-Mustansir (r. 350–366/961–976), the new caliph after the death of al-Nāṣir (d. 350/961), who had profited considerably from the civil war in the kingdom of León.

[§10] The quoted excerpt presents this encounter in the following way: Aware of the support that ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III had given Sancho, Ordoño hopes to change this situation by placing himself under the protection of the caliph, the most powerful ruler in Iberia at that time. Al-Mustansir, determined to impress the Christian, spares no resources to display his power and the splendour of the Cordovan Caliphate to the Christian prince. Negotiations then takes place. Ordoño declares himself “servant of the Commander of the Believers” (*ʿabd amīr al-muʿminīn*) and asks for the caliph's help to regain the throne of León.<sup>17</sup> The caliph invites him to take a seat, gives him a robe of honour (*ḥilʿa*) and draws up a document promising his help against his cousin in exchange for entering a contractual relationship of “clientage to Islam” (*muwālāt al-islām*) and for breaking his alliance with the Castilian count. As can be seen, the caliph seems to consider Fernán González a special enemy and consequently demanded his extradition when he was a prisoner of García de Pamplona.<sup>18</sup> Ordoño concludes the agreement by giving his right hand. He receives gifts, pack animals, and a retinue of Andalusī Christian notables who are supposed to help consolidate the Christian prince's authority among the people of León and who are to take charge of his son García, now the caliph's hostage.

[§11] The excerpt continues to explain that Sancho, who had harassed the Muslim outposts after the death of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III, is alarmed by the new developments. He proceeds to send his oath of allegiance (*bayʿa*) to the caliph, thus seeking the same protection that he had received from al-Ḥakam's father. Al-Ḥakam accepts this oath in exchange for several conditions, one of them being the demolition of fortresses on the border. In this way, the caliph renounces his alliance with Ordoño. We do not know much more about this prince, except that he died quite conveniently in Córdoba in 962, i.e. the year of his visit.<sup>19</sup>

[§12] As far as Sancho is concerned, the disappearance of Ordoño freed him of a competitor. Perhaps because of this, he felt less obliged to fulfil his commitments to the caliph. As the chronicler Ibn ʿIdārī (d. ca. 719/1320) notes, “the breach [of commitments] on the part of the Galicians became manifest everywhere.”<sup>20</sup> Córdoba reacted by launching a series of expeditions against Castile and the kingdoms of León and Pamplona. Umayyad superiority prevailed, and Sancho was forced to accept Umayyad suzerainty once again. As a consequence, relations between Sancho and the Caliphate were stabilised in the form of peace agreements. That relations had improved is manifest in the fact Sancho was able to successfully negotiate in 966 that the remains of the Christian martyr Pelayo would be sent to him.<sup>21</sup> The saint's remains, however, were to be received by his young son Ramiro III (r. 966–984), aged five, as Sancho had just died.<sup>22</sup> A period of minority in the kingdom began, under the regency of his paternal

<sup>16</sup> Rodríguez Fernández, *Monarquía leonesa*, pp. 329–330; Martínez Díez, *Condado de Castilla*, pp. 415–423.

<sup>17</sup> al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-ṭīb*, ed. ʿAbbās, vol. 2, p. 391.

<sup>18</sup> Martínez Díez, *Condado de Castilla*, p. 419 and 430.

<sup>19</sup> Torres Sevilla-Quiñones, Ordoño IV; *Historia Silense*, p. 170: “Ordonius adhuc vivens inter Sarracenos mansit, et eiulando penas persolvit.”

<sup>20</sup> Ibn ʿIdārī, *Kitāb al-bayān*, ed. Maʿrūf and ʿAwād, vol. 2, p. 220: “zahara nakṭ al-Ḡalāliqa bi-kulli ḡiha”; Ibn ʿIdārī, *Histoire de l'Afrique*, trans. Fagnan, p. 389.

<sup>21</sup> Münch, 955: Hrotsvit.

<sup>22</sup> *Historia Silense*, pp. 170–171; Torres Sevilla-Quiñones, Sancho I; Carriedo Tejado, *Una embajada*, pp. 137–141; Lévi-Provençal, *España musulmana*, 378–382; Earenfight, Sancho I, p. 729; Rodríguez Fernández, *Monarquía leonesa*, pp. 314–320.

aunt, Elvira Ramírez, between 966 and 972. This factor served to consolidate Córdoba's hegemony over the kingdom and the rest of the Christian realms on the Iberian Peninsula until the end of the 970s.

## Contextualization, Analysis & Interpretation

[§13] Having outlined the general historical circumstances in which the extract is set, we can focus on the details of the agreements concluded between the Umayyad caliphs and the princes of the Christian north. The most remarkable aspect is the use of the oath of allegiance (*bay'ā*) in diplomatic relations between Christians and Muslims, since such an oath is generally considered to be employed only within the Islamic sphere between different Muslim parties. The following discussion will focus on defining this element, its connection to Islamic rituals, the presence of Christians in them and its use as formal tool to establish a relation of dependency between the Muslim and the non-Muslim sphere.

[§14] The word *bay'ā* comes from the root *b-y-*, which is associated with processes of selling and buying. Both processes are associated with the conclusion of some form of contractual relationship involving a certain degree of trust. From this derives the meaning “to swear an oath of allegiance.” Although there is some debate as to the origins of the term, Arabic-speaking Muslims have used this verb to describe the official recognition and acknowledgement of authority of rulers from the time of the prophet Muḥammad onward.<sup>23</sup> Concluded under the covenant of God (*'ahd Allāh*), who is represented by the respective political authority, the *bay'ā* displays a certain degree of sacrality.<sup>24</sup> A series of penalties were laid down for violators, who in exceptional circumstances were executed, although most commonly they were obliged to make the *bay'ā* again, thus renewing their demonstration of obedience (*tā'ā*).<sup>25</sup>

[§15] Scholarship has intensively debated the nature of this institution. Some researchers consider it to be a contractual agreement, a pledge, or a promise.<sup>26</sup> Others see it as an oath of allegiance.<sup>27</sup> A third group places it somewhere in between.<sup>28</sup> Strictly speaking, *bay'ā* designates the ceremony, the framework in which the proclamation takes place, including oaths, promises and pledges. In Sunnī legal conception, the *bay'ā* was not merely the legal act that served to proclaim the *imām* but the element that invested him with the legitimacy to exercise power.<sup>29</sup> According to the jurists it was a “contract” between the ruler and the community. It is logical that the *'ulamā'* insisted on this idea of exchange. Presenting the institution of the caliphate as the result of an agreement downscaled the ruler's pretensions of presenting his power as an expression of the divine will. At the same time, the *'ulamā'*'s contractual interpretation of the *bay'ā* also stabilised the ruler's claim to power. If he protected and safeguarded religion, defended Islam, and ensured just taxation, the *umma* owed him obedience in return. The handclasp (*ṣafqa*) became a proper gesture of the *bay'ā* and the way to ratify the agreement. The purpose of this ritual was to show that the ruler had been “chosen” by the community and not imposed.<sup>30</sup> Consequently, two levels should be distinguished: the theoretical and the real, the discourse and the practical functioning. Indeed, the *bay'ā* was presented as a pact between the ruler and the representatives of the community, but throughout

<sup>23</sup> Hanne, *Ritual*, pp. 141–158; Landau-Tasseron, *Religious Foundations*, pp. 1–44; Marsham, *Rituals*.

<sup>24</sup> Al-Qadi, *Primordial Covenant*, pp. 332–338; O'Connor, *Qur'anic Covenants*, pp. 1–22.

<sup>25</sup> Marsham, *Oath of Allegiance*, p. 401; Manzano Moreno, *Conquistadores*, p. 221.

<sup>26</sup> Ación Almansa, *Entre el feudalismo y el Islām*, p. 142; Ación Almansa, *Sobre el papel de la ideología*, p. 82; Noguchi, *Evolution*, p. 137; Al-Mutawakkil, Hishām, *Al-Bay'ā wa-wilāyat al-'ahd*, pp. 32–33.

<sup>27</sup> Tyan, *Bay'ā*; Tyan, *Institutions*, pp. 139 y 261–273; Manzano Moreno, *Relaciones*, pp. 901–902; Mottahedeh, *Loyalty*, pp. 50–51; Mottahedeh, *Oaths*, pp. 118–119.

<sup>28</sup> Lewis, *Political Language*, p. 58; Dennerlein, *Legitimate Bounds*, 291–293, 310.

<sup>29</sup> Crone, *God's Rule*, 227.

<sup>30</sup> Manzano Moreno, *Conquistadores*, p. 224.

history it functioned as an oath of allegiance. The failure to take this oath was interpreted as an act of rebellion. To describe the *bay'a*, the term “oath” therefore seems a more appropriate concept than “pact”, “agreement,” or “alliance.” These terms imply a certain idea of equality and mutual commitments and thus obscure that taking the *bay'a* was not optional.

[§16] The proclamation of the Muslim ruler took place in the context of a lavish and hierarchical ceremony divided into two parts: *bay'at al-hāṣṣa* (*bay'a* of the elites) and *bay'at al-'āmma* (*bay'a* of the common people). The former was attended only by the ruler's family, administrative staff and troop commanders, who performed the *bay'a* in a staged manner and organised according to their social rank. In the second ceremony, the general population had to present itself before the representatives of the ruler (family members, viziers, chamberlains or *quḍat*), usually in the Great Mosque, and take their oath. In the course of these proclamations, the written record of the *bay'a* or *kitāb al-bay'a* was read out, a document that drew together the entire ideological message that legitimised the ruler in concentrated form. The provinces and cities also proceeded to send letters showing their adherence and submission to the newly proclaimed ruler.<sup>31</sup>

[§17] However, the versatility of the *bay'a* is not limited to a simple proclamation ceremony, but could be used in other contexts, for example in the diplomatic sphere. The Fāṭimid caliphs and especially the 'Abbāsids made use of rituals and other elements (the *ḥuṭba*, the coinage, the robe of honour, etc.) to maintain the fiction that they were lords of distant territories that were completely autonomous.<sup>32</sup> The *bay'a* played a decisive role here, as it was the vehicle for establishing this illusion, that of a command given and the right to rule granted by the caliph to the *amīr*-s and sultans in the territories they already controlled. The supposed “subordination” of one (emirate) to the other (caliphate) was a necessary fiction for both parties. The *amīr* gained recognition that his rule was legitimate, and the caliph could display the universality of his dominion.<sup>33</sup> An example of this can be found in what 'Umar b. Ḥafṣūn (d. 305/918), the most prominent of the rebels who rose up against the Umayyad rule of Córdoba, did in 301/913–914. In a context of tensions between the Šī'ī Fāṭimids of Ifrīqiya and the Sunnī Umayyads of al-Andalus, he decided to recognise the sovereignty of the Fāṭimid caliph 'Ubayd Allāh (r. 297–322/909–934) by sending him a written oath of allegiance (*bay'a*). The caliph replied by “giving him the command of the whole of al-Andalus, sending him a gift and silk clothes, and indicating in his letter his manner of doing the call to prayer, the prayers and the sermon.”<sup>34</sup>

[§18] The *bay'a* was therefore used in inner-Islamic contexts. However, not only Muslims participated in these ceremonies. Christians living among them did so as well. Christian mercenaries, for example, were also part of these proclamation rituals. In fact, in the case of the Mu'minid Caliph al-Rāšīd (r. 630–640/1232–1242), his private *bay'a* was made by the three leaders of the army, one of them being Marqasīl, “commander of the Christians” (*qā'id al-Rūm*).<sup>35</sup> This group is referred to by Ibn al-Ḥaṭīb (d. 776/1375) as “the Christians commanders” (*quwwād al-Naṣārā*).<sup>36</sup> Finally, 'Alī b. Abī Zar' (d. after 726/1326) notes that among the groups

<sup>31</sup> Peláez Martín, *Ritual de la Bay'a*, pp. 273–314.

<sup>32</sup> Khan, *Caliphates*, pp. 185–219.

<sup>33</sup> Peláez Martín, *Reconocimiento*, 98–100.

<sup>34</sup> *Dīkr bilād al-Andalus*, ed./trans. Molina, vol. 1, p. 156 (AR), vol. 2 (ESP), p. 166: “wa-fī sana ihdā wa-thalāthimā'a bāya'a Ibn Ḥafṣūn li-'Ubayd Allāh al-Šī'ī wa-kataba lahu bi-bay'atihi fa-ba'ata lahu 'Ubayd Allāh bi-'ahdihī 'alā ḡamī' bilād al-Andalus wa-ba'ata ilayhi bi-hadiya wa-tiyāb ḥazz wa-kataba ilayhi bi-maḡhabihī fī l-aḡān wa-l-ṣalāt wa-l-ḥuṭba (...). See Martínez Enamorado, *Fāṭimid Ambassadors*, pp. 267–300.

<sup>35</sup> Ibn Abī Zar', *Rawḍ al-qirtās*, s. ed., p. 254; Ibn Abī Zar', *Rawḍ al-qirtās*, trans. Huici Miranda, vol. 2, pp. 493–494. See also Ibn 'Idārī, *Kitāb al-Bayān*, ed. Ma'rūf and 'Awād, vol. 3, p. 420; García Sanjuán, *Mercenarios*, p. 438.

<sup>36</sup> Ibn al-Ḥaṭīb, *al-Iḥāta*, ed. 'Inān, vol. 1, p. 417. 'Inān warns in note 4 that the first word (*quwwād*) is not clear in the manuscripts.

attending the public proclamation of the Marīnid sultan Abū Sa‘īd ‘Uṭmān II (r. 710–731/1310–1331) were the Christian commanders (*quwwād al-Rūm*).<sup>37</sup> To these examples it is possible to add the case analysed here: the *bay‘a* made by Sancho I to al-Ḥakam II (351/962).

[§19] Before describing this particular Christian–Muslim *bay‘a* in more detail, it is necessary to consider the possible relations between non-Muslims and Muslims spelled out in Islamic legal texts. Islamic juridical texts generally distinguish between “the abode of Islam” (*dār al-islām*) and “the abode of war” (*dar al-ḥarb*).<sup>38</sup> In the first, Muslims ruled under the normative framework of Islamic law, while the second refers to territories ruled by non-Muslims not subject to Islamic norms. Non-Muslims living within the *dār al-islām* were granted the protection of the authorities as *ḍimmī*-s if they paid a poll tax (*ḡizya*) and subordinated themselves to Muslim rule. In addition to this, non-Muslims could be bound to Muslims in different relationships of clientage and dependence (*walā’*, *muwālā*, *al-tabā‘a* or *ḥidma*).<sup>39</sup> The *bay‘a* proclaimed in the *dār al-islām* to a Muslim ruler could be categorized among these relationships of clientage and dependence. Relations between a Muslim-ruled polity and external non-Muslims were classified in different terms: non-Muslims could conclude a surrender agreement (*ṣulḥ*) or different (peace) treaties (*hudna*, *‘ahd*, *mu‘āhida*, *baqt*) that are difficult to distinguish from each other. Non-Muslim individuals were allowed to access the *dār al-islām* temporarily for commercial and other purposes and received a security guarantee (*amān*) to this end.<sup>40</sup>

[§20] The passage cited here is so interesting, because it claims that the Umayyad caliph al-Ḥakam II used elements known from the internal organisation of Muslim societies—i.e. the contract of clientage (*muwālā*) and the inner-Muslim oath of allegiance (*bay‘a*)—to manage the caliphate’s foreign relations with its northern Christian neighbours. In al-Maqqarī’s rendering of Ibn Ḥayyān, the dethroned king of León, Ordoño IV, declares himself a servant of the caliph (*‘abd amīr al-mu‘minīn*) and in a document drawn up by the latter agrees to conclude a contract of clientage that is explicitly marked as Islamic (*muwālāt al-islām*).<sup>41</sup> This contract was concluded by clasping the right hand (*ṣafqat yamīnihi*), the customary way of making the *bay‘a*. The text does not say that Ordoño was performing the *bay‘a*, but it does indicate that the agreement was sealed with an oath, something which, in any case, was not unusual in the relations that Córdoba established with the neighbouring Christian polities.<sup>42</sup> This oath seems to have created a bond of patronage (*walā’* or *muwālā*) between a lord (the caliph) and a dependent (Ordoño). According to al-Maqqarī, al-Ḥakam commits himself to the Leonese prince in the following way:

“We will strengthen the foundations of your royal power, we will make you reign over all those who gather around you from your community, and, to that end, we will establish for you a treaty in which we will fix the boundaries of your kingdom

<sup>37</sup> Ibn Abī Zar‘, *Rawḍ al-qirṭās*, s. ed., p. 397; Ibn Abī Zar‘, *Rawḍ al-qirṭās*, trans. Huici Miranda, vol. 2, p. 722.

<sup>38</sup> Calasso and Lancioni, *Dār al-islām / dār al-ḥarb*; Abel, *Dār al-Ḥarb*; Crone, *God’s Rule*, pp. 359–362; König, *Dār al-ḥarb*, pp. 37–69.

<sup>39</sup> Cahen, *Dhimma*; Friedmann, *Dhimma*; Crone, *Mawlā*; Forand, *Relation*, pp. 59–66; Parolin, *Citizenship*, p. 63; Paul, *Khidma*, pp. 392–422; García Sanjuán, *Formas de sumisión*, pp. 61–111.

<sup>40</sup> İnalçik, *Dār al-‘Ahd*; Macdonald and Abel, *Dār al-Ṣulḥ*; Khadduri, *Hudna*; Wansbrough, *Safe-Conduct*; Köhler, *Alliances*; García Sanjuán, *Formas de sumisión*, pp. 61–111; Sijpesteijn, *Baqt*; Seignobos, *La frontière*; Schacht, *‘Ahd*; Schacht, *Amān*; Christ, *Conflicts*, p. 49; Pelikan, 1254: *Abkommen*.

<sup>41</sup> Al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-ṭīb*, ed. ‘Abbās, vol. 1, p. 384: “wa-kataba bi-wūṣūlihi mulqīyan bi-nafsihi wa-‘āqadahu ‘alā muwālāt al-islām wa-muqāṭa‘at Farḍaland al-qūmis (...) wa-rahana waladahu Garsiya.”

<sup>42</sup> Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V*, ed. Chalmeta and Corriente, p. 336; Ibn Ḥayyān, *Crónica del Califa*, trans. Viguera and Corriente, p. 252.



and that of your cousin's. We will also prevent the latter from disturbing you in the territory he will have to cede to you."<sup>43</sup>

[§21] It seems that the caliph was planning to break up the kingdom of León into two parts and to establish an additional ruler who would be completely dependent on Córdoba. The Andalusī Christian notables mentioned in al-Maqqarī's text were sent along with Ordoño for the purpose of making this more acceptable to the Christian population affected by this partition.<sup>44</sup> We know their names from Ibn Ḥaldūn: the judge (*qāḍī*) Wālid b. Muḡiṭ, Aṣḡaḡ b. 'Abd Allāh b. Nabīl al-Ġāṭulīq (i.e. the "Catholic") and 'Abd Allāh b. Qāsim, the bishop of Toledo.<sup>45</sup> The transmission of the former's name is not secure. It could also be Wālid b. Ḥayrūn or Wālid b. Ḥayzurān. In any case, it is known that he was a judge of the Christians (*qāḍī l-naṣārā*) and that he served as an interpreter (*tarġumān*) at the audience that the caliph granted to Ordoño in 351/962.<sup>46</sup> One should emphasise with Jesús Zanón that this person did not only participate in the audience as an interpreter, but also as a judge of Christians who would be able to solve or at least mitigate conflicts between Christians within the *dār al-Islām*, but also outside it. In fact, in 394/1004, Aṣḡaḡ b. Salma, judge of the Christians in Córdoba at the time, was sent by 'Abd al-Malik, son and successor of the famous chief minister (*ḥāġib*) Abū 'Āmir Muḡammad al-Manṣūr (d. 392/1002), to León in order to settle a dispute concerning the guardianship of Alfonso V (r. 999–1028), a child.<sup>47</sup> This shows that Córdoba employed its Christian elites to exercise its supremacy over the Christian kingdoms.

[§22] It is in this logic that the *bay'a* sent by Sancho and the counts and bishops of Galicia and Zaomora is framed. To avert the danger of a partitioned kingdom, they demonstrate the loyalty and obedience demanded by Umayyad caliph.<sup>48</sup> Al-Ḥakam thus won the submission of León, pledged and expressed in the *bay'a*, and no longer needed to play the card of supporting another pretender to the throne. According to al-Maqqarī, the caliph accepted the oath of allegiance on the condition that a number of fortresses on the border would be demolished. Ibn 'Idārī's chronicle provides further details:

“Envoys arrived in Córdoba from Šānġa b. Ruḍmīr, fighting with the tyrant Urdūn, his cousin, king of the Galicians. With them were 'Abd al-Raḡmān b. Ġaḡḡāf, *qāḍī* of Valencia and Ayyūb b. al-Ṭawīl, among others. They arrived to al-Mustanṣir in Rabī' al-Āḡir. The letter of Šānġa b. Ruḍmīr was forwarded to him [al-Ḥakam al-Mustanṣir] with the reply to what had been addressed [previously to this king] and his *bay'a*, which he had committed himself and the people of his kingdom to the Commander of the Believers al-Mustanṣir bi-llāh.”<sup>49</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-tīb*, ed. 'Abbās, vol. 1, p. 392: “wa-naṣuddu awāḡī mulkaka wa-numallikuka ġami'a man inḡāša ilayka min ummatika wa-na'qidu laka bi-ḡalika kitāban yakūnu bi-yadika nuqarriru bi-hi ḡadd mā baynaka wa-bayna ibn 'ammika wa-naqbiḡuhu 'an kull mā yuṣarrifuhu min al-bilādi ilā yadika.”

<sup>44</sup> Torres Sevilla-Quiñones, Ordoño IV; al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-tīb*, ed. 'Abbās, vol. 1, p. 384: “wa-anṣarafa ma'ahu wuġūhu naṣārā al-ḡimma li-yuwaṡṡidū lahu al-ṭā'ata 'inda ra'iyatihi.”

<sup>45</sup> Ibn Ḥaldūn, *Tārīḡ*, ed. Zakkār and Šaḡāda, vol. 4, p. 186.

<sup>46</sup> Al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-tīb*, ed. 'Abbās, vol. 1, p. 391. On this judge and the other figures mentioned in the excerpt, see Zanón, *Los intérpretes*, pp. 335–339.

<sup>47</sup> Zanón, *Los intérpretes*, pp. 335, 339; Ibn Ḥaldūn, *Tārīḡ*, ed. Zakkār and Šaḡāda, vol. 4, p. 232; Rosser-Owen, *Articulating the Hijāba*, p. 70.

<sup>48</sup> Al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-tīb*, ed. 'Abbās, vol. 1, p. 384: “wa-'inda ḡalika ba'ata ibnu 'ammihī Šānġa b. Ruḍmīr bi-bay'atihi wa-ṭā'atihi ma'a qawāmīs ahl Ġillīqiyya wa-Sammūra wa-asāqifatihim.”

<sup>49</sup> Ibn 'Idārī, *Kitāb al-bayān*, ed. Ma'rūf and 'Awād, vol. 2, p. 220: “waṣala Qurṭuba arṣāl Šānġa b. Ruḍmīr munāzi' al-ṭāġiya Urdūn ibn 'ammihī malik al-Ġalāliqa wa-ma'ahum 'Abd al-Raḡmān b. Ġaḡḡāf qāḍī Balansiyya wa-Ayyūb b. al-Ṭawīl wa-ġayrhumā fa-tawaṣṣalū kulluhum ilā al-Mustanṣir fī Rabī' al-Āḡir wa-awṣalū kitāb Šānġa b. Ruḍmīr bi-ġawāb mā ḡuṡṡiba fī-hi wa-bay'atihi allatī 'aqadaha 'alā nafsihī ġami' ahl mamlakatihī li-amīr al-mu'minīn al-Mustanṣir bi-llāh (...).” Ibn 'Idārī, *Histoire de l'Afrique*, trans. Fagnan, p. 389.

According to this text, the retinue arrived with some Andalusians, the judge (*qādī*) of Valencia and Ayyūb b. al-Ṭawīl, who was appointed judge of his city (Guadalajara, Madīnat al-Faraġ, or Wādī al-Ḥiġāra) by al-Ḥakam.<sup>50</sup> If we turn to Ibn al-Abbār's (d. 658/1260) biographical dictionary, the *Takmila*, it says that "both were sent by al-Ḥakam al-Mustansir to his cousin, the king of the Galicians, to confirm their pact and take his *bay'a*."<sup>51</sup> It seems, therefore, that Sancho, on learning of what was happening in Córdoba, decided to bow to the caliph's demands and that the caliph sent a delegation to León, including these distinguished figures, to obtain the *bay'a* as a confirmation of the agreement and a proof of submission. This also clarifies the doubts about who was responsible for drafting such an illustrious and complex document as the *kitāb al-bay'a*. We can assume that the Andalusī envoys who took charge of this.

[§23] This whole business of the oaths and dependency relations that Córdoba tried to impose on the Christian north is best understood by broadening the geographical perspective and considering what was happening in North Africa at the same time. The context was one of intense conflict between the Fāṭimids and Umayyads over control of trade routes and the gold trade.<sup>52</sup> In 347–348/958–959, the Fāṭimid caliphs launched a great expedition that subdued the entire central and far Maghrib. This was the situation when al-Ḥakam II came to power in 350/961. However, when the Fāṭimids gained control of Egypt in 358/969, their policy ceased to gravitate towards the west. When the Fāṭimids turned their gaze towards the east, this opened up a window of opportunity for the Umayyads who consolidated and expanded their position until the struggle for control of the Maghrib was settled in their favour. In 361/972, al-Ḥakam II began an intense military intervention by sending numerous troops to the region. A series of expeditions directed mainly against Idrīsīd leaders and Berber tribes subjected the territory to Cordovan control in 363/974. However, this military strategy was accompanied by effective diplomacy, i.e. efforts to woo tribal chiefs by means of gifts, including robes of honour (*ḥil'a*), weapons, money, and horses. This is what Xavier Ballestín has called "*ḥil'a* politics."<sup>53</sup> In return, the Maghribī notables were required to profess the *bay'a* to the Umayyad caliph. In cases such as Fez (363/974), the texts of the *bay'a* are preserved.<sup>54</sup> Acting as the representatives of their communities, the notables (*šuyūḥ*) received diplomas in which al-Ḥakam II invested them with the authority to rule over their tribes. The *bay'a* thus created what Michael Brett has called a "creature of the caliph."<sup>55</sup> These are the same tools that Córdoba used with the Christians of northern Iberia in the case described in al-Maqqarī's text. Like the North African notables, Ordoño was given a robe of honour and gifts, whereas Sancho professed his allegiance in a written *bay'a*. In the Umayyad view, both had become servants of the sovereign, their rule having been, in a sense, granted by the caliph.

[§24] It can therefore be affirmed that the *bay'a* functioned as an additional element in the diplomatic relations between Christians and Muslims, a way of demonstrating submission and of recognising the authority of the Caliph of Córdoba. It does not seem appropriate to reduce the *bay'a* to a mere act of formal recognition as some scholars have considered it.<sup>56</sup> The *bay'a* was considered by the Islamic powers as the main way of showing submission to the authority of the ruler and joining his sphere of sovereign rule. Its military, economic, cultural, and

<sup>50</sup> Ibn al-Faraḍī, *Ta'rīḥ 'ulamā' al-Andalus*, ed. Ma'rūf, vol. 1, p. 140; al-Safadī, *Wörterbuch*, ed. Sublet and 'Amāra, vol. 10, p. 39.

<sup>51</sup> Ibn al-Abbār, *Takmila*, ed. Codera, vol. 2, p. 565: "wa-yaġahhumā al-Ḥakam al-Mustansir bi-llāh ilā ibn 'ammihī malik al-Ġalāliqa yuw'akkidūna 'ahdahu wa-yaqbiḍūna bay'atahu."

<sup>52</sup> See Manzano Moreno, *Corte del califa*, pp. 169–195; Montel, *Al-Andalus et le Maghreb*, vol. 1, pp. 103–106.

<sup>53</sup> Ballestín Navarro, *Al-Mansur*, pp. 138, 151–204; Ballestín Navarro, *Jil'a y monedas*, pp. 391–415.

<sup>54</sup> Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII*, ed. al-Ḥaġġī, pp. 174–175; Ibn Ḥayyān, *Anales Palatinos*, p. 213.

<sup>55</sup> Brett, *Diplomacy*, p. 153.

<sup>56</sup> Rodríguez Fernández, *Monarquía leonesa*, p. 318: "Estamos ya en el año 966, y por fortuna el poder de Córdoba no había inquietado a León con gestos hostiles, limitándose a obtener un mero reconocimiento formal de superioridad (...)."

political supremacy allowed the Umayyad Caliphate to impose itself on neighbouring political entities in the Iberian Peninsula and in North Africa in the second half of the fourth/tenth century. The Umayyad's vision of itself and the political entities around it was well reflected in the protocol followed during the receptions granted to foreign delegates who came to al-Andalus on diplomatic missions. The aim was to demonstrate the Caliphate's superiority, but Córdoba was aware of the great powers of the time and offered different treatment accordingly. Byzantium was seen as an entity on a similar level, while the North African leaders and the kingdoms and counties of the peninsular north were considered as akin to vassals. This is what Ivana Elbl has defined as the imperial agenda, with the Byzantine Empire and the Caliphate of Córdoba perceiving themselves as superior centres of power and civilisation, surrounded by surrounding inferior states and peoples, natural subjects with whom they established a tributary relationship.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Elbl, *Diplomacy*, pp. 152–153; Valdés, *La embajada*, p. 545; Valdés, *De embajadas*, p. 34; Cardoso, *Scenography*, pp. 390–434.

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