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Mediterranean Crossings

Sexual ~~Transgressions~~ in Islam and Christianity (10th-18th Centuries)

edited by Umberto Grassi

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Preface

This volume is a further development of a collection of essays previously edited in Italian by Giuseppe Marcocci and myself. In Italy, the book has not only aroused the interest of the specialist press, but it has also been commented upon in the "culture" sections of a number of prestigious newspapers, radio programmes and online magazines. This attention is largely a response to the relevance of these issues in our contemporary political situation, both in Italy and beyond. Relations between Christians and Muslims currently lie at the centre of public debate in Western countries, and the tensions between interreligious dialogue and issues of sexuality continue to worry social workers, citizens, various associations, the press and political elites. Muslims are considered a threat to the achievements of both women and gender and sexual minorities civil rights movements in the West. At the same time, Muslims who do not identify with dominant heteronormative models or rigid gender binarism suffer from discrimination both in their communities and in the LGBTQI+ environment. Furthermore, the rhetoric of defending human rights is frequently used to justify open war against Middle Eastern countries, often to conceal motivations of mere strategic and geo-political interest. The problems are complex and cannot be resolved easily. I certainly do not presume to settle them by editing a history book, but I hope that this volume can at least contribute to the debate by providing its readers with some material for reflection. The myth that greater respect arises from mutual knowledge is, unfortunately, only a myth. But those who have the will to use knowledge for this end will perhaps find stimuli in the following pages to re-read some of these issues from a different perspective.

Compared to the previous publication, this collection of essays presents a new theoretical framework, one more attentive to the Mediterranean dimension and to the analysis of social networks in cross-cultural interactions. It also no longer presents itself as a work exclusively focused on male homosexuality but includes reflections on female homoeroticism and on the heterosexual transgressions of women in contexts of religious hybridisation. The essays by Vincenzo Lavenia, Tomás Antonio Mantecón Movellán and Luiz Mott are presented again, but in translation. Selim Kuru's essay offers original reflections on the theme of authorship in the context of early modern Turkish-Anatolian literary production. The new contributions are the introduction, the essay by Serena Tolino and my own concluding essay.

This new English edition would have been impossible without the preceding Italian version, in the drafting and conception of which my colleague and friend Giuseppe Marcocci played a central role. It was developed within the framework of the Italian Ministry of Education FIRB project "Beyond the Holy War", which he coordinated at that time.

This new volume is an outcome of my current research project SPACES: Sex, disPlacements and Cross-cultural EncounterS (University of Verona and University of Maryland). The project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Sklodowska-Curie grant agreement No 795514.

Umberto Grassi

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Sexual ~~Transgressions~~: A Mediterranean Perspective

1. *Mediterranean sexuality?*

The idea of a "Mediterranean sexuality" has played a fundamental role in the construction of an "essentialist" vision of the populations that have inhabited this geographical area over the centuries. The work of the eclectic explorer, writer and soldier Sir Richard Francis Burton (1821-1890) was a crucial step in the formalisation of this stereotype in the modern period. Burton was the author of a complete translation of the *Arabian Nights*, a work that, in his rather free and deliberately titillating rendition, has for a long time fed the orientalist fantasies of Europeans about the Muslim world. In the concluding essay, inserted at the end of the tenth volume, Burton included the most famous 19th-century ethnographic synopsis on homoerotic practices around the world. Although Burton believed that homosexual attraction was universally found within human societies around the globe, he identified a geographical area, which he renamed the "Sotadic Zone" (after the Alexandrian poet Sotades, 3rd century BCE), that, due to its climatic and environmental characteristics, he argued, favoured the generalised and endemic spread of this form of desire. In his reconstruction, this strip lay between the 30th and 45th parallels of the northern hemisphere, thus including parts of the Mediterranean area, Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Chaldea, Afghanistan and a portion of India, China, Japan and Turkistan. In Burton's view, masculine and feminine characteristics mixed within the inhabitants of this geographical area, creating an ambiguous blend that, more than in other areas of the world, favoured homosexual desire. Although the author specified that his model was not based upon racial but on climatic assumptions, his entire treatise relied upon an uncertain limbo in which climatic determinism and the biological plan were deeply intertwined.[1] As we will see, these assumptions had their roots in a distant past. Aiming to shed light on an aspect of this prolonged history, this volume will focus on the analysis of sexual and gender non-conformity across the imaginary and physical boundaries that divided the Muslim and Christian Mediterranean.

1. Rudi C. Bleys, *The Geography of Perversion: Male-to-Male Sexual Behaviour outside the West and the Ethnographic Imagination, 1750-1918*, New York, New York University Press, 1995, pp. 216-219. See the reprint of this section of the *Terminal Essay*: Richard F. Burton, *The Sotadic Zone*, Boston, Longwood Press, 1977.

In this context, we aim to respond to a set of questions that move way beyond Burton's classificatory intentions: what were the commonalities and differences in how sexual morality was dealt with in Christian Europe and Muslim North Africa? Did proscribed sexuality play any role in the larger processes of religious crossing, hybridisation and conversion between the two faiths? What contributions can the history of ~~transgressive~~ sexualities make to a broader history of the Mediterranean as a subject of historical inquiry?

Although we cannot offer linear responses to any of these questions, their relevance is better understood when we appreciate the role the Mediterranean has played in the recent transnational and global historiographical turn. The pressing issues of today have placed the validity of a history centred exclusively on the dimension of the nation-state in crisis.[2] Over time, the study of world history[3] has developed alongside and been supplemented by a variety of approaches that have placed transnational or interconnected[4] and entangled[5] disciplinary fields at the centre of their research and of their theoretical and methodological reflections. In recent years, work on the Mediterranean area has played a decisive role in this shift. This interest is driven by multiple factors. Since ancient times, the Mediterranean has been a crossroads of cultures. Its seas have been traversed by men, merchandise, artistic products, scientific and technological innovations, philosophical theories and literary genres, but also, and not least, by contagious diseases, warships and slave ships. The powerfully hybrid nature of the Mediterranean region continues to attract the interest of a society that today finds itself increasingly pressed to respond to the challenges posed by multiculturalism, immigration and processes of cultural and ethnic hybridisation.[6] At the same time, the Mediterranean remains a "hot" area marked by religious and cultural conflicts that, today, continue to be re-read and inserted by historians into political agendas that often sit in stark contrast to each other.[7]

2. I would like to thank Vincenzo Lavenia (Università di Bologna) and Stefano Villani (University of Maryland) for their feedback and suggestions in the writing of this introduction. My gratitude also goes to Viviana Tagliaferro, who shared the drafts of her forthcoming review articles on the Mediterranean as a category of historical analysis with me, as they have been a precious source of inspiration for this work.

3. For an introduction, see Sebastian Conrad, *What is Global History?*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2016. For gender studies in a global perspective, see Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, *Gender in History: Global Perspectives*, 2nd ed., Malden (MA) and Oxford, John Wiley & Sons, 2011.

4. Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Exploration in Connected History: From the Tagus to Ganges*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2005; Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Three Ways to Be Alien: Travails in the Early Modern World*, Waltham (MA), Brandeis University Press, 2011; Serge Gruzinski, *Quelle heure est-il là-bas?*, Paris, Seuil, 2008.

5. A seminal text is Michel Espagne, *Transferts: les relations interculturelles dans l'espace franco-allemand (XVIIIe et XIXe siècle)*, Paris, Éditions recherche sur les civilisations, 1998.

6. Refer to the excellent introduction in the manual by Monique O'Connell, Eric R. Dursteler, *The Mediterranean World: From the Fall of Rome to the Rise of Napoleon*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016, p. 3.

7. An outstanding case is Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1996.

Braudel's classic, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*,[8] established the Mediterranean as a subject of historical research. The ambitiousness of his project garnered some (well-founded) criticism, but for quite some time the vastness of the horizons he sought to conceptualise also deterred other scholars from making their own forays into this field of research and proposing new methods that might better address the challenges.[9] Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell's *The Corrupting Sea* (2000)[10] played a fundamental role in reviving the historiographical debate on the Mediterranean, and the scholarly contributions that followed their work have been numerous.[11] The authors of these studies have questioned what it is that defines the Mediterranean as an object of historical investigation: what are the dominant features of this territory? Are there specific cultural traits shared between the cultures and civilisations on its shores, which are otherwise divided on religious, political and institutional grounds? Criticism of any idea of "Mediterraneanness" has emerged above all in the field of anthropology, particularly in the work of Michael Herzfeld, who questioned

8. Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*, Paris, Armand Colin, 1949. The English edition, which came much later, represents a substantial revision of the original: Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, trans. by Siân Reynolds, London, Collins, 1972-1973.

9. On the historiographical debate on *La Méditerranée*, see: Eric R. Dursteler, "Fernand Braudel (1902-1985)", in *French Historians 1900-2000: New Historical Writing in Twentieth-Century France*, ed. by Philip Daileader and Philip Whalen, Chichester, Wiley-Blackwell, 2010, pp. 62-76; *Braudel Revisited: The Mediterranean World, 1600-1800*, ed. by Gabriel Piterberg, Teofilo F. Ruiz and Geoffrey Symcox, Toronto and Los Angeles, University of Toronto Press, 2010; *Trade and Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Mediterranean: Braudel's Maritime Legacy*, ed. by Maria Fusaro, Colin Heywood and Mohamed-Salah Omri, London and New York, Tauris Academic Studies, 2010; Peregrine Horden, "Mediterranean Excuses: Historical Writing on the Mediterranean since Braudel", *History and Anthropology*, 16/1 (2005), pp. 25-30. I wish to thank Stefano Villani and Viviana Tagliaferro for their contributions in the conception of this historiographical synthesis.

10. Peregrine Horden, Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2000.

11. The field is vast, and it is impossible to offer a complete bibliography. We will cite just several of the most significant works: *Bibliographie du monde méditerranéen. Relations et échanges (1454-1835)*, ed. by Alain Blondy, Paris, Presses Universitaires de la Sorbonne, 2003; *Rethinking the Mediterranean*, ed. by William V. Harris, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005; Faruk Tabak, *The Waning of the Mediterranean 1550-1870: A Geohistorical Approach*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008; *Il Mediterraneo delle città. Scambi, confronti, culture, rappresentazioni*, ed. by Franco Salvatori, Rome, Viella, 2008; Eric R. Dursteler, "On Bazaars and Battlefields: Recent Scholarship on Mediterranean Cultural Contacts", *Journal of Early Modern History*, 15/5 (2011), pp. 413-434; *War, Trade and Neutrality: Europe and the Mediterranean in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. by Antonella Alimento, Milan, FrancoAngeli, 2011; *David Abulafia, Great Sea: A Human History of the Mediterranean*, London, Allen Lane, 2011; *Mediterranean Identities in the Premodern Era: Entrepôts, Islands, Empires (Transculturalisms, 1400-1700)*, ed. by John Watkins and Kathryn L. Reyerson, Farnham, Ashgate, 2014. The publication of historical journals on this theme is also notable, including *Mediterranean Historical Review*, *The Journal of Mediterranean Studies*, and the Italian periodical *Mediterranea – ricerche storiche*.

the idea of a "Mediterranean identity", judging it to be a northern European construct imbued with stereotypes that the very inhabitants of the Mediterranean area have contributed to reinforce and sustain.[12] On the other hand, another approach is that adopted by David Abulafia, who refused to take hinterlands into consideration and limited himself to the maritime arena and the exchanges that took place therein. He focused instead on the human affairs for which the sea was a backdrop and facilitator, analysing the process through which this expanse of water became an integrated cultural, commercial and sometimes political space. Abulafia nevertheless highlighted how this integration has always been subject to crises and conflicts, emphasising the importance of human choice and rejecting every form of environmental determinism.[13] In contrast, Horden and Purcell, in their methodological proposal, sustained a view of the unity and complexity of the area, linking both to the jagged geography of the coasts and the lands surrounding them. In their convincing interpretation, the fragmented topography and its high degree of productive specialisation have, in fact, made the relationships and commercial exchanges in this area almost inevitable.[14]

The study of unconventional sexualities opens new research prospects in this field. As we have seen from Burton's theories, ideas of sexuality and "Mediterraneanness" were strictly intertwined. The Mediterranean was a site of eroticised fantasies that, however, overflowed the realm of the imagination to carry deep political implications. The importance of sexual stereotypes in the construction of 19th-century racial rhetoric is well known. The violent expansion of the major European industrial powers between the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century was a direct consequence of economic logic, but it also included ideological factors. The myth of national strength and prestige also found new outlets in territorial conquests that did not endanger (at least not directly) the fragile balance of the borders across the Old Continent. This process, which had high human and economic costs, required a form of intellectual justification, and the nascent biological theories of race provided much-needed support, granting (pseudo-)scientific merit to the colonial expansion program.[15]

The result was an affirmation of ideas regarding the necessary "civilising" function of Western powers, which, because of their moral and intellectual superiority, had the "obligation" to educate populations that were believed to sit lower on the evolutionary scale. Scientific observation of the sexual behaviour of colonised populations further contributed to the justification of Western domination. The field of anthropology benefitted greatly from the new horizons

12. Michael Herzfeld, "The Horns of the Mediterranean Dilemma", *American Ethnologist*, 11 (1984), pp. 439-454.

13. Abulafia, *Great Sea*.

14. Horden, Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea*.

15. Ann L. Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's "History of Sexuality" and the Colonial Order of Things*, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 1995. On colonialism and sexuality, see also Ronald Hyam, *Empire and Sexuality: The British Experience*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1990. On Orientalism and homosexuality, see Joseph A. Boone, *Orientalism and Homosexuality*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2015.

opened up by the conquests. Non-European peoples became a subject of study, and their religions, customs, traditions, physical forms and mental habits were all observed and documented in light of the classificatory impulse that remained one of the most decisive features of 19th-century scientific discourses.[16]

The construction of racial theories in the 19th century was located within a specific social and cultural context. For a long time, historians have denied that "race" can be used as a descriptive category for phenomena that took place before the crystallisation of the modern biological explanatory model. However, recent historiography has challenged these assumptions. These "teleological" interpretations considered race a stable, rigid category that has materialised in "singular, static forms".[17] On the other hand, ideas of fluidity and instability have now been largely accepted and are understood to be one of the main reasons for the adaptability and periodic emergence of racial discourses in different historical and social contexts.[18] In medieval and early modern Europe, religious labels often assumed a more or less explicit racialised undertone. If we focus on how these discourses served the purpose of structuring and managing human differences, then rather than emphasising their substantive content, we can use "race" in a historical perspective as a "relational" and "contingent" category whose "instrumentality is enhanced precisely because it can be construed as either lodged in the body (nature) or in culture".[19]

In late medieval and early modern Spain, anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim rhetoric gave birth to racialised religious stereotypes that exercised an enduring influence in shaping the terms by which Christians in Europe referred to non-Christians. David Nirenberg has argued that, even outside the interpretative framework of evolutionary biology and genetics, historians are authorised to use the word "race" to describe the process by which Jews and then Muslims were marginalised and later, though at different times, expelled from the kingdom. Nirenberg's analysis is enriched by his discussion on the use of the word "raça", which already in some of its contemporary applications seemed to allude to a form of biological inheritance.[20]

16. Jean-Raphaël Bourge, "Colonialismo, omosessualità e mondo islamico nell'immaginario erotico europeo tra Otto e Novecento", in *Le trasgressioni della carne. Il desiderio omosessuale nel mondo islamico e cristiano, secc. XII-XX*, ed. by Umberto Grassi and Giuseppe Marcocci, Rome, Viella, 2015, pp. 187-203.

17. Jonathan Burton, "Race", in *A Cultural History of Western Empires*, vol. 3, *A Cultural History of Western Empires in the Renaissance*, ed. by Ania Loomba, London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2019, pp. 203-228: 215.

18. *Ibid*.

19. Traub, "Sexuality", in *A Cultural History of Western Empires*, vol. 3, *A Cultural History of Western Empires in the Renaissance*, pp. 147-180: 152. See also: Geraldine Heng, "The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages I: Race Studies, Modernity, and the Middle Ages", *Literature Compass*, 8/5 (2011), pp. 258-274; and Ania Loomba, "Race and the Possibilities of Comparative Critique", *New Literary History*, 40/3 (2009), pp. 501-522.

20. David Nirenberg, *Neighboring Faiths: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism in the Middle Ages and Today*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 2014, pp. 169-190. Margo Hendricks was a pioneer in promoting the use of the category of "race" in premodern history: Margo Hendricks, "Race: A Renaissance Category?", in *Companion to English Renaissance*

The process of the "naturalisation" of the differences between Christians and religious minorities in Spain was not, however, in Nirenberg's interpretation, a fruit of the distance between cultures, but rather of their excessive proximity. In fact, it was after an explosion of anti-Jewish violence in 1391, when many Jews were forced to convert to Christianity, that the presence of new converts began to raise ancestral anxieties. Those who were different, the potential enemy, "the other", were now mixed in with the Christian majority. It was in this context that the problem of genealogy became fundamental. The policies of *limpieza de sangre* ("blood purity"), which sought to establish who the descendants of Christians were so as to exclude new converts from certain occupations, trades and relevant institutional positions, fueled this process. Blood and descent became determining factors in conveying cultural belonging and the transmission of religious values. A "new Christian" could never be equated with a "Christian *by nature*".[21] It then became crucial to identify the signs that distinguished the potential enemy. Unregulated sexuality, and in particular the practice of sodomy, was permanently associated in the collective imagination with the infidel who was potentially dangerous to society.

2. *Race and sexuality*

Vincenzo Lavenia's essay in this volume analyses how sexual themes have been intertwined with anti-Muslim rhetoric since the late Middle Ages, and how this combination had large consequences in driving the inquisitorial persecution of Muslims, both converts and non-converts, across the Iberian Peninsula. Moreover, the essay ends by indicating how this model was subsequently exported overseas and how it influenced travel literature, which drew upon this cultural heritage. However, anti-Muslim rhetoric was not the only lens through which Iberian observers scrutinised and interpreted the customs and habits of the populations they encountered along the paths of their foreign expansion. During their "conquests", xenophobia and marginalisation, which had previously been configured upon a primarily religious basis, were selectively re-purposed to confront new political and cultural contexts. Classic models exerted an equally decisive influence. In ancient times, Greeks and Romans had identified "barbarians" with a monstrous

Literature and Culture, ed. by Michael Hattaway, Oxford and Malden (MA), Blackwell, 2001, pp. 690-698. See the recent contribution by Geraldine Heng, *Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2018.

21. *Ibid*. The debate on the proto-racialisation of ethnic and religious minorities in Spain has a long history: Jerome Friedman, "Jewish Conversion, the Spanish Pure Blood Laws and Reformation: A Revisionist View of Racial and Religious Antisemitism", *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 18/1 (1987), pp. 3-30; John Edwards, "The Beginnings of a Scientific Theory of Race? Spain, 1450-1600", in *From Iberia to Diaspora: Studies in Sephardic History and Culture*, ed. by Yedida K. Stillman and Norman A. Stillman, Leiden, Brill, 1999; *Race and Blood in the Iberian World*, ed. by Max S. Hering Torres, María Elena Martínez and David Nirenberg, Zurich and Berlin, Lit, 2012. The issue is also debated in *After Conversion: Iberia and the Emergence of Modernity*, ed. by Mercedes García-Arenal, Leiden, Brill, 2016.

and unregulated sexuality. [22] One of the models that contributed most to the ongoing "sexualisation" of the fear aroused by the foreigner in Western culture was the repertoire of monstruous races contained in Pliny's *Natural History*.[23]

As already argued by Rudi C. Bleys[24] and, more recently, by Carmen Nocentelli,[25] Christians' relationships first with Jews and Muslims and then with non-European populations profoundly changed the perception of sexuality in the Western world: it prepared the ground for an understanding of sexual behaviour that moved beyond theologically-based moral categories. The belief that some ethnic groups were more prone to vice than others gradually shifted the axis of reflection on sexuality from moralistic thought to naturalistic investigation. Greek and Roman medicine had already assumed a similar perspective in its considerations of the organic causes of homosexual desire, and a continuity was maintained in European medieval commentaries on classical texts.[26] However, when this theoretical debate came to be conflated with proto-anthropological reflections on non-European peoples, the process accelerated and helped formulate the image of the sexual deviant, even within European societies, as belonging to a "species" unto himself. This intertwining is particularly evident in 16th-century reflections on female homoerotic desire. In his *Des Monstres et Prodiges* (1573), Ambroise Paré (1510-1590), one of the most influential European physicians and surgeons of the 16th century, listed the anomalies of the female genitalia, which he observed sometimes had an outgrowth of the lips so prominent that they reacted to erotic stimulations, such as an erect penis. In the second edition of the work (1575), he enriched his list with a description of the diviners of Fez.[27] This passage was taken almost literally from the French translation of Leo Africanus' *Description of Africa* (1550).[28] The paragraph was a compendium of recurrent themes from

22. Joseph Roisman, "Greek and Roman Ethnosexuality", in *A Companion to Greek and Roman Sexualities*, ed. by Thomas K. Hubbard, Chichester, Wiley Blackwell, 2014, pp. 405-423.

23. Traub, "Sexuality", p. 152.

24. Bleys, *Geography of Perversion*.

25. Carmen Nocentelli, *Empires of Love: Europe, Asia, and the Making of Early Modern Identity*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014.

26. Joan Cadden, *Nothing Natural is Shameful: Sodomy and Science in Late Medieval Europe*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.

27. "Female diviners of Fez" were women who, "claiming to be possessed by *djinns* or demons, foretold the future or served as healers". Leo Africanus (see note 28 below) in the 16th century describes them as *suhaqiyat:* "(*sahacat*, as he transliterated into Italian the current Arabic word for 'tribade', lesbian) women who had the 'evil custom' of 'rubbing' (*fregare*) each other in sexual delight. Assuming the voices of demons, they lured beautiful women into their lascivious company, singing, dancing, and having sex with them, enticing them to trick their husbands along the way". Natalie Zemon Davis, *Trickster Travels: A Sixteenth-Century Muslim between Worlds*, New York, Hill and Wang, 2006, p. 201.

28. Umberto Grassi, *Sodoma. Una storia dell'omosessualità (V-XVIII sec.)*, Rome, Carocci, 2019, pp. 129-131. Leo Africanus was an eminent Arab geographer born in Granada around 1485 with the name al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad al-Wazzān. Captured by pirates, he became a Christian and was baptised in Rome, and then he returned to Africa and re-embraced Islam. Ambroise Paré, *Des monstres et prodiges*, ed. by Jean Céard, Geneva, Droz, 1971 (or. pub. 1585), pp. 26-27, and Leo Africanus, *Historiale Description de l'Afrique*, 2 vols, Lyon,

the debates on female same-sex desire. Paré, following Leone, had defined the fortune-tellers of Fez as *fricatrices*, a Latin term that indicated the rubbing of the female genital organs and which was often accompanied by the classic descriptions of the "tribade".[29] Classical literature and travel reports also influenced medical treatises. They helped determine how, in the new discipline of anatomy, the study of the physical forms of the female genitalia and their anomalies contributed to the revival of the classic figure of the "tribade", which influenced the ways in which female homoeroticism has been interpreted and understood in the Western world until very recently.[30]

Notions derived from Galenic humoral theories also reinforced naturalised interpretations of cultural differences. It was commonly believed that temperate climates favoured a balance between moods and, consequently, the development of balanced complexions. On the other hand, those who lived in equatorial or torrid areas were believed to be characterised by more unstable complexions and to be more inclined to abandon themselves to the passions. "Within this framework", Valerie Traub wrote, "inhabitants of southern climes were considered more prone to sexual 'excess' of various sorts".[31] Burton's theories on the "Sotadic zone", with which we opened this introduction, thus had their roots in a very distant time.

3. *Islam, Christianity and sexuality: conflicts and interactions*

Along with assumptions of a religion-based race, the suspicion that surrounded sexual relations between Christians and non-Christians was exported to colonial territories and crystallised in rigid proscriptive formulas. In many circumstances, however, pragmatic needs led to the tolerance of, and sometimes incited, interethnic and interreligious mixings. In the colonial context, the idea that men could not do without the sexual outlet they found in native women was widely accepted. But the exchange of women was also often used as a lubricant to foster peaceful relations between the conquerors and occupied populations. Although colonial empires grew on different timelines, the increasingly strict rules formulated to control interactions within them were not implemented at the start of the expansion but occurred in a

J. Temporal, 1556/1557, vol. 1, pp. 161-162. Both works are quoted in Katharine Park, "The Rediscovery of the Clitoris: French Medicine and the Tribade, 1570-1620", in *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by David Hillman and Carla Mazzio, New York and London, Routledge, 1997, pp. 171-193: 171. On Leo Africanus, see Zemon Davis, *Trickster Travels*.

29. According to recent research, the reemergence of the theme of tribadism in European mental horizons can be located in the Italian humanistic culture of the 1470s: Marc Schachter, "Alcuni anelli mancanti del discorso lesbico: i primi commenti a stampa sopra Giovenale", in *Tribadi, sdomiti, invertite e invertiti, pederasti, femminelle, ermafroditi. Per una storia dell'omosessualità, della bisessualità e delle trasgressioni di genere in Italia*, ed. by Umberto Grassi, Vincenzo Lagioia and Gian Paolo Romagnani, Pisa, ETS, 2017, pp. 29-40: 30-31.

30. Valerie Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 197-203.

31. Traub, "Sexuality", p. 154.

phase of consolidation, mainly in response to the need to define the status of the offspring generated from mixed relationships.[32]

Despite strict prohibitions, in the Mediterranean area, too, sexual relations played a crucial role in determining both the construction of borders between faiths and ethnic groups and their intrinsic instability and permeability. Much work has already been done on the analysis of interreligious marriages, concubinage, prostitution and female conversions.[33] But other areas of human sexuality, such as female and male homosexuality, still need to be explored from this perspective.

This volume is an initial foray in this direction. The first part, entitled "Definition and Proscription", examines cultural, social, legal and institutional attitudes towards female and male homosexual desire in the medieval and early modern Muslim and Christian worlds. Serena Tolino's essay, which opens the section, explores ideas of female same-sex desire through the analysis of texts produced within three different Arabic literary genres: lexicography, medical treaties and legal discourses. Although the history of homosexuality in the Muslim world has recently been the subject of growing interest, especially in the Anglo-American academic world,[34] the issue of female homosexual desire and practices still leaves much to be explored. Its study is particularly difficult due to the scarcity of sources.[35] However, Tolino underlines the existence of certain basic attitudes towards the practice, which, moreover, also find echo in western Christian Europe. Here as in the Muslim world, sex, viewed in official texts from an exclusively androcentric perspective, was difficult to conceive of and was considered irrelevant if it did not involve penetration. Lesbianism was therefore interpreted exclusively in terms of "absence", and it only became relevant when the use of artifices, such as a dildo, or particular natural conditions made it possible for women to penetrate each other.[36] The Arabophone world studied by Tolino,

32. *Ibid.*, p. 176.

33. See the bibliography in ch. 6.

34. *Sexuality and Eroticism among Males in Moslem Society*, ed. by Arno Schmitt and Jehoeda Sofer, New York, Haworth Press, 1992; *Homoeroticism in Classical Arabic Literature*, ed. by J.W. Wright and Everett K. Rowson, New York, Columbia University Press, 1997; Walter G. Andrews, Mehmet Kalpaklı, *The Age of Beloveds: Love and the Beloved in Early-Modern Ottoman and European Culture and Society*, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2005; Khaled El-Rouayheb, *Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic World, 1500-1800*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2005; Dror Ze'evi, *Producing Desire: Changing Sexual Discourse in the Ottoman Middle East, 1500-1900*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2006; Joseph A. Massad, *Desiring Arabs*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 2007; *Islamicate Sexualities: Translations across Temporal Geographies of Desire*, ed. by Kathryn Babayan and Afsaneh Najmabadi, Cambridge (MA) and London, Harvard university Press, 2008; *Islam and Homosexuality*, ed. by Samar Habib, Santa Barbara, Praeger, 2010; Jolanda Guardi, Anna Vanzan, *Che genere di Islam. Omosessuali, queer e transessuali tra shari'a e nuove intepretazioni*, Rome, Ediesse, 2012.

35. For the bibliography on female homoeroticism in the Muslim world, see the notes in Tolino's chapter in this volume.

36. On the "insignificance" of lesbian desire in the Christian context, see: Valerie Traub, "The (In)significance of 'Lesbian' Desire", in *Queering the Renaissance*, ed. by Jonathan Goldberg, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 1994, pp. 61-83; Patricia Simons,

however, presents fundamental differences when compared to the Christian West. The norm/deviation binary appears, in fact, to be more complex and articulated. Different norms coexisted without ceasing to be considered "norms", even within the same social groups. This attitude is reflected in both alcohol consumption and (especially male) homoeroticism. While both were prohibited from a legal perspective, they were widely celebrated in poetry and literature. However, this was not a contradiction, since it was assumed that different registers, with their internal regulatory regimes, were used across different genres.

Similarly, this attention to the articulation of literary genres is the cornerstone of Selim Kuru's analysis, who also observes a fundamental discrepancy between normative texts and literary production. As in the Arabic-speaking context that Tolino examines, homosexual love played a central role in Turkish-Anatolian literature between the medieval and early modern periods, although in both cultural spheres attention to male homoerotic desire was incomparably greater than representations of female same-sex love. As Kuru points out, its importance grew from the end of the 15th century onwards, particularly in the genres of lyric poetry and verse narratives. The composition of lyric poems addressed to young lovers was the subject of competition among members of the Ottoman educated elite and, in particular, of those men of letters who occupied a place in the bureaucracy. The originality of Kuru's argument lies in the link he forges between this theme and novel developments within certain specific literary genres, which, in close relationship with the topic of same-sex love, underwent radical changes in form and content. These new trends lasted over time and left an imprint on certain expressions of Turkish-Anatolian literature that survived into the 19th century. From that time onwards, however, growing contacts with European powers in full colonial expansion radically changed the intellectual landscape of the Ottoman Empire[37] and, as other authors have pointed out,[38] of the Muslim world as a whole.

It is important to underline the significance of this historical turning point for a deeper understanding of the role that sexuality has played in Christian-Muslim interactions. The theme of homoerotic love, and in particular the praise of beautiful young boys, actually transcended the limits of the Turkish-Anatolian cultural area and constituted a central literary topos in Arabic and Persian productions as well. The representability of same-sex love, which acted as a counterbalance to the religious and criminal condemnation of homosexual acts, reveals how homoerotic desire was considered in the Muslim world to be a constitutive component of human psychology. In fact, it was worthy of being celebrated in fine lyric poems and in compositions that had mystical and religious themes. Contemplation on the beauty

"Lesbian (In)visibility in Italian Renaissance Culture", *Journal of Homosexuality*, 27/1 (1994), pp. 81-122; Fernanda Alfieri, "Impossibili unioni di uguali. L'amore fra donne nel discorso teologico e giuridico (secoli XVI-XVIII)", *Dimensioni e problemi della ricerca storica*, 2 (2012), pp. 105-125.

37. Ze'evi, *Producing Desire*.

38. See also: Afsaneh Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches and Men without Beards: Gender and Sexual Anxieties of Iranian Modernity*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2005.

of a young man was often the basis from which the authors rose to contemplate the beauty of creation and, through it, the goodness of God himself.[39]

This tradition was completely eliminated and censored with the increasing influence of Western Europe in the Muslim world from the end of the 18th century onwards, but especially during the 19th century, when colonialism and imperialism led European powers to adopt an increasingly aggressive policy of expansion in Africa and the Middle East. What might appear paradoxical in the eyes of a contemporary observer, especially at a time when the LGBTQI+ civil rights theme is often used to justify anti-Muslim rhetoric,[40] is that the progressive disappearance of (mainly male) homosexual themes from the literary canon of Muslim countries was the result of contacts with Europeans over the 19th century. Still further, its most avid supporters included representatives of Western-inspired modernist trends between the 19th and 20th centuries. From this perspective, the genesis of religious radicalism and the "backwardness" of the Muslim world should be rethought in a different key than that presented in public debate. Indeed, it should be considered a reaction to the growing influence of Western culture and the conflicts that emerged during that process, rather than as the exclusive result of internal and endemic elements of "backwardness".

Lavenia's essay takes us to the other shore of the Mediterranean. As already mentioned, the author analyses the relationships between sexuality and Islamophobia in the Iberian cultural context. It is clear that in Christian Europe between the late Middle Ages and the early modern period homosexual desire did not find space for expression in the official literature comparable to that enjoyed in the Islamicate world.[41] As we have already mentioned, cultural differences crystallised on the European side in the creation of a powerful anti-Muslim stereotype, in which the accusation of "indecent" behavior, and above all of sodomy, played a central role.[42]

39. See, among others: Wright, Rowson, *Homoeroticism*; Murray, Roscoe, *Islamic Homosexualities*; El-Rouayheb, *Before Homosexuality*; Ze'evi, *Producing Desire*.

40. Jasbir Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism and Queer Times*, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2007; Lisa Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality: Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy*, Boston, Beacon Press, 2003.

41. If not in some niche areas. For the medieval period, see: John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1980 (although his thesis on the ample diffusion of tolerance towards homosexual practices in the medieval period has been strongly reduced, the work remains a point of reference for the abundance of the sources cited therein). For the early modern period, within openly dissenting environments, see Randolph Trumbach, "Erotic Fantasy and Male Libertinism in Enlightenment England", in *The Invention of Pornography: Obscenity and the Origin of Modernity, 1500-1800*, ed. by Lynn Hunt, New York, Zone Books, 1993, pp. 253-282.

42. Despite these differences, we must not foget that in the conceptualisation of homosexual practices in Western Europe a major role was played by the influx of themes borrowed from the classical world, in particular philosophy, the medical tradition, and astrology. In these environments, the mediation of the Muslim world was fundamental. At the same time, literary themes also crossed the borders of the Muslim and Christian worlds. See, for example: Sahar Amer, "Lesbian Sex and the Military: From the Medieval Arabic Tradition to French Literature", in *Same Sex Love and Desire*

If the first part of the volume focuses on regulatory systems and cultural perceptions, the second part, "Interactions", leads us to social practices and exchanges. The essay by Lavenia already highlighted the centrality of the Iberian world in studies on the conflicting interactions between Muslims and Christians.[43] The special role occupied by this region is also at the center of Tomás Mantecón Movellán's contribution on Spain in the 16th and 17th centuries, and it continues with Luiz Mott, who explores homosexual relations between Muslims and Christians in the Lusitanian world and in North Africa between the 16th and 18th centuries, focusing on moriscos and "renegades" (that is, Christians who converted to Islam). It then ends with my essay on the multiple conversions of a woman who was condemned to death as a result of her relationships (which were never sealed by marriage) with Muslim and Jewish partners in Sicily, at that time a territory of the Crown of Spain.

The key to this second part is to understand the role played by proscribed sexuality and unconventional gender performances in relationships between religious minorities and majorities in the early modern Mediterranean. For this purpose, a micro-historical approach has been chosen, one attentive to punctual connections and documented relationships.[44]

Historians have already made some significant contributions in this direction. Although *The Age of Beloveds* (2005)[45] is a predominantly comparative work, Walter G. Andrews and Mehemet Kalpakli nevertheless also offered insights for the study of concrete relations between Muslims and Christians in the early modern period. Due to the Muslim prohibition on alcohol consumption, Christian and Jewish wine sellers were in fact the main animators of the pleasure industry in the city of Istanbul. The verses and prose texts that celebrated transgressions in the taverns and cafes of the Galata district praised the beauty of young Western men, especially the French, who were considered one of the main attractions of the neighborhood. Their immorality garnered both disapproval and intrigue.[46] As Andrews and Kalpakli wrote,

among Women in the Middle Ages, Francesca Canadé Sautman and Pamela Sheingorn, New York, Palgrave, 2001, pp. 179-198. On the medical literature, see the references in Leah DeVun, "Erecting Sex: Hermaphrodites and the Medieval Science of Surgery", *Osiris*, 30 (2015), pp. 17-37.

43. One study that is very careful with regards to the themes of gender and sexuality is *Queer Iberia: Sexualities, Cultures, and Crossings from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance*, ed. by Josiah Blackmore and Gregory S. Hutcheson, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 1999.

44. On the use of a microhistorical approach in world history, in addition to Trivellato, *Familiarity of Stranges*, see Francesca Trivellato, "Is There a Future for Italian Microhistory in the Age of Global History?", *Californian Italian Studies*, 2/1 (2011), at http://escholarship.org/uc/item/0z94n9hq. This approach has already been very fruitful. See Mercedes García-Arenal, Gerard Wiegers, *A Man of Three Worlds: Samuel Pallache, a Moroccan Jew in Catholic and Protestant Europe*, trans. Martin Beagles, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003; Linda Colley, *Ordeal of Elizabeth Marsh: A Woman in World History*, New York, Anchor Books, 2008.

45. Andrews, Kalpakli, *The Age of Beloveds*. The first cafes were founded around the mid-16th century (*ibid.*, pp. 70-71). The subculture that developed around these places, in taverns, saunas and brothels were the targets of the increasing legislative control of the 16th and 17th centuries that, however, had fluctuating effects (*ibid.*, pp. 281-288).

46. *Ibid.*, pp. 63-73.

> If Istanbul of the sixteenth century seems distant from Europe and the life of European society, this is more a product of our own myopia and the blind spots of scholarship than a representation of Ottoman realities. For Ottoman Istanbulites, Europe was always just a boat ride away, and Muslims seem to have caroused with, loved and had sexual relations with European on a regular basis.[47]

Other studies on Islamic homosexuality have occasionally unearthed interreligious homosexual ties. The theme of the handsome Christian, the *tarsā baĉeh* (literally the "fearful child"), is a literary topos that was widely diffuse in both classical Persian and Arabic literature. It was already present in the works of Abū Nuwās, a famous poet from the early Abbasid period who lived between the 8th and 9th centuries of the Christian era, but it was mainly developed in the verse texts of the great 12th-century Persian poet 'Aṭṭār.[48] Evidence for Muslims' predilection for Jews and Christians is also found in Franz Rosenthal's studies,[49] while the theme of love for a Christian boy, which drives a pious Muslim crazy with longing and leads him to madness and apostasy, is a recurring plot in the Persian and Arabic literature analysed by Paul Sprachman.[50] Norman Roth's pioneering research identified Muslim Spain as a particularly fertile ground for studies on interreligious homoeroticism. Here, Muslim authors wrote occasional poems in praise of young Christians and Jews, and Jewish poets celebrated, albeit in a less explicit language, the beauty of Arab boys.[51]

The majority of these studies are based on the analysis of literary sources. Mantecón Movellán and Mott's essays, on the other hand, start from both civil and ecclesiastical judicial sources from the Iberian Peninsula. The analysis of these documents presents numerous methodological difficulties, photographing the unbalanced power relations between judges and defendants. However, reading them against the grain allows us to extract a large amount of useful information for the reconstruction of proscribed sexual practices and relations between Muslims and Christians. The authors have paid particular attention to shared social spaces and the construction of networks in which the lives of individuals intertwined. The majority of the cases analysed concern Muslim slaves in the Catholic world or, conversely, Christian slaves in Muslim regions.

In this type of source, the intimate experiences of the suspects remain largely inaccessible to historical investigation. However, it has proven fruitful to pay

47. *Ibid.*, p. 65. For the current review, up to note 51, I rely upon a previous article: Umberto Grassi, "Omosessualità islamiche e relazioni tra cristiani e musulmani: nuove prospettive di ricerca", *Storica*, 60 (2014), pp. 51-89.

48. Guardi, Vanzan, *Che genere di Islam*, p. 122. On the etymology of *tarsā baĉeh* and on the motif of love for Christians, the authors refer to: Franklin D. Lewis, "Sexual Occidentation: The Politics of Conversion, Christian-Love and Boy-Love in 'Aṭṭār", *Iranian Studies*, 42 (2009), pp. 693-723.

49. Franz Rosenthal, "Male and Female: Described and Compared", in *Homoeroticism in Classical Arabic Literature*, pp. 24-54: 35-36.

50. Paul Sprachman, "'Le beau garçon sans merci': The Homoerotic Tale in Arabic and Persian", in *Homoeroticism in Classical Arabic Literature*, pp. 192-209.

51. Norman Roth, "'Deal Gently with the Young Man': Love of Boys in Medieval Hebrew Poetry of Spain", *Speculum*, 57 (1982), pp. 20-51.

attention to the size of semi-clandestine networks. From this perspective, it is clear that homosexual practices played a role in cementing social ties, helping to promote forms of contact not only between religious minorities and majorities, but also between individuals from different social classes. In the Spanish cases analysed by Mantecón Movellán, it is apparent that prostitution allowed Muslims and black slaves to obtain economic advantages, exploiting the exotic charm that made them objects of particular attraction in the eyes of some members of the Spanish noble class who were willing to pay for their favours.[52] Mott's cases instead show that, in the North African context, in addition to the violence suffered at the hands of their masters, homosexual relations sometimes played an important role in the social promotion of Portuguese slaves within the new economic contexts in which they were forced to enter.

On the other hand, two cases in which individuals crossed gender and religious boundaries repeatedly, explored across two of the essays in the final part of the volume, shed light on biographical elements. That of Eleno/a de Céspedes, a well-known case, is reintroduced in the conclusion to Mantecón Movellán's article. Elena/o was born as a woman in Spain and was a moorish slave and a convert who was freed and who, during their life, embraced a male identity, accompanied by a mysterious change of sex. Their social rise, obtained first through their service as a soldier and then through their commitment to the medical art, only ended when Elena/o tried to obtain the authorisation to marry a woman, and thus ended up in the hands of inquisitorial justice.[53] In the final article, I then bring to light the story of Susanna Daza, a "Christian *de mora*" in Sicily who was accused of denying the Catholic faith after she first embraced Islam and then Judaism, following her romantic relationships with a Muslim and a Jew.

The study of religious conversions has been fundamental to research on the fluidity of boundaries between the three main monotheistic faiths in the Mediterranean region.[54] In cases of enslavement in a foreign land, conversion could be purely opportunistic, inspired by the desire for redemption or social rise within the new community, or it could be dictated by a sincere "conversion of the

52. Barbara Fuchs, *Exotic Nation: Maurophilia and the Construction of Early Modern Spain*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009.

53. On Elena/o, see the bibliography cited in Mantecón Movellán's chapter.

54. Bartolomé Bennassar, Lucile Bennassar, *Les Chrétiens d'Allah XVe-XVIIe siècles*, Paris, Perrin, 1991; Lucia Rostagno, *Mi faccio turco. Esperienze ed immagini dell'islam nell'Italia moderna*, Naples, Istituto per l'Oriente C. A. Nallino, 1983; Lucetta Scaraffia, *Rinnegati. Per una storia dell'identità occidentale*, Rome and Bari, Laterza, 1993; *Conversion: Old World and New*, ed. by Kenneth Mills and Anthony Grafton, Rochester and New York, University of Rochester Press, 2003; *Conversions islamiques. Identités religieuses en Islam méditerranéen*, ed. by Mercedes García-Arenal, Paris, Maisonneuve et Larose, 2001; Tijana Krstić, *Contested Conversion to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2011; *Diaspora Morisca*, ed. by Giovanna Fiume and Stefania Pastore, special issue of *Quaderni Storici*, 144 (2013); *Religious Conversion: History, Experience and Meaning*, ed. by Ira Katznelson and Miri Rubin, Farnham, Ashgate, 2014; *Conversion and Islam in the Early Modern Mediterranean: The Lure of the Other*, ed. by Claire Norton, New York and London, Routledge, 2017.

heart"; often, however, it was located in an intermediate sphere between these two extremes.[55] The documentation makes it difficult to understand where along this spectrum the subjects involved were located. The inquisitorial documents (the main source, at least on the Catholic front, for reconstructing the history of conversions) were mostly composed following rhetorical and formular schemes. These serial repetitions result from the use of "expedite justice", which aimed to find a solution through lean and flexible procedures and to resolve a problem that, due to its pervasiveness, was difficult to manage without some accommodation. Furthermore, the political implications were manifold and the presence of slaves, both converts and non, on both Muslim and Christian soil, was often managed by taking into account the consequences that overly restrictive policies would have had on the enslaved communities held by the rival powers.[56]

Recent research has brought attention to the relationship between gender and conversions. Whether an individual was a man or woman influenced their transition between one religion and another and, conversely, these transits affected their gendered performances.[57] The repressive reaction was not only triggered because religious boundaries were violated, but also, and especially in the case of women, when the conditions of patriarchal domination were violated through religious choice. Susanna's case clearly falls into this second category. However, it also allows us to reflect upon the phenomenon of multiple conversions, which was not uncommon in the early modern Mediterranean, and on its relationship with the phenomena of cultural hybridisation, indifferentism and religious skepticism.[58]

4. *Conclusions*

Exploring the history of sexual ~~transgressions~~ and non-aligned gender performances allows us to shed light on a largely unexplored dimension of Mediterranean history and Muslim-Christian relations. From the perspective

55. See among others: *Le commerce des captifs: Les intermédiaires dans l'échange et le rachat des prisonniers en Méditerraneé, XV^e^-XVIII^e^ siècle*, ed. by Wolfgang Kaiser, Rome, École Française de Rome, 2008; *La schiavitù nel Mediterraneo*, ed. by Giovanna Fiume, special issue of *Quaderni Storici*, 107 (2001); Robert C. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500-1800*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003; Salvatore Bono, *Schiavi musulmani nell'Italia moderna: Galeotti, vu' cumpra', domestici*, Naples, Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1999.

56. Stefano Villani, "Dalla Gran Bretagna all'Italia: narrazioni di conversione nel Sant'Uffizio di Pisa e Livorno", in *La città delle nazioni. Livorno e i limiti del cosmopolitismo (1586-1834)*, ed. by Andrea Addobbati and Marcella Aglietti, Pisa, Pisa University Press, 2016, pp. 109-126; Giovanna Fiume, *Schiavitù mediterranee. Corsari, rinnegati e santi di età moderna*, Milan, Bruno Mondadori, 2009, p. xv; Maria Sofia Messana, "La 'resistenza' musulmana e i 'martiri' dell'Islam: moriscos, schiavi e crisitani rinnegati di fronte all'inquisizione spagnola di Sicilia", *Quaderni Storici*, 42/126/3 (2007), pp. 743-772: 746.

57. See *Conversions: Gender and Religious Change in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Simon Ditchfield and Helen Smith, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2017.

58. For further readings, see the footnotes of my chapter in the present volume.

of "high" culture and regulatory strategies, numerous parallels emerge that are evident above all in the transversal circulation of themes and texts. However, there is also a substantial difference in the degree of freedom with which love and homosexual attraction could be represented in literary and artistic spheres without incurring moral or judicial sanctions.

From the point of view of social practices, focusing attention on proscribed sexuality allows us to understand the importance of clandestine activity and illegality in allowing for interaction between individuals of different faiths, particularly considering the complex dynamics that governed relations between religious minorities and majorities. Sexual ~~transgressions,~~ due to ~~their~~ proscribed nature, favoured the establishment of clandestine networks. These could, in turn, open communication channels between groups that rarely made official contact otherwise, providing benefits that ranged from the most immediate enrichment opportunities to much more complex processes of social promotion and integration.

At the same time, especially in border areas such as Spain, Sicily or Balkan Europe, the boundaries between faiths were frequently crossed, in a range of configurations that stretched from contaminations and syncretisms to radical religious conversion. If these shifts were sometimes forced, as in the case of mass conversions, or driven by opportunism, at other times they embodied a deep dissatisfaction with the religion and the cultural and social background to which the subjects belonged. In any case, they ended up affecting shared views of religion, favouring hybridisation processes that could lead to skeptical attitudes or open disbelief. In these contexts, unaligned sexuality and gender ~~transgressions~~ sometimes manifested in radically subversive attitudes towards institutionalised religions, the established order, gender roles and patriarchal domination.[59] Despite the poverty of information on the protagonists' intimate beliefs in the sources analysed across these essays, we can reasonably assume that in these latter cases we move beyond mere opportunistic decisions to touch upon that dark and inaccessible sphere in which social practices intertwined with the more intimate dimension of religious beliefs and cultural convictions. To what extent sexuality and "deviant" behaviours were the cause or consequence of unorthodox approaches to religion in a cross-cultural context remains an open question, and one upon which, we hope, new studies will continue to focus and reflect.

(*Translated by Kalina Yamboliev*)

59. See: Rostagno, *Mi faccio turco*; Giovanni Romeo, *Amori proibiti. I concubini tra Chiesa e Inquisizione*, Rome and Bari, Laterza, 2008, pp. 63-111; Stuart B. Schwartz, *All Can Be Saved: Religious Tolerance and Salvation in the Iberian Atlantic World*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2008, pp. 31-33.

I

Definition and Proscription

Serena Tolino

Normative Discourses on Female Homoeroticism in Pre-Modern Islamicate Societies

1. *Introduction*

The last two decades have witnessed an increase in the number of publications on sexuality in the Islamicate world,[1] and scholarship on homoeroticism has constituted an important part of this field.[2] However, the great majority of

1. I use "Islamicate" here following Marshall G. S. Hodgson, who coined the term to refer to "the social and cultural complex historically associated with Islam and the Muslims, both among Muslims themselves and even when found among non-Muslims", in contrast to "Islamic" which refers more specifically to Islam as a religion. See Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, vol. 1, *The Classical Age of Islam*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1977, p. 59.

2. For historical and literary works, see, for example, Everett K. Rowson's contributions, and particularly "The Traffic in Boys: Slavery and Homoerotic Liaisons in Elite ʿAbbāsid Society", *Middle Eastern Literatures*, 11/2 (2008), pp. 193-204; "The Effeminates of Early Medina", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 111/1 (1991), pp. 671-693; "The Categorization of Gender and Sexual Irregularity in Medieval Arabic Vice Lists", in *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity*, ed. by Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub, New York and London, Routledge, 1991, pp. 50-79. See also *Homoeroticism in Classical Arabic Literature*, ed. by J.W. Wright and Everett K. Rowson, New York, Columbia University Press, 1997; *Islamic Homosexualities: Culture, History and Literature*, ed. by Stephen O. Murray and Will Roscoe, New York, New York University Press, 1997; Khaled El-Rouayheb, *Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic World, 1500-1800*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2005; Joseph A. Massad, *Desiring Arabs*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2008; *Islamicate Sexualities: Translations across Temporal Geographies of Desire*, ed. by Kathryn Babayan and Afsaneh Najmabadi, Cambridge (MA), Harvard University Press, 2008; *Islam and Homosexuality*, ed. by Samar Habib, 2 vols, Santa Barbara, ABC Clio, 2009; Vanja Hamzić, *Sexual and Gender Diversity in the Muslim World: History, Law and Vernacular Knowledge*, London, I.B. Tauris, 2015. For a focus on religious aspects, see Scott Siraj al-Haqq Kugle, *Homosexuality in Islam: Islamic Reflections on Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Muslims*, Oxford, Oneworld Publications, 2010; Scott Siraj al-Haqq Kugle, *Living Out Islam: Voices of Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Muslims*, New York and London, New York University Press, 2014; Scott Siraj al-Haqq Kugle, "Sexual Diversity and Ethics in the Agenda of Progressive Muslims", in *Progressive Muslims: On Justice, Gender, and Pluralism*, ed. by Omid Safi, Oxford, Oneworld Publications, 2003, pp. 190-234; Serena Tolino, *Omosessualità e atti omosessuali fra diritto islamico e diritto positivo: il caso egiziano con alcuni cenni all'esperienza libanese*, Naples, Edizioni Scientifiche

this work has focused on male homoeroticism, to the detriment of research on female same-sex relationships. For example, in 1997 two edited collections on homoeroticism in the Islamicate world appeared, and while one did not include even a single article devoted specifically to female homoeroticism,[3] the other included only a very short chapter on the subject.[4] More recently, a number of publications on homoeroticism in Arabic literature have appeared: in 2001 Fedwa Malti-Douglas published an article that examined the figure of the "tribade" in the *Nuzhat al-albāb fī-mā lā yūjad fī kitāb* (Delights of the Hearths in What is Never Found in Books), an erotological treatise by the Tunisian author al-Tīfāshī (d. 561/1253).[5] This treatise also includes a section "On Praise of Tribadism and Argumentation in its Favour" and another "On the Blame of Tribadism".[6] These two chapters were analysed in Samar Habib's book on female homosexuality in the Middle East,[7] where she compared the relative tolerance and acceptance of female homosexuality in pre-modern Arabic literature (focusing on the *Nuzhat al-albāb fī-mā lā yūjad fī kitāb* as a case study) and the strict condemnation to which female homosexuality is subject in contemporary Arabic literature. Sahar Amer devoted a number of articles and a monograph to homoeroticism in medieval French and Arabic literature,[8] where she showed how a comparative approach can shed light on the methods by which Arabic tales about love between women entered French literature and how they were re-adapted to "suit their audience's sensibilities and expectations and to conform to some of their period's generic and

Italiane, 2013. For a general introduction, see Jolanda Guardi, Anna Vanzan, *Che genere di Islam. Omosessuali, queer e transessuali tra shari'a e nuove interpretazioni*, Rome, Ediesse, 2012.

3. Wright, Rowson, *Homoeroticism in Classical Arabic Literature*.

4. Stephen O. Murray, "Woman-Woman Love in Islamic Societies", in *Islamic Homosexualities*, pp. 42-50. The chapter is quite disappointing, as it is partially based on a number of orientalist reports that are not critically assessed but simply taken as truths.

5. Fedwa Malti-Douglas, "Tribadism/Lesbianism and the Sexualized Body in Medieval Arabo-Islamic Narratives", in *Same Sex Love and Desire Among Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Francesca Canadé Sautman and Pamela Sheingorn, New York, Palgrave, 2001, pp. 123-141.

6. *Ibid*., p. 127. This presentation of both the pros and cons of a given sexual practice is common in Arabic medieval literature. See, for example, the work of the famous polymath al-Jāḥiẓ, the *Kitāb Mufākharat al-jawārī wa'l-ghilmān*, translated into English as "Boasting Match over Maids and Youths", where he presents a controversy between a man who prefers to have sex with maids and a man who prefers to have sex with boys, analysing their positions from several angles. Al-Jāḥiẓ, "Kitāb Mufākharat al-jawārī wa'l-ghilmān", in *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ. Al-Rasā'il al-adabiyya*, Beirut, Dār wa-Maktaba al-hilāl, 2002. The essay has been translated into English in William M. Hutchins, *Nine Essays of al-Jahiz*, New York, Peter Lang, 1989.

7. Samar Habib, *Female Homosexuality in the Middle East: Histories and Representations*, New York and London, Routledge, 2007.

8. The monograph is entitled *Crossing Borders: Love Between Women in Medieval French and Arabic Literatures*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008. Other articles Amer wrote on the same topic include: "Cross-Dressing and Female Same-Sex Marriage in Medieval French and Arabic Literatures", in *Islamicate Sexualities*, pp. 72-113; "Naming to Empower: Lesbianism in the Arab Islamicate World Today", *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 16/4 (2012), pp. 381-397; "Medieval Arab Lesbians and Lesbian-Like Women", *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 118/2 (2009), pp. 215-236.

literary conventions".[9] The literature on love between women in the early modern period has also been analysed by Kathryn Babayan, in an article on 17th-century Iran.[10] More recently, in 2012, an entire issue of the *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, edited by Huma Ahmed-Gosh, was devoted to "Lesbians, Sexuality and Islam", with a clear contemporary focus.[11] Still further, a number of articles have been devoted to homosexuality and homosexual practices in Islamic law, but again most of the research has focused on male homoeroticism.[12]

The reasons for this silence have been already addressed in the historiography: as sharply put by Jacqueline Murray, "lesbians" in the Middle Ages were "twice marginal and twice invisible".[13] Judith M. Bennet pointed out that:

> Lesbian histories are, of course, even more challenging to construct, for even fewer documents tell of past lesbians among either privileged or ordinary folk. Women wrote less; their writings survived less often (Sappho's works are the classic example); and they were less likely than men to come to the attention of civic or religious authorities.[14]

The literary sources analysed by Malti-Douglas, Amer and Habib seem to underscore the fact that even those few texts that did address female homoeroticism offered an androcentric perspective. As Fedwa Malti-Douglas stated, even

9. Amer, *Crossing Borders*, p. 163.

10. Kathryn Babayan, "'In Spirit we Ate Each Other's Sorrow': Female Companionship in Seventeenth-Century Safavi Iran", in *Islamicate Sexualities*, pp. 239-274.

11. The articles published in this issue included Amer, "Naming to Empower"; Diya M. Abdo, "My Qarina, My Self: The Homoerotic as Islamic Feminism in Alifa Rifaat's 'My World of the Unknown'", pp. 398-415; Elizabeth M. Bucar, Faegheh Shirazi, "The 'Invention' of Lesbian Acts in Iran: Interpretative Moves, Hidden Assumptions, and Emerging Categories of Sexuality", pp. 416-434; Yuenmei Wong, "Islam, Sexuality, and the Marginal Positioning of Pengkids and their Girlfriends in Malaysia", pp. 435-448; Asifa Siraj, "'I Don't Want to Taint the Name of Islam': The Influence of Religion on the Lives of Muslim Lesbians", pp. 449-467; Nighat M. Gandhi, "Siraat-e-Mustaqeem or the Straight Path", pp. 468-484.

12. Works that focus on same-sex acts in Islamic law mostly focused on *liwāṭ* and include Arno Schmitt, "Liwāṭ im fiqh: Männliche Homosexualität?", *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies*, 4 (2001-2002), pp. 49-110; Mohammed Mezziane, "Sodomie et masculinité chez les jurists musulmans du IXe au XIe siècle", *Arabica*, 55 (2008), pp. 276-306; Amr A. Shalakany, "Islamic Legal Histories", *Berkeley Journal of Middle Eastern & Islamic Law*, 1 (2008), pp. 1-82; Camilla Adang, "Ibn Ḥazm on Homosexuality: A Case-Study of Ẓāhiri Legal Methodology", *Al-Qanṭara*, 24/1 (2003), pp. 5-31. See also the two articles by Sara Omar, "From Semantics to Normative Law: Perceptions of *Liwāṭ* (Sodomy) and *Siḥāq* (Tribadism) in Islamic Jurisprudence (8th-15th Century CE)", *Islamic Law and Society*, 19 (2012), pp. 222-256; and Serena Tolino: "Homosexual Acts in Islamic Law: *Siḥāq* and *Liwāṭ* in the Legal Debate", *GAIR-Mitteilungen*, 6 (2014), pp. 187-205.

13. Jacqueline Murray, "Twice Marginal and Twice Invisible: Lesbians in the Middle Ages", in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, ed. by Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage, New York, Garland, 1996, pp. 191-223.

14. Judith M. Bennet, "'Lesbian-Like' and the Social History of Lesbianism", *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 9/1 (2000), pp. 1-24: 2. Some scholars, however, have questioned the "myth of lesbian impunity". Although far less prosecuted than male same-sex intercourse, female homosexual interactions were often condemned by the law and sometimes punished by criminal justice: Louis Crompton, "The Myth of Lesbian Impunity: Capital Laws from 1270 to 1791", *Journal of Homosexuality*, 6/1-2 (1980-1981), pp. 11-25.

when "a female is the main character of an anecdote or when a female narrator is responsible for a narrative unit, the male perspective always organises and dominates the text".[15] Clearly, these sources were written by men who had a male audience in mind. The sources analysed by Malti-Douglas also seem to show that these (male) writers were driven by two basic assumptions. The first is that every woman, when she is in the privacy of her house, practices same-sex activities, no matter her marital and social status. The second is that these practices should be understood (and even accepted) as a "passing phase that will end when the penis arrives on the scene".[16]

This seems to be confirmed, for example, by the story of Qamar al-Zamān and the princess Budūr from the *One Thousand and One Nights*.[17] This tale has been the topic of an article by Sahar Amer, who, however, reached conclusions that are radically different from mine. The story goes as follows: the princess Budūr is in love with the prince Qamar al-Zamān. When he disappears, Budūr cross-dresses as a man and takes her husband's name in order to find him. She arrives in the Isle of Ebony, whose king, unaware that she is a woman, forces her to marry his daughter, Ḥayāt al-Nufūs. After she reveals her identity to Ḥayāt al-Nufūs, they start a relationship that seems to be based on mutual feelings of affection (and probably love), and certainly also includes sex. When, at the end, Qamar al-Zamān returns, Budūr reveals the truth and is reunited with him, who takes Ḥayāt al-Nufūs as a second wife. Amer speculates that the relationship between the two women continued.[18] Moreover, she considers the relationship between Ḥayāt and Budūr a "lesbian" one. However, it is clear that when Qamar al-Zamān comes back onto the scene the previous "order" is re-established and the non-normative relationship between Ḥayāt al-Nufūs and Budūr is normalised within a polygamous marriage. Moreover, as Brad Epps pointed out, Budūr does not so much subvert gender structures as much as reinforce them. For example, she cross-dresses in order to exploit the benefits of being a man in a patriarchal society: travelling as a man, Budūr finds "not merely hospitality, greater wealth, and a new kingdom but also a young woman who is promptly made her wife, whom she appears to love, and whose virginity she feigns to take (with the willing complicity of her bride) in an elaborately deceptive game of show-and-tell replete with bloody sheets".[19] At the end, Budūr, "taken for a man, saves her bride's

15. Malti-Douglas, "Tribadism/Lesbianism", p. 127.

16. *Ibid*., pp. 130-131.

17. Amer, "Cross-Dressing and Female Same-Sex Marriage", p. 94.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 101-104.

19. Bred Epps, "Comparisons, Competition, and Cross-Dressing: Cross-Cultural Analysis in a Contested World", in *Islamicate Sexualities*, pp. 114-160: 126. Epps criticises the fact that Amer almost ignored the frame-story that incorporates this tale, namely that of Maymūna and Dahnash, a female and a male *jinn*. The two *jinn* argue about the beauty of a boy that Maymūna has seen and of a girl that Dahnash has seen, namely Qamar al-Zamān and Budūr. As Epps wrote: "Put all too simply, the tale presents a powerful female *jinn* who extols the qualities of a male mortal and a less powerful male *jinn* who extols the qualities of a female mortal. The competition would thus seem to be consistent with that some now call a heterosexual economy, or heteronormativity, in which desire is constructed as running between 'opposites' –

virginity for her husband – that is, for the man who will be *their* husband".[20] All in all, as Malti-Douglas put it, once "the penis arrives on the scene",[21] it clearly dominates it and seems to confirm patriarchal norms, more than challenge them.

Scholars like Malti-Douglas, Amer and Habib have shown that it is possible to find traces of female homoeroticism in pre-modern Arabic texts, especially in literary texts. Obviously, literary sources do not necessarily represent lived social practices. However, as literary analysts have shown repeatedly, these texts must be understood by the public they are directed to and speak to their readers: as such, they never exist in a vacuum. Therefore, even though we do not know how representative the literary sources are with respect to the practices of female homoeroticism, we can be sure that these practices were at least intelligible to the contemporary public.

What is certainly noteworthy when looking at these sources is that, despite a strict ban in Islamic law on same-sex practices (at least in theory),[22] these constituted a very important topos in the literary sources. Even scholars known for their piety composed such works, as in the case of al-Tīfāshī, the author of the mentioned *Nuzhat al-albāb fī-mā lā yūjad fī kitāb*; he was the son of a jurisconsult and also one himself.[23] This may be surprising to the scholar unfamiliar with Arabic literature, though we must recall that *adab*, to which this work also belonged, was a prose genre that aimed to entertain the reader. As Malti-Douglas explains:

> *Adab* discourse was an intertextually rich discourse that freely mixed Qur'ānic verses with poetry, *hadīths* (the sayings and actions of the prophet), and philological and other materials to create a literary ensemble of great sophistication. The *adab* writer had to display wide mastery over the centuries-long textual tradition as he (for they were invariably male) wove his text.[24]

Erotic literature was an important part of this genre, and it had its own rules that were different from the legal standards. Same-sex practices were certainly banned by Islamic law, but this does not mean that they were not represented in the literary canon.

men and women – of uneven power" (*ibid*., p. 116). At the end a third party is called to arbitrate, Kashkash, a supernatural creature that suggests leading the two humans to be "confronted with the sight of each other's naked body. The winner, he declares, will be whoever is *not* moved to translate the perception of physical beauty into a sexual act, whoever is *not* moved, that is, to translate seeing into touching, contemplation into consummation" (*ibid.*, p. 119). At the end, and unsurprisingly, Qamar wins, as he is "*able to control himself* from copulating with the girl (he thinks of the displeasure that his illicit pleasure would cause his father) *and the girl is unable to control herself* from taking possession of the boy's thing (she thinks not of her father but only of herself and her newly found object of desire, it seems)" (*ibid.*, p. 119). Interestingly enough, this is also quite in line with coeval perception of gender roles: the woman is irrational and unable to control her instincts, while the man is rational and can control them.

20. Epps, "Comparisons, Competition, and Cross-Dressing".

21. Malti-Douglas, "Tribadism/Lesbianism", pp. 130-131.

22. On the other hand, as we will see, we do not find many hints that this prohibition was actually put into practice.

23. Malti-Douglas, "Tribadism/Lesbianism", p. 127.

24. *Ibid*., pp. 125-126.

As Thomas Bauer showed in his *Die Kultur der Ambiguität. Eine andere Geschichte des Islams* (*The Culture of Ambiguity: An Other History of Islam*),[25] in pre-modern Islamic society there was no single register of truth. On the contrary, many "truths" coexisted. As such, Islamic culture was characterised, during the entire pre-modern period, by an extreme tolerance for what Bauer called "cultural ambiguity". This "ambiguity" should not be intended simply as "Norm und Abweichung"[26] – "norm" and "deviation" from the norm – but more as a coexistence and tolerance of different value systems, all of them considered "norms" by the same group of people at the same moment. This explains why, for example, same-sex intercourse (or the drinking of wine), constituted such a fundamental theme of poetry and literature in general, even though it was strictly prohibited from a legal perspective. This could seem to be a contradiction, but clearly it was not: simply put, *adab* was one register, Islamic law another, and each of them had its own rules.

While we already know from the works of Amer, Malti-Douglas and Habib what the "literary register" said on female homoeroticism, we do not know much about what other "registers" maintained. This is what I aim to do in this chapter, namely to bring into focus three typologies of texts – lexicographies, medical treatise and legal discourses – from the 10th to the 13th centuries. While this will neither help us to "write about actual women",[27] nor make it possible for us to write a consistent social history of female homoeroticism in the Islamicate world, it will at least allow us to reconstruct a broader picture of these practices and their documentation that could serve as a basis for future research on the topic. I am trying to recreate, at least partially, how discourses around female homoeroticism were constructed in the period under analysis, and to do so I am building on the Foucauldian notion of discourse, where discourses are considered "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak".[28]

Certainly, these discourses will only allow us to form a partial picture, as it is a fact that most of the written sources we have at our disposal for this period allow us to reconstruct a vision of female homoeroticism, and sexuality in general, across only one specific layer of society (namely the well-educated urban cosmopolitan elite), and from the masculine perspective: we basically have sources that were written by male authors for a male public. Every study that we undertake with these sources is therefore bound to be a generalisation, and this becomes even more evident if we focus on a single kind of source. For this reason, and in order to get a broader picture, I will attempt to bring different genres of sources into focus and to reconstruct a picture that, though far from satisfactory, will at least be more inclusive.

25. Thomas Bauer, *Die Kultur der Ambiguität. Eine andere Geschichte des Islams*, Berlin, Verlag der Weltreligion im Insel Verlag, 2011.

26. *Ibid*., p. 29.

27. *Ibid*., p. 3.

28. Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge*, trans. by A.M. Sheridan Smith, New York, Pantheon Books, 1971, p. 49 (or. ed. *L'Archeologie du Savoir*, Paris, Gallimard, 1969).

2. *Lexicography: what does* siḥāq *mean?*

In order to historicise multivalent concepts and practices, lexicography constitutes a good starting point, as it allows us to gain a first impression of what terms were used in any target language to speak about a given phenomenon, what a particular concept meant in any specific time period and how it was linguistically constructed and understood.

According to Sahar Amer, in classical Arabic literature a number of "women couples" can be identified, such as Hind bint al-Nuʿmān, also known as al-Ḥurqah, the daughter of the last Lakhmid king of Ḥira in the 7th century, and Hind Bint al-Khuss, known as Zarqāʾ al-Yamāma and who was "reportedly the first lesbian in Arab history".[29] I would not go so far as to define Zarqāʾ al-Yamāma and Hind bint al-Nuʿmān as "lesbians": first of all, we are speaking about two semi-legendary figures, as historical research has shown that three centuries separated Zarqāʾ al-Yamāma's life from Hind bint al-Nuʿmān's.[30] Second, using this term would lead us to project a modern category of homosexuality onto the pre-modern world. For this reason, I prefer to speak of homoeroticism, which implies a more or less stable desire towards members of the same sex that, even if it overlaps with some of the modern conceptions of homosexuality, certainly cannot be equated to the category as a whole.

Research on sexuality in the pre-modern Islamic world has demonstrated that sexuality was not constructed along the homo/hetero binary, but along the active/passive one.[31] Agency and activity were attributed to men, and passivity was attributed to women. While legally speaking the only accepted form of intercourse was that between an active male and a passive female, which had to be "legalised" by a relation of *mulk*, of possession (either through marriage or concubinage), social practices did not necessarily follow these legal prescriptions closely. The active partner was always supposed to be a man, while the passive partner did not necessarily need to be a woman: it could also be a prepubescent boy or an effeminate man. These last options were completely reprehensible from a moral and religious standpoint, as they would constitute *liwāṭ* (sodomy, a serious crime in Islamic law), but they were not major issues from a social perspective, as long as the penetrated partner was not a "full" man,[32] namely, that he did not have a beard. Indeed, as Afsaneh Najmabadi has pointed out, "The growth of a

29. Amer, "Medieval Arab Lesbians", p. 218.

30. Charles Pellat, "Hind Bint al-Khuss", in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., online ed. available at http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_2880 (last access 16 January 2018).

31. See, in particular, Kecia Ali, *Sexual Ethics and Islam: Feminist Reflections on Qur'an, Hadith, and Jurisprudence*, London, Oneworld, 2006.

32. In this sense I agree with Abdallah Cheikh-Moussa, who in an article published in 1982 demonstrated how in al-Jāḥiẓ's (d. 255/868) writings on eunuchs the most convincing analytical binary we have at our disposal is not the "men/women" binary, but the "men/the other" one, where the first term of the binary is defined like so: "Est homme, celui qui est adulte, en pleine possession de la raison, des moyens de procreer et de se reproduire, et qui se plie aux normes de la Cite". For him, the second term includes eunuchs, children and women, but we could also add other categories. See Abdallah Cheikh Moussa, "Ǧāḥiẓ et les eunuques ou la confusion du même et de l'autre", *Arabica*, 29/2 (1982), pp. 184-214: 211.

full beard marked adult manhood, the adolescent male's transition from an object of desire to a desiring subject".[33] However, while it is impossible to find a single conceptual category that unifies the complex realities of homosexual identities,[34] recent studies have highlighted how, especially in the medical field, the notion that attraction to people of the same sex could be a constitutive element of certain pathologised subjects was widespread in the medieval Muslim world. When such cases concerned only those who wished to have a passive role in the homoerotic relationship, these debates moved beyond the perspective of the penetrator and sought instead to understand the physiology and psychology of the *ma'būn* (the passive partner) and the *mukhannath* (the effeminate man).[35]

These reflections remind us of the centrality of penetration in the definition of masculinity in pre-modern Islamic discourse. This relevance is also reflected in lexicographical sources, and in this sense it will not come as a surprise that the space lexicographers devoted to female same-sex practices was quite limited.

I have decided to focus on two lexica here, which philologists consider to be among the most representative and comprehensive dictionaries of the classical Arabic language. The first was compiled in the 10th century by al-Jawharī (d. between 393/1002-1003 and 400/1009-1010) and is the *Tāj al-lugha wa ṣiḥāḥ al-'arabiyya* (The Crown of the Language and What is Correct in Arabic). The second is the renowned 13th-century lexicon *Lisān al-'Arab* (The Tongue of the Arabs), compiled by Ibn Manẓūr (d. 711/1312). *Lisān al-'Arab* was completed in 1290 and is considered to be the most well-known and comprehensive dictionary of classical Arabic.

We must note here that Arabic lexicographical sources work by accumulation: therefore, they are not only useful in showing us how a specific lexicographer understood and explained a given concept, but also what previous lexicographers had said about it before he compiled his lexicon. This allows us to enlarge our perspective and form a broader picture that includes more authors than the one who compiled the work we are actually analysing. For example the *Lisān al-'Arab* is based on five earlier works; therefore, it gives us access not only to what a given concept meant for Ibn Manẓūr himself, but also what it meant for the five predecessors he included

33. Afsaneh Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches and Men without Beards: Gender and Sexual Anxities of Iranian Modernity*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2005, p. 15. As Najmabadi pointed out, it is only in the 19th century that, at least in Iran, a stable man/woman binary in relation to sexuality was established. As she put it, "The nineteenth-century distinctions of woman, amrad, amradnuma, and man meant that gender differences were not read through a template of sexuality, and that sexuality was not read through a template of gender. Specifically, gender was not the male-female binary that we now take for granted" (*ibid*., p. 237).

34. El-Rouayheb, *Before Homosexuality*, pp. 43-51; Stephen O. Murray, Will Roscoe, "Introduction", in *Islamic Homosexualities*, pp. 3-13.

35. The *ma'būn* is seen as a sick person afflicted by a disease named *ubna* (El-Rouayheb, *Before Homosexuality*, pp. 19-25, 43-51; Dror Ze'evi, *Producing Desire: Changing Sexual Discourse in the Ottoman Middle East, 1500-1900*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2006, pp. 16-47). Although some illustrious examples, among which Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) stands out, disagree with this vision (considering *ma'būn* a vicious person deserving of punishment) the majority of medieval and modern treatises treated this "degeneration" as a disorder and a disease. A treatise devoted entirely to the topic was studied by Franz Rosenthal, "Ar-Rāzī on the Hidden Illness", *Bullettin of the History of Medicine*, 52 (1978), pp. 45-60.

in his work, namely al-Azharī (d. 370/980-981), Ibn Sīda (d. 458/1066), al-Jawharī, Ibn Barrī (d. 582/1186-87) and Majd al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr (d. 606/1210).[36]

In Arabic most words are derived from a "root", a sequence of consonants. These roots usually consist of three consonants (but can also be two or four), and words are formed from the roots via the insertion of short or long vowels, the doubling of consonants, the addition of prefixes, infixes or suffixes. The most relevant root in reference to female homoeroticism in Arabic for the entire pre-modern period is the root *s-ḥ-q*: the term used most often to describe sexual intercourse between two women was *siḥāq* or *musāḥaqa*, while the word *musāḥiqa* usually referred to a woman who had sexual intercourse with other women.

Interestingly enough, despite the relevance the term *siḥāq* already had in legal discussion when the two lexica were compiled, the specific meaning of sexual intercourse between women was not extensively discussed by either al-Jawharī or Ibn Manẓūr.

For example, according to al-Jawharī the root *s-ḥ-q* meant to consume, to wear out, and it was used especially in reference to a piece of clothing that was consumed by its user;[37] he made no mention of *siḥāq* as female homoeroticism. Ibn Manẓūr stated instead that the root *s-ḥ-q* means to reduce into powder, or to rub.[38] Therefore, the term was analogous to the Greek verb τρίβω, from which the word tribade also derives. This was not mentioned by Ibn Manẓūr, who, however, pointed out that according to the former lexicographer al-Azharī, "*musāḥaqa al-nisā'*" (the s*iḥāq* of women) was a neologism, but he offered no further details.[39]

This is certainly a telling absence. Indeed, when these two dictionaries were compiled, *siḥāq* was certainly already an established category, at least in the legal sphere. The same two lexica explicitly mention and discuss the equivalent term that was used to refer to sexual intercourse between men, namely *liwāṭ*,[40] under the root *l-w-ṭ*. I am inclined to believe that this striking absence should be understood as a confirmation of the androcentricity of the sources under examination, which were, once again, written by men who had a male public in mind that mainly understood sexuality in terms of penetration. This intellectual paradigm is confirmed by the other normative discourses we will examine.

3. *Medical discourse*

When looking at medical discourses, we must underline that same-sex intercourse was not necessarily pathologised: as long as the active/passive normative binary

36. See Ramzi Baalbaki, "Ibn Manẓūr", in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 3rd ed., available at http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_30632 (last access 16 January 2018).

37. Abū Naṣr Ismā'īl b. Ḥamād al-Jawharī, *Al-ṣiḥāḥ. Tāj al-luġa wa ṣiḥāḥ al-'arabiyya,* ed. by Muḥammad Muḥammad Tāmir, Anas Muḥammad Shāmī and Zakariyyā Jābir Aḥmad, Cairo, Dār al-Ḥadīth, 2009, p. 522.

38. Muḥammad b. Mukarram b. ʿAlī b. Aḥmad b. Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, 15 vols, vol. 10, Beirut, Dār al-Ṣādir, no date, p. 152.

39. *Ibid*., p. 153.

40. Serena Tolino, *Omosessualità e atti omosessuali*, p. 22.

was respected, with a man being the active and penetrating partner and a "non-man" (a young beardless boy, a eunuch, an effeminate man or a woman) being the passive and penetrated partner, medical authorities did not feel the need to interfere.

As Franz Rosenthal[41] and Hans-Peter Pökel have shown,[42] the active anal penetration of men (*liwāṭ*) was not considered a pathology, while the desire that an adult man felt when he wished to be penetrated, *ubna*, was an illness to be treated. For example Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (d. 313/925 or 323/935), an important Persian physician, alchemist and philosopher, wrote a treatise devoted to *ubna*, which he defined as the "hidden illness". In his view, it was caused by a physical imperfection that derived from an incomplete process of "masculinisation" of the sexual organs and by the feminisation of the person affected, due to the prevalence of the female sperm during conception.[43]

Medical discussions on *siḥāq* are very rare in the sources, but not inexistent. Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037), also known as Avicenna, discussed *siḥāq* very briefly in his monumental work *al-Qānūn*, which was translated into the Latin as *Liber canonis medicinae* and for centuries set the medical standards in both the Islamicate world and in Europe.

The paragraph on *siḥāq* is, surprisingly, located in the chapter that discusses kidney stones. In this section, Ibn Sīnā discussed the sexual organs, sexual intercourse and then wrote a small paragraph on why doctors should not feel ashamed to discuss pleasure or to share their experiences on "how to make the vagina smaller and the penis larger".[44]

The reason why Ibn Sīnā spoke about *siḥāq* was that he considered female pleasure fundamental for the emission of female semen, which he saw as necessary for reproduction, as he was a supporter of the Galenic theory of the two semen. Indeed, it would be impossible to understand the pre-modern Islamic vision of the body, of illness and healing without taking into account the impact that Greek medicine had on Islamic medicine. Starting from the 3rd/9th century, Greek sources were translated into Arabic and were easily accessible by the cultural elite, naturally including Ibn Sīnā.[45] Three Greek authorities had a particular impact on Muslim authors: Hippocrates (460-370 BCE) and Galen (129-201 CE) for the field of medicine, and Aristotle (384-322 BCE) for philosophy.[46]

41. Rosenthal, "Ar-Rāzī on the Hidden Illness".

42. Hans-Peter Pökel, "Der sexualpathologische Diskurs über den penetrierten Mann in der arabisch-islamischen Medizin des 10. und 11. Jahrhunderts", in *Liebe, Sexualität, Partnerschaft. Paradigmen im Wandel. Beiträge zur orientalistischen Gender-Forschung*, ed. by Roswitha Badry, Maria Rohrer and Karin Steiner, Freiburg, Fördergemeinschaft wissenschaftlicher Publikationen von Frauen, 2009, pp. 65-79.

43. Rosenthal, "Ar-Rāzī on the Hidden Illness", pp. 54-55.

44. Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAbd Allāh Ibn Sīnā, *al-Qānūn fi'l-Ṭibb*, ed. by Muḥammad Amīn al-Ḍannāwī, Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1999, vol. 2, p. 746.

45. On the translation of Greek works into Arabic, see Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early 'Abbasid Society (2nd-4th/5th-10th C)*, London, Routledge, 1998.

46. On the relevance that Greek medicine had in the Islamic word in regards to theories of conception, see Ursula Weisser, *Zeugung, Vererbung und Pränatale Entwicklung in der Medizin des arabisch-islamischen Mittelalters*, Erlangen, Verlagsbuchhandlung Hannelore Lüling, 1983,

We know that Ibn Sīnā was particularly influenced by Galen, whom he considered the supreme authority in medicine, and by Aristotle, in his view the highest authority in philosophy. For this reason, in his discussion on conception he sought to reconcile the Galenic theory of the two semen with the Aristotelic theory of form and matter. He did so by stating that female semen was thin in comparison to male semen due to the unfinished nature of the cooking process, which was a consequence of the lack of heat in the female body. Still, he believed that female pleasure was fundamental for the purpose of human reproduction: he was convinced that without female orgasm, female sperm could not be emitted and reproduction would be impossible.

Thus, in the paragraph on "how to make the vagina smaller and the penis larger", he also mentions that "a small penis is often the reason why a woman does not experience pleasure". This could cause the woman "to show aversion to her husband and to look for something else". Similarly, if the vagina is not "small enough, then the husband will not satisfy her and she will not satisfy him, and he will look for a surrogate". And then he comes to the greatest matter of interest for our purposes: if instead it is the man that is unable to satisfy the woman's desire, "this will cause *musāḥaqa* [tribadism] and women will meet among themselves because of their desire".[47]

While it cannot be denied that female pleasure is only mentioned because it was believed to be connected to the ejaculation of female semen and therefore to reproduction, it is also true that it is openly discussed and thematised and that women are given some agency: they can still "turn" to homoeroticism if the penis does not satisfy them. This does not make the paragraph any less phallocentric, however: for Ibn Sīnā *musāḥaqa* clearly only came to mind as a "second option" and was only to be practiced when the woman was not satisfied by her husband. This seems to confirm Malti-Douglas' point: homoeroticism is a "passing phase that will end when the penis arrives on the scene"[48] – and does its job, we might add.

4. *Female homoeroticism in classical Islamic law*

When we examine how Muslim jurists addressed *siḥāq*, it is evident that they followed a common pattern in which penetration was the most important element in their decision on how sexual transgression was to be punished. Indeed, as Sara Omar pointed out, three factors played a role in determining the penalties for same-sex intercourse in classical Islamic law:[49]

and Sherry Sayed Gadelrab, "Discourses on Sex Differences in Medieval Scholarly Islamic Thought", in Sherry Sayed Gadelrab, *Medicine and Morality in Egypt: Gender and Sexuality in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*, London, I. B. Tauris, 2016, pp. 5-44, also published in the *Journal of the History of Medicine*, 66/1 (2011), pp. 40-81.

47. Ibn Sīnā, *al-Qānūn fi'l-Ṭibb*, vol. 2, p. 746.

48. Malti-Douglas, "Tribadism/Lesbianism", pp. 130-131.

49. With classical Islamic law I refer to the period from the 3rd/9th century to the 7th/13th century. I focus here on works of jurisprudence, *fiqh*.

> (1) the punishment for *zinā* (illicit sex between a man and a woman, i.e. adultery and fornication), which served as a paradigm for punishing *liwāṭ* and *siḥāq*; (2) the perception of sexual intercourse as an exclusively male act of phallic penetration; and (3) an individual's legal status within the social hierarchy as reflected in jurisprudential discussions of illicit sexual intercourse (*zinā*).[50]

In Islamic law, *zinā* constituted one of the so-called *ḥudūd* (literally the limits prescribed by God), namely one of the crimes mentioned in the Qur'an, whose punishment therefore could not be established at the discretion of the judge but was fixed. These included *zinā*, theft (*sariqa*), highway robbery (*qaṭ' al-ṭarīq*), a false accusation of *zinā* (*qadhf*) and drinking alcohol (*shurb al-khamr*).[51]

Legally speaking, *zinā* was defined as the penetration of a sexual organ without what in Arabic is called *mulk*, literally "possession". In Islamic law lawful sexual intercourse could only exist between two married person or between a man and his concubine. While all jurists agreed that unlawful vaginal penetration constituted *zinā*, they debated whether anal intercourse (*liwāṭ*) would also be categorised as such. In Islamic law there was a clear punishment for *zinā*, which was determined by the status of the two culprits, especially in relation to the so-called *iḥṣān*: those who were *muḥṣan* were to be punished with death by stoning, and the others with one hundred lashes. The concept of *iḥṣān* is a debated one, but it fundamentally referred to a person who had already experienced puberty, was mentally sane, free and who had already consummated a valid marriage. Some jurists also held that the person should be a Muslim to be considered *muḥṣan*, and that both partners should fulfill all of these requirements to be *muḥṣan*.

In any case, the central question was whether the concept of *zinā* also included *liwāṭ* or not, and the different Sunnī juridical schools (and even different jurists within the same school) often reached different conclusions. For example, the Ḥanafis[52] believed that *liwāṭ* did not constitute a form of *zinā* and, therefore, that a *ḥadd* punishment was not applicable.[53] This does not mean that the Ḥanafis did not impose a punishment: it simply was not the same as for *zinā*, so the judge was required to enforce a discretionary punishment (*ta'zīr*). This was also the position

50. Sara Omar, "From Semantics to Normative Law", p. 225.

51. These are the crimes considered as belonging to the category of "*ḥudūd*" by all jurists. There are other crimes that are considered as such by some jurists, like apostasy, but there is no unanimity on them. For more details, see Wael B. Hallaq, *Sharī'a: Theory, Practice, Transformation*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 308-323.

52. One of the four Sunni schools of jurisprudence (*madhhab*), named after Abū Ḥanīfa al-Nu'mān ibn Thābit (d. 150/767).

53. See for example Al-Sarakhsī (d.c. 483/1090), *Kitāb al-Mabsūṭ*, Beirut, Dār al-Ma'rifa, 1406 A.H. [1985], 31 vols, vol. 9, pp. 78-79; Al-Kāsānī (d. 587/1189), *Kitāb Badā'i' al-Ṣanā'i' fī Tartīb al-sharā'i'*, Beirut, Dār al-Kitāb al-'arabī, 1986, 7 vols, vol. 7, p. 34; Al-Marghīnānī (d. 593/1197), *Hidāyat al-Muhtadī: Sharḥ Bidāyat al-Mubtadī*, with Ibn al-Humām (d. 861/1457), *Fatḥ al-Qadīr* and al-Ḥaṣkafī (d. 1088/1679), *al-Durr al-muntaqā fī sharḥ al-multaqā*, Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-'ilmiyya [s. d.], 10 vols, vol. 5, pp. 251-252. For more details, see also Tolino, "Homosexual Acts in Islamic Law: Siḥāq and Liwāṭ in the Legal Debate", esp. pp. 197-198, and Omar, "From Semantics to Normative Law".

taken by Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064), founder of the (short-lived) Ẓāhiri school.[54] Mālikis[55] believed that those who committed *liwāṭ* were to be killed by stoning in all cases, whether they were *muḥṣan* or not. The Shafi'is held two positions on the topic: for them, *zinā* was the "penetration of a sexual organ by another sexual organ, and also includes *liwāṭ*".[56] While some scholars believed that the *ḥadd* was to be be applied for *zinā*, others held instead that those who practiced *liwāṭ* were to be killed in all cases, whether *muḥṣan* or not. They also held different opinions on how the accused was to be executed. According to some scholars he was to be decapitated, while others believed he should be stoned. The Ḥanbalis followed the stance of their eponym, Ibn Ḥanbal, who had two opinions on the matter: either the application of the same *ḥadd* as that for *zinā*, or the execution of the culprit.[57]

This debate could lead to a naïve assumption: that schools which did not apply the same *ḥadd* for *zinā* were somehow more "tolerant" towards homoeroticism than schools that did apply the *ḥadd*. However, there is an important element that we must mention. According to what the Muslims jurists held unanimously, in order to enact the *ḥadd* for *zinā* at least four trustworthy men were required to testify that they had seen the unlawful sexual intercourse take place (and their testimonies were expected to be identical), or the culprit was to confess four times to having committed such an act. If there were not four witnesses, or if one withdrew, the accusation was to be treated as *qadhf* (slander), a false accusation of *zinā*, that would be punishable with eighty lashes. This made the application of such a *ḥadd* virtually impossible and could indicate that such a punishment was established to deter people from engaging in such acts rather than for actual implementation. Indeed, there is very little evidence that these forms of punishment were enacted, both in the court records and in chronicles. On the other hand, those scholars that did not consider *liwāṭ* as a *ḥadd* punishment did not believe it necessary to have four witnesses, but only two: therefore, although the penalty was less severe, its applicability was more plausible.

When we come to *siḥāq*, the discussion was much less nuanced; all jurists from the Sunnī schools of law reached the same conclusion: there was no *ḥadd* punishment because there was no penetration,[58] and a discretional punishment was to be applied.

54. See Tolino, "Homosexual Acts in Islamic Law", pp. 203-204, and Adang, "Ibn Ḥazm on Homosexuality".

55. One of the four Sunni schools of jurisprudence (*madhhab*), named after Mālik ibn Anas (d. 179/796).

56. See for example Al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), *al-Wajīz fī fiqh al-Imām al-Shāfiʿī*, Beirut, Dār al-Arqam b. abī Arqam, 1997, 3 vols, vol. 2, p. 167.

57. See, for example, Ibn Qudāma (d. 620/1223), *al-Mughnī*, Riyadh, Dār 'ālam al-Kutub, 1999, 15 vols, vol. 12, p. 348.

58. For the Mālikis, see, for example, Mālik b. Anas, *Al-Muwaṭṭāʾ bi-Riwāyātihī al-thamāniya bi-Ziyādātihā wa-Zawāʾidihā wa-ikhtilāf alfāẓihā*, Giza, Maktabat al-Furqān, 2003, 5 vols, vol. 4, p. 133; Saḥnūn (d. 240/855), *al-Mudawwana al-Kubrā*, Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-'ilmiyya, 1994, 4 vols, vol. 4, pp. 485-486; Ibn Abī Zayd (386/996), *al-Risāla*, Beirut, al-Maktaba al-thaqāfiyya, no date, pp. 145-146; Ibn 'Abd Al-Barr (d. 463/1070), *al-Kāfī fī Fiqh Ahl al-Madīna al-Mālikī*, Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-'ilmiyya, 1992, p. 574. For the Shāfi'is, see al-Fayrūzābādī

This is easily explained: generally speaking, in Islamic law the act of penetration played a central role in the definition of sexual intercourse. For example, a marriage that was not consummated was not even considered valid. Therefore, it is obvious that penetration also played a fundamental role in the definition of *zinā.* The absence of penetration in the case of *siḥāq* was the reason why jurists did not even consider it to be in the same category as *zinā* and *liwāṭ*: it was certainly more complicated to construct an analogy between the two acts. While in both *zinā* and *liwāṭ* there was the penetration by an active partner (man) of a passive partner (a non-man), in the case of *siḥāq* things were different: no penetration was involved, or this was at least what the jurists assumed. Once again, jurists were men who probably did not have any practical knowledge of homoerotic practices between women and did not consider the penetration of a woman by another woman a thinkable act.

5. *Conclusions*

This chapter has analysed different normative discourses on female homoeroticism. Because previous publications, especially those of Habib, Amer and Malti-Douglas, have shown how the literary canon in pre-modern Islamicate societies depicted female homoeroticism, this chapter aimed to reconstruct what other normative sources said on the topic, focusing on lexicographical, medical and legal texts.

For the lexicographical sources, we have seen that the most important root in Arabic to refer to female homoeroticism was *s-ḥ-q*, to rub or to reduce into powder, from which the term *siḥāq* derived. We have also seen that while the lexicographer al-Jawharī did not specifically mention female homoeroticism, the lexicographer Ibn ʻArabī did, though only *en passant*, although the term was well attested in coeval legal texts. In terms of the medical sources, it is clear that more research is needed. So far, I have been able to locate only one reference to female homoeroticism in the *Qānūn* of Ibn Sīnā, where he adhered to Galen's theory of the two semen and referred to the importance of female pleasure in the reproductive process. At the same time, Ibn Sīnā also stated that if a man does not satisfy his wife, then she will seek to satisfy her desires by turning to *musāḥaqa* (tribadism). Finally, the jurists certainly did not devote the same space to *siḥāq* as they did to *liwāṭ*: they all agreed that the judge was to apply a discretionary punishment, but did not say much more. They did not draw an analogy between the two homoerotic acts of *siḥāq* and *liwāṭ*, but rather drew one between *zinā* and *liwāṭ*. This link was based on the act of penetration without *mulk*, the right of possession. The fact that in the first case the penis penetrates a vagina, and in the second an anus, was secondary.

(d. 476/1083), *al-Muhadhdhib fī fiqh al-Imām al-Shāfiʻī*, Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-ʻilmiyya, 1995, 3 vols, vol. 3, p. 339-340; Al-Ghazālī, *al-Wajīz*, pp. 167-168; Al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277), *Minhāj al-Ṭālibīn*, Beirut, Dār al-Minhāj, 2005, p. 503. For the Ḥanbalis, see, for example, Ibn Qudāma (d. 620/1223), 390-391. See also Tolino, "Homosexual Acts in Islamic Law", pp. 198-199, and Omar, "From Semantics to Normative Law".

Physicians, lexicographers and jurists all had their different aims and reasons when they wrote, and they did not seek to reach the same audience. Moreover, to return to Thomas Bauer's idea that many "norms" coexisted in pre-modern Islamicate cultures, it is certainly worth underlining that Muslims jurists did not all take the same approach to female homoeroticism that, for example, Ibn Sīnā did when he wrote his *Qānūn*, or as that held by the authors of *adab* analysed by Malti-Douglas, Habib and Amer.

Nevertheless, the public to whom all of these authors appealed was in some aspects one and the same: they all had an elite adult male audience in mind, and the discourses they helped shape shared certain characteristics and assumptions in regard to sexuality. For instance, they shared the presumption that women needed to fulfil their sexual desires, as implied by the literary sources Malti-Douglas discussed, but also by Ibn Sīnā: if not, they would "turn" to *siḥāq*, a notion that signals a general mistrust of women. This view also implies that if the penis came back onto the scene, as Malti-Douglas underlined in reference to literary sources (or satisfies the woman, as Ibn Sīnā discussed), then there would be no need for *siḥāq*.

Another commonality was the centrality of penetration, which became particularly clear in the legal discourse: if *siḥāq* was subject to a less serious punishment than *liwāṭ* and *zinā*, this certainly was not because jurists were more "tolerant" towards female homoeroticism, but because they moved about in an androcentric and phallocentric society in which female sexuality was simply not taken into consideration unless penetration was involved. Another shared aspect was the paucity of attention devoted to *siḥāq* in comparison to *liwāṭ*: this was a common thread in literary, lexicographical, medical and legal sources and seems to confirm what Jacqueline Murray characterised as the "double invisibility" of female homoeroticism in pre-modern texts. It also shows that, in this regard at least, Christian and Muslim sources could find common ground.

Selim S. Kuru

Generic Desires: Homoerotic Love in Ottoman Turkish Poetry

1. *Introduction*

At the end of the 15th century, male homoerotic desire found expression in the evolving genres of rhymed lyric poetry (*gazel*) and verse narrative romances that were popular in the courtly society of the Ottoman Empire. Since homoerotic desire was censored in other genres, a distinct group of court poets cultivated a detailed discourse on homoeroticism that they composed in a blossoming form of the Anatolian Turkish language – later called Ottoman Turkish – through which they expressed their desire. Until the mid-19th century, this literature centred around the figure of the beloved, understood as a beautiful young boy.

This homoerotic discourse of desire harkened back to a rich reservoir of themes, styles and genres. Although it matured in distinct Islamic cultural environments, it developed one particular central theme that was shared across the rich Ottoman literary tradition. Thousands of lyric poems and many romances recounted the desires of an older male lover for his young male beloved, and these were often penned by poets who held prominent positions at court. Indeed, learned men, who were educated in state-sponsored higher education institutions or trained in palace schools, were responsible for almost all of the literature produced on the theme of boy-love.

Many of these lyric and romantic compositions were located within prose texts, particularly biographies and court histories, and they thus reflected a tension within the bureaucratic and learned groups that produced them. Notably, this trend also marked the birth of a specific authorial identity that drew life from the intense, torturous and impossible desire for self-annihilation it performed. When the ability to compose lyric poems with overtly homoerotic themes turned into a competitive game, many elite men could not resist engaging in it, regardless of their own sexual preferences. As a result, experiments within literary depictions of homoeroticism transformed the production of lyric poetry in the late 15th century, and this in return expanded the range by which a poet could express his love. On the other hand, it is important to note that the longer verse narratives of homoerotic love composed in the Persian romantic tradition actually promoted self-discipline, warning readers against the consequences of homoerotic sexual yearning and favouring asexual romance instead. Curiously, the relationship

between the two – narrative and lyric homoerotic literature – was complementary. The lyric tradition contrasted the miserable state of the lover and the otherworldly perfection of the beloved as a necessary precondition for the lover's annihilation. At the same time, the verse narratives treated homoerotic desire as a coming-of-age experience, wherein the beloved became the metaphorical bridge to achieving the true love of God. Therefore, the emotive dimension of homoeroticism was transformed into a rhetorical game that pushed the uses of language and topical imagery to their limits, and it survived safely as it was transmitted from practice to language and thus preserved under the cover of, and thanks to, the two distinct genres of lyric poetry and verse narrative romances.

In a previous survey article, I explored the forms and themes of the emerging literary culture in Anatolia between 1450-1600, and here I would like to focus on the texts and literary frameworks of homoerotic practice.[1] This was a very specific topic and one reformulated in Rûm within a wide-ranging Anatolian Turkish literary tradition composed in the central Ottoman Empire under the reign of the sultans. I will begin from the moment when the rule-bound discourse of homoerotic love came to an end as a literary game. Then I return to consider its origins in the Anatolian Turkish language, in order to investigate the relationship between this discourse and expressions of profane sexual acts, as well as the responses they generated subsequently. In this study, I will examine only a few texts as representatives of homoerotic discourse, focusing on two samples of lyric poetry, one verse romance and a prosometric text about illicit sexual acts. While tracing the literary movement that underscored the tensions embodied in overtly homoerotic poetry, I will also make some initial observations about the genesis and demise of the positions its authors took in their self-reflective commentaries. Fundamentally, I am arguing that study of the transformation of authorial positioning in pre-modern Ottoman literary culture will benefit from further research on the continuities and ruptures in expressions of homoerotic love.[2]

2. *Time and desires*

In his private reports to the Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamid II (1842-1918), the 19th-century Ottoman statesman Ahmed Cevdet Paşa (1822-1895) expressed his opinion on the visible change in the sexual tastes of the civil servants:

> The number of "lovers of women" [*zen-dost*] has increased and that of boy-beloveds [*mahbub*] has decreased, as if the people of Lot [i.e. sodomites] sank underground. Love for, and relationships with, young men used to be common and customary in Istanbul

1. Selim S. Kuru, "The Literature of Rum: The Making of a Literary Tradition (1450-1600)", in *Cambridge History of Turkey*, ed. by Suraiya N. Faroqhi and Kate Fleet, 4 vols, vol. 2, Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press, 2013, pp. 548-592.

2. As this article reflects on my previous research, it is informed by two large questions: first, the reasons behind the production of so many lyric poems about homoerotic love by Ottoman bureaucrats and learned men, i.e. the Ottoman elite; and second, the social, historical and material mechanisms that lay behind this production.

> since the early days, but it has changed, focusing [now] on girls, as is the natural state. Kagithane promenades, which have been customary since the time of Ahmed III, have become increasingly popular. Either there or in Bayezid Square, love games through sign language with [women in] carriages have become very common. Those who were famous for their sexual relationships with boys [*gulâmpârelik*] among well-respected people, the likes of Kamil and Ali Pashas, and their supporters have disappeared; as a matter of fact, Ali Pasha was trying to hide his relations with boys in an attempt to ward off criticism from Westerners.[3]

Cevdet argued that Western criticism was a major reason why high-level bureaucrats began conducting their homoerotic relationships in secret. Yet his commentary seems to be based more on his individual observations of the sexual mores of civil service elites in the Ottoman Empire and his personal relationships with Ali Pasha (1815-1871) and Kamil Pashi (1808-1876), than on any real change in people's taste in their objects of desire. Other scholars have argued that his commentary might reflect an emergent morality among the modernising intellectuals of the empire on the topic of same-sex relations.[4] However, this shift did not necessarily reflect the social reality of homoerotic relationships, but only the emergence of a new discourse informed by innovative literary genres – i.e. the novel and modern poetry, which transformed understandings of the authorial self.[5] My previous work on literary genres which incorporated pre-modern verse focused on the development of a specific sexual discourse that both shaped and was shaped by expressions of the homoerotic experience. In this article, I revisit this body of work to show the common mechanisms behind the construction of these genres, which informed the discourse that defined its purveyors' desires. I

3. Ahmed Cevdet, *Ma'rûzât*, ed. by Yusuf Halaçoğlu, Istanbul, Çağrı Yayınları, 1980, p. 9. Unless otherwise indicated, the translations are my own.

4. Dror Ze'evi, in a ground-breaking study on Ottoman Turkish discourses on sexuality, cites the same passage as reflective of established sexual discourses: *Producing Desire: Changing Sexual Discourse in the Ottoman Middle East, 1500-1900*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2006, p. 164. For a different perspective, with more attention to the context of this quotation, see Serkan Delice, "'Zen-dostlar çoğalıp mahbûblar azaldı'. Osmanlı'da toplumsal cinsiyet ve tarihyazımı", in *Cinsellik muamması. Türkiye'de Queer kültür ve muhalefet*, ed. by Cüneyt Çakırlar and Serkan Delice, Istanbul, Metis Yayınları, 2012, pp. 329-363: 355-360.

5. For a discussion on how the erasure of homoerotic relationships determined the authorial self in late-19th-century Ottoman Turkish literature, see Selim S. Kuru, "Yaşanan, söylenen ve yazılan. Erkekler arası tutkusal ilişkiler", *Cogito*, 65-66 (Spring 2011), pp. 263-277. I argue that 19th-century literature rejected homoerotic themes as Islamicate genres were falling out of fashion; such themes were sequestered into biographies and memoirs and employed to rebuke and disgrace rival authors and intellectuals, if they were not presented as scandal or mere curiosity. For a brilliant account of "the birth of the modern author in Turkey", see Zeynep Seviner, "Blue Dreams, Black Disillusions: Literary Market and Modern Authorship in the Late Ottoman Empire", unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Washington, 2015. Here, Seviner – through an analysis of an influential novel *Ma'i ve siyah* (Blue and Black) by Halid Ziya Uşaklıgil (1886-1945), a book about the failure of an aspiring poet – identifies the making of a modern Ottoman authorial identity. It is telling that *Ma'i ve siyah*, arguably one of the first major Ottoman Turkish novels, develops around the topic of poetry.

aim to do so by focusing on the emergence of a new typology of authorial identity, one that emerged in relation to a distinct form of self-discipline.

Ahmed Cevdet Pasha's commentary can be considered indicative of the suppression of homoeroticism, a prevalent theme within the budding modern Turkish literature and one that continued into the 1950s. Interestingly, it also echoed a remark made several centuries earlier. In the 1560s one learned scholar had already noted an observable change in the sexual tastes of elite men in the Ottoman Empire. In an entry in his biographical dictionary of poets, *Meşâirü'ş-şu'arâ* (comp. 1568), Âşık Çelebi (d. 1572) related that a certain famous poet, professor and judge, İshak Çelebi (d. 1537), "used to go to Tahtakale on his horse and eat the pastry [*katayıfın yirdi*] of a beautiful boy who was known as 'Bekir, the Sherbet maker'. Such behaviour had once been interpreted as an aspect of graceful character. But nowadays it attracts rebuke and slander".[6]

Without giving any particular reason for his comments, Âşık Çelebi clearly stated that, about two generations before him, "eating the pastry" of a boy was part of having a "graceful character" – which might have implied some sort of eloquent self-fashioning – but this was no longer the case in his own time, only two or three decades later. Thus, Âşık Çelebi was either stigmatising a certain homoerotic act through his own reproof or expressing nostalgia for a vanished expression of eloquent conduct.

It is tempting to take such comments literally, especially considering the many conflicting arguments concerning homoerotic relationships made across Anatolian Turkish texts over the centuries.[7] For example, a generation after Âşık Çelebi, another famous 16th-century intellectual, Mustafa Âlî (1541-1600), expressed a different opinion: "Nowadays there are more dishonourable men who prefer beardless, smooth-cheeked, handsome and sweet-tempered servant boys than there are men who prefer pretty and charming women".[8] So, while Aşık Çelebi related homoerotic playfulness to eloquence, Âlî described it as a dishonourable shift in the interests of elite men who favoured boys over women for their sexual entertainments.

6. Âşık Çelebi, *Meşa'irü'ş-şu'ara*, ed. by Filiz Kılıç, 3 vols, vol. 1, Istanbul, Pera Müzesi yayınları, 2010, p. 331.

7. For a selection of erotic texts that involve homosexual relations, see Murat Bardakçı, *Osmanlıda seks. Sarayda gece dersleri*, Istanbul, Gür yayınları, 1992. Also see Selim S. Kuru, "Sex in the Text: Deli Birader's dâfi'ü'l-gumûm ve râfi'ü'l-humûm and the Ottoman Literary Canon", *Middle Eastern Literatures*, 10/2 (2007), pp. 157-174, and Irvin Cemil Shick, "Representation of Gender and Sexuality in Ottoman and Turkish Erotic Literature", *Turkish Studies Association Journal*, 28/1-2 (2004), pp. 81-103.

8. In Mustafa Âlî, *The Ottoman Gentleman of the Sixteenth Century: Mustafa Âli's* Mevâ'idü'n-nefâ'is fi kavâ'idi'l-mecâlis, *Tables of Delicacies Concerning the Rules of Social Gatherings*, ed. and trans. by Douglas S. Brookes, Cambridge (MA), Harvard University Press, 2003, p. 28. In the section of this advice book on the qualities of servant boys, Mustafa Âlî explains the shift of interest towards boys through the growing seclusion of women from public space. For a study on Ottoman law and the gradual seclusion of women, see Leslie Peirce, "Domesticating Sexuality: Harem Culture in Ottoman Imperial Law", in *Harem Histories: Envisioning Places and Living Spaces*, ed. by Marilyn Booth, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2010, pp. 104-134.

A couple of centuries later, our Ahmed Cevdet identified a different change in the sexual tastes of men. In terms similar to those used by Âlî, he reported in secret to the sultan on how men's sexual preferences had judiciously changed, but from boys to women.[9] These observations and condemnations contrasted with the lyric poems of pre-modern Ottoman poets, and of those of Âşık Çelebi and Mustafa Âlî, who openly expressed love for young boys, at times citing their boy-beloveds by name. These examples reveal that beyond the lived realities of same-sex relationships, whether pre-modern or modern, authors followed existing discursive trajectories as they articulated the objects of desire among men, and these were discourses that became well-established as standard practice within a literature of longing.

There are many other examples from the mid-15th to the early 20th century that show the pervasive significance of male same-sex erotic interaction in pre-modern and modern discourses. These examples clearly point to a sharp distinction between homosexuality and homoeroticism, both in terms of literary expression and lived social experience. The recent ground-breaking work on the topic of male same-sex relationships in the Ottoman Empire proves beyond doubt that homoerotic writings were quite visible and pervasive.[10] Yet, while a distinct form of boy-love embodied by the term *mahbub-perestî*,[11] literally "worship of the boy-beloved", was one of the basic themes of Ottoman Turkish love literature, homosexual acts were still a

9. For a detailed analysis of the role of homoeroticism in Âlî's work, see Delice, "Zendostlar", pp. 339-354. In this article, Delice critically compares Âlî's and Ahmet Cevdet's commentaries on changing sexual norms with respect to Ottoman historiography.

10. In addition to Ze'evi's work, see Walter G. Andrews, Mehmet Kalpaklı, *Age of Beloveds: Love and the Beloved in the Early-Modern Ottoman and European Culture and Society*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2005. Andrews and Kalpaklı see the period from 1450 to 1750 as important in the development of homoeroticism in Anatolian Turkish literature and compare sexual mores narrated in literary and historical texts in Anatolian Turkish with those in European languages. For a general survey of scholarly work on gender and sexuality in the Ottoman Empire, see Leslie Peirce, "Writing Histories of Sexuality in the Middle East", *American Historical Review*, 114/5 (2009), pp. 1325-1339.

11. Even though a detailed study of the vocabulary that concerns objects of love in the Anatolian Turkish language has not been completed, there seems to be a set of binaries in literary discourses on love that contrasts male and female persons: while *mahbub-perest* meant "a beautiful boy-lover", or more literally "a boy-beloved worshipper", signifying a learned man who was socially acceptable by at least some groups, the much less employed term *zendost* meant "woman-lover", a man who had interest in women. These terms did not necessarily reflect a carnal desire, but rather an eloquent form of desire among litterateurs and mystics. This binary system was further described by opposites of these terms, namely *gulâm-pâre*, a man who has sexual interest in boys, and *zen-pâre* a man who sleeps around with women. While *mahbub-perest* and to some degree *zen-dost* were tolerated among the learned elite as a part of eloquence, *gulâm-pâre* and *zen-pâre* were used as stigmatising adjectives for sexually predatory men. In today's Turkish, *mahbûb-perest* and *zen-dost* have fallen out of usage while *gulâm-pâre* and *zen-pâre* survive in the forms *kulampara*, pedophile, and *zampara*, adulterer. For a historian's take on gendered terminology in Anatolian Turkish, see Leslie Peirce, "Seniority, Sexuality, and Social Order: The Vocabulary of Gender in Early Modern Ottoman Anatolia", in *Women in the Ottoman Empire: Middle Eastern Women in the Early Modern Era*, ed. by Madeleine Zilfi, Leiden, Brill, 1997, pp. 169-196.

controversial topic in Ottoman Anatolia during this period, even if they were not entirely rejected.[12] There was a contrast between the parameters of the law and the themes of literary works. While the former strictly prohibited homosexual activities, the latter formulated an array of discourses that openly depicted and discussed homosexual practices and homoerotic desire. This widely-recognised distinction points to the importance of understanding the phenomenon as a genre-dependent, variegated expression of sexual practices and desires that was variably organised across literary, legal, bureaucratic, historical and moral writings.

Until recently, myopic modern interpretations condemned and thus concealed homoerotic interactions in pre-modern societies. These interactions were only interpreted through the prism of emerging moralistic norms, and they painted ahistorical, generalised portraits of the Ottoman realities. This vision obscured important distinctions between different practices of, and various debates on, male same-sex relationships, although these disputes continue in our present day. Recent scholarship has uncovered a wealth of material to counter both the former denial of the existence of homoerotic expression in Ottoman literature and the claim made in modern nationalist scholarship that such depictions were mere examples of perversity. Nonetheless, there has not yet been any significant work on the genres and language that established this powerful discourse around homoerotic desire.[13]

In the 15th century, and especially after the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453, the reformation of educational, military and courtly institutions gave rise to new social groups and a more stable urban lifestyle. Accordingly, new discourses emerged around these transformations, as did different authorial positions. Among the new themes that emerged, there was an unprecedented and conspicuous literary interest in homoeroticism. Lyric poems (*gazel*) – which borrowed strongly from a Persianate tradition that had already formulated a language to express one's love for an idealised beloved – began to incorporate the names of young boys. In some cases, these verse genres included catalogues that described the beautiful boys one could see in various urban marketplaces, mentioning them by name. This was an innovation that took the elite literary audience by storm. Verse

12. For a brilliant analysis of a lengthy early 16th-century biographical story focusing on various features of homoerotic relationships, see Walter Andrews, "Sexual Intertext of Ottoman Literature: The Story of Me'âlî, the Magistrate of Mihalic", *Edebiyat*, NS3 (1989), pp. 31-56: 46 ff. See also, Andrews, Kalpakli, *Age of Beloveds*, pp. 217-237. For a more detailed discussion of the topic in similar lines to Andrews' article in the context of Arabic literature, see Khaled El-Rouayheb, *Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic World, 1500-1800*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2005. These works present a similar approach to homoerotic relations that were proposed in scholarship on ancient Greek homoeroticism and homosexuality that defined these relations with respect to permissible interaction among men of particular classes and ages.

13. Works with homoerotic themes were either evaluated as proof of the perversity of the Ottoman dynasty and imperial ideology by early 20th-century nationalist scholarship or altogether rejected, as a recent article and responses to it reflect. For references to the former, see "Sex in the Text", pp. 158 ff, and for the article with the outrageous argument that all homoerotic texts, especially biographical dictionaries of poets, were fabrications by western Orientalists, see Menderes Coşkun, "Latifi'de Oryantalizmin parmak izleri, Latifi'nin Türk ve İslam büyüklerini anekdotlar vasıtasıyla değersizleştirme gayreti", *SDÜ FEF Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 23 (2011), pp. 145-169.

narratives then began to take an autobiographical turn and actually expressed the poet's experience of pursuing his love for a boy. The result was an explosion of lyric sensibility that became central to works composed by a number of Ottoman bureaucrats and learned men, and this was a transformation that occurred within just 50 years of the reorganisation of the state and its educational institutions.

This lyric sensibility benefitted from a fast-developing high register of an Islamicate language that was molded from the Turkish. From the mid-15th century to the early 20th century, a figurative language that incorporated the imagery and forms of both lyric love poetry and lyric narrative developed to express a manifest homoerotic sentiment. The continuity of this particular style – which some have argued was superficial due to its consistent form over the centuries, which appeared more like a trope than a reflection of a practice – suggests that it assumed a coherence and served functions that are not as easy for us to understand today. A variety of evolving genres borrowed upon this linguistic expression and, simultaneously, helped consolidate it. But within the genres that described male same-sex relationships, there were nevertheless divergent ruptures that have often been overlooked by modern scholars. These breaks did not only represent contradictory configurations of homoerotic love, but also indicated how particular expressions of that love served as a form of self-discipline among the Ottoman elites. In some genres, the "transgressive experiments" were intended to be subversive and to provide shock value, as a part of this moralising purpose. As long as the expression of homoerotic love served to educate, it was permissible. We can pursue this argument by examining the changes visible across three identifiable pre-existing genres: lyric poems that listed the names of boy-beloved as a rhyming element; catalogues of beautiful boys in any given city, also composed in verse; and, finally, autobiographical verse narratives about male same-sex experiences that also incorporated certain lyric elements.

3. *Carnal desire*

In order to explore the evolution of homoeroticism as a topic of lyric texts in late 15th- and early 16th-century Ottoman Turkish literature, we must understand that homoeroticism was distinct from homosexuality and that it was presented in these pre-modern works as a strategy by which to discipline the self. A look at one Ottoman Turkish literary text, *The Book that Repels Sorrow and Removes Anxiety* (c. 1500s), can help elucidate these points. This scandalous work was written by an Ottoman scholar, judge, courtier and poet writing under the pen-name Gazalî (d. 1535), a boon companion of an Ottoman prince. The prosometric text includes a wide range of sexually explicit stories, jokes and witticisms that chart a hellish topography of illicit passions. In this mock treatise on sexual practice, mens' objects of desire and sexual acts that involve the penis are classified in seven chapters.[14]

14. The first chapter presents marriage as a refuge for those who cannot control their passions. The second provides a lengthy story that describes an allegorical war between boy-lovers and adulterous woman-lovers and ends in a poetic dispute on the positive and negative characteristics

In the work, Gazalî discussed male homosexual relations in three different sections. The first is located in the second chapter, which depicts a boasting match between those who love boys and those who love women. Ultimately, men who choose boys as their objects of sexual pleasure win the debate over those who prefer women, and they are rewarded for their victory with the sons of adulterers, boys born out of wedlock. The second section is found in chapter three and includes several stories about boys who are tricked into sex by lecherous older men. Finally, the last such section is found in chapter six, where passive homosexuality is explained as a sickness caused by experiencing anal sex with a young boy. Apparently, the young boy's sperm has an adverse effect in the anus, causing an unbearable itch that can only be satisfied by phallic penetration.[15]

Interestingly, this commentary on sexual intercourse provides a different perspective on male same-sex encounters. In contrast to adulterers, who are seen to be feminised because of their constant intercourse with women, chapter two describes practitioners of homosexuality as unrefined and, by virtue of their homosexual relationships, as strong and manly men. The narrator despises and rebukes both groups, calling them sinners, black-faced animals and unbelievers. Notably, in the third chapter on boys, those who engage in such behaviour are different. They are generally older men: judges, teachers, merchants. They are urban professionals characterised as lechers who employ all kinds of deceptive tricks in their hunt for beautiful boys who can satisfy their sexual appetites. These homosexual partners are distinct from those depicted in the chapter on women, who are generally presented as yielding victims who fall prey to an insatiable female sexual passion.

The third chapter on boys actually begins with descriptions of love, the lover, and the beloved, explaining the various kinds of beautiful boys that boy-lovers prefer. It opens with allusions to poetic formulations of love, a feature not seen in the chapter on women. From there, the text evolves into sexually explicit stories of the seduction of innocent boys by lechers. It ends with a poetic précis of the people of Lot as inventors of anal sex between men, recalling Mustafa Âlî's argument mentioned above regarding men's increasing interest in boys:

> The source of sodomites is the people of Lot
> They were the first to coin this word
> Maybe they had been ass-fucking already
> But from then on nobody was left out
> Today sodomites fall for ass so much that
> The door of the cunt is locked and deserted altogether.

of the vagina and the anus for men's sexual pleasure. The third to fifth chapters respectively discuss sex with boys, young girls and women, and animals. The fifth chapter also includes a discourse on masturbation. The sixth chapter discusses passive homosexuals and transvestites, and the final chapter is on pimps. I have described this text and the context in which it was written in "Sex in the Text". For a preliminary transcribed edition and English translation of the text, see my dissertation: "A Sixteenth Century Scholar: Deli Birader and his *Dafi ü'l-gumûm ve rafi ü'l-humûm*", unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 2000.

15. For medieval scientific etiologies of the desire for anal penetration, which was formulated as a disease in Arabic literature, see El-Rouayheb, *Before Homosexuality*, pp. 19-20.

Gazalî intentionally targeted particular groups of men who practiced sodomy with boys. Even though the chapter on boys begins with descriptions of love, the lover and the beloved, none of the many stories, jokes and witticisms about homosexual relations involves poets or courtiers. As I mentioned above, those who are implicated are provincial scholars and judges, educated men – though not necessarily members of courtly society – and members of the merchant classes. According to Gazalî, homosexuality is a vile sexual act that has nothing to do with love.

Gazalî's work mostly reads as a morbid reflection on sexuality, elucidating the revolting consequences of pursuing sexual satisfaction. However, in the sections that depict boys as sexual objects, men are endowed with agency and branded as appalling sinners. Regardless of his intentions, by condemning men who seduced innocent boys for sexual satisfaction, Gazalî, who himself composed lyric poetry for boys, underscored the lyric expression of homoerotic experience as related to the practice of self-discipline. As I will explore more below, a poet's voicing of an impossible love for an idealised individual excluded any proclamation of sexual union with the beloved.[16]

The Book that Repels Sorrow and Removes Anxiety was written around the same time as other innovative lyric works, and probably in connection with them. Among the many literary innovations that can be found in Anatolian Turkish literature during this period, I would like to focus on three that appeared roughly simultaneously: (1) the trend of using a male name as a repeated element of rhyme (*redif*); (2) a genre that consists of a versified catalogue of beautiful boys found in a given city; and (3) a lyric romance that recounts a homoerotic love story as an actual autobiographical experience. The separation between *The Book that Repels Sorrow and Removes Anxiety* and this group of works appears in the distinct vocabulary the authors employed to distinguish sex from love, and it produces a gap between the understanding of homosexual acts and homoerotic desires. The former work by Gazalî – who also produced scholarly texts on Islamic law and conventional lyric poetry – remained isolated and was seen to be scandalous. The three genres that contained expressions of homoerotic love, on the other hand, provided the basis for an inventive literary production across subsequent eras. They were copied extensively – though later rejected by the modern canon as rarified expressions of love – and presented a discursive experience of the economy of desire.

4. *Genres and desire*

Anatolian Turkish lyric poetry was borrowing from Persianate models even before the Ottomans established their rule over Anatolia and the Balkans. Its main theme was the beautiful young male body, which was considered the manifestation of divine beauty upon which God's loving signature could be appreciated. What was reflected in the young male body were singular features that stood for a multitude

16. This argument is detailed in Kuru, "Sex in the Text".

of expressions; at one and the same time, the body revealed God's beauty and his wrath and rendered the body a divine book that captivated the lover in awe. Through focus on the beauty of the boy-beloved, the lover severed his ties to the distracting multitude of social and natural phenomena. The recognition that the body of the beloved was a ground for reflection established a concept of the body not as a true sign but as a signifier, a metaphor that galvanised the poets' hearts. In lyric poetry, the passion expressed for a beautiful boy was one stage within a well-established hierarchy that led to true love, the love of God that destroys worldliness and connects one to the divine; at that point on the path of love, poems fail to have any significance. These two forms of love and desire were explored in various discourses, with the love for the boy-beloved termed a metaphorical love (*aşk-ı mecâzî*) and a step towards true/divine love (*aşk-ı hakîkî*).[17]

I am arguing that as an expression of metaphorical love, erotic lyric poetry reflected the explorations of lovers trapped at this stage of the metaphor. In this phase, the lovers were left in a confused state due to their entrapment by the figure of the beautiful boy, and they were thus unable to experience the true love of God even while they experienced His beauty and might through their encounters with the most ideal example of His creation. Their poems were lamentations that shaped the personalised form of the lyric and expressed the pain of a desire that was impossible to satisfy in a domain of signs. As such, lyric poems not only reflected the beauty of God's creation with a particular vocabulary in metre and rhyme, but they also claimed to be places of convergence and reproductions of beautiful creations, simply framed in a verbal reconstruction.

As long as lyric poetry employed figurative language without alluding to a particular human being, it was accepted as an expression of the piercing beauty of creation in the form of a mystical experience. In the late 15th century, desire for beautiful boys gained momentum as new literary genres and modifications of existing ones began to reflect the developing urban experience. Among certain groups of poets, an interest in city life, particularly marketplaces and the guild apprentices, began to enter and add texture to the tradition of lyric poetry. Once Ottoman poets first began to depict the objects of their desire as actual boys, lyric poetry came to be subject to worldly and personal experiences in an unprecedented way, and this then created tensions surrounding the nature of the desire that was manifested through it.[18]

At the same time as this new high literary language was being fashioned, the mystical and platonic formulation of metaphorical love underwent a worldly

17. For a detailed, albeit not historically situated, description of homoerotic love, specifically in the Persian poet Attar's works and in general in Islamicate literature, see Helmut Ritter, *The Ocean of the Soul: Men, the World and God in the Stories of Farid al-Din 'Attar*, trans. by John O'Kane, Leiden, Brill, 2003, pp. 360-592. For a brief description of these two senses of love, see pp. 450-452. In this work, Ritter provides useful information on the perceptions of earthly love and religious love in general terms.

18. For a recent study on lyric as a more dangerous form of literature that expresses sexual subversion in the context of Renaissance England, see Rebecca Yearling, "Homoerotic Desire and Renaissance Lyric Verse", *SEL Studies in English literature 1500-1900*, 53/1 (2013), pp. 53-71.

translation in the courts of the Ottoman sultans. In fact, one of the earliest instances of this transformation was reflected in an erotic lyric poem by Sultan Mehmed II (1432-1481), the conqueror of Constantinople. In his poetry collection, there is one short lyric poem, a *gazel*, with the repeated rhyme of Veyis, a male name. In this five-couplet poem, Mehmed II, under the pen name Avnî, described Veyis' beauty and ended as follows:

> O Avnî, fortune arranged this visit by the beloved to you,
> Do not kill this prospect; he is worth a thousand lives, Veyis[19]

Here Avnî, the poetic persona of Mehmed II, unabashedly wanted to seize the opportunity to enjoy Veyis' visit in full. This may be the earliest poem that uses a male name as the repeating element of rhyme (*redîf*).[20]

In Anatolian Turkish lyric poetry, it was certainly unusual in the 15th century to use a name as the rhyming element and, to my knowledge, this was not a common practice in any other Islamicate language either. Though male names may occasionally have appeared in lyric love poetry before this time, by the late 15th century repeating the name of the beloved in the final part of each couplet of a lyric poem had become a trend in Anatolian poetry. It was so popular that Latîfî (1491-1582), another 16th-century biographer who recorded the lives of poets, discussed one poetry collection by Visâlî where each lyric love poem employed the name of one boy-beloved as the repeating rhyme.[21]

This act of inserting the beloved's name into the poem destabilised the love lyric's mystical foundations and transported it to another, worldlier, level. Here, the figurative language of love no longer depicted an idealised, otherworldly beloved, but a boy-beloved of this world, a boy of flesh and blood that stood for creation's most perfect reflection. Furthermore, due to their occasional nature, these poems had a performative aspect, as reported in the biographical dictionaries of poets. Since these poems were meant to convey the poet's appreciation – or rather, his love – for the boy named, the gesture of love facilitated the formation of a new social function. As a result, it softened the mystical overtone of the poems, or, in other words, rendered lyric mysticism more occasional, rather than spiritual and metaphorical.

Not all poets partook in the trend of using a male name as a repeated rhyme element, yet it is worthwhile to focus on one specific type of verse composition that was associated with this curious development. This new type of verse, the *şehrengiz* ("city-thrillers") may have been influenced by the literary fashion of

19. Ahmet Atillâ Şentürk, *Osmanlı şiiri antolojisi*, Istanbul, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1999, p. 49.

20. For references on the use of male names and the *şehrengiz* genre, see my articles: "Naming the Beloved in Ottoman Turkish Gazel: The Case of İshak Çelebi (d. 1537/8)", in *Ghazal as World Literature II: From a Literary Genre to a Great Tradition. The Ottoman Gazel in Context*, ed. by Angelika Neuwirth, Michael Hess, Judith Pfeiffer and Börte Sagaster, Würzburg, Ergon-Verlag, 2006, 163-173; and "Gazelde sevgilinin cinsiyetlendirilmesi açısından erkek isimli redifler", *Kitap-lık*, 107 (2007), pp. 83-89.

21. Latifî, *Tezkiretü'ş-şu'arâ ve tabsıratü'n-nuzamâ*, ed. by Rıdvan Canım, Ankara, Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Başkanlığı, 2000, p. 562. This poetry collection is not extant.

employing the beloved's name in the *gazel*, as the two developed more or less around the same time. The *şehrengiz* was a distinctive composition composed as verse narratives that ranged between 100 and 400 couplets in length. It had three sections: (1) an introduction; (2) a catalogue of the names of boys from a particular city in the form of short verses that featured inventive imagery pertaining to each boy's name or profession; and (3) a conclusion with self-deprecatory supplications. Additionally, the *şehrengiz* had various functions: first, as a particular innovative composition; secondly, to promote particular cities in the Ottoman Empire; and third, to curry favor with the beautiful boys named and praised in the texts.

Two *şehrengiz* works by the poets Mesîhî and Zâtî were most probably composed in 1512 to celebrate the arrival of sultan Bayezid II (d. 1512) or Selim I (d. 1520) in Edirne, a former imperial capital of the Ottoman Empire. Fascinatingly, these two original texts share features that imply ongoing competition between the two authors. In their preambles, both authors assumed the identity of a wayward poet who had turned away from his religious duties in order to worship the boy-beauties of Edirne. In this lengthy introductory section, the poets expressed their captivation by the beauties of creation and developed a discourse in which metaphorical love (*aşk-ı mecâzî*) was defined as a trap against true love (*aşk-ı hakîkî*). The poet then prayed towards the lover's eyebrow instead of the niche that points Mecca in mosques; he forgot about his religious and social duties, focusing only on the boy-beloved. He was a sinner, begging for forgiveness for his unruly acts of desire. After these boldly self-critical verses, the introduction then continued with a short description of the arrival of the sultan, which represented the coming of spring, the season of rejuvenation.

Thereafter, the second part of the lyric begins, a catalogue formed of a list of the youthful boys found in the marketplace in playful short verses of three to four couplets. The boys are apprentices working in various guilds in the marketplace, and they are so beautiful that the poet becomes confused, startled and then forced to go astray. The lists of boys, 47 in Mesîhî's and 52 in Zatî's, distinguish Edirne as a heavenly dominion with so many beauties, perhaps suggesting that it vied with other cities for its high reputation. On the other hand, being surrounded by so many beauties instead of a single unique reflection of divine beauty amplified the poet's confusion. Mesîhî, now distracted by the multitude of metaphors, explained his state as follows:

> My roving heart fell into pieces
> and each piece stuck on another beauty

Obviously, the *şehrengiz* violated the core conceit of lyric poems: the expression of longing for the beloved who was a reference to divine beauty, a metaphor for the unity of creation, a symbol of the beauty and wrath of God. Now, with the *şehrengiz*, the actual beautiful boys across the cities described would come to be identified in terms of the beloveds of lyric poetry. The fact that these boys were reachable, that union with them was probable, disrupted the impossibility of worldly desire.

Mesîhî ended his work with a provocative line:

> Mesîhî managed the praise only this much
> if you don't like it go ahead and give it a try.[22]

In a short while, his challenge was taken up and a flurry of *şehrengiz* compositions appeared promoting the beautiful boys of other cities. By the mid-16th century there were around twenty *şehrengiz* texts, and by the mid-17th century there were more than sixty works that displayed the compositional features of the form.[23] However, there was a decrease in interest in *şehrengiz* texts after the mid-16th century, and, as they became less frequent, the expectations for what elements characterised the genre loosened from what had been formulated earlier in the century. Notably, most poets who composed *şehrengiz* narratives also wrote lyric poems with boys' names as the repeating rhyme element. Perhaps as a consequence of this, the popularity of these high-culture verse narratives about marketplace boys paralleled the interest in lyric poems that cited boy-beloveds by name.

These two genres – *şehrengiz* and lyric poetry, both of which employed the beloveds' names so incessantly – marked an unprecedented literary turn, but around the same time we can trace additional innovations that transformed another popular verse genre and brought it closer to this lyric sensibility: versified romances (*mesnevi*). Until the 15th century, the main themes for verse romances were pre-Islamic or Qur'anic love stories between male and female protagonists. Romances such as the tales of Hüsrev and Şirin or Yusuf and Züleyha were very popular in Perso-Turkic elite cultures, and boy-love was not considered an acceptable theme. However, in the late 15th century, a poet from eastern Anatolia, Halilî (d. after 1485), composed an unprecedented autobiographical lyric romance written in verse that he titled *Fürkat-nâme* (The Book of Separation, 1471), in which he told his story of falling in love with a beautiful boy who he had met in Nicea (İznik).[24] Halîlî's romance, the first ever autobiographical narrative on boy

22. For an edition of Mesîhî's "Edirne Şehrengizi", see *Mesîhî dîvânı*, ed. by Mine Mengi, Ankara, Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Yayınları, 1995, pp. 89-109.

23. Barış Karacasu, "Türk edebiyatında şehr-engîzler", *Türkiye araştırmaları literatür dergisi*, 5/10 (2007), pp. 259-313. In this important bibliographical article, Karacasu identifies 68 *şehrengiz* texts, some of which are relative texts and do not necessarily follow the composition that I describe here.

24. According to a recent critical edition of the text that is based on 11 of the 17 extant manuscript copies, the work is in 1,319 couplets that are organized under 98 subtitles. For references to *Furkat-nâme*, see Orhan Kemal Tavukcu's edition of the text, *Halîlî and his Fürkat-nâme: Introduction, Analysis, Critical Text and Facsimile*, Cambridge (MA), Harvard University Press, 2008. The numbers in parenthesis refer to couplet numbers in this edition. Günay Kut (Alpay), "Fürkat-nâme", in *Türk dili araştırmaları yıllığı belleten* (1977), pp. 333-353 provides a lengthy summary of the work. Also see my article for a comparison of *Fürkat-nâme* with another autobiographical romance from the same period: "Mesnevi biçiminde aşk hali. Birinci tekil şahıs anlatılar olarak *Fürkat-nâme* ve *Heves-nâme* üzerinde bir değerlendirme", in *Nazımdan nesire edebi türler*, ed. by Hatice Aynur, Müjgan Çakır, Hanife Koncu, Selim S. Kuru and Ali Emre Özyıldırım, Istanbul, Turkuaz Yayıncılık, 2009, pp. 168-183. Written in 1493, twenty-two years after *Fürkat-nâme*, the *Heves-nâme* recounts the famous bureaucrat and poet Tâcî-zâde Cafer Çelebi (d. 1515)'s love affair with a woman.

love in Anatolian Turkish, if not altogether, established a precedent that would influence other poets in Rûm in the 16th century.

Fürkat-nâme opens with the short conventional section commonly found in verse romances that includes a testimony to God's oneness (*tevhîd*), prayers of repentance, and pleadings for deliverance from the animal soul (*münâca'ât*), followed by praises of the Prophet Muhammad (*na'at*) and the four rightly-guided caliphs. After this relatively short 81-verse introduction, Halîlî presents his work as an adventure that he himself experienced and summons his courage to narrate moment by moment "the passions of love" that he lived through, as well as the "struggle of love" he suffered (96).

According to the story, Halîlî, a student of Qur'anic sciences, heads towards the land of Rûm in the pursuit of knowledge and settles in İznik. In this town, notable for its *medrese*s, i.e. Islamic theological colleges, he begins working with famous scholars. On one of his excursions into the town, he meets a beautiful boy in the marketplace, and then returns repeatedly to see him:

Whenever the sea of my heart swelled in waves,
I used to promenade in the marketplace;
Where I saw a cypress stature with a double-chin like an apple
His face was hot like the sun, yet with refreshing sweet lips.
He was sitting in a corner at the street of cloth merchants,
Without a match in the history of time
His body was formed by divine light
Even angels refrained from calling him of mankind
His lips were as small as an imaginary dot,
His words were perfect jewels set in metre and rhyme.
Adorned, he was, you'd say, the peacock of heavens
Such a soul he had that, behold, he is the beloved of the world.

Halîlî immediately falls in love with him:

Since my eyes saw that swaying cypress,
My heart moved away from me, flowing;
As my heart turned into a sea and swelled
I started wailing like a nightingale.
Night and day, nothing did I but cry,
My liver, with the fire of love, I myself branded.
[…]
The world left my eyes in such a way
That altogether I lost all hope for myself
I fell apart from learning and training,
I fell ill, burning in the fire of separation.
Celestial spheres altered my being,
It canceled my education and learning.
What of the desire for learning, asceticism, and an ascetic life
What of litanies, acts of piety, and nights of praying (171-178).

Similar to *Fürkat-nâme* with respect to its topic and the description of worldly love, *Heves-nâme* is the first and last autobiographical "romance" that presented a woman as the object of love.

These lines reflect the common lyrical sensibilities of the times and especially the expression of entrapment by a boy's love. In pursuit of the cloth merchant, Halîlî forgets his scholarly ambitions and ascetic life and undergoes a personal transformation. After his initial advances are rejected, he leaves for Istanbul where he languishes in the extreme agony of separation. Then, after exchanging letters with the beautiful boy, he returns to İznik. The romance ends with a scene in which their union evolves into absolute separation. Nevertheless, if we trust the information in biographical dictionaries of poets, the transformative impact of the homoerotic desire he had experienced caused Halîlî to shift his path from one of scholarship to one of mysticism; he deserted the path of teaching and became a sheikh in İznik.[25]

As mentioned before, *Fürkat-nâme* was the first narrative romance in Ottoman Turkish that assumed homoerotic desire as its main theme. It was also the first verse narrative in Anatolian Turkish written in the first person. Halîlî does not reveal any influence behind his extremely interesting and innovative text, except for a plea to himself that he recited in the second person:

> Reveal an account of the love of lovers:
> Let us hear the sweet story of
> How you experienced passions afflicted by love,
> Moment by moment, how you suffered the inflictions of love (95-96).

Halîlî explains his motive for narrating his own experience, but, as he recounts it, the reflections of the path of love as it was defined in Islamic mysticism are easy to recognise.[26] In *Fürkat-nâme*, Halîlî adapted the basic stages of metaphorical love and presented them as his own experience. As a result, the lyric poem diverged from classical romances because, rather than moving between fantastical temporalities and spatialities, it was rooted in a realistic time and place. There is a certain unmistakable form of realism in *Fürkat-nâme.* True, the autobiographical leaning is vague and there are very few descriptions and details in the story. But even against this ambiguity in the description of locales and persons, Halîlî reformats the surreal travails of the lover told in the legendary stories of Muslim mystical literature in order to express his own very real experience.

25. Biographical dictionaries provided further information about the discourses around homoerotic love through stories that may as well have been invented to reinforce the lyric sensibility that I investigate in this article. They constitute an important part of my exploration about the function of genre in expressions of desire.

26. Discourses around boy-love were prevalent before *Fürkat-nâme*. For example, in an advice book in verse, *Murad-nâme* (comp. 1427), adapted from a much older and popular advice book, the *Qâbus-nâme* by Keikavus ibn Iskandar, the importance of metaphorical love was detailed. The author, Bedr-i Dilşâd, assigns this form of love to younger people as a form of training beyond just regular education. In this text, the author identifies women as well as boys as possible objects of metaphorical love, warning against the destructive consequences of sexuality: *Bedr-i Dilşâd'ın Murâd-nâmesi*, ed. by Âdem Ceyhan, Istanbul, M.E.B., 1997, pp. 313-329. However, in this article I focus on literary manifestations of this pre-existing theme rather than on its development in more mystical tracts. Convergences and divergences in these genres of love as a mystic path require further research.

The fact that a life narrative such as this was produced in Anatolian Turkish on the topic of homoerotic love, and that it enjoyed relative popularity, demonstrates the significance of the phenomenon to the lives of the educated elite. Though it can also be read as a rejection of the state-sponsored theological education system, in favour of mystical experience (*'ilm* vs *'irfân*), *Fürkat-nâme* provides a model on how to love and how to train the animal soul through an experience of love. As he discovers more about divine knowledge through his tumults of love and desire than he is able to through his theological studies, Halîlî's love for the cloth-seller becomes a life-changing experience. Yet, the unrest that resulted from his abandon of divine pursuits for the practice of worldly love stimulated the need to practice a new form of self-discipline.

The self-disciplinary dimension of *Fürkat-nâme* requires more exploration, yet several other 16th-century texts testify to the fact that Halîlî's work was evaluated and emulated much as the innovations in lyric and *şehrengiz* texts were later. However, the impact of *Fürkat-nâme* would be more enduring.[27] Further analysis is needed to show how *Fürkat-nâme* gave rise to the practice of using individual boys' names both in the lyric poem and in the catalogues of boys living in particular cities. In any event, in one of the lyric digressions in the work, inserted at a point in the narrative when Halîlî sees the beautiful boy, an 18-couplet acrostic reveals the name and profession of the boy as "Mustafa the cloth-seller". By reformulating the lyric in a manner that brought its mystical aspirations down to earth so as to underline the temporal nature of worldly love, these poets were engaging with generic conventions, but instead of changing them into unrecognisable new forms, they were bending them to convey a new form of disciplining the self. In this way, homoerotic yearnings were consolidated into a new form of discourse that sought to keep the elite and their worldly desires in check.

In various entries in his biographical dictionary mentioned above, Aşık Çelebi related stories of other poets, his predecessors, from the period when original compositions of what I call worldly literature came into being. Yet he distinguished himself from his peers by casting a perceptive eye on the theme of homoeroticism in his biographical sketches of poets. Were it not for the stories of love in the biographical dictionaries of the 16th century, which reflected a nostalgia for the period between the 1450s and the 1530s, it would be difficult for us to grasp the significance of homoerotic love in this period.[28] It becomes clear, however, in the extent to which the themes of love and poets' love stories dominated the biographical sketches of poets who lived after the 1450s. Remarkably, though, before the 1450s there were no such stories in the biographical dictionaries of poets. It is thus apparent that with the passing of time, attitudes towards

27. For references on autobiographical verse-narratives, see Ali Emre Özyıldırım, "Sergüzeştnâmeler üzerine hasbihâl ya da hasbihâlin sergüzeşti", in *Nazımdan nesire*, pp. 135-65.

28. I am thankful to Walter Andrews who stated that another biographer, Latifi, added several anecdotes of worldly love and lovers, rather than more detail about their professional lives, to the 1574 recension of his biographical dictionary that were not found in the 1546 version. Personal communication on 10 May 2018. This may indicate a growing interest, at least for this author, in worldly love.

homoerotic love shaped literary expression, and were in turn shaped by it. If, over the period of one hundred years, lyric poetry ceased to use male names as a repeating element of rhyme, and if *şehrengiz* ceased to be a popular genre, this does not mean that the experience of homoerotic love changed in that time. It does, however, reflect a particular degree of permissibility in its expression. In contrast, the autobiographical *hasb-i hâl* genre, which found its initial expression in the *Fürkat-nâme*, continued to exhibit major particularities with respect to its lengthy and increasingly complex versified discourses on the discrepancy between metaphorical love and true love.[29]

It is difficult to come up with a single argument regarding the reason behind the disappearance of lyric poems with boys' names and *şehrengiz* texts. Perhaps it can be attributed to the fact that these genre-bound compositions expressed homoerotic desire in an ambiguous manner. As this worldly turn in mystical lyric through naming of the beloved implied, the desire construed in these works could be interpreted as a desire that targeted physical union, i.e. sexual interaction. Unlike *Fürkat-nâme*, a story of transformation which follows a poet/lover who realises the worldly – that is to say, transitory – nature of metaphorical love and changes the direction of his desire from a horizontal orientation to a vertical one leading to God, lyric poems only expressed the state of being of the impossible metaphorical love for a non-existant and idealised beloved and promoted the masochistic joy of experiencing it. Attaching a boy's name to the poem disrupted its ambiguous core. As a matter of fact, the erotic lyric poems and *şehrengiz* were written to communicate with the boys mentioned in them. Through the case of the "Şehrengiz of Giannitsa" by Hayretî (d. 1534), for example, we gain a clearer picture of how these texts circulated. After writing his *şehrengiz*, four of the six boys who were introduced as the beauties of Giannitsa criticised Hayretî's description of them, saying that it was insufficient to capture their attractiveness. Hayretî grew angry at their ingratitude and composed another text, this time satirising the boys.[30] In a sense, this particular innovative movement, which included a tweaking of the lyric and the invention of the *şehrengiz*, was a trend that threatened both the literary genre and its social function.

Meanwhile, *Fürkat-nâme*-like verse romances followed at least two distinct trajectories. There were worldly texts similar to *Fürkat-nâme*, which gradually evolved into impersonal third-person narrative stories. Then there were first-person discourses on mystical love that did not involve any boy-beloveds. The

29. There are many examples of such discourses, but they were generally taken up in the introductory chapters of verse-romances. For a 17th-century example, see Nevî-zâde Atâyî, *Heft-hvân mesnevîsi. İnceleme-metin*, ed. by Turgut Karacan, Ankara, Ataturk Universitesi Yayinlari, 1974, pp. 138-153. In this versified story collection, Atâyî presents a discussion of Persian poet Nezâmî's verse-narrative *Heft-hvân*, accusing Nezâmî of choosing heterosexual love as a theme, which would lead only to sexual passion, and defending homoerotic love as the relevant topic for romances.

30. For a transcribed edition of the only copy of the text, see Mehmet Çavuşoğlu, "Hayretî'nin Yenice şehr-engizi", *Güney-Doğu Avrupa araştırmaları dergisi*, 1-2 (1975-1976), pp. 81-100.

playful and worldly format of the erotic lyric was later resurrected during the 18th-century neoclassicist turn in Ottoman Turkish literature, in autobiographical romances such as *Defter-i Aşk* (c. 1795) by Fazıl-ı Enderunî (1757-1810).[31]

5. *Homoeroticism and authorship*

The entry of homoerotic desire into the Anatolian Turkish language under Ottoman patronage needs further research, as does its genre-dependent nature, yet the relationship between this type of language and biographical narratives needs no additional proof.[32] The shifts that unfolded within the genre of lyric poetry, particularly with the appearance of *şehrengiz* poems, extended the realm of the personal lyric in the form of occasional poems that described particular boys, while at the same time temporally and spatially restraining the expanse of lyric poetry since they referred to living persons and real places. The love for beautiful boys created a space for a new form of literary production at the same time as it became a specific mode of expression for an elite Ottoman identity. What purpose this shift served, and to what ends it functioned, is another question, yet its central role in the lives of bureaucrats and scholars continued well into the early 20th century. Biographical dictionaries of poets, a genre I will examine in another work, provided contextual information for the personalised lyric eroticism in the garb of literary commentary, using anecdotes to link seemingly impersonal poetic texts to the lives of their authors.

The literary works and commentary that focused on homoerotic experiences and their expression appear contradictory at times, as the passages by Âşık Çelebi and Mustafa Âlî quoted in the opening to this article reveal. The transformations both 16th-century authors observed may not have taken place just as they recorded them. However, this does not mean that such changes in the expression of homoerotic love did not exist. Still, the greatest shift seems to have been that unwittingly observed by Ahmed Cevdet in the 19th century, on the turn to heteronormative romance rather

31. Just like first-person verse romances, the development of autobiographical verse narratives requires further research. While the former presents an artistic emulation of classical Islamic romances, the latter appear in the form of short and realistic narratives that seem to have functioned as resumes summarising the accomplishments of the sultan's elite subjects. Fazıl's romance combines the two in the late 18th century. For an edition of Fazıl's work, see Selim S. Kuru, "Biçimin kıskacında bir 'tarih-i nev-icad'. Enderunlu Fazıl Bey ve Defter-i aşk adlı mesnevisi", in *Şinasi Tekin Anısına. Uygurlardan Osmanlıya*, ed. by Günay Kut and Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz, Istanbul, Simurg, 2005, pp. 476-506. These first-person verse narrative genres are yet to be considered in their own contexts. For an exceptionally insightful study of an early first-person verse romance, see Hakan Atay, "*Heves-nâme*'de Aşk Oyunu: Tâci-zâde Cafer Çelebi'nin Özgünlük İdeali", M.A. Thesis, Bilkent University, 2003.

32. There are many studies on 16th-century biographical dictionaries, yet there is no study focused on the conspicuous homoeroticism enveloped in individual entries for poets. Andrews, "Sexual Intertext", provides insight on ways to approach the rich material and complicate our understanding of the authors of the dictionaries and their interest in the homoerotic experiences of poets active in the late 15th and early 16th centuries.

than homoerotic desire. This was accompanied by the disappearance of a significant practice explored here, particularly with the emergence of the novel as a new genre in the 19th century. While certain studies on the birth of the Ottoman Turkish novel have discovered correspondences to the metaphors and narrative techniques used in classical Ottoman literature, they have failed to identify one major missing element: love for the beautiful young boy. In fact, novelistic texts became major discursive tools in the promotion of a new heteronormative ethics that until that point had been unprecedented in Anatolian Turkish culture and literature.

Cevdet's remarks on the decrease in the number of beautiful boys and the increase in woman-lovers offer us a glimpse at another instance of the convergence of poetry and homoeroticism. His mention of the "People of Lot" makes it rather clear that he was speaking of sexual relations. We should recall that the passage continues with his observation that amorous relations, which were pursued with boys in times past, had now been relegated to young women, as was now expected by the "natural" state of things. The rest of the quotation attributed this to the appearance of women on the public stage, and to Westerners' critical attitude toward homosexual relationships.

The exclusion of male homoerotic love stories in the emergent genres of the novel and poetry, perceived as Western in origin, seems to support Cevdet's argument, as does the growing role of women in intellectual life across the Ottoman Empire. However, a closer look at Cevdet's quotation reveals another interesting aspect of the change he perceives. The passage quoted from the reports is located within a section on the economic situation in Istanbul and the change in consumption patterns after the Crimean War (1853-1856).[33] After he speaks about the spread of a particular type of Turkish tobacco that had even found a market in Paris, Cevdet's train of thought shifts to a description of the times:

> At those times, the Bosphorus was a sign of Paradise. Especially on the nights when the full moon was reflected on the surface of the sea, it presented a composition worth being photographed. As is well known, the most beautiful vision of the full moon can be viewed from the shores of Bebek and Büyükdere. Everyone would go either to the waterside at Büyükdere or Bebek to watch the "silver cypress". Imagery of the silver cypress would be the currency for poets to sing beautiful verses. Now since we are talking about the truth of the matter, I should reveal my own condition as well: even though I, his majesty's servant, was busy composing project proposals and reports for the government, I devoted my leisurely time to composing serious works of my own. However, when the winds of pleasure and joy took over Istanbul, I, his servant, could not be out of this altogether. While I was not a poet, I joined with the poets and at times those full-moon-watchers by composing poems with imagery about the silver cypress.

It is at this point that the quotation cited at the beginning of this article begins, to describe the decline of the poems sung about the image of the silver cypress.

33. See Şerif Mardin, "Super Westernization in Urban Life in the Ottoman Empire in the Last Quarter of the 19th Century", in *Turkey: Geographic and Social Perspectives*, ed. by Peter Benedict, Erol Tümertekin and Fatma Mansur, Leiden, Brill, 1974, pp. 403-446, for a detailed discussion of the interface of the early Ottoman Turkish novel against the background of economic transformations in the Empire.

The reflection of the full moon over the dark waters of the Bosphorus, swaying as the water moves, echoed a description of beautiful boys who were depicted as swaying cypresses in the stock imagery of Persianate court poetry. The "full moon", on the other hand, was a metaphor for the face of the beloved, which made the full-moon-watchers those who enjoyed watching beautiful faces. Cevdet, who described himself as uninterested in the profession of poetry, was apparently swept up by the fad of composing poetry, and he himself unwittingly wrote poems about the silver cypress.[34] That he should insert this passage on his singing of silver cypress poems and watching the "full moon" in the middle of a report that documented his critical approach toward the changing economic conditions after the Crimean War seems all the more curious for one who was otherwise a hardworking state official. This is especially true in the context of what follows: the disappearance of the beautiful boy-beloveds and the surge in woman-lovers.

Although Cevdet did not indicate it directly, his seemingly sudden diversion from singing poetry about the silver cypress to the disappearance of beautiful boys within a discourse about rising patterns in consumption in Istanbul actually indicates a relationship between lyric poetry and boy-beloveds. The second argument he provides is all the more crucial for any study of homoeroticism. The appearance of women in the new arenas of love, the gardens and town squares, not only takes poetry away from love as an experience – he calls the act of flirtation with women *mu'aşaka*, which I translated as love-games – but also gives way to a lengthy misogynistic section that begins with how Sultan Abdülmecid (1832-1861) was consumed by woman-love to such an extent that "due to excessive dialogue with women, his royal body weakened day by day".

Ahmed Cevdet further expressed his misogynistic attitude as follows: "Lot's act has diminished; I would wish that sex with women also disappeared, so that the world finds its balance".[35] Cevdet's comments about sexuality continues over a couple of pages in this segment of his report, signifying a general distaste for sexuality among the 19th-century Ottoman intelligentsia, similar to what was defended in Gazalî's work (that is, aversion to homosexual behaviour). This section of Cevdet's reports to Sultan Abdülhamid II can be read from various perspectives, as it reflects different levels of ambiguity and, more importantly, pulsates with its author's ambiguous positioning of himself in the text; the calculated and restrained lyric game that cloaked the ambiguities of individual authorial voices in discourses that shaped homoerotic desire was no more.

By the time Cevdet wrote his reports, *şehrengiz* texts and lyric poems had been condemned to a waning manuscript culture. Even though early printing in the Empire involved homoerotic verse narratives, those that circulated were few in number and occasionally censored. Around the same time, versified autobiographies, which were narrated around experiences of love, were evolving into more anecdotal and better sustained life narratives. Instead of mentioning one love story as a life-defining experience, these works recounted a series of

34. Cevdet, *Ma'rûzât*, p. 9.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

spatially and temporally articulated events, among which a love story was only a single instance of experience. Love was no longer an asexual erotic game controlled by the pretenses of the lyric form, or a type of self-discipline that made one into a better person. It was now a passionate affair to be explored between men and women, the sexual nature of which would take more than a few decades to be overtly discussed in writing. This emergent discourse, which paralleled the vanishing of genres in which elite desire found material expression, suppressed a widely circulating articulation of homoerotic passion. As we have seen, this passion had previously been expressed through particular genres to frame a certain form of self-discipline, one centred on the experience of love. It was precisely in this frame that the concept of an authorial identity emerged in pre-modern Ottoman Turkish literature.

Vincenzo Lavenia

Between Heresy and "Crimes against Nature": Sexuality, Islamophobia and the Inquisition in Early Modern Europe

Sin la reconquista, habría triunfado la homosexualidad,
tan practicada en la España mora

Without the Reconquista, homesexuality would have triumphed,
as it was practiced in moorish Spain

Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz

1. *Introduction*

That Muhammad could be considered a *heresiarch* was a belief shared across both the Catholic and Protestant worlds. In the opening to his rich anthology of texts on Islam and the Ottoman world – which would enjoy great success – Theodor Bibliander inserted an *Apology* that sought to justify his decision to promote a Latin edition of the Qur'an, which he was including in the volume. He explained that he was publishing the collection (which included the works of Vincent of Beauvais, Ricold of Montecroce, Alonso de Espina, Nicholas of Cusa and Paolo Giovio, among others) for the sole purpose of refuting the false opinions of the Muslims, which reminded him, in part, of those of the anti-Trinitarians. His preface echoed the authoritative pen of the Lutheran humanist Melanchthon, who, after evoking the doctrinal errors of the prophet, had also alluded to the irrational and perverse character of Qur'anic teachings on morality, adding that Muhammad had declared as lawful even the "nefarious lust due to which God destroyed not only five cities, but often entire populations" (*nefarias libidines* […] *propter quas Deus non tantum quinque urbes, sed etiam saepe totas gentes delevit*). Yet Bibliander was not inventing anything new, but simply reiterating a cliché that had been consolidated as early as the 12th century and that depicted the founder of Islam (who was considered lustful and polygamous) as being in favour of sodomitic practices that, according to the pages of the Old Testament, should have merited divine punishment.[1]

1. *Machumetis Sarracenorum Principis Vita ac Doctrina omnis, quae et Ismahelitarum lex et Alcoranum dicitur*, Basel, Oporinus, 1543. On Bibliander, see Victor Segesvary, *L'Islam*

As a result of several key biblical passages, the practice of the so-called *vitium nefandum* had been assimilated into the broader category of heresy over the centuries, and the judicial effects of this theological reading of the "crime against nature" were neither marginal nor homogeneous.[2] What were the reasons for this difference of interpretation? What was their relationship to Christian Islamophobia? From which sources did the cliché derive that confirmed the prophet's allegedly lascivious precepts? And why was it particularly successful in early modern Spain? Finally, why, specifically in the Iberian Peninsula from the 16th century onwards, did the hunt for sodomites (who were considered perverse and heretical) take place in part under the banner of the religious courts? Here, I will try to answer these questions, tracing a picture of the early modern history of the hereticalisation of sodomy and seeking to establish a relationship between widespread feelings of hostility towards Muslims and the inquisitorial repression of the crime.

In the Christian tradition, the classification of certain sins as being contrary to the order of nature, partially founded on Roman law, was not very well-defined. However, theologians, canonists and jurists agreed on one point: sodomy (both heterosexual and homosexual) had belonged to the category of the most serious crimes since the time of Augustine of Hippo.[3] Indeed, seed that was wasted and made infertile violated the divine order of creation, broke the rules of nature and rendered the offenders impure.[4] As Francisco Tomás y Valiente, who devoted many incisive pages to the obsession with the seed in Spain, the land of "blood purity" laws (*limpieza de sangre*), wrote: "only from the perspective of moral theology can one understand the why and how of the persecution and punishment of the sin or crime against nature".[5] This

et la Réforme. Étude sur l'attitude des réformateurs zurichois envers l'Islam, 1510-1550, Lausanne, L'Age d'Homme, 1978; Henri Lamarque, *Le Coran en latin. Plaidoyer pour une traduction*, Toulouse, Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 2007; Alastair Hamilton, *The Forbidden Fruit: The Koran in Early Modern Europe*, London, London Middle East Institute, 2008; Lucia Felici, "L'islam in Europa. L'edizione del Corano di Theodor Bibliander (1543)", in *Traduzioni e circolazione delle idee nella cultura europea tra '500 e '700*, ed. by Girolamo Imbruglia et al., Naples, Bibliopolis, 2009, pp. 35-63.

2. Jacques Chiffoleau, "Dire l'indicible. Remarques sur la catégorie du nefandum du XIIe au XVe siècle", *Annales ESC*, 45/2 (1990), pp. 289-324; Giacomo Todeschini, "'Soddoma e Caorsa': natura e sterilità del peccato alla fine del medioevo cristiano", in *Le trasgressioni della carne. Il desiderio omosessuale nel mondo islamico e cristiano, secc. XII-XX*, ed. by Umberto Grassi and Giuseppe Marcocci, Rome, Viella, 2015.

3. "Flagitia, quae sunt contra naturam, ubique ac semper detestanda atque punienda sunt, qualia Sodomitarum fuerunt. Quae si omnes gentes facerent, eodem criminis reatu divina lege tenerentur, quae non sic fecit homines, ut hoc se uterentur modo.Violatur quippe ipsa societas, quae cum Deo nobis esse debet, cum eadem natura, cuius ille auctor est, libidinis perversitate polluitur" (*Confessiones*, l. III, 8, 15).

4. Jacques Chiffoleau, "'Contra naturam'. Pour une approche casuistique et procédurale de la nature médiévale", *Micrologus*, 4 (1996), pp. 265-312.

5. "sólo desde una perspectiva teológica de teología moral se puede entender el porqué y el cómo de la persecución y de la punición del pecado o crimen contra natura", in Francisco Tomás y Valiente, "El crimen y pecado contra natura", *Sexo barroco y otras transgresiones*

is particularly apparent in the history of the Iberian Peninsula, which was the territory in which the notion of a subversion of the laws of nature slowly combined with the legal concept of the "flavour of heresy". The latter was a theological *passepartout* that accompanied every expansion of the religious courts' competence in the field of *mores*, whether related to birth or death, family ties or sexuality, medicine or food habits. The conflation of the two sanctioned the reproof of a crime and vice that was considered to be among the most detestable. In fact, the crime and sin "against nature" evoked sexual teratologies in a period of shifting medical knowledge, and, at the same time, it triggered misogynistic and demonic obsessions and worried a "disordered" clergy that wished to avoid legal prosecution. But above all, as we will see, sodomy could serve to exorcise the enemies of a Christianity that understood itself to be at risk of infection, both by "barbarians" in the colonies and "infidels" who still remained on European soil.

2. *The devils' reluctance*

The hereticalisation of the crime of sodomy was certainly not a modern invention. As Adriano Prosperi noted, we can trace a reference to the scriptural passages on the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah – an ancient (but not unanimous) theological tradition which documented how divine anger punished sexual practices that did not conform to nature – back to the first apostolic constitutions that authorised the foundation of delegated religious courts.[6] Then, in the 13th century, Thomas Aquinas elaborated a doctrine of the sin of lust that would remain a point of reference for all theologians over the subsequent centuries: the "vice against nature" was listed among the faults that violated the sixth commandment, but it was a sin of greater gravity because a *specialis ratio deformitatis* made this venereal act indecent (*Secunda Secundae*, q. 154, articles 11-12). The harmony between Aquinas' text and Peter Damian's earlier *Liber Gomorrhianus*, the first medieval treatise entirely dedicated to the topic, is clear: sodomy was a sin that simultaneously contravened the sixth and first commandments, insofar as it offended God and implied an "error" (of reason, if not exactly of faith). In any case, the Church ensured that at least the practice of *mollities* (another improper use of sexuality) was left to the pastoral care of the confessors, who Jean Gerson armed with a treatise so they might better interrogate those penitents who had given themselves over to vice. Attitudes towards bestiality were different than those towards sodomy between a man and a woman or even between two men (the case of a woman being with a woman remained much less

premodernas, ed. by Francisco Tomás y Valiente, Madrid, Alianza, 1990, p. 34. See Francisco Vázquez García, Andrés Moreno Mengíbar, *Sexo y Razón. Una genealogía de la moral sexual en España (siglos XVI-XX)*, Madrid, Akal, 1997, pp. 224-234.

6. Adriano Prosperi, *Giustizia bendata. Percorsi storici di un'immagine*, Turin, Einaudi, 2008, p. 27.

defined),[7] but all three began to be persecuted in many urban areas of Christian Europe. In a number of cities, accusations of sodomy were also raised against those individuals increasingly defined as heretics, who were guilty – according to the "Catholic" literature – of legitimising the "nefarious vice" by asserting that it was not a sin of any particular gravity.[8] A persecutory and defamatory strategy was thus born against the Bogomils, the Amalricians, the Brethren of the Free Spirit, Gherardo Segarelli's Apostles and above all the Cathars.[9] It was the same sort of argument that had previously been levied against the early Christians and then against Jewish communities in Visigothic Spain.

According to some historians' reconstructions, it was in the Italian city of Siena that sodomy was first classified as a form of heresy in 1262, but there was a precedent in a 1232 papal act by Gregory IX that authorised Dominican inquisitors in Austria to prosecute not only witchcraft but also the "nefarious vice".[10] As Panormitanus, one of the leading canonists of the 15th century, would later write, despite the doctrine of *crimina mixti fori*, the power of the Church and popes *ratione peccati* allowed ecclesiastical action to be taken against sodomy even if it extended beyond traditional jurisdictional boundaries: "in whatever way men sin against nature, whether in a venereal act or by worshipping idols, or in another way [i.e. with usury], the Church can always exercise its jurisdiction over the laity".[11] After all, even a pontiff had been accused of sodomy.[12]

But it was in the Iberian Peninsula of the early modern inquisitions, of forcefully converted religious minorities and of the globalisation of Catholicism

7. Fernanda Alfieri, "Impossibili unioni di uguali. L'amore fra donne nel discorso teologico e giuridico (secoli XVI-XVIII)", *Dimensioni e Problemi della Ricerca Storica*, 2 (2012), pp. 105-125.

8. An illustrious Franciscan theologian of the 16th century doubted the similar accusations made against the Waldensians by Alain de Lille and Bernard Gui: see Alfonso de Castro, *Adversus omnes haereses*, Venice, Ad signum Spei, 1557, f. 207v, *s.v.* "coitus". However, the treatise reveals the strength of the traditional genealogy that traced heretical disobedience to the revolt of men prone to lust (f. 54v).

9. Michael Goodich, *The Unmentionable Vice: Homosexuality in the Later Medieval Period*, Santa Barbara, Ross-Erikson, 1979, pp. 7-10 and 89-123; Vern L. Bullough, "The Sin against Nature and Homosexuality", in *Sexual Practices & the Medieval Church*, ed. by Vern L. Bullough and James Brundage, Amherst and New York, Prometheus Books, 1994, pp. 55-71; Vern L. Bullough, "Postscript: Heresy, Witchcraft and Sexuality", *ibid*., pp. 206-217; Irene Bueno, "Dal 'carnalis concubitus' all''heretica pravitate'. Sesso, matrimonio ed eresia nel tribunale di Jacques Fournier (1318-1325)", *L'Atelier du Centre de Recherches Historiques*, 4 (2009), URL: http://acrh.revues.org/1205.

10. This refers to the *Speciosus forma* apostolic letter from 3 September 1232. See John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1980, pp. 291, 294.

11. "qualitercunque homines peccent contra naturam, vel in actu venereo, vel adorando idola, vel alio modo [con l'usura], semper Ecclesia potest iurisdictionem suam exercere in laicos", *ibid*., note on p. 331.

12. Agostino Paravicini Bagliani, *Bonifacio VIII*, Turin, Einaudi, 2003, pp. 324-344, to which I also refer for the bibliography.

that the first steps were taken to authorise the new centralised religious courts to take action against the practice of sodomy. It began in one of the domains unified by the Crown of Spain, and this is not surprising: the "nefarious vice", Tomás y Valiente wrote, "was one of the most serious questions for a monarchy concerned above all about the defense of the faith, its unity and its orthodox morality".[13] These words remind us that the disciplinary genealogy emphasising the link between the hunt for witches and the repression of sodomy might not actually offer the most fruitful path to follow.[14] In fact, the theological tradition denied the notion that devils – spiritual substances – liked to engage in "vices against nature" even in the course of coitus with humans.[15] The Majorcan inquisitor Arnau Albert discussed this in a famous treatise from 1554: "although there are demonic incubi and succubi, you will find that they never mate against nature in an active or passive position and in human form".[16] However, just a few years earlier, as we know from one study,[17] the Dominican theologian Silvestro Mazzolini (Prierias) had argued otherwise in his *De strigimagarum daemonumque mirandis* (1521), as had the philosopher Giovan Francesco Pico in the *Strix sive de ludificatione daemonum* (1523), later vulgarised by the Bolognese inquisitor, Leandro Alberti. Over the 16th century their position triumphed and was taken up by the well-known demonologist Martín Del Rio in the *Disquisitionum magicarum libri sex*, which appeared in 1599. By that date, however, a number of inquisitorial courts across the Iberian Peninsula had already launched their hunt for sodomites through a forum devoted to the repression of apostasy among new conversos. So, what were the theological premises and medieval precedents that led to these actions?

3. *Muhammad's plowing*

A hagiographical legend dating back to the priest Raguel and to the poetic works of the canoness Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim (*Passio Sancti Pelagii*, 10th century) attributed the martyrdom of Pelagius of Cordoba (926?) to the

13. "era una de las questiones más graves en una monarquía preocupada por encima de todo por la defensa de la fe, de su unitad y de la moral ortodoxa de ella derivada", Tomás y Valiente, *El crimen y pecado contra natura*, p. 45.

14. Armando Maggi, "Homosexuality", in *Encyclopedia of Witchcraft*, 4 vols, ed. by Richard Golden, Los Angeles, ABC-Clio, 2006, pp. 508-509. This genealogy is taken up again in part in Fernanda Molina, "La 'herejización' de la sodomía en la sociedad moderna. Consideraciones teológicas y praxis inquisitorial", *Hispania Sacra*, 62 (2010), pp. 539-562.

15. Dyan Elliott, *Fallen Bodies: Pollution, Sexuality and Demonology in the Middle Ages*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999.

16. "cum inveniantur daemones incubi et succubi, nunquam inveniuntur ut incubant et succubant in forma humana contra naturam", Arnaldus Albertinus, *Tractatus de agnoscendis assertionibus catholicis et haereticis*, in *Tractatus Universi Iuris*, Venice, Societas Aquilae se Renovantis, 1584, vol. 11, part 2, f. 79v.

17. Tamar Herzig, "The Demons' Reaction to Sodomy: Witchcraft and Homosexuality in Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola's 'Strix'", *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 34 (2003), pp. 53-72.

yearnings of the emir ‘Abd ar-Rahmān III, a “barbarian” affected by the “sodomitic vice”, who had been struck by the boy’s beauty. The adolescent, however, had been handed over as a hostage in exchange for the release of his uncle, Bishop Ermogius, and he wanted neither to renounce his faith nor to indulge in the sexual advances of the Muslim sovereign. As a result, he rejected the ruler with such contempt that it led him to a terrible death.[18] The story of Pelagius contains one of the first depictions of the Muslim as sodomite and it enjoyed long-lasting popularity in Spain due to the widespread cult of the saint, though over time the initial erotic charge of his martyrdom was attenuated with a military disguise. Pelagius’ icon came to sit alongside that of the so-called “martyrs of Cordoba” (9th century) and with the most important of them: Eulogius, bishop of Toledo and a hard anti-Muslim controversialist who had identified Muhammad with the Antichrist.[19] In the 16th century, Eulogius’ cult was promoted by the bishop of Plasencia, Pedro Ponce de León, who, shortly before his death, was appointed General Inquisitor of Spain. He also provided Ambrosio de Morales, the Escorial librarian, with the notes and commentary he had drawn up for an edition of Eulogius’ works, along with the oldest manuscripts concerning the martyrs. The anthology appeared in 1574 and included a transcription of Raguel’s account of Pelagius’ martyrdom.[20]

The ethical overtones of the Iberian crusade took inspiration from the cult of the Andalusian martyrs, which became the emblem of resistance against Islam, a resistance that transcended the boundaries of faith when it came to the issue of sexual relations. Eulogius was certainly among the first polemicists to hereticise the Islamic doctrinal tradition in his attempt to erect a barrier between the two religions in a land that was now no longer Christian. However, the story being told obviously has a wider range, which brings us to the heart of Europe, to the knights planning their advance towards Jerusalem and the theologians developing scholasticism.[21] In central Europe, one could find Henri de Marcy – the abbot of Clairvaux, successor and pupil of Saint Bernard, scourge of the Cathars and Waldensians and preacher of the Third Crusade – issuing warnings about the winds carrying the stench of the “nefarious sin” from the East to the West. Meanwhile, his contemporary Alain de Lille,[22] who in *De planctu naturae* had denounced the subversion of the world to “the abominable vice”, in his *Tractatus contra haereticos* pointed to the Muslims as a people prone to the pleasures of the flesh: “in fact, their entire life is steeped with the stench of their lust” (*tota enim vita eorum in*

18. Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, pp. 198-200; Mark D. Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy in Christian Theology*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1997, pp. 10-28.

19. John V. Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination*, New York, Colombia University Press, 2002, pp. 85-97 (refer to his work for the bibliography).

20. Divus Eulogius, *Opera, studio et diligentia [...] Petri Poncij Leonis [...] per regna & ditiones Philippi II. Regis Catholici inquisitoris reperta [...]. Cum alijs nonnullis sanctorum martyrum Cordubensium monumentis*, Compluti, Ioannes Iniguez, 1574, ff. 112v-116r.

21. A fundamental reference is *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, ed. by David Thomas et al., Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2009-.

22. Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, p. 310.

fetore luxuriae est).[23] After all, beginning with the First Crusade, Christian hostility towards Islam benefitted from reports of alleged rape or violations of the natural law. A famous example was narrated in the widely-circulating letter that was (falsely?) attributed to the emperor Alexius I Comnenus who, around 1091, while he was under attack by the Pechenegs and Seljuk Turks, asked Count Robert I of Flanders and his Latin knights for help so that the Byzantines might avoid the sacrilege, violence and unspeakable sins perpetrated at the hands of the Muslims. He continued, "What more? We now come to even worse things: men of all ages and orders, boys, adolescents, the youth, the elderly, nobles, servants, and, what is worse and even more shameful, clerics and monks, and – oh, what pain! –, that which […] has never before been said or heard, even bishops are being insulted by the sin of Sodom, and a bishop perished by this obscene sin".[24]

The first attempt at a Latin translation of the Qur'an, the *Lex Mahumet pseudoprophete*, dates to the 12th century and takes us back to the heart of Spain, to the cloister of Santa María la Real de Nájera and to Toledo, where Peter of Poitiers – a notary of Peter the Venerable, abbot of Cluny, who took a trip around Iberia in 1142 – collaborated with the team Peter the Venerable assembled and charged with elaborating the so-called *Corpus Toletanum*. The cornerstone of the project was the new translation of the Qur'an (the same as that printed centuries later by Bibliander), and the effort starred Peter of Toledo (perhaps an Arab convert), Herman of Carinthia and Robert of Ketton. It was Peter of Poitiers who spurred Peter the Venerable to complete a work of refutation against the errors of Islam and who first compiled an early catalogue of the contents (which, as far as we know, was lost). He also reworked the contents, suggesting to the Venerable how he might confront one particular problem that deserved great attention and reprobation. This was the question of sodomy, and Peter of Poitiers included it in the index he sent to the Venerable:

> Do not be scandalised by the chapter where you will read about those who vilely abuse their wives, because it is really so in the Qur'an, and as I learned in Spain, both from Peter of Toledo, my translation partner, and from Robert [of Ketton], now archdeacon of Pamplona, all Saracens perform this act licentiously, as if it were a precept of Muhammad.

What Peter of Poitiers was alluding to (which evoked Ketton's and Peter of Toledo's accounts of Muslim communities) becomes clear by scrolling through the index of the contents: it anticipated that the sixth paragraph of the second book would refute "what [Muhammad] taught on the very foul act of sodomy in his Qur'an, as if speaking on behalf of God: 'Men, plow your women from whatever side you like'".[25]

23. Alain de Lille, *Contra haereticos libri quatuor*, in *Opera Omnia*, ed. by J.P. Migne, Turnhout, Brepols, 1976 (*Patrologia Latina*, 210), col. 425.

24. Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, pp. 279-280, 367-369.

25. "Capitulum etiam quod est ibi de uxoribus turpiter abutentis, non vos nullo modo scandalizet, quia vere ita est in Alchorano, et sicut ego in Hyspania pro certo, et a Petro Toletano, cuius in transferendo socius eram, et a Roberto Pampilonensi nunc archidiacono audivi, omnes Sarraceni hoc licenter quasi ex praecepto Mahumeth faciunt"; "quod insuper rem sodomiticam atque turpissimam docuerit, praecipiens in Alchorano suo, et velut ex persona Dei sic loquens:

There are, however, no traces of this obscene theme in the work that Peter the Venerable ultimately drew up, the *Liber contra sectam sive haeresim Saracenorum* (which he almost certainly completed).[26] Perhaps this was because he did not want to listen to the Toledan group's stories, or to their tendentious readings of the Qur'an, and thus chose not to address them in his work (which nevertheless remains fundamental to the history of the hereticalisation of Islam). However, it is also apparent that Ketton's translation and Peter of Poitiers' letter to the Venerable, which still circulated in a manuscript with the index, offered a curious interpretation of a passage from Surah 2 (Al-Baqara, v. 223: "your brides are like a field for you. Come to your field as you wish…"), which suggested that Muhammad legitimised a sexuality that was flexible enough to include sodomy, at least with his own wives. In the early 14th century, this reading[27] was mainly disseminated by friar Ricold of Monte Croce, as we will see later, but we can also trace its previous diffusion. After all, it was perhaps by virtue of the Toledan translation of the Qur'an that in the 13th century Jacques de Vitry, in his *Historia Orientalis*, could write that Muhammad, the "enemy of nature" (*hostis naturae*), had "secretly" (*latenter*) introduced the sodomitic vice among his people, "which is why most of them improperly abandoned themselves to foul practices not only with both sexes, but also with beasts" (*unde ipsi ex maxima parte non solum in utroque sexus, sed etiam in brutis turpitudinem abusive operantes facti sunt*).[28] Thus, from a vice practiced with their brides it became one performed between men, and even with animals. This view proliferated and Fidentius of Padua, in the *Liber recuperationis Terrae Sanctae* (which sought to justify holy war),[29] and William Adam, in his *De modo sarracenos extirpandi*,[30] also later referred to the alleged Muslim inclination to sodomy. Both were engaged in the evangelisation of the Middle East, which was already beginning to contaminate the Crusader knights, if it is true that among the charges brought against the Templars in 1307 there were accusations of sodomy alongside those of heresy.[31] The longstanding effect of those sensational trials can perhaps still be deduced in a 1451 brief issued by Pope Nicholas V, in which he authorised the inquisitors of Toulouse to take

'O viri, mulieres vobis subiectas, ex quacumque parte vobis placuerit perarate'". I am citing from the edition included in James Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1964, pp. 215-217 (but the entire book is fundamental for reconstructing the history of the *Corpus Toletanum* and of the texts analysed here).

26. *Ibid*., pp. 220 ff.

27. It was obviously far from a reliable reading, especially if extended to relations between men: see *Islamic Homosexualities: Culture, History, and Literature*, ed. by Stephen Murray and Will Roscoe, New York and London, New York University Press, 1997, esp. the articles by Jim Wafer ("Muhammad and Male Homosexuality", pp. 87-96), and Louis Crompton ("Male Love and Islamic Law in Arab Spain", pp. 142-157).

28. Cited in Chiffoleau, "'Contra naturam'", note on p. 278.

29. Tolan, *Saracens*, p. 210.

30. Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, p. 282.

31. On the accusations of sodomy against the Templars and their relationships with the anti-Muslim tradition, see Mark Steckler, "Brotherhood of Vice: Sodomy, Islam, and the Knights Templar", *Perspectives: A Journal of Historical Inquiry*, 34 (2008), pp. 13-28.

action against sodomy and "those guilty of that crime, which is so great that it draws the wrath of God to the children of disbelief" (*patratores quoque sceleris illius tam enormis, propter quod ira Dei venit in filios diffidentiae*).[32]

4. *In times of reconquest*

Until the 15th century it is difficult to establish whether and how much secular and religious courts in the Iberian Peninsula dealt with sodomy, even with the increasing intolerance that characterised the 13th and 14th centuries (the inquisitorial courts were limited to Catalonia). However, among the first civil regulations of the sin, we should include the prescription of the death penalty for those convicted of sodomy, as ordered by Alfonso X of Castile in the Fuero Real (1254),[33] just a few years after his victories against the Muslims in Seville. On the other hand, as recent research has shown, no shared stereotype in the Iberian world identified Muslims as sodomites, at least not until the 15th century. The moor, the wartime enemy, was not at all effeminate; if anything he appeared in literary production as the *longa manus* of a God who was punishing the faults of the Christians.[34] It was different on the level of theological controversy, where in the mid-13th century the same Dominican friars who in Aragon were promoting the introduction of delegated religious courts were also beginning to compose their own works.

Ramon Martí is more famous as an anti-Jewish controversialist than as an Arab scholar and Tunisian evangeliser, but he is also credited with a brief refutation of Islam (the *De secta Machometi*), which was drawn up around 1257 and circulated under different titles. In that book, as John Tolan and others have reminded us, the prophet was targeted above all and attributed with impious teachings, including the view that the practice of sodomy was lawful.[35] The tone of the Castilian treatise *Sobre la seta Machometana* – which, according to tradition, the Mercedarian Peter Pascual wrote as a prisoner of the Emir of Granada before his martyrdom (in 1299 or 1300) – was far more dramatic. The book also circulated in the early modern period in manuscript form, not without a touching evocation of Pelagius, and it repeatedly stressed the prophet's lust, which the moors praised because "he was a good hunter when it came to dating women, so that in an hour he could lay with eleven women". And yet, the author objected, "what was the benefit for you, Muhammad, in laying with so many women, if you could not put sons or daughters in them?". Moreover, while certain traditions recorded that Muhammad himself would wait for his spouses' menstrual cycles before he copulated with them, his lust towards women led him to grant license to his followers to practice the "vice against

32. *Bullarium Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum, opera p. f. Thomae Ripoll, recognitum a p. f. Antonino Bremond*, 8 vols, Rome, Hieronymi Mainardi, 1729-1740, vol. III, p. 301.

33. Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, note on p. 288.

34. Gregory S. Hutcheson, "The Sodomitic Moor: Queerness in the Narrative of the 'Reconquista'", in *Queering the Middle Ages*, ed. by Glenn Burger and Steven F. Kruger, Minneapolis and London, University of Minnesota Press, 2001, pp. 99-122.

35. Tolan, *Saracens*, p. 238.

nature", telling them: "your women are tilled fields, so plow your lands however you wish". Still further, the fact that he was also indulgent in his relations with men was demonstrated in this account by the fact that "he said that if a man sinned with another man in that way, then they should be reprehended, and if they repented and ceased doing it, so that they were no longer misguided, because God is a receiver of penitence and [He is] merciful". How could one be merciful towards a sin that God himself had shown he abhorred above all others, towards a "nefarious crime" that "reigns among the moors" and that demonstrated the evident irrationality of the precepts of Islam?[36] In any case, even if the Castilian Peter Pascual (or somebody else on his behalf) did denounce the prophet's perversion, the ongoing marginality of the question of sodomy in anti-Muslim discourse is attested to, in medieval Aragon, by the Carmelite writer Gui de Perpignan (Guido Terreni or Guiu Terrena de Perpinyà), who was bishop in Mallorca and a controversialist intent on fighting the errors of the Muslims. In his writings, which were composed in the early 14th century and printed in 1528, the vice was associated with the Armenian clergy, but not yet with Muhammad's followers.[37]

In the 14th century there was an increase in intolerance, especially during times of plague, when, at least in Valencia, the virulence of the disease was attributed to the practice of sodomy among the Muslims.[38] A century later, in the 1440s, accusations of the "nefarious vice" would affect relations between the Aragonese *privado* Álvaro de Luna (a foreigner) and the weak Castilian king John II. This same period also saw the drafting of the first *limpieza de sangre* statutes against conversos.[39] This accusation (which politicised the theme of gender in a period of noble infighting and the crisis of the Trastámara dynasty) would also be raised years later by Isabella's entourage and chroniclers (in particular, Alonso de Palencia) against her stepbrother and predecessor Henry IV,[40] who was burned in effigy out of contempt in 1465. He was also guilty of a sort of "maurophilia", as was evident in his use of a powerful military guard of moorish converts to Christianity.[41] But the "permeability" that was

36. I am citing from Pedro Pascual, *Obras*, in *El obispo de Jaén sobre la Seta Mahometana*, vol. 4, ed. by Pedro Armengol Velenzuela, Rome, Imprenta Salustiana, 1908, pp. 34-35, 46-49, 202. In his edition of the *Sobre la se[c]ta Mahometana*, Valencia, Publicacions de la Universitat de València, 2011, Fernando González Muñoz questioned the attribution to Pascual. See also Pier Mattia Tommasino, "Sobre el Pseudo Pedro Pascual", *Al-Qantara*, 33 (2012), pp. 201-211.

37. Guido de Perpignan, *Summa de haeresibus et earum confutationibus*, Paris, Iodocus Badius Ascensius, 1528, f. 37r: "dicunt etiam quod sacerdos habens unam uxorem si cum ea committat sodomiam non peccat, nec ex hoc punitur nec ex hoc tenetur confiteri".

38. David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1996, pp. 119-120.

39. Gregory Hutcheson, "Desperately Seeking Sodom: Queerness in the Chronicles of Alvaro de Luna", in *Queer Iberia: Sexualities, Cultures, and Crossings from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance*, ed. by Josiah Blackmore and Gregory Hutcheson, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 1999, pp. 222-249.

40. Barbara Weissberger, *Isabel Rules: Constructing Queenship, Wielding Power*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2004, p. 74.

41. Ana Echevarría, *Knights on the Frontier: The Moorish Guard of the Kings of Castile 1410-1467*, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2009. More generally, see Barbara Fuchs, *Exotic*

characteristic of Castile, and Spain broadly, when they hosted Christian, Jewish and Muslim populations, would not survive the new directions taken after 1492 under the new religious policy that constructed the myth of Spain as an entirely Catholic, masculine and de-Semitised land.

5. *A fortress awaiting the millennium*

The second half of the 15th century was characterised by dynastic and social struggles among the Castilian nobility, and it also saw Constantinople's capture by the Ottoman Turks. It fell to Pope Pius II to rekindle Crusader zeal, and he convened a council in the city of Mantua to promote a new holy war – one that did not, however, take place. It was on this occasion, in 1459, that Enea Silvio Piccolomini asked the converso Cardinal Juan de Torquemada to draw up a theological refutation of the errors of Islam, one that could be used in Catholic propaganda. The Dominican friar responded to the appeal by composing a text that would enjoy a certain fortune across the Iberian world. In it, he departed from the model set by the converso of Zaragoza, Pedro de la Cavallería, who had written only a few years earlier,[42] and instead used the charge of sodomy explicitly against the infidels:

> The bestial Muhammad seems to have made the serious mistake of admitting the sin against nature, as if it were lawful, even if the Saracens themselves would turn pale in some honest interpretations [if they heard this]. In fact, he tells the Saracens not to contaminate themselves with the infidels, unless they become believers; and regarding women, he says: "your women are your field, make use of them as you wish". There is no need to offer many testimonies to understand just how reprehensible and objectionable this error is.[43]

However, in those times of widespread anti-Turkish obsession[44] and growing fears towards conversos, it was the friar minor Alonso de Espina, in his infamous

Nation: Maurophilia and the Construction of Early Modern Spain, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008.

42. Petrus de la Cavallería, *Tractatus Zelus Christi contra Iudaeos, Sarracenos, et infideles, anno 1450 compositus, nec unquam impressus*, Venice, apud Baretium de Baretijs, 1592, f. 129v ff. Also, Juan de Segovia's *De mittendo gladio in corda Sarracenorum* – written several years later by a theologian who, having finished his fight for conciliarism, began to study Arabic and translate the Qur'an – did not insist upon sodomy. See Darío Cabanelas Rodríguez, *Juan de Segovia y el problema islámico*, Madrid, Universidad de Madrid, 1952; Thomas E. Burman, *Reading the Qur'an in Latin Christendom, 1140-1560*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007, pp. 178-198.

43. "Item bestialis Machometus gravissimo errore errasse videtur, concedens, tanquam licitum, peccatum contra naturam […], licet ipsi Sarraceni pallient quibusdam honestis expositionibus. Dicit enim Sarracenis quod non polluant se cum Infidelibus, nisi credant; et de mulieribus dicit, mulieres vestrae aratura vestra sunt, utimini eis, ut vultis. Quam reprobandus et execrandus sit error iste, non est opus pluribus testimonijs uti". I am citing from the second edition (the first appeared in 1508): Juan de Torquemada, *Contra principales errores perfidi Machometi*, Rome, ex typographia Gulielmi Facciotti, 1606, p. 178.

44. "The anxiety of homosexual passivity, as a metaphor for religious and military permeability, loomed over Christian Europe as much as the anxiety of suffering an armed

Fortalitium fidei (drafted as early as 1458 but printed years later anonymously and re-published several times), to use the argument of the "sin against nature" more pointedly against Islam. From this text, it is usually the books against Jews and conversos[45] that draw scholars' attention, along with that on witchcraft, and yet the fourth book, *De bello sarracenorum*, reveals the extent to which de Espina (himself a converso?) understood the crusade for the true faith to be an all-encompassing struggle directed against all minorities present on Iberian soil, including Jews and Muslims. However, there is still a passage in which de Espina pronounced the usual accusation of perversion against Muhammad, adding that the prophet himself had practiced it and authorised the sexual act in *vase indebito* for men: "in the Qur'anic chapter on 'The Cow', he allows sodomy with both males and females; for this reason alone his sect should be exterminated by the heavenly fire. It is therefore clear that Muhammad's life was bestial, because it was lustful, incestuous, adulterous and he was stained by the most serious of crimes". In a more explicit passage, Friar Alonso reiterated that the surah legitimised the practice of sodomy for all followers of Islam, who thus became prone to sin with both men and women and who were therefore deserving of death at the stake.[46] As is known, the text also had an effect on the strictly judicial level and a few years later came to serve as an "ideological manifesto" for the foundation of the Spanish Inquisition. However, in the first decades of the Inquisition's activity, the court did not want to or could not act against Muslim or morisco groups, who managed to avoid the judges' anger.

The turning point did not become evident until after 1492. In a climate of strong apocalyptic expectations after the fall of Granada (and the expulsion of the Jews, as well as Columbus' journey), it was Martín García Puyazuelo of Caspe, a theologian trained at the college of San Clemente in Bologna, who addressed the challenge posed by Islam more directly. García was a canon of Zaragoza, a vicar of Archbishop Alonso de Aragón, and he had been made an inquisitor in Aragon at the behest of Ferdinand II (the king asked him to investigate the murder of his renowned colleague friar Pedro Arbués, in 1485, and then extended his reach to

invasion by the Muslim side" ("L'ansia della passività omosessuale, in quanto metafora di permeabilità religiosa e militare, incombeva sull'Europa cristiana tanto quanto l'ansia di subire l'invasione armata da parte musulmana"), in Giovanni Ricci, *I turchi alle porte*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2008, p. 78. There was also a widespread fear that those defeated would be raped *in vase indebito* by the fierce Ottoman troops.

45. See, at least, Benzion Netanyahu, "Alonso de Espina: Was He a New Christian?", *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, 53 (1976), pp. 107-165; Alisa Meyuhas Ginio, *"De bello iudaeorum": Fray Alonso de Espina y su "Fortalitium fidei"*, Salamanca, Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, 1998; Ana Echevarría, *The Fortress of Faith: The Attitude towards Muslims in Fifteenth-Century Spain*, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 1999; Stefania Pastore, *Il Vangelo e la spada. L'Inquisizione di Castiglia e i suoi critici (1460-1598)*, Rome, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2003, pp. 12 ff.

46. "in suo Alchorano capitulo de baca concedit sodomiam tam cum masculo quam cum foemina, propter quod solum igne celesti deberet dirimi secta sua. Patet ergo […] quod vita Machometi fuit vita bestialis, quia fuit luxuriosus, incestuosus, adulterus et in crimine pessimo maculatus", Alonso de Espina, *Fortalitium fidei contra Iudeos, Sarracenos aliosque Christianae fidei inimicos*, Ludguni, Stephanus Gueynard, 1511, ff. 243r, 245r.

Barcelona). He then intensified his preaching against the Andalusian *agarenos et ismaelitas* (he knew Arabic and Hebrew well) after the fall of the Nasrids, when he was a confessor to Queen Isabella. Then he was officially commissioned to work toward their conversion (in 1500) and continued to recite sermons as a religious judge (until about 1505) and then as bishop of Barcelona (1512-1521) in the lands of the Crown, which he believed were infested by an Islam that was close to its dissolution.[47] His *Sermones*, published shortly before his death by the canon Augustín Oliván,[48] abounded with millenarian predictions on the imminent downfall of the Muslim world (events he claimed had been prophesied by the Arab interpreters themselves).[49] García's belief in this end was so strong that it justified his recourse to *compelle intrare*.

The alternative, for both the Muslims and Jews, was either to convert or disappear, to follow Christ or to be chastised, even if the "insolence" of the Muslim sect – García pointed out animatedly – was far from being extinguished. On the contrary, it drew support not only from those who openly protected the Muslim communities, but also took advantage of the neglect shown by the shepherds of the church, whom he therefore chastised: "the cause of the non-conversion of the infidels is the negligence of the temporal judges and the inquisitors. In fact, if they had chastised the Hagarenes for their mistakes, they would not have remained in their state of infidelity".[50] He was less polemical in his treatment of

47. On the figure of the bishop, judge and polemicist, see: Sebastián Cirac Estopañán, *Los sermones de don Martín García Obispo de Barcelona, sobre los Reyes Católicos*, Zaragoza, Tip. La Académica, 1956; Josep M. Ribera Florit, *La polémica cristiano-musulmana en los sermones del maestro inquisidor don Martín García*, Barcelona, Universidad de Barcelona, 1967; Louis Cardaillac, *Morisques et chrétiens. Un affrontement polémique (1492-1640)*, Paris, Klincksiek, 1977; Angel J. Sesma Muñoz, *El estabelecimiento de la Inquisición en Aragón, 1484-1486. Documentos para su estudio*, Zaragoza, Institución Fernando el Católico – CSIC – Diputación Provincial, 1987; Juan Blázquez Miguel, *La Inquisición en Cataluña: el tribunal del Santo Oficio de Barcelona, 1487-1820*, Toledo, Arcano, 1990; Gonzalo Martínez Díez, *Bulario de la Inquisición española. Hasta la muerte de Fernando el Católico*, Madrid, Editorial Complutense, 1998; Echevarria, *The Fortress of Faith*, pp. 67-68; Anna Ysabel D'Abrera, *The Tribunal of Zaragoza and Crypto-Judaism, 1484-1515*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2008. There is nothing on García in Miguel Angel Motis Dolader, "'Imago Dei deturpatur': el pecado 'nefando' o 'contro natura' en el arzobispado de Zaragoza (siglos XV-XVI)", *Hispania Sacra*, 52 (2000), pp. 343-365.

48. Martín García, *Sermones*, Cesaraugustae, Georgium Coci, [1520].

49. *Sermo vicesimus tertius in die Penthecostes, in quo interfuerunt ysmaelite*, in *ibid.*, f. 54v: "appropinquatur terminus eorum et sua secta finietur in brevi secundum alphaquinos eorum. Nam omnes tenent quod non debebat habere nec durare annis mille". The starting date of Muhammad's preaching is set at 617, and therefore the last Islamic century would have begun at the beginning of the 16th century (*iam sunt in ultimo centenario*). See also *Sermo quadragesimus quintus in dominica quinquagesimae coram serenissimo rege Hispaniarum Ferdinando*, in *ibid.*, f. 123r. According to calculations attributed to Albumasar, the end would begin 875 years after Muhammad's preaching, a time which coincided precisely with the capture of Granada.

50. "causa non conversionis infidelium fuit negligentia iudicum tam temporalium quam inquisitorum. Nam si illi punirent agarenos de erroribus suis non sic remanerent in infidelitate sua", *Sermo trigesimus secundus pro conversione Agarenorum*, in *ibid.*, f. 85r.

Judaism, which in his printed sermons appeared almost as a secondary objective. In contrast, García considered Islam a faith devoid of natural light, and he drew upon the controversialist tradition to motivate his attack on the Muslims' sexual norms and customs: "Muhammad's law or doctrine does not contain anything good […]. It is evident that a doctrine must be true and in accordance with reason. But the doctrine written by Muhammad is not this way". If man had been allowed up to four wives (not counting concubines), why would God have given Adam the flesh of only one woman? García did not speak of sodomy explicitly, but he placed himself in the wake of the controversy against Islam by asserting that the law of Muhammad was not the same as that of Moses. The Qur'an, moreover, could be compared to the Talmud, but certainly not to the Old Testament.[51] And yet, the idea that the end was near was evident from a clear sign: the *horribilitas peccatorum*. It called to memory the ancient times of Lot, but with a substantial difference: "Now there are enormous sins, much as the sin against nature was [found] in the promised land in those days. Today, however, the sin swarms across Asia, Africa, Greece and Europe, especially Italy; may the heavens ensure that it is not also found in our Spain".[52]

The "nefarious vice" had become globalised; it had no borders and it had contaminated Europe (especially Italy). Moreover, its abominable character, a sign of the end of days, was not being recognised.[53] To García, the spread of the plague in Spain was another fruit of sin and of *infidelitatis*, particularly due to the presence of Jews and moors: "In fact, even if the Jews are gone, their roots have remained; then there are the Hagarenes and the Christians who favour them, and the heretics who have not yet been fully purged".[54] The hand of the Inquisition, he wrote in disconsolation, was still too soft and the sins of the flesh (including incest) were growing out of proportion, overturning the rules of nature. In the Christian era, Sardanapalus' mannerisms had triumphed. A devotee of the Virgin Mary, García invited infidels to accept Christianity, but he also remarked upon the fictitious and utilitarian character of some of the conversions and finally came to decry a phenomenon that he believed was contaminating the true faith and its *mores*: "Christians have turned into Hagarenes with necromancy, through the many superstitions that necromancers perform among them". This was considered a perversion, and not the only one in those times of upheaval: "men transform into women by styling their hair like them, while women wear a hat and belt.

51. "lex vel doctrina Machometi nullum bonum habuit […]. Patet quo ad doctrinam quod debet esse vera et rationi conformis. Sed haec doctrina quam Machometus scripsit non est talis", *Sermo vicesimus septimus in dominica ante adventum, ad quem fuerunt vocati ysmaelite*, in *ibid.*, f. 65r.

52. "Nunc sunt peccata enormia […] sicut tunc fuit illud peccatum contra naturam sed in sola terra promissionis. Sed nunc illud peccatum pullulat in Asia, in Affrica, in Grecia, et in Europa specialiter in Italia; et utinam iam non esset in nostra Hispania", *Sermo centesimus vicesimus quintus et secundus in prima dominica Adventus*, in *ibid.*, f. 394r.

53. *Ibid*.

54. "Nam si iudei recesserunt radices hic remanserunt; etiam agareni sunt ibi et christiani sunt eorum fautores; heretici non plene sunt purgati", *Sermo centesimus quinquagesimus primus in processione contra pestem et locustam*, in *ibid.*, f. 366v.

Women shave their hair to give it to the men, while the latter have women's hair". García did not establish direct ties between perversion, cross-dressing and Muslim contamination, but the statement lends itself to such a reading, and his goal was undoubtedly to insinuate an (implicit?) relationship.[55]

The rise in judicial concerns about sodomy on Spanish soil (in Aragon, but not in Castile) took place in the years when García had a close relationship with Ferdinand II, and it was perhaps also inspired by his anti-Muslim sermons and his function as a religious judge.[56] In William Monter's reconstruction, the first case in Zaragoza – which led to the writing of Clement VII's brief that authorised the inquisitorial court of Valencia, Barcelona and Zaragoza to prosecute sodomy as a heresy (24 February 1524) – was that of the converso Sancho de la Cavallería.[57] However, in these years there was also widespread hostility towards *mudéjares* in Aragon after the Germanía revolts, and efforts to force them to receive baptism and assimilate into the Christian population were intensifying.[58] Further, it is good to remember that in the same year of 1524 Clement VII freed Charles V from his oath not to force Muslims to convert, through the *Id circo nostris*, all while the friars (especially in Valencia) preached about how the plague was a result of the "crime against nature". Yet, if the extension of the religious judges' powers certainly originated, at least in my opinion, in anti-Muslim hostility, we also know that the victims of Aragon's inquisitorial tribunals were not only moors, North Africans and Muslim slaves (who suffered the harshest treatment). On the contrary, among the dozens of people sent to the stake over the century after the papal brief was

55. "conversi sunt in agarenos christiani per nichromantiam per multas superstitiones quae inter eos fiunt per nichromanticos […] homines conversi in mulieres portando capillos mulierum et mulieres portando balreum et birretum et c. Mulieres decapillantur ut dent capillos hominibus et homines portant crines ut mulieres", *Sermo centesimus quinquagesimus secundus in processione generali hospitalis Virginis Marie Gratie*, in *ibid.*, f. 469r.

56. For a picture of the regulatory and jurisdictional aspects, see Bartolomé Bennassar, *Le modèle sexuel: l'Inquisition d'Aragon et la répression des pechés abominables*, *L'Inquisitione Espagnole (XV^e^-XIX^e^ siècles)*, ed. by Bartolomé Bennassar, Hachette, Paris, 1979, pp. 339-369; Rafael Carrasco, "Le châtiment de la sodomie sous l'Inquisition", in *Violences Sexuelles*, ed. by Alain Corbin, Paris, Imago, 1989, pp. 53-69; Tomás y Valiente, *El crimen y pecado contra natura*, pp. 51-53. See also Tomás A. Mantecón Movellán's chapter in this volume. The cases of hermaphroditism that appeared before the Holy Office consistute a story of their own. The most famous one in the 16th century was that of Elena/o de Cespedes, born in Andalusia to an African slave, also discussed by Mantecón Movellán. Another episode that is not very well known has been recounted in François Soyer, "The Inquisition and the 'Priestess of Zafra': Hermafroditism and Gender Transgression in Seventeenth-Century Spain", *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa. Classe di Lettere e Filosofia*, 5/1 (2009), pp. 535-562.

57. William Monter, *Frontiers of Heresy: The Spanish Inquisition from the Basque Lands to Sicily*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, pp. 24, 36, 276-298 (but the whole book is relevant to this topic).

58. The literature on moriscos and the religious courts is very vast. See at least the collection of articles in *Les moriques et l'Inquisition*, ed. by Louis Cardaillac, Paria, Publisud, 1990, and Mercedes García-Arenal, "Moriscos, Spagna", in *Dizionario storico dell'Inquisizione*, ed. by Adriano Prosperi, Vincenzo Lavenia and John Tedeschi, Pisa, Edizioni della Normale, 2010, pp. 1075-1081 (including the bibliography).

issued, there were also old Christians, conversos and many foreigners, including some people of high rank.[59] The penalties were those allotted by civil law (even if they were imposed with less flippancy and more indulgence);[60] the procedures were those adopted by the religious courts; and the scope of the accusations (which almost exclusively affected men) sometimes had a political dimension. Sodomy, for example, was one of the crimes that Antonio Pérez, Philip II's secretary, was charged with when his case was opened in 1591, before it later dragged on to Rome.[61]

But García's work did not remain confined to the lands where he was an inquisitorial judge. After 1492, in fact, his preaching inspired the conversion efforts in Granada pursued by a *faqīh* (jurist) of Xàtiva, himself a convert to Christianity who adopted the name Juan Andrés. The latter appears to have become a canon in the cathedral of Granada, as he reported years later in the opening pages of his *Confusión o confutación de la secta Mahomética y del Alcorán* (Valencia, 1515). Whether it was the real author or a very zealous polemicist masking himself with this pseudonym, Andrés (who claimed to have translated the Qur'an into Aragonese at García's behest)[62] described his conversion to Christianity and accused the moors of obeying vile laws:

59. Cristian Berco, "Social Control and its Limits: Sodomy, Local Sexual Economies, and Inquisitors during Spain's Golden Age", *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 26 (2005), pp. 331-358. Also fundamental is Rafaël Carrasco, *Inquisición y represión sexual en Valencia. Historia de los sodomitas (1565-1785)*, Barcelona, Laertes, 1985. See also Rafaël Carrasco, Bernard Vincent, "Amours et mariage chez les morisques au XVI^{e} siècle", in *Amours légitimes, amours illégitimes en Espagne (XVI^{e}-XVII^{e} siècles)*, ed. by Augustin Redondo, Paris, Publications de la Sorbonne, 1985, pp. 133-149. In general, consult the *Encyclopedia of Homosexuality*, 2 vols, ed. by Wayne Dynes, New York, Garland, 1990, esp. the sections on the "Inquisition" (by William A. Percy, pp. 601-606), "Islam" (by Maarten Schild, pp. 615-620) and "Spain" (by Daniel Eisenberg, pp. 1236-1243).

60. In the 1630s the Jesuit Fernando de Castro Palao summarised Aragonese practice on the topic of sodomy, highlighting how much it derived from a compromise between inquisitorial and civil laws: "aperitur via cognitionis huius criminis ex depositionis unius testis etiam complicis […]; si delictum fateatur et maior sit vigintiquinque annis, curiae saeculari relaxatur in actu publico; si delictum tribus testibus comprobetur, etiamsi singulares sint, relaxandus est quantumvis neget, iuxta legem regni editam anno 1598; si minor est vigintiquinque annis flagellis caeditur, et triremibus adducitur. Simul cum inquisitoribus de hoc delicto Caesar Augustae [Saragozza] cognoscit ordinarius ecclesiasticus, sicut in causis fidei; at Barcinonae cognoscit saecularis iudex simul cum inquisitore. Nunquam ob delictum bestialitatis crematur animal in tribunali Inquisitionis", Fernando de Castro Palao, *Opera Moralis, pars prima*, Lugduni, sumptibus Ioan. Bapt. Devenet, 1656, p. 370.

61. See also Ricardo García Cárcel, Doris Moreno Martínez, *Inquisición. Historia crítica*, Madrid, Temas de Hoy, 2001, p. 306.

62. "Et io per non stare otioso mi conversi a translatar di Arabico in lingua Aragone tutta la legge di Mori, cioè l'Alcorano con le sue giose, e li sette libri della Zuna, pur mosso à questo pel mandato del molto Reverendo Signore Mastro Martino Garcia Vescovo di Barcellona et inquisitore d'Aragon mio Signore, perche nel carico che io teneva da sua altezza di predicare à li Mori potessi con l'autorità della lor medesima legge confondergli et vincergli, il che senza cotal mio travaglio con difficultà havrei potuto fare" ("And in order not to be bored, I turned to translating from the Arabic to the Aragonese language the law of the moors, that is, the Qur'an with its glosses and the seven books of the Sunna, even though moved to this by the mandate of

> Of the things that Mohammed put in the superfluous and dishonest Qur'an, the first is what he says in the first book and first chapter. In Arabic it says *o vize uquum harzon lequum fatu harzoquum anensitum*, which means, "oh moors, your women are for your plowing so that you may put your seed in as you like", which text or verse or saying is very dishonest and superfluous. But the interpreters of the Qur'an exhibited [it] and excused [it] and moreover dishonored [it]: they said that "as you like" means nothing more than according to the customary place. But it says that the man can use his wife whatever way he likes, that is, standing or leaning or laying on the sides or sideways. So that if the text is dishonest by itself, more dishonest still is the gloss. So tell me, oh moor, what you think of this verse of the Qur'an, how do you excuse it, as this saying could not be a part of the book that you claim to be the word of God; rather, all of you moors should say that God wanted to teach the other moors how you use women, which is not reasonable, because one does not read that God taught Adam the way he was to use his wife […], because the scripture of God does not have to mention things so natural to humans, especially in the seventh age of the world, and it is not only natural to men, but also to brute animals and to the birds. Tell me then, oh moor, you who are overseas where there are many male and female camels that do not regard the honesty that the male camels have in this act [because] when they try to use the female, they only do so at night and in a dark place so no other man or animal can see them. Yes, if this honesty is found in brute animals, how much more so it must be in men.[63]

Andrés made no direct allusion to male sodomitic practices, but he cited the usual passage from the Qur'an to accuse Islam of considering sacred a book that went so far as to instruct men on how to practice sexuality.

In addition to the works composed after the conquest of Granada, we should consider the texts that circulated in print and that dated back to the anti-Muslim polemics of the time of the Crusades. For example, there are the writings of the friar-preacher Ricold of Monte Croce (c. 1243-1320),[64] who was famous for the trip he took to Palestine, Armenia, Turkey and Persia, where he sought to convert the Jacobites of Mosul and the Nestorians of Baghdad to papal obedience; his *Liber peregrinationis* matured from this experience. Then around 1300, after he had returned to Italy, the friar (who was planning his own translation of the Qur'an

the very Reverend Lord Master Martino Garcia Bishop of Barcelona and inquisitor of Aragon my Lord, so that in the charge that I held from his height to preach to the moors I could confuse and defeat them with the authority of their own law, which without my labour I would have done with difficulty"). I quote from an Italian vulgarisation of a few years later: Juan Andrés, *Opera chiamata Confusione della setta Machometana, composta in lingua spagnola, tradotta in italiano per Domenico di Gaztelù*, Venice, Bartholomeo detto l'Imperatore, 1545 (1st ed. 1537), f. 5v. On the text, see, among the more recent studies: Jason Busic, "Polemic and Hybridity in Early Modern Spain: Juan Andrés's 'Confusión o confutación de la secta Mahomética y del Alcorán'", *Journal of Early Modern Cultural Studies*, 12 (2012), pp. 85-110; Ryan Szpiech, "Preaching Paul to the Moriscos in the 'Confusión o confutación de la secta Mahomética y del Alcorán' (1515) by Juan Andrés", *La Corónica*, 41 (2012), pp. 317-343. Andrés' work was reprinted in 2003 under the direction of Elisa Ruiz García.

63. Andrés, *Opera chiamata Confusione*, ff. 56v-57r.

64. Emilio Panella, "Ricerche su Riccoldo da Monte di Croce", *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, 58 (1988), pp. 5-85. A modern edition of the text is found in Riccoldo, "Libellus contra legem Saracenorum", ed. by Jean-Marie Mérigoux, in *Memorie Domenicane*, 17 (1986), pp. 1-144. More generally, see Tolan, *Saracens*.

because he had direct knowledge of Islam from his time in the Middle East) drafted an *Improbatio Alcorani*, a text that also came to be widely diffuse in Byzantine territories. We know the sequence of the editions of this text: it was printed by Henri Estienne in Paris in 1509, then translated into German under Luther's instigation, and then republished by Bibliander. Significantly, it had circulated as a print text in Seville and Valencia as early as 1501, in vulgarised form and with the title *Reprobacion del Alcora*, thanks to Peter Hagenback. Later it was disseminated in Latin due to the efforts of Bartolomeo Picerni of Monte Arduo, an opponent of Lorenzo Valla and his theses on the Declaration of Constantine, who dedicated his "re-translation" of the Greek text of Demetrius Cidon to King Ferdinand II (1506). Picerni, in fact, had no doubts that it was up to the ruler of Aragon (who had assumed the regency of Castile just then and who was preparing to attack North Africa), to free Jerusalem, especially since the "Saracens" were now "*molles*" and "*effeminati*", to the point that "they cannot handle weapons, or mount horses, or make anything virile" (*his nunquam licet arma tractare, nec equum ascend, nec virile quicquam facere*).[65] Moreover, Ricold wrote, Arabs and "Saracens" followed the letters of a heretical text that had nothing to do with the law of God, a text that told fairytales and that fell into contradiction every time that it exhorted the faithful to engage in guilt-free sexual intercourse:

> In the chapter of the Cow, [Muhammad] allows what is against nature: that men and women exchange roles. In fact, he tells the Saracens not to contaminate themselves with the infidels before they convert. And regarding women he says: your women are your land, plow them as you wish. And yet in the same chapter he had declared that the sodomites in Lot's time had committed an abominable sin that no people had practiced before.[66]

The prophet therefore showed no consistency and, as in the time of Lot, condoned the practice of a sin (one that was condemned in text but authorised in practice with one's wives) that otherwise would never have become so diffuse, but would simply have become forgotten again.

6. *Expelling evil: a manly decision*

According to a document first examined by Henry Charles Lea, before his death Philip II – who also issued a harsh civil edict to target sodomy – pleaded with the pope that the inquisitors of Castile might have a free hand to act against all who committed the "nefarious crime"; however, Clement VIII did not concede

65. Found in Riccoldo, *Confutatio Alcorani seu legis Saracenorum ex Graeco nuper in Latinum traducta per Bartholomaeum Picenum de Montearduo*, Basel, Nikolaus Kessler, 1506 or 1507, fol. not numbered.

66. "In capitulo Bovis [Muhammad] concedit quod est praeter naturam: misceri masculis & mulieribus. Dicit enim Saracenis, ne maculent seipsos cum infidelibus antequam credant. Et de mulieribus dicit: mulieres vestrae terra est vestra: arate eas sicut vultis. Sed tamen in eodem capitulo ante dixit: quod Sodomitae tempore Loth abominabile peccatum commiserunt, et nationibus quae prius fuerant desuetum", *ibid.*, ch. V, fol. non numbered.

any such papal brief.[67] Moreover, the jurisdiction that had previously been accorded to Ferdinand, and then applied to Aragon, was neither extended to Mallorca or to the Italian islands that had formerly been part of Aragon's domains. On the contrary, the clash with Rome became bitter for Sicily when, upon Philip's death, the viceroy made it so that the pontiff denied the inquisitors authority over the matter. The judges protested and obtained permission to continue to exercise their jurisdiction over the crime only in the cases in which officers of the court engaged in sodomy (the police force was rather well-nourished, restless and jealous of their own wide privileges).[68] In Castile, the secular judges were more effective than the inquisitors: in Seville between 1567 and 1616, in a time when there were tensions with the Andalusian moorish communities (which rebelled, as is known, in 1568),[69] 71 people (including Turks, Berbers, blacks and mulattos) were condemned to burn at the stake for "crimes against nature". The person who confessed many of them in their final moments was an illustrious Jesuit, Pedro de León.[70]

In the first three decades of the 17th century there was a resurgence in the battle against sodomites, primarily in Aragon. Spain had been liberated from the moriscos after the expulsion of 1609-1614,[71] yet the literature preserved the

67. Henry Charles Lea, *Historia de la Inquisición Española*, ed. by Ángel Alcalá, 3 vols, vol. 3, Madrid, Fundación Universitaria Española, 1983-1984, p. 778.

68. See Romano Canosa, *La restaurazione sessuale. Per la storia della sessualità tra Cinquecento e Seicento*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 1993, p. 43. For Sicily, see Nicola Pizzolato, "'Lo diavolo mi ingannao'. La sodomia nelle campagne siciliane (1572-1664)", *Quaderni Storici*, 122 (2006), pp. 449-480; Francesco Ereddia*, Ebrei, luterani, omosessuali e streghe nella contea di Modica. Lotte politiche e conflitti sociali fra intolleranza e Santa Inquisizione (secoli XV-XVII)*, Palermo, Sellerio, 2009, esp. pp. 210 ff. Arnau Albert, who had long been an inquisitor in Mallorca and Sicily, reiterated that sodomy was an eminently Islamic vice: "dico quod non est mirum si illi infideles inciderunt in hunc errorem contra ius naturale, ducentes plures uxores in simul, cum plura alia commiserunt contra ius naturale […]. Item dicti infideles sciebant peccatum illud sodomiticum indicibile esse contra naturam et tamen illud committebant, et publice committunt, ut est vulgatum apud saracenos, quia Deus non sic formavit homines ut se illo untantur modo", Albert, *Tractatus de agnoscendis assertionibus catholicis*, f. 79v.

69. A testimony of the increased hostility towards the moriscos and how much the association between Islam and sodomy had become diffuse on the popular level emerges from a Castilian inquisitorial document of 1575: "Lorenzo Decallar, morisco de los de Granada, esclavo de Hernando de Carrion […]. Fue testificado que contando çierta persona un cuento de Mahoma y Mauliqus en que en efecto dezia que Mauliqus avia cometido el pecado nefando con Mahoma por vengarse del. El dicho Lorenço rrespondio que Mahoma avia echo tal cosa con todos los christianos y que todos eran putos, y que preguntandole si el era moro abia dicho que moro era hasta los huessos […]. Fue botado a tormento […] y abjurase de vehementi y fuese recluido", *Procesos de la Inquisición de Toledo (1575-1610)*, ed. by Julio Sierra, Madrid, Trotta, 2005, pp. 226-227. I owe this reference to Giuseppe Marcocci.

70. Once again, see Mantecón Movellán's chapter in this volume (and his bibliography).

71. In the endless literature on the expulsion of the moriscos and the debate that preceded it, see at least: Rafael Benítez Sánchez-Blanco, *Heroicas decisiones: la Monarquía católica y los moriscos valencianos*, Valencia, Institució Alfons el Magànim, 2001; Leonard P. Harvey, *Muslims in Spain, 1500 to 1614*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 2005; Grace Magnier, *Pedro de Valencia and the Catholic Apologists of the Expulsion of the Moriscos: Visions of Christianity and Kingship*, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2010; Isabelle Poutrin,

stereotypes of their illicit sexuality ("Is this Spain, or Sodom / oh holy Inquisition / My master and Antonio are / followers of Muhammad", from Guillén de Castro, *Los mal casados de Valencia*, act III, 1618) and fires were lit at the stakes again especially in the years between 1618 and 1620.[72] Many of those persecuted for the "nefarious crime" then headed to Rome, trusting in the greater indulgence they would find in the city of the popes and in the private abjuration that would protect them from the greatest risks. But it is important to note that the decision to expel the moors was preceded by a broad theological, legal and political debate. At the end of the 16th century certain interlocutory texts, such as the *Antialcoran* by the Erasmian Bernardo Pérez de Chinchón (1st edition, 1532), hardly dealt with the question of sodomy, except in relation to circumcision and the influence of Berber Islam on Iberian Islam.[73] Not long later, however, the friar-preacher Jaime Bleda once again connected the issue of sodomy to the presence of the (formerly-)Muslim minority in Iberia in a significant page of his famous *Defensio fidei* (1610).[74] In fact, as the Valencian inquisitor recalled, among the many measures introduced to force the moriscos to assimilate once and for all before the final act of expulsion (which many considered impossible), there was a ban that prevented them from using any language other than Castilian or Valencian.[75] Bleda considered it an ineffective, if not harmful, strategy, but pointed out that to justify it its proponents had emphasised the dangers that would derive from the moors' real or simulated ignorance of Iberian languages. This very dangerous situation impeded the magistrates' control over sexuality:

> It may be that their women conceal (as some believe) the very serious crimes of their husbands and have not reported them to the Inquisition; in fact, Muhammad, that nefarious, filthy and ignoble man, the master of all pestilence, granted [in the Qur'an] that: your wife and servant are your property; plow them and spread your seed from whichever side you prefer.

Convertir les musulmans. Espagne, 1491-1609, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 2012; *Los moriscos: expulsión y diáspora. Una perspectiva internacional*, ed. by Mercedes García-Arenal and Gerard A. Wiegers, Valencia, Publicacions de la Universitat, 2013.

72. Carrasco, *Il castigo della sodomia*, p. 53.

73. The Berbers, one reads at the end of the treatise, are a people "untada del vicio de Sodoma como todos lo mas moros de Africa lo son. Y la misma ley de Mahoma non esta muy libre dello, porque algunos glosadores del Alcoran dizen que Mahoma dio licencia para este vicio, lo qual es cosa abominable, y por esto se llama vicio contra natura" ("smeared with the vice of Sodom as all the most moors of Africa are. And the same law of Muhammad is not very free of it, because some glossaries of Alcoran say that Muhammad gave license for this vice, which is an abominable thing, and that is why it is called vice against nature".), Bernardo Pérez de Chincón, *Libro llamado Antialcoran*, Salamanca, Iuan y Andres Renault, 1595, pp. 545-546 (for circumcision as a remedy for lust and sodomy, see p. 146). The work was recently republished under the care of Francisco Pons Fuster (Alicante 2000). On stereotypes of the Berbers, see Miguel A. de Bunes Ibarra, *La imagen de los musulmanes y del Norte de Africa en la Espana de los siglos XVI y XVII. Los caracteres de una hostilidad*, Madrid, CSIC, 1989.

74. Lea, *Historia*, vol. 3, p. 776.

75. Bleda made reference to the theses expounded by the Granadan theologian Pedro Guerra de Lorca, *Catecheses Mystagogicae pro advenis ex secta Mahometana ad parochos et potestates*, Madrid, apud Petrum Madrigal, 1586 (the work invited the strict control of the sexual behaviour of moriscos, especially in terms of prostitution, sodomy and bestiality).

According to Bleda, speaking in Arabic allowed them to hide their sins of the flesh from the eyes of the religious judges, and the situation was all the more serious because it was likely because of the moricos that the papal act which authorised the Inquisition in Aragon to prosecute crimes of sodomy (Bleda ignored the case of Sancho de la Cavallería) was passed: "perhaps these were the children of disbelief among whom the horrendous crime of sodomy began to swarm, as the ambassador Luis de Córdoba, Duke of Sessa, recounted to Pope Clement VII".[76] But Bleda found it even worse that the papal bull displayed to Spain's enemies an image of a land that was particularly infected by the "nefarious vice". In his eyes the Duke of Sessa had made a serious mistake in reporting to the pope on the alleged problems that had arisen due to the presence of the Arabs (according to some, Bleda wrote, in bringing up the question of sodomy he had wanted to make a move against his predecessor Jerónimo Vich, a Valencian sent to Rome by Ferdinand II). In Bleda's view, the Toledan Luis de Páramo had also erred a few years earlier when he published the brief in the first semi-official history of the Inquisition, thereby revealing its origin.[77] On the other hand, a second hypothesis circulated concerning the origins of the text: that the alarm was due to a group of Ligurians who had settled on Iberian soil, "since five hundred merchants of Italian origin were then residing in Valencia" (*quia tunc Valenciae degebant quingenti mercatores, ex ea Italiae Provinciae*). And there was even a third: that the brief actually dated back to the pontificate of Hadrian VI, who had been shocked at the news that the young Spaniards and their families who had arrived at the Curia in Rome had given themselves over to terrible sins (*abominanda*), driven to do so by the perverse nature of the Italians. The Flemish pope and theologian thus sought advice from the University of Salamanca, according to what Onofrius Panvinius recounted in his supplements to Bartolomeo Platina's account, and at that point the idea of strengthening the inquisitors' jurisdiction over the "nefarious crime" in the Aragonese domains was born. In any case, the *gens Valentina* (to whom the proud friar belonged) detested heresy as much as sodomy, and the royal chronicles reported that "this crime was almost unknown" (*fuisse istud flagitium quasi inauditum*) at that time – as rare, Bleda claimed, as it remained in the present: "Our confessors will confirm that they have hardly ever heard this crime

76. "sic eorum feminae flagitia gravissima maritorum forsan dissimulant (ut quidam putant) et Inquisitioni non deferunt; ille enim nefarius, spurcissimus, ignominosusque homo Mahometus pestilentissimus institutor ei concessit [in Alcorano]: uxor et ancilla emptitia possessio vestra est: arate, et vestrum semen spargite quacunque volueritis"; "ii forsan erant illi diffidentiae filii, in quibus horrendum sodomiae crimen pullulare incoepisse in his Regnis narravit Ludovicus de Cordoba Dux Suessae Clementi Papae Septimo", Jaime Bleda, *Defensio fidei in causa neophytorum, sive Morischorum Regni Valentiae, totiusque Hispania, Tractatus de iusta Morischorum a Hispania expulsione*, Valencia, apud Ioannem Chrysostomum Garriz, 1610, pp. 422-424.

77. Luis de Páramo, *De origine et progressu officii Sanctae Inquisitionis*, Madrid, ex Typographia Regia, 1598, pp. 184 ff. On this work, see Kimberly Lynn Hossain, "Was Adam the First Heretic? Diego de Simancas, Luis de Páramo, and the Origins of Inquisitorial Practice", *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, 97 (2006), pp. 184-210; Kimberly Lynn Hossain, *Between Court and Confessional: The Politics of Spanish Inquisitors*, Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 2013.

in confession" (*testabuntur confessarij nostrates, fere nunquam id crimen se audivisse in confessione*). Once the moriscos had been driven out, therefore, the best thing to do was to ask Rome to correct the brief regarding the *declarationem exordii*, or to request that it be extended to all of Spain, since Aragon had no special inclination toward the "Muhammadan vice".[78]

We should note that the theme of sodomy was also employed by other polemicists, jurists and theologians who, like Bleda, sought to justify the terrible provision of 1609. For example, in a work published by the *licenciado* Pedro Aznar Cardona[79] (which was, however, probably composed by his uncle, Jerónimo), the author drew upon Espina as he accused Muhammad of legitimising homosexual relations. He also interpreted the janissary recruitment system in an erotic, rather than purely military, key. In the early 17th century Islamophobia and Turkophobia could easily overlap. In any case, it is clear that apologists of the controversial but "heroic" decision to eliminate the moriscos for good found sodomy to be useful in forming their arguments in favour of the move. That vice, Bleda insinuated, derived from the Muslim presence, so he pushed the popes to issue a (just but defamatory) brief that would give free rein to the judges of the faith. The time had finally come to turn the page and liquidate the "contaminant".

7. *In other worlds*

The discussion on the heretical or non-heretical nature of the crime of sodomy (or rather, of sins against nature) has also been very lively in the historiography on the Latin American world, perhaps the most fruitful in twenty years.[80] Here it is only

78. Bleda, *Defensio fidei in causa neophytorum,* pp. 422-424.

79. Muhammad "aprovò la nefanda sodomia, assi con hombres, como con mugeres, aunque algunos de sus alfaquies, cubiertos de verguença mala, procuran paliar esta abominacion, y lo niegan por honra de su mal maestro, injurioso a la ley natural y divina. Pero por mas que negar lo quieran, sus obras del entonces, y despues la pratica de su bruta ley, convencen lo contario. Diganlo las historias Griegas y Latinas. Diganlo los Sarrallos del Gran Turco, a donde reservan los moçuelos de buen rostro, y de mejores fayciones, y apazible aspecto, de los que le dan de diezmo sus tributarios" ("approved of nefarious sodomy, both with men as with women, although some of their legal scholars, covered with shame, try to alleviate this abomination and deny it for the honour of their bad master, as injurious to the natural and divine law. But no matter how much they want to deny it, their works of that time, and then the practice of their gross law, convince them of the contrary. The Greek and Latin stories recount it. The Sarrallos of the Great Turk say it, where they reserve the boys with a good face and with better features and a gentle appearance, from those who give their taxpayers tithes"), Pedro Aznar Cardona, *Expulsion justificada de los Moriscos*, Huesca, Pedro Cabarte, 1612, f. 96r.

80. *A Inquisição em xeque: temas, controvérsias, estudos de caso*, ed. by Ronaldo Vainfas, Bruno Feitler and Lana Lage da Gama Lima, Rio de Janeiro, Universidade do Estado de Rio de Janeiro, 2006 (esp. the articles by Vainfas and Luiz Mott). On this same theme, a convincing piece is that of Zeb Tortorici, "Against Nature: Sodomy and Homosexuality in Colonial Latin America", *History Compass*, 10/2 (2012), pp. 161-178 (see also the lengthy bibliography on the Latin-American world). More generally, see the collection of essays in *Infamous Desire: Male Homosexuality in Colonial Latin America*, ed. by Pete Sigal, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press,

necessary to note that in the American territories where the Spanish Inquisition acted, the crime of sodomy was not prosecuted by the religious courts, in accordance with Castilian rather than Aragonese practice; the case of Brazil, in contrast, followed Portuguese law.[81] On the other hand, the rhetoric of colonial conquest drew upon the "nefarious vice" to legitimise the subjection of the Native Americans according to an "imperialistic" and "orientalistic" logic that was evident *in nuce* in the speeches of the anti-Muslim Reconquista.[82] If Saint James the apostle changed from *matamoros* to *mataindios*, Christian colonists associated idolatry, demonolatry, sodomy and "natural" servitude as hallmarks of the justifications of the wars of conquest. On this point, it is enough to read Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo's writings, upon which Francisco López de Gómara drew. The latter later inspired José de Acosta, Garcilaso de la Vega and Pedro Cieza de León to distinguish Incan practices from those of other groups that were more permissive towards sodomy in the complex of American communities and empires.[83] However, many thinkers, beginning with the celebrated Bartoloméo de las Casas, doubted that these sins were sufficient to justify the methods of conquest. And while Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, in the *Democrates alter*, recalled the biblical punishment of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah in order to affirm that the Christians could eradicate the Indians "because of their infamous crimes and barbarism and inhumanity",[84] it was Francisco de Vitoria, in the *Relectio de Indiis*, which rejected any idea of holy war, to write that "it is not permissible for the pope to make war against Christians if they are impudent, rogues or even if they are sodomites". "If it were so", he added, "it would be licit for any king to be overthrown, because there are many sinners everywhere". Moreover, he observed, "these sins are more serious among the Christians".[85] Like John Donne would do later, Vitoria reminded his opponents that "crimes against nature" were

2003 (esp. the contributions by Ward Stavig, "Political 'Abomination' and Private Reservation: The Nefarious Sin, Homosexuality, and Cultural Values in Colonial Peru", pp. 134-151, and Serge Gruzinski, "The Ashes of Desire: Homosexuality in Mid-Seventeenth-Century New Spain", pp. 197-214, which also appeared as "Las cenizas del deseo. Homosexuales novohispanos a mediados del siglo XVII", in *De la Santidad a la perversión o de por qué no se cumplía la ley de Dios en la sociedad novohispana*, ed. by Sergio Ortega, México, INAH, 1986, pp. 255-283).

81. For a quick overview, see Mott's article in this volume. I reflected on the processes of the hereticalisation of sodomy under the Portuguese and Roman Inquisitions in Vincenzo Lavenia, "Indicibili 'mores'. Crimini contro natura e tribunali della fede in età moderna", *Cristianesimo nella Storia*, 30 (2009), pp. 513-541.

82. On this aspect, see Federico Garza Carvajal, *Butterflies Will Burn: Prosecuting Sodomites in Early Modern Spain and Mexico*, Austin, University of Texas Press, 2003.

83. Richard C. Trexler, *Sex and Conquest: Gendered Violence, Political Order, and the European Conquest of the Americas*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1995. A more recent reconstruction can be found in Fernanda Molina, "Crónicas de la sodomía. Representaciones de la sexualidad indígena a través de la literatura colonial", *Bibliographica Americana*, 6 (2010), URL: http://www.bn.gov.ar/revistabibliographicaamericana/documentos/2010/Cronicas-sodomia Molina.pdf.

84. Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, *Democrate secondo, ovvero sulle giuste cause di guerra*, ed. and trans. by Domenico Taranto, Macerata, Quodlibet, 2009, p. 89.

85. Francisco de Vitoria, *Relectio de Indis. La questione degli indios*, ed. and trans. by Ada Lamacchia, Bari, Levante, 1996, p. 71.

not well-defined and that the sin of sodomy was practiced everywhere, even among Christians. But those who had struggled to establish the paradigm framing sodomy as an "alien evil" – a hypothesis that allowed for its hereticalisation in Spain, drawing upon the question of the Muslim presence – did not like his words at all.

The echo of an anti-Muslim paradigm in which heresy and sodomy traveled hand in hand could even be felt in the first writings composed by missionaries in Ming China. The Portuguese Dominican Gaspar da Cruz, for example, ended his precocious treaty by noting the presence of Muslims in the empire ("some moors have been scattered across different parts of China"), explaining how they spread and why their community was rather limited. Speaking of the difficulties of evangelisation, he highlighted the hostility of the Chinese towards novelties and foreigners, and he stressed that xenophobia manifested itself against the "moors" and against the Christians who had recently settled in Canton (ch. XXVIII). But at that point he abruptly finished the book with a final chapter (XXIX) in which he narrated "some punishments of God that the Chinese received in the year fifty-six". A strong windstorm had struck China, a river had flooded and an earthquake had made the ground shake. And to Cruz all of this upheaval seemed to be the manifestation of a terrible divine punishment, the same reserved in the Bible for the city of Lot. Moreover, this apocalyptic rebuke had a reason, as Cruz bitterly denounced the Chinese for their "abominable ineptitude" as they gave themselves "in such a way to the nefarious sin" without recognising it for what it was: was it that they had been contaminated by the Muslims? That they deserved punishment or colonial submission for their inclination toward the "nefarious vice"?[86]

(*Translated by Kalina Yamboliev*)

86. See Gaspar da Cruz, *Tractado em que se cõtam muito por estẽso au cousas da China*, Évora, André de Burgos, 1569. See also *South China in the Sixteenth Century: Being the Narratives of Galeote Pereira, Fr. Gaspar da Cruz, 0.P. and Fr. Martin de Rada*, ed. by Charles Boxer et al., London, Hakluyt Society, 1953, pp. 223-227. These pages were also discussed by Ronnie Po-chia Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City: Matteo Ricci, 1552-1610*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010, Italian trans., *Un gesuita nella città proibita. Matteo Ricci 1552-1610*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2012, p. 76.

II

Interactions

Tomás Antonio Mantecón Movellán

Beyond Repression: Gender Identities and Homosexual Relations between Muslims and Christians in 16th- and 17th-Century Spain

1. *Introduction*

In 1492 the joint offensive of the Catholic monarchy defeated Abu ʻAbd Allāh Muhammad, the king of the last Muslim outpost in the Iberian Peninsula. The conquest of the Emirate of Granada was the final act in a process that had started in the early 11th century and witnessed the gradual erosion, on the part of Christian authorities, of the lands conquered by Arab and Berber peoples in the 8th century. Less than three months after the fall of al-Andalus, Isabel of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon also imposed the expulsion of the large Jewish minority. The compulsory choice was either exile or conversion to Christianity. Afterwards, the considerable number of people who secretly maintained loyalty to their former faith was prosecuted by the Inquisition under the charge of being "Judaising". This was the culmination of a process that had started much earlier than the expulsion and that had already raised suspicions against all new converts who continued to maintain ties to the clothing, rituals and customs of the faith they had held prior to their apostasy.[1]

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1. It is almost impossible to summarise the vast historiographical debate on Spanish Jews and "conversos". Just to mention some recent contributions to the field: Miriam Bodian, *Dying in the Law of Moses: Crypto-Jewish Martyrdom in the Iberian World*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2007; Yirmiyahu Yovel, *The Other Within: The Marranos. Split Identity and Emerging Modernity*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2009; *Late Medieval Jewish Identities: Iberia and Beyond*, ed. by Carmen Caballero-Navas and Esperanza Alfonso, New York, Palgrave-Macmillan, 2010; Ángel Alcalá, *Los judeoconversos en la cultura y sociedad españolas*, Madrid, Trotta, 2011. For an approach incluing a reflection on both "judeoconversos" and "moriscos" in Iberian society, see: James Amelang, *Historias paralelas. Judeoconversos y moriscos en la España moderna*, Madrid, Akal, 2012; María Rosa Menocal, *The Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews, and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain*, Boston, Little Brown, 2012; David Nirenberg, *Neighboring Faiths: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism in the Middle Ages and Today*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2014; *After Conversion: Iberia and the Emergence of Modernity*, ed. by Mercedes García-Arenal, Leiden, Brill, 2016.

Once the medieval conquest of the territories under Muslim rule (the Reconquista) had been completed, a similar destiny was also envisioned for the *mudejares*, Muslims who lived in the Christian kingdoms across the Iberian Peninsula in organised communities and who were initially tolerated, despite the social tensions and struggles that arose in everyday life.[2] Additionally, and for sound reasons, the Muslims of the newly-conquered Emirate of Granada faced the same lot. In 1502 the obligation to convert was imposed in Castile and, after no small number of conflicts, it also became effective in the territories of the Crown of Aragon in 1526.

Even while the courts of the Inquisition exerted vigilant and fierce control over this recently converted minority, some channels of mediation remained open. Especially in the Aragonese territories, where Muslim residents were well integrated into the productive community, those negotiated spaces guaranteed the survival of entire communities of moriscos (as Christian converts of Muslim origin were termed), with their own specific identities. Thus, a long period characterised by tensions and misunderstandings ensued and, together with other episodes of conflict, resulted in the Alpujarras Morisco revolt (1568-1571) and, eventually, in the moriscos' expulsion (1609). This last decision was difficult to explain, but it was influenced by other changes in the Catholic monarchy's diplomatic relations. Indeed, the expulsion of the moriscos developed as a counterpoint to the peace treaties signed between the Crown and its rival European powers, mainly England in 1604 and the Netherlands in 1609, which the Catholic Spanish monarchy also considered to be heretical states.[3]

In Spain, this time of tense coexistence between a Christian majority and a morisco minority renders the historical period considered in this paper – Spain in the *Siglo de Oro* – a particularly fruitful area of analysis for the study of Christian-Muslim social and cultural interactions. Moreover, it provides many opportunities to re-read those relations from a new perspective focused on the history of sexuality.

In fact, the Catholic monarchs promoted social homogenisation based on *limpieza de sangre* (the principle of the innate purity of Christian ancestry, which implied, as a corollary, the discrimination of ethnic and religious minorities), as

2. Bernard Vincent has underlined this circumstance and the historiographical myth of the harmonic coexistance of the three faiths in medieval and early modern Spain. Bernard Vincent, "Convivencia difícil", in *Las figuras del desorden. Heterodoxos, proscritos y marginados*, ed. by Santiago Castillo and Pedro Oliver, Madrid, Siglo XXI, 2006, pp. 57-80.

3. Among many others, with very different viewpoints about this, see: Vincent Bernard, Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, *História de los moriscos: vida y tragedia de una minoría*, Madrid, Revista de Occidente, 1978; Mercedes García-Arenal, *Inquisición y moriscos. Los procesos del Tribunal de Cuenca*, Madrid, Siglo XXI, 1978 (2nd ed. 1983, 3rd ed. 1988); Trevor J. Dadson, *Tolerance and Coexistence in Early Modern Spain: Old Christians and Moriscos in the Campo de Calatrava*, Woodbridge (Suffolk) and Rochester (NY), Tamesis, 2014; *Expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain: A Mediterranean Diaspora*, ed. by Mercedes Garcia-Arenal and Gerard Wiegers, trans. by Consuela Lopez-Morillas and Martin Beagles, Leiden, Brill, 2014; Bernard Vincent, *Islam d'Espagne au XVIe siècle: résistances identitaires des morisques*, Saint-Denis, Éditions Bouchène, 2017; Rafael Benítez Sánchez-Blanco, "La expulsion de los moriscos: el triunfo de la razón de Estado", in *Refugiados, exiliados y retornados en los mundos ibéricos (siglos XVI-XX)*, ed. by José Javier Ruiz Ibáñez and Bernard Vincent, Madrid and México, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2018, pp. 175-194.

well as on the rigid observance of Catholic religious precepts. At the same time, both secular and inquisitorial courts drew upon various arguments and pretexts to justify their prosecutions of those stained by the "vile vice" of sodomy.

2. *"Natural order" and "public peace"*

Sodomy, according to a "viral" analogy, was considered an evil presence in Spanish society because its contaminating influence came from subjects who were traditionally alien to the native Christian community: foreign merchants, Muslims and Jews, but also those "deviants" who were "Spanish" but a "bad" kind of Spanish. Ethnic prejudice and sexual anxieties intersected in Spain and resulted in an explosive mixture.[4]

In other, and rather different, European contexts, expressions of clandestine homoerotic sociability were well-known, and they were frequently condemned by civic and ecclesiastical courts, which dealt with the cases and sought to reach resolutions for them.[5] Nonetheless, within a number of urban contexts across 16th- and 17th-century Spain, there were spaces in which specific vivid homoerotic subcultures bloomed that stimulated a process of group identification among those who partook in them, one that affected, and was affected by, the perception they had of themselves as individuals. In this context, as we will see, the ethnic and religious alterity of Muslims and moriscos occupied a specific place in the economy of desire and transgression.

In the *Siete Partidas*, the legislative code promulgated by Alfonso X of Castile in the 13th century, sodomy was defined as "the sin committed by men who lie with other men against nature", which, it reads, causes "the birth of everything that is evil". According to the text, in engaging in this offense "a bad reputation ensued not only for the person who commits the crime but also the place where it is allowed [to take place]". Arguments of this kind were used to justify the heaviest punishments against the sodomite and all those who consented to the "vile vice".[6]

Almost two centuries later, a norm promulgated by the Catholic monarchy in Medina del Campo on 22 August 1497 established burning at the stake and the confiscation of property as punishments for these practices.[7] The *Siete Partidas*

4. See Federico Garza Carvajal, *Butterflies Will Burn: Prosecuting Sodomites in Early Modern Spain and Mexico*, Austin, University of Texas Press, 2003.

5. Tomás A. Mantecón Movellán, "Experiencias sodomitas y justicia urbana en sociedades temprano-modernas del Mediterráneo occidental", in *La vida inquieta. Conflictos sociales en la Edad Moderna*, ed. by Ofelia Rey Caselao, Ruben Castro Redondo and Camilo Fernández Cortizo, Santiago de Compostela, Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, 2018, pp. 69-88. On England, for instance, see Tim Hitchcock, Michelle Cohen, *English Masculinities, 1660-1800,* New York and London, Routledge, 1999, pp. 60-61.

6. *Las Siete Partidas del Rey don Alfonso el Sabio, cotejadas con varios códices antiguos por la Real Academia de la Historia*, 3 vols, Madrid, 1807, pt. VII, tit. 21, laws 1 and 2.

7. *Novísima recopilación de las leyes de España, divida en XII libros, en la que se forma la Recopilación publicada por el señor don Felipe… mandada formar por el señor don Carlos IV*, Madrid, 1992, book XII, tit. 30, law 1, pp. 427-428.

and the custom of 1497 defined the phenomenon (and its criminalisation) as it was understood in Spain in the 16th and 17th centuries: sexual relationships among men were considered a sinful vice that disrupted the natural order and public peace, polluting all of society. It was an "atrocious crime" not only in the moralist's eyes and in those of the church courts but also in legal culture and doctrine.

Because it occupied a liminal space between crime and sin, sodomy was always considered an offense of mixed – church and state – competences (*mixto foro*), which therefore fell under the jurisdiction of both ecclesiastic and secular justice. Regarding the first, the "crime against nature" was prosecuted by bishops' courts across Christian Europe, but the involvement of inquisitorial courts was specific to the Iberian context, which considered sodomy as both divine and human *lèse-majesté*. In the Crown of Aragon, the Inquisition acquired full competence over the crime from the moment that, in 1524, Clement VII gave it the authority to intervene both against the "vile vice" and bestiality.[8]

In contrast, in Castile sodomy was never a specific matter of concern to the Inquisition, but only appeared as an aggravating circumstance in processes related to other, more properly heretical, crimes: not even the pressure exerted by Philip II, who strongly defended the repression of crimes of a moral nature as a priority, was successful in gaining the pope's approval to extend inquisitorial power to this magnitude, despite the debate produced on the matter.[9]

While the control exercised by ecclesiastical courts over sodomy is a widely studied topic, this article focuses rather on the activities carried out by secular justice in Spain during the early modern period.[10] This will be done by drawing upon an extraordinary source, the manuscript entitled *Compendio de las industrias en los ministerios de la Compañía de Jesús*, penned in the second half of the 16th century and the early decades of the 17th by the Jesuit father Pedro de León. In that period, the Jesuits were recovering their own position within the Catholic hierarchy in order to take active part in urban and rural missions and, as father Pedro de León himself did, to hear the confessions of jailed prisoners. He also collected detailed information about those prisoners condemned to capital punishment, whom he attended to in their last days. These reports contain the prisoners' commentary and perceptions of their own lives, alongside various facts related to the circumstances of their crimes.

8. Vincenzo Lavenia, "*Indicibili Mores*, Crimini contro natura e tribunal della fede in età moderna", *Cristianesimo nella storia*, 30 (2009), pp. 513-541, esp. p. 519. This in Portugal, where in 1553 John III provided the inquisitors with jurisdiction over the "vile vice", which was later reconfirmed by the Cardinal-Infante Henrique and recognised by pope Pius IV, although only in 1562, with the brief *Exponi nobis*. See Luiz Mott, "Sodomia, Portogallo", in *Dizionario storico dell'Inquisizione*, ed. by Adriano Prosperi, Vincenzo Lavenia and John Tedeschi, Pisa, Edizioni della Normale, 2010, pp. 1450-1451.

9. Bartolomé Bennassar, *Storia dell'Inquisizione spagnola*, Milan, Rizzoli, 1980, p. 300; Lavenia, *Indicibili mores*, p. 520.

10. A basic reference is Rafaël Carrasco, *Inquisición y represión sexual en Valencia. Historia de los sodomitas (1565-1785)*, Barcelona, Laertes, 1985; and Rafaël Carrasco, "Le châtiment de la sodomie sous l'Inquisition", in *Violences Sexuelles*, ed. by Alain Corbin, Paris, Imago, 1989, pp. 53-69.

Inspired as he was by such uplifting aims, the author preserved the memories he collected during his activity as a confessor to the condemned who sat in Seville's prisons awaiting their fates. In his registry, there is precious information about the sodomites burned at the stake who lived in Seville between the 16th and 17th centuries, although these details appear only sporadically. His text recorded individual and isolated cases that were founded on specific accusations; only occasionally was there an institutional move to break apart an entire organised group of homoerotic sociability.[11]

3. *Dying as a sodomite*

The Sevillian courts punished the practice of sodomy with rigor, and Pedro de León's notes permit us to retrace the scenarios of their activities. For the period under consideration here, between 1578 and 1616, the Jesuit registered 309 people who were executed in Seville, 15% of whom were burned at the stake because of the "nefarious crime". Every year, therefore, one or two men were burned on the charge of sodomy. This is a considerable figure, taking into account that between 1566 and 1620 those condemned by the inquisitorial courts of Barcelona and Valencia were two to three times the number of those in Seville, respectively, yet only a single individual was released to the secular court for execution in either city. In Zaragoza, the figure could reach up to six prosecuted per year, but on average it was one or two.[12] Nevertheless, as in the other inquisitorial courts just mentioned, in more than half of the cases the judges based their accusations on charges of bestiality; in father León's register, only two were released to the secular court for having had sexual intercourse with animals.

The repression generally affected the lower classes, men who were economically insecure, such as daily workers, servants, foreigners, young and marginal people, and those occasionally assisted by some urban charitable institution. Other times the accused included people who, on account of their

11. Pedro de León, *Compendio de las Industrias en los ministerios de la Compañía de Jesús con que prácticamente se demuestra el buen acierto en ellos* (1628). I have consulted the manuscript version, which is kept in the Library of the University of Salamanca, MS 573, f. 247 ff. In this article, this document will be referred to using the library reference. This version of the manuscript has been compared and contrasted with the transcription edited in: Pedro de León, *Grandeza y miseria en Andalucía. Testimonio de una encrucijada histórica (1578-1616)*, ed. by Pedro Herrera Puga, Granada, Facultad de Teología, 1981.

12. See Mary E. Perry, "The 'Nefarious Sin' in Early Modern Seville", *Journal of Homosexuality*, 16/1-2 (1989), pp. 67-90, esp. p. 71; Carrasco, *Inquisición y represión sexual*, pp. 76-77. The average of those condemned to death was about 11% of the cases in both the kingdoms of Castile and Aragon, but just taking moriscos, Berbers and blacks into consideration increases the average to a bit over one-third. This was clearly implemented against vagrants and slaves (about 26%) more often than other social categories. The upper class averaged at less than 5%. See Cristian Berco, "Social Control and its Limits: Sodomy, Local Sexual Economies, and Inquisitors during Spain's Golden Age", *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 36/2 (Summer 2005), pp. 331-358: 336-337.

professions, lived in exclusively male spheres of sociability: teachers, clerics, soldiers, guards, grocers, foremen, grooms or minor craftsmen. The largest group was comprised of young men who had been initiated into their sexuality by other men from their same background. In Seville, for instance, on 14 February 1579, two adolescent boys, one of them from Biscay, were tried "for dishonest caresses between them, lying in an inn and in bed together". They were seen "flirting, saying filthy words and touching each other".[13]

Orphanages were places where these kinds of practices often arose in an involuntary fashion. The managers of these institutions, adults who held authority and who were stronger than the children they sheltered, sometimes took advantage of their positions of power to abuse their dependants, either through force or seduction. This was the case of a "brown, smelly, shabby youngster" who was 22 years old when he died at the stake in Seville in 1596 for having committed the "vile sin" with various children of 8 and 9 years of age who had been sheltered at the House of Mercy (*Casa de la Misericordia*).[14] Two elementary school teachers, Miguel Jerónimo de Salazar (tried on 24 March 1588) and Juan de Quevedo, a teacher at Utrera (who was burned at the stake on 30 March 1579), also exploited infantile fragility and the natural dependence of students on their instructors. Quevedo had acquired his education in Jesuit-run schools under the guidance of father Acebedo, who had also been a teacher to Pedro de León and Miguel de Cervantes.[15]

Apart from the cases described above, the number of adults who used violent means to seduce, abuse and force children into sexual acts was small.[16] There is the case of a man tried on 18 May 1586 for abusing a 4-year-old child, or the 1616 case of the Turkish-Tunisian slave Hamete, who had encountered a child of almost 9 just outside of town and beat him so brutally that the child was found covered in tears and blood.[17] The Trinitarian Juan González, after being solemnly degraded and released to the secular court, was burned on 14 October 1595 for having seduced children (in Ecija) and for having had sexual intercourse with a donkey. Previously he had been punished by his own religious order and driven to abandon the secluded life. Nine years had passed since he had departed the convent and begun to live as a peasant with a new identity, but then one day he once again "gave in to this sin".[18]

Others were not attracted to children but harboured clear inclinations towards teenagers. The priest Pascual Jaime, who was 56 years old in 1578, served in the Duke of Alcalá's household and had this weakness. For this reason, he was

13. León, *Compendio*, ff. 250-251.

14. *Ibid.*, ff. 343-344.

15. *Ibid.*, ff. 250-251.

16. According to Vicente Graullera Sanz, this option was the most frequent in the cases examined by the governor and the *Audiencia Real* of Valencia in the 16th century. Commonly, these were about active adults and minors who were 16 years old and played the passive role in the sodomitic intercourse. See Vicente Graullera Sanz, "Delito de sodomía en la Valencia del siglo XVI", *Torrens*, 7 (1991-1993), pp. 213-326, esp. pp. 214 and 217.

17. León, *Compendio*, ff. 390-392.

18. *Ibid.*, ff. 334-336.

sentenced to death, a year before the teacher of Utrera. For more than forty years, Pascual had shown a manifest preference for foreign youngsters passing through his city. He chose poorly dressed but handsome candidates, "took them to his home, washed and dressed them with elegant clothes". Then he invited them to have lunch or dinner, and, finally, to lie in his bed, "where, due to flattery, persuasion and money, they eventually gave their consent".[19]

Sometimes, the judges made every effort to ensure that teenagers, once initiated into the "vile vice", no longer continued to practice it. They were flogged and forced to attend the executions of their sexual partners, so that they might witness them succumb to the flames. After the executions, the adolescents were also made to cross the fire so that the terrible disciplinary image of the perils awaiting those who persisted on the path of "vice" would become impressed on their minds.[20]

We have seen how, every year, the practice of sodomy led one or more men to the stake in Seville. The stake was an instrument of punishment used for repressive purposes and, at the same time, for preventive and deterrent ends. It consumed the body and purified the soul. The condemned were suffocated and then devoured by the flames until they became ash, thus turning into nothing. It could not have been otherwise. The "nefarious sin" was a "shameful crime" capable of "destroying the natural order", and, as a consequence, it was "punished by divine justice". It could cause God to become enraged to the point of "sending hunger and pestilence, as well as other torments, to Earth".[21]

Whoever offended both God and men and, at the same time, polluted the earth and the social relations around him with his vice, deserved only fire. The flames annihilated the condemned man and stained his memory among the living. The burden of avoiding the tragic outcomes of this punishment lay in the hands of the family heads, tutors and all those responsible for the good care of children and teenagers, including clerics and missionaries. They were expected to make every effort in their educational roles and take the necessary measures to stop the vile sin from emerging and spreading.

4. *Identity versus social discipline*

The study of what acts were considered expressions of deviant sexuality must confront the challenge of conducting research based on sources that were polluted by the institutional bodies that produced them only as they aimed to repress what was understood to be a "moral excess". This is even more evident in research on the so-called "crime against nature". As a result, we must interpret and contextualise the information found in these sources in a more nuanced way, remaining aware

19. *Ibid.*, ff. 250-251.

20. In 1606 a "small child named Bernardo" was forced to attend as his seducer was burned at the stake. His lover was a young boy of 18 named Francisco. Bernardo was also present for the whipping of one of his lovers, a minor of 14 years named Jerónimo. See *ibid.*, ff. 359-360.

21. *Ibid.*, ff. 283-285.

of the critical and repressive aims of the institutions that produced them. The first part of this discourse sheds light on one specific problem: the uses and meanings of sex and gender for those who were directly involved. The second, in contrast, unveils the moral and penal logic of repression, which sought to contend with what was considered an "unnatural" sin and an "atrocious crime".

Nevertheless, the prohibition of a sexuality that was supposedly deviant or "against nature" favoured the appearance of a series of defensive techniques. Body language, gestures, and an individual's sociability, secrecy or segregation gave rise to new forms of communication that were only understood in specific places and thus shaped a subculture that was able to provide a certain sense of identity, self-awareness and probably also solidarity. We can gaze into the world of sodomite subcultures in Spain in the first part of the early modern period if we can recreate the pressures the individuals implicated felt as a result of the anxieties of the time, and if we can grasp their existential strategies and options across the longer history of the construction of sexual identities. It required the greatest caution to take part in a socially proscribed form of sociability and to practice a sexuality that implied the death penalty. As a result, and significantly so, this triggered the development of specific languages comprised of gestures and other codes and models of behaviour.

Catholic moralists considered the sense of touch especially dangerous: it established physical contact which could easily degenerate into a forbidden sexual relationship. "Children and teenagers" had to pay particular attention "not to be taken by the hand by a man" since, once the door to the senses was open, they risked becoming trapped on a slippery slope that could lead to the practice "of this animal-like vice": "through the touch, in fact, they know each other; thanks to the use of a certain sign when they touch their hands, they can know if they belong to their group [of the sodomites] or not and whether they can dare or not". Moralists considered the realm of the senses dangerous. In their view, sodomites "recognised each other through the smell and understood their thoughts as if they could read them or as if they talked; they recognised each other at first sight, because of their pace or certain swaying [of the hips]".[22] On the other hand, the vocabulary employed was not very different from that used in other types of courting and emotional or amorous relationships.[23]

If we consider the situations and behaviours analysed thus far, it becomes evident that "sodomy" was an umbrella term for many plural and diverse realities.[24] Among the practices that, at the time, could lead a man or boy to the stake due to the "vile vice", there were cases of relatively stable couples of adult lovers, voluntary prostitutes, seducers of children and teenagers, extortionists, youngsters who were initiated into their sexuality through games with their

22. *Ibid.*, ff. 277-281 and 310-311.

23. See Carrasco, *Inquisición y represión sexual*, pp. 101, 107-108, 117, 119.

24. On the construction and meanings of the category of "sodomy" in western Christianity, see: Mark D. Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy in Christian Theology*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1997; Glenn W. Olsen, *Of Sodomites, Effeminates, Hermaphrodites, and Androgynes: Sodomy in the Age of Peter Damian*, Toronto, Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2011.

equals and, finally, those who engaged in bestiality. It is certainly important to take into account the polysemy inherent in the definition of sodomy, but it is equally necessary to consider the degree of prejudice that has traditionally been responsible for the oversimplification of this subject.

The tendency to classify different behaviours under the same label is a characteristic deformation of the sources available for us to study such topics. As we analyse the different forms of sexuality in the plural, however, we can at least avoid falling into the pattern of oversimplification followed by past thinkers, who tended to conflate a diverse cluster of sexual transgressions under the stigmatising category of the "crime against nature". Moreover, it is worth pointing out that "sodomy" and "crimes against nature" were not the same thing. Rather, sodomy was a subcategory of "crimes against nature" – the latter also included masturbation, heterosexual fornication and bestiality – at least since the articulation of the sins of "lust" in Thomas Aquinas' *Summa theologiae* (13th century). This oft-quoted classification had a long-lasting influence on subsequent western Christian moral theology.[25]

In our eyes, it is clear that there is more than just a subtle difference between seduction and the use of violence to induce a sexual relationship. There is a significant distinction between paying for sexual services and corrupting a child by taking advantage of one's position as an educator, or between violent coercion and youngsters' innocent initiation into the sexual world in their own houses or in inns. None of these scenarios belong to the same phenomenon, although their treatment in Spain – the case of Seville is expressive enough – was identical in all cases, once the measures of social control were activated. The attitude of the judicial institutions thus reflected a moral code that was focused more on practice than on the relational dynamics of sexual intercourse.

As such, punishments were apportioned according to reasons or arguments that considered no criteria other than moral condemnation and fear over the social impact of "atrocious crimes", though certain other key elements, such as the social position of the accused, were also taken into account. The institutions in charge of repressing the "vile vice" issued their judgements not only on the sexual acts, but also on the degrees of implication of those involved, their voluntariness and the liability or accountability of the offenders. Any suspicion could be enough to initiate deliberations in favour of the death penalty (which were notoriously arbitrary), while the social position of the suspect influenced the judges' decisions on the actions to be taken in any particular case: in essence, the penalty was proportional to the suspect's position on the social scale, increasing in severity for those in the lowest ranks. Lastly, religious men, who were often the confessors, were asked to make every effort to avoid engaging in similar behaviour. In general, however, their sacred status made them immune to death at the stake, although they could still face punishment at the hands of their superiors.

In any case, in each of the different examples analysed there emerged identifiable languages and codes of behaviour that functioned within the circles of homosexual sociability. Yet, contemporarily, these recognisable gestures and

25. Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy*, p. 175.

signals were still exclusive enough to avoid the notification or condemnation of those who forbade them. Therefore, across the large urban centers of Spain, and already in the first part of the early modern period, evidence points to the development of milieus of homosexual sociability and awareness that were similar to those that appeared just afterwards in other European contexts.

Lively cities such as Amsterdam,[26] Paris[27] and London,[28] along with others across the Mediterranean region[29] and colonial America,[30] witnessed the birth of subcultures that were associated with homosexual sociability from the second

26. Theo Van der Meer, "Sodomy and its Discontents: Discourse, Desire, and the Rise of a Same-Sex Proto-Something in the Early Modern Dutch Republic", *Historical Reflections*, 33/1 (2007), pp. 41-67; Theo Van der Meer, "Sodomy and the Pursuit of a Third Sex in the Early Modern Period", in *Third Sex, Third Gender: Beyond Sexual Dimorphism in Culture and History*, ed. by Gilbert Herdt, New York, Zone Books, 1993, pp. 137-212; Theo Van der Meer, "The Persecutions of Sodomites in Eighteenth-Century Amsterdam: Changing Perceptions of Sodomy", in *The Pursuit of Sodomy: Male Homosexuality in Renaissance and Enlightenment Europe*, ed. by Kent Gerard and Gert Hekma, New York, Harrington Park Press, 1989, pp. 263-307. See also Leo J. Boon, "Those Damned Sodomites: Public Image of Sodomy in the Eighteenth-Century Netherlands", in *The Pursuit of Sodomy*, pp. 237-248.

27. Michel Rey, "Police and Sodomy in Eighteenth-Century Paris: From Sin to Disorder", in *The Pursuit of Sodomy*, pp. 129-146; Jeffrey Merrick, "Commissioner Foucault, Inspector Noël, and the 'Pederasts' of Paris, 1780-83", *Journal of Social History*, 32/2 (1998), pp. 287-307; *Homosexuality in French History and Culture*, ed. by Jeffrey Merrick and Michael Sibalis, New York, Harrington Park Press, 2001; *Homosexuality in Modern France*, ed. by Jeffrey Merrick and Bryant T. Ragan, New York, Oxford University Press, 1996.

28. Alan Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1995 (or. ed. 1982); Rictor Norton, *Mother Clap's Molly House: The Gay Subculture in England 1700-1830*, London, Gay Male Press, 1992; Randolph Trumbach, "The Transformation of Sodomy from the Renaissance to the Modern World and its General Consequences", *Signs*, 37/4 (2012), pp. 832-848; Randolph Trumbach, "London Sapphists: From Three Sexes to Four Genders in the Making of Modern Culture", in *Third Sex, Third Gender*, pp. 111-136; Randolph Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution*, vol. 1, *Heterosexuality and the Third Gender in Enlightenment London*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1998. On the 18th century, see Tim Hitchcock, *English Sexualities, 1700-1800*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1997.

29. For early examples in Italy and for an analysis of "sexual crimes", including sodomy, as causes of urban public disorder and problems of governance, see: Carol Lansing, "Gender and Civic Authority: Sexual Control in a Medieval Italian Town", *Journal of Social History*, 31/1 (Autumn, 1997), pp. 33-59. Orvietan statutes on sexual offenses were very much focused on different versions of sodomy in the end of the 13th century. Carol Lansing also considered developments regarding these practice in other cities and offered a framework of what was considered sodomy. The main penalty was usually public humiliation, beating and exile. The punishment was quite harder in the early modern period. See, for instance, Tomás A. Mantecón, "The Pope's Sword: Early Modern Capital Punishment, Homicide and Cultures of Suffering. Rome in the European Context", in *Morality, Crime and Social Control in Europe 1500-1900*, ed. by Olli Matikainen and Satu Lidman, Helsinki, Finnish Literature Society, 2014, pp. 259-297.

30. See, for instance, Clare A. Lyons, "Mapping an Atlantic Sexual Culture: Homoeroticism in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia", *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 60/1. *Sexuality in Early America* (Jan. 2003), pp. 119-154. According to Lyons, Philadelphia, the most cosmopolitan city in British North America in the second half of the 18th century, shared conditions with other colonial North American port cities (pp. 120-122).

half of the 17th century onwards. Apart from allowing the consummation of sexual relationships, these subgroups adapted and affirmed values that sat partially in opposition to the accepted norms of mainstream society and that therefore may have contributed to a sense of "group identity". This self-awareness reveals the existence of unique centers of sociability with a distinct corporal language fashioned out of singular gestures and behaviours.[31]

Two-thirds of those condemned for sodomy in Seville, in father León's accounts, died as "good Christians" repenting for their sins.[32] This was also the case of "a Turk of origin, or a Moor", named Suleiman Negro, who was burned at the stake after having converted to Christianity and having being baptised and confirmed.[33] However, these examples hold paradoxes that deserve further consideration. On the one hand, if according to the Church the sodomite was a sinner who could only be saved "with a miracle",[34] how is it possible that so many died at the stake after having repented and that some even showed "evident signs of their salvation"? Through his conversion, did Suleiman hope to be killed before he was burned at the stake, and thus avoid this final torment? Or was it perhaps possible to escape the death penalty in such a way?

Some young convicts probably accepted the "protocol" of remorse and conversion in the hope of eluding physical punitive torture or because they feared death. Nevertheless, several questions remain: why did one-third of those tried for the "nefarious vice" not regret their behaviour? Could they possibly have believed that they had not sinned? Did they not fear eternal damnation? Obviously, the sources analysed here do not allow us to interpret these paradoxes properly, since it is impossible to know the reasons behind any of the remorse felt by those who were condemned and repented. After all, understanding their beliefs, as well as their passions and emotions,[35] raises challenges as complex as those involved in studying

31. It is interesting to highlight that, throughout the early modern era, the social perception and censure of sodomitic behaviour was shared across Catholicism and Protestantism. In the countries where the Reformation was successful, in fact, attitudes were not more favourable to homosexuals. There, too, the "vice of sodomy" did not only imply a sin or a crime, but was also a mark of infamy, which sullied the family's reputation and the social context of the suspect. There is seemingly no indication of significant differences or contrasts among the diverse regions of Christian Europe. On the Protestant world, see: Helmut Puff, *Sodomy in Reformation Germany and Switzerland: 1440-1600*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 2003; William G. Naphy, "Sodomy in Early Modern Geneva: Various Definitions, Diverse Verdicts", in *Sodomy in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Tom Betteridge, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2002, pp. 94-111.

32. On the comfort received by those sentenced to death from a comparative standpoint in Europe, see Adriano Prosperi, *Delitto e perdono. La pena di morte nell'orizzonte mentale dell'Europa Cristiana, XIV-XVIII secolo*, Turin, Einaudi, 2013.

33. León, *Compendio*, f. 260.

34. The qualification of sodomites as unrepentant is a commonplace in Christian moral theology that can be dated back to Peter Damian's *Liber Gomorrhianus*: see Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy*, pp. 66-67; Olsen, *Of Sodomites*, p. 414.

35. Significant progress has, however, been made in the field of the history of emotions. This also helps us understand this relevant element. I will just quote some recent reference books on this now established field of research: *A Cultural History of the Emotions*, 6 vols, ed. by Susan Broomhall,

the relationship between sodomy and homosexuality. However, if they did indeed refuse to repent, this would offer evidence of a strong sense of self-awareness and a critical attitude towards the moral codes imposed by the Church.

5. *That "dark" object of desire: moriscos, Muslims, and homosexual subcultures*

In the 16th and 17th centuries, arguments accumulated in Valencia's criminal law codes to consolidate the prejudice that attributed a greater inclination towards sodomitic practices to Muslim and morisco populations.[36] Additionally, these kinds of social and cultural scruples also supported the denunciations of moriscos in other parts of the Iberian Peninsula. In Andalusia, for instance, after the Alpujarras conflict, accusations relating moriscos to sodomitic practices intensified.[37]

Despite the barriers erected by these prejudices, the most representative cases reported by Pedro de León show how in daily homosexual life in Seville, ethnic and cultural distinctions were easily transcended. Moreover, Muslim slaves who were not converts, moriscos and mulattos – all subjects on which, notwithstanding their diversity, normative discourse placed the heavy and infamous accusation of indulging in sodomitic practices – were immersed in circles of homosexual sociability defined by a marked transversal social composition, and in some cases they occupied privileged positions (as objects of desire).

In 1610 a friar named Juan Duarte faced the flames at the stake and was burnt alongside a man named López and two mulattos, Juan Pérez and Antón de Morales. The latter two had provoked the curiosity of many youngsters in the neighbourhood, who had often seen them shut themselves up in the place where they lived. Sometimes Juan and Antón looked for new experiences and secretly took other boys inside their place as well.[38]

Before he died, Hamete "the Turk", the slave mentioned previously who was tried in 1616 for violence against a child, confessed to having offered his sexual services for a fee. He presented himself as an "agent", that is to say, as playing the active role in homosexual intercourse. Among his clients, he mentioned the local notable Don Pedro Dávila, who occasionally resorted to his services. Hamete frequented members of the popular classes as well as those who were well-off. In fact, homosexual sodomy rarely respected the hierarchical barriers of social class. Dávila was absent from Seville in 1616 and was therefore condemned to

Jane W. Davidson and Andrew Lynch, London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2019; Rob Boddice, *The History of Emotions*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2018; *Histoire des Émotions*, 3 vols, ed. by Alain Corbin, Jean-Jacques Courtine and George Vigarello, Paris, Seuil, 2016-2017; *Histoire intellectuelle des émotions, de l'Antiquité à nos jours*, ed. by Damien Bouquet and Piroska Nagy in *L'Atelier du Centre de recherche historique* (CRH online journal); *Early Modern Emotions: An Introduction*, ed. by Susan Broomhall, London and New York, Routledge, 2017; Jan Plamper, *The History of Emotions: An Introduction*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012.

36. Graullera Sanz, "Delito de sodomía", p. 214.

37. Perry, "The 'Nefarious Sin'", p. 76. See also Vincenzo Lavenia's chapter in this volume and Lavenia, "*Indicibili Mores*", cited above in n. 8.

38. León, *Compendio*, ff. 360-362.

the stake *in absentia*, after he had obtained Hamete's homosexual favours. The proceedings record that he paid a *real* of eight ducats every time he enjoyed such services. Dávila appears to have had a weakness for Muslims, and he was sometimes seen to be with more than one simultaneously. Apparently, he was very demanding. He often "looked for Moors or Turks with big sexual organs [*que tuviesen grandes naturales*], to buy them for that purpose". Yet there were others who were prepared to pay even more for that kind of service. A merchant admitted in court that "another gentleman gave him a hundred ducats every time he had been an agent with him".[39]

Machuca "the Black" was captured in the late 16th century and, "by the way he addressed young and handsome gentlemen", he had earned deserved fame within the most frequented homosexual circle in Seville. He acted as a pimp (*alcahuete*), "arranging the meetings of one youngster with another one and telling them: certainly, you will be able to spend time with this one who is also prone to the vice of sodomy". He also facilitated the love conquests of *caballeritos* (well-off men) among the youth of the popular classes. Maybe for this reason Machuca's execution caused a great deal of anxiety across the city: some feared that the proceedings against him could also send others to their execution, including some who enjoyed a good reputation among the local elite. This, however, did not take place.[40]

The activities of matchmakers like Machuca led to the proliferation of meeting points, reunion places and rooms where several "of the most embellished and elegant young men" could freely express their emotions and passions. Notably, these spaces created room for interaction among members of different social classes. In this context, individuals such as the freedman Machuca were essential intermediaries in the secret contacts among men from diverse backgrounds. Prostitution was a way to put men of great physical prowess in contact with others such as Don Pedro Dávila, the soldier who had a weakness for moors with "large sexual organs", or with other local *caballeritos* and members of the nobility.

The scene created for Machuca's execution on 21 October 1585 sought to represent the victim's path to the stake and, later, his execution, with the maximum exemplarity: "he was carried in a carriage with his face painted, wearing a collar with many agave tips, curly hair and a big tuft [of hair], and on both sides of the carriage, which were also painted, [and] there were very handsome and embellished youngsters with their own collars of agave tips and curly tufts of hair. The Black, who was depicted as being even blacker than he was, took the boys by the hand as if to marry them".

The decoration on the carriage and the personal ornaments, together with the skin colour and the gestural language, represented the punishable behaviour and manners that, because they were attributed to Machuca, were considered to be "sins against nature". Machuca was a "moor" and a pimp among same-sex lovers, but also among clients and prostitutes. These facts rendered his actions particularly objectionable and punishable.[41]

39. *Ibid.*, ff. 390-392.
40. *Ibid.*, ff. 282-283.
41. *Ibid.*, ff. 280-281.

6. *The subversion of gender norms*

When in 1585 the judges tried Don Diego Maldonado he confessed by accusing his partners at the same time. Among these, the figure of one very charismatic prostitute stands out, Francisco Galindo. The fact that he was an adult attracted to younger boys, with whom he "acted as a woman", worsened his situation in the eyes of the judges. He was dressed "with many ornaments so as to look like a woman rather than a man", and his clothes and femininity attributed him a corporal and gestural language that was easily understood within his circle of relations and favoured his love affairs.[42] "Passivity" (having sex as a woman, assuming a receptive role) and the feminisation of the adult male, as in the case of Francisco Galindo, were considered serious aggravating circumstances. In fact, the value of virility was central to the configuration of male identity and was firmly included in the ethical dimension of honour and respectability in early modern Spanish society.[43]

In his *Introductio ad sapientiam* (1524), the humanist Juan Luis Vives called for caution in the love for oneself, which "undermined and feminised male souls". Although he did not argue that this weakness necessarily implied same-sex attraction, Vives believed it led to a lack of self-control and the loss of equilibrium. It made it easier to succumb to capricious emotions and passions which, "as if they were women", serve to dull reason. It led to men's appropriation of weaknesses that were typically feminine, such as the propensity to gossip, excessive and irrational devotion, frivolity, superficiality and vanity.[44] This was a widespread opinion in Europe at the time. Soon after the printing of the *Introductio*, the erudite scholar, doctor and British diplomat Sir Thomas Elyot, who was close to Thomas More, stated in his *Castle of Health* (1539) how the man abandoned to his feelings was forced to face internal chaos. According to him, just a woman's look could cause him to endure a corporal and humoral disorder.[45]

Although the loss of control was considered a weakness that did not necessarily lead to same-sex practices, official discourses on sodomy were informed by these conceptions and prejudices against gender diversity and their associations with ideas of disorder and deviancy. In the minds of moralists, they needed to be accompanied by a corresponding measure of discipline. The valorisation of masculinity was a crucial aspect of Western culture during the ancient regime, and it pervaded every aspect of social life. As a result, women willing to assume control of their own lives often adopted the semblance of men. In these instances, the phenomenon of cross-dressing was not necessarily an expression of homosexual desire, even if it could sometimes mean a significant

42. *Ibid.*, f. 277 and ff.

43. Cristian Berco, "Producing Patriarchy: Male Sodomy and Gender in Early Modern Spain", *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 17/3 (2008), pp. 351-376.

44. This is a quotation from the Spanish translation, edited for the first time in Bruges in 1546: Juan L. Vives, *Introducción a la sabiduría*, Valencia, 1779, pp. 57-58.

45. Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England*, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 67. The author refers to a 1561 edition of Elyot's work.

step in this direction. In certain circumstances, in fact, cross-dressing enabled the formalisation of relationships among women based on the heterosexual model.[46]

Writings of the time described the adventures of women cross-dressers – who spent a significant part of their lives as sailors, soldiers or bandits – very emphatically. One episode, which had great repercussion in Spain under Philip IV, was that of Catalina de Erauso, "The Lieutenant-Nun", who was even granted license to wear male clothes.[47] Before Catalina was awarded this license, they served as a soldier in different conflicts until, in their confluence of gendered expressions, they were condemned for killing a soldier in a tavern brawl in the Peruvian region of Huamanga in 1620. They then revealed their female identity and their past as a nun who had escaped the seclusion of the convent, which their family had decided for them in the Dominican community of San Sebastián el Antiguo. Their military achievements were recognised and rewarded with a pension and with the permission to dress as a man. Later, they became a legend in Castile, in Veracruz and in other parts of the New World: they were painted by Francisco Pacheco and their life was re-elaborated in theatrical performances and stories. Presented as a biologically female being who knew how to face the world with legendary and heroic virility, they were attributed more than a dozen homicides and also some sentimental female conquests.[48]

Although exceptional, Catalina's case was not an isolated one. In 1576 the freedwoman Elena de Céspedes abandoned her female clothes and lived as a man named Eleno for many years, married in the Madrid locality (town) of Ciempozuelos and succeeded in keeping up their disguise until they were investigated by the Inquisition.[49] Stories of this kind, which were more or less true, were also commented upon in books and treatises about so-called monstrous beings. They were later represented in theatre or described in popular narratives, which were frequently translated and circulated widely throughout western Europe.[50]

46. Rudolf M. Dekker, Lotte C. van de Pol, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism in Early Modern Europe*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 1989.

47. On Catalina de Erauso, see *Coded Encounters: Writing, Gender and Ethnicity in Colonial Latin America*, ed. by Francisco Javier Cevallos-Candau et al., Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 1994, p. 189. See also Enriquetta Zafra, "El caso de las 'mujeres sueltas': Isabella de Luna, prostituta en el ejército imperial y cortesana española en Roma, y la monja alférez, Catalina de Erauso", *Hispanic Review*, 82/4 (Autumn, 2014), pp. 487-504.

48. Mary E. Perry, *Gender and Disorder in Early Modern Seville*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1990, pp. 127-135.

49. Antonio de Fuentelapeña, *El ente dilucidado. Tratado de monstruos y fantasmas*, ed. by Javier Ruiz, Madrid, Editora Nacional, 1978 (or. ed. 1676), pp. 244-245.

50. See: Kathleen P. Long, *Hermaphrodites in Renaissance Europe*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2006; Lorraine Daston, Katharine Park, "Hermaphrodites in Renaissance France", *Critical Matrix*, 1/5 (1985), pp. 1-19. On Spain, see: Richard Cleminson, Francisco Vázquez Garcia, *Sex, Identity, and Hermaphrodites in Iberia, 1500-1800*, London, Pickering and Chatto, 2013; François Soyer, *Ambiguous Gender in Early Modern Spain and Portugal: Inquisitors, Doctors and the Transgression of Gender Norms*, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2012; Richard Cleminson, Francisco Vázquez Garcia, *Hermaphroditism, Medical Science and Sexual Identity in Spain 1850-1960*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2009.

These reports reveal how a multiplicity of value systems could coexist at the same time, even if they often lay in clear contradiction to one another. Together with the mythologisation of figures who today would be defined as transgender (or in some instances intersex), strong voices were raised to argue for the need to uphold distinct boundaries between the sexes. As Fray Antonio de Fuentelapeña noted in the late 17th century, models of the "perfect man" and "perfect woman" were fashioned according to divine precepts; God "created our ancestors", each of whom, in "praise of Nature", possessed "the integrity and the perfection of the species". According to this logic, no benefit whatsoever could be extracted from the universal natural order with the confusion of the sexes. Quite the contrary, the result would be the same as when "wine is mixed with oil and neither of them remains good but deteriorates and loses any value that either could have on its own".[51] Not only did the ability to enjoy biological harmony with nature come to be lost forever, but the order that God preferred was not being respected either. The results were monstrosity and sin.

Antonio de Fuentelapeña went on to state that "a monster is nothing more than a sin of nature, in which due to a defect, excess, variation or diversity, the being could not reach the perfection he should have". Monstrosity could be a consequence of "having had sex outside of the ordinary way", of "excessive lust" or of the parents' dirty "imagination". According to the logic of this Capuchin theologian, the "hermaphrodite" had the obligation to choose an option that clearly defined their gender and sex.[52]

Nevertheless, the idea of a distinct dichotomy between the male and female sexes, which derived from Aristotelian thought, was not the only model in circulation at the time. The Galenic view was also quite widespread: it stated that there was only one sex and that female genitals were nothing more than the male reproductive apparatus that, instead of turning outward, remained intro-flexed due to a lack of heat at the moment of intra-uterine development and thus caused the development of a female being, with a specific biology and identity. In light of these theories, the phenomenon of hermaphroditism was not interpreted as the existence of a "third species" or a "third sex" but as a variable, as a gradation between two poles which, while not opposites, represented the extremes of a continuum.[53]

51. Fuentelapeña, *El ente dilucidado*, pp. 164-165.

52. *Ibid.*, pp. 167-177, 185-190. These considerations had roots in the ancient Justinian law that had been projected into subsequent historical periods. Every person, including hermaphrodites, had to choose between two sexes categorised as men and women. Those who avoided making this choice could be prosecuted due to the commission of two important sins: sodomy and damage to the moral doctrine on the sacrament of matrimony. This also included men who had taken their religious vows as priests. This tradition was preserved in the *Summae* of the late medieval period. See Valerio Marchetti, *L'invenzione della bisessualità: discussioni fra teologi, medici e giuristi del XVII secolo sull'ambiguità dei corpi e delle anime*, Milan, Bruno Mondadori, 2001.

53. Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*, Cambridge (MA) and London, Harvard University Press, 1990. Laqueur's seminal text has undergone criticism in the last decades. In particular, Joan Cadden has pointed out the coexistence of a plurality of paradigms of interpretation of sexual diversity in medieval medical thought: Joan

These ideas made it easy for people to believe the accounts about persons who had been born as women but later turned into men. It was thought that male genitals that were unable to bloom immediately, due to a lack of heat, would develop later.[54] The opposite, however, was not considered to be possible. A person who was born a man could never become a woman, "since nature always aspires to perfection" (that is, to masculinity, according to the mentality of the time). If it was indeed possible for male genitals to retract "completely and irreversibly", likely due to a potential cooling down of the body, this did not mean that "the person experiencing such a phenomenon could have access to the female sexual apparatus".[55] Despite these sound convictions, inquisitorial authorities did not recognise the natural sex change argued for by Elena/o de Céspedes as a valid justification when the judges accused them of having rejected the sacrament of marriage. In their troubled life, in fact, they had married first a man and then a woman. They defended themselves by declaring that they could no longer show their penis, which they said they had severed piece by piece because of gangrene caused by horse riding, but this argument did not convince the judges.[56]

The cleverness Elena/o showed in creating their defense situates their personal experience in a totally extraordinary position. In a society where barriers of gender, race, class, religion and cultural belonging were so strong, their account demonstrates time after time the disrupting force of "transit". They had been born a slave and freed at a very young age, were the daughter of an "old Christian" and a recently converted slave of colour, and they declared their faith in the Church at court. Regardless of the sincerity of their statements, they defended their devotion with exceptional arguments and knowledge. Although Elena/o had never studied formally, they had learned to read and write and owned books from which they had been able to acquire some medical knowledge. After having practiced a range of crafts, they had finally become specialised in surgery and practiced this profession dressed as a man.[57]

Luis García-Ballester has noted that the word *cirujano* was often used to refer to morisco healers, who generally lacked a license to operate and who were bearers of traditional wisdom. Before the Crown launched its policy of forced conversion and began its battle to eradicate the cultural peculiarities of the morisco minority, there was a long tradition of medical practice among a portion of the Iberian Muslim population. Despite the prevalence of medical studies built upon Avicenna's wisdom, which survived among representatives of Iberian humanism, at the academic level there was also an attempt to undermine the importance of Arab-Muslim influence in the transmission of medical knowledge, which was

Cadden, *Meaning of Sex Difference: Medicine, Science and Culture*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993.

54. Friar Antonio de Fuentelapeña also mentions the example of four nuns – one from Úbeda, one from Alcalá and another two from Madrid – who had experienced this strange phenomenon and abandoned their own female condition to become men. See Fuentelapeña, *El ente dilucidado*, p. 245.

55. *Ibid.*, pp. 243-244, 247.

56. *Inquisitorial Inquiries*: *Brief Lives of Secret Jews and Other Heretics*, ed. by Richard L. Kagan and Abigail Dyer, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004, pp. 36-59.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

cemented, rather, in classical sources, particularly in Galen's work, through direct translations from the Greek. Meanwhile, the access to university training became increasingly difficult for morisco populations due to the proofs of blood purity that were required to attend and also due to their clearly poor social origins. As a result, pursuing a university degree in medicine was only possible through strongly assimilationist strategies, which granted the student the advantages of integration at the cost of a total loss of cultural origin and memory, in addition to the other personal factors and resources required to attend.[58]

The suppression of linguistic difference was one of the most fundamental steps in the annihilation of morisco cultural heritage. Being discovered in possession of Arabic-language texts automatically raised suspicions of crypto-Islamism. Although some medical texts circulated in secrecy, they could be used in doctors' training only sporadically. In the morisco communities there were healers who practiced experiential knowledge that had been orally transmitted to them by other members of the community or family. These practices, which had been handed down across generations, entailed close contact with natural elements and demonic entities, which were controlled and manipulated through formulae and prayers. Such remedies underwent the Inquisition's rigid control, which was intent on destroying morisco cultural specificity, as well as any form of relation to the supernatural that was not mediated through the ecclesiastical hierarchy.[59]

Elena/o de Céspedes, however, did not belong to this category of medical practitioners. They owned and worked in a small library comprised of half a dozen books: among them were copies of treatises, some of them in Latin, by authors such as Aristotle, Galen, Vesalius, and Ambroise Paré, a famous 16th-century French doctor who had explored the question of hermaphroditism, among other subjects.[60] Many of these works were mentioned in *Medicus-politicus, sive de Officiis Medico-Politicis Tractatus* (1614) by Rodrigo de Castro, a renowned doctor of Portuguese origin and a Jewish convert. One of the founding fathers of gynecology, he wrote the treatise as part of his attempt to codify the practice of medicine and establish a canon of medical texts for future practitioners.[61]

These considerations situate Elena/o within the context of official medical practice rather than in that of popular wisdom, which they could have inherited on account of their origins. It is not difficult to interpret their decision to practice medicine as an attempt at social redemption and autonomy apart from their past as a freedwoman. Theirs was certainly not an isolated case. Gaspar Capdal was a doctor who practiced his medical art in Buñol, Requena and Valencia. Tried by the Inquisition, he was an example of a totally integrated morisco. His testimony confirms the appeal of academic medicine, its evident scientific and social prestige, as well as his own pride in having acquired formal scientific training.[62]

58. Luis García Ballester, *Los moriscos y la medicina. Un capítulo de la medicina y la ciencia marginadas en la España del siglo de oro*, Barcelona, Editorial Labor, 1984.

59. *Ibid*.

60. *Inquisitorial Inquiries*, p. 55.

61. Jon Arrizabalaga, "Medical Ideals in the Sephardic Diaspora: Rodrigo de Castro's Portrait of the Perfect Physician", *Medical History. Supplement*, 29 (2009), pp. 107-129, esp. pp. 118-119.

62. García Ballester, *Los Moriscos y la medicina*, p. 84.

Ambition and determination allowed Elena/o to practice their trade even at the Court Hospital (*Hospital de la Corte*) and at El Escorial, in addition to offering their services as an itinerant doctor in the villages of La Serranía. However, their decision proved to be risky and they received complaints for practicing medicine without permission. According to their testimony, they went to court and obtained two licenses, one for bloodletting and purging and the other for surgery.[63] Yet the institutionalisation of their knowledge did not allow them to avoid suspicion. When their ambiguous sexual and gender identities caught the attention of the Inquisition, the accusation of practicing magic to change the form of their genitals was one of the main charges Elena/o had to face in court.

In fact, one of their first medical examiners had mysteriously recognised them as fitting the male sex, a fact that might support the hypothesis that Elena/o was actually an intersex person. Despite their attempts to achieve social recognition, in the inquisitors' eyes Elena/o's disconcerting and subversive nature situated them in the realm of the supernatural and of evil. Nonetheless, their medical background played a decisive role in the construction of their defense, which was extremely intelligent, refined and showed a great awareness of the knowledge at the time on the phenomenon of hermaphroditism.[64]

Although Elena/o de Cespedes' more intimate psychological motivations cannot be fully grasped from the extant historical documentation, in light of what has been seen so far the desire for redemption seems to be one of the main considerations driving their actions. Their will for independence and their lack of scruples had also driven them to pick up soldier's weapons. Elena/o, who descended from a recently converted Muslim slave, fought side by side with "old Christians" against the moriscos during the Alpujarras revolt. This fact could serve as proof of their contradictory search for social promotion, situating their figure in an ambiguous position halfway between rebellion against societal norms and their ambition for recognition and acceptance.[65]

Ultimately, they were condemned to work in a sanatorium for ten years, where they received no salary and were forced to wear female clothes. The interest Elena/o raised, which disrupted the tranquility of the hospital, shows the fascination for their figure and, further, the contradictions of the very society whose laws and values had punished them.

7. *Conclusions: homoerotism, homosexual relationships and gender identity*

In Golden Age Spain the various layers of social complexity – moral and religious traditions, ethnic components, social condition and class – contributed

63. *Inquisitorial Inquiries*, p. 42.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 55.

65. Israel Burshatin, "Written on the Body: Slave or Hermaphrodite in Sixteenth-Century Spain", in *Queer Iberia: Sexualities, Cultures, and Crossings from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance*, ed. by Josiah Blackmore and Gregory S. Hutcheson, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 1999, pp. 420-456.

to establishing archetypes according to which each individual and social group was identified. The Christian, Muslim and Jewish traditions all helped articulate their distinct communities, which were suspended in a complicated web of social coexistence marked by innumerable tensions and conflicts during the transition from the medieval to the early modern period. Cultural archetypes linked to ideas of the Christian, Muslim and Jew were refined and applied broadly after the expulsion decree of 1492 and then after the expulsion of the moors in 1609. Social prejudices indicated the boundaries of tolerance, but archetypes also allowed for cross-cultural relational areas to be constructed.

Indeed, homoerotism offered a chance for social interaction across certain cultural frontiers. It sometimes implied not only the recognition of qualities appreciated in "the other", but also the emergence of specific bodily and gestural languages that facilitated the overcoming of barriers of the forbidden, and which gave rise to clandestine interethnic and intercultural relational networks. These expressions of culture, with recognisable, participatory and transmissible traits, helped develop a sense of both group and individual awareness. Nevertheless, this did not occur in all cases, since the range of homoerotic relationships spanned widely between the extremes, from sexual experimentation and initiation to seduction or even to participation in homosexual social circles. Forced sex and organised prostitution expressed other dimensions of the phenomenon. As we have seen, in these cases the asymmetrical relationships between the parties could clearly involve physical violence.

In the second half of the 17th century, in many important European and Latin-American cities, there were circles of homosexual sociability that fostered self-conscious representation among those who partook in them. In urban early modern Spain, male homoerotic cultures helped construct localised sexual and gender self-identifications. At the level of personal experience, sexual and gender identities were not always fashioned at once. Still further, in such a patriarchal society our understanding of the experiences of transgender and intersex persons demands a rather different set of critical tools than those used to analyse male homosexuality. Nevertheless, in cases as unique as those of Elena/o de Céspedes and Catalina de Erauso, there was also a great degree of self-consciousness that influenced both their sexual preferences and gendered roles.

The information analysed in this article is thus the tip of the iceberg of a much broader phenomenon involving the protagonists' decisions regarding their sexuality and gendered expressions, one that is partially obscured by the very nature of the sources historians have at their disposal when investigating the history of sexuality. Indeed, the documents that allow us to explore these topics commonly come from archives created by institutions that aimed to repress uses of sexuality that were considered amoral or "contrary to nature". Pedro de León's report concentrated on the most complicated cases, those whose circumstances made it difficult to avoid the death penalty. However, despite all of the moral and legal considerations, the death penalty ordinarily affected only about 10% of those condemned due to homosexual practices in the Crowns of Castile and Aragon in the 16th and 17th centuries. This proportion was nevertheless higher when we speak of social actors of a lower social

status or of slaves and freedmen, moors or men of Berber origin. Then, the average of those investigated and condemned to death is at about one quarter of the total.

Everything indicates that under similar penal circumstances, the lower the social condition, category and class of the accused, the higher the punishment. Taking into account both the social actors' considerations of their own sexual experiences and feelings and the social and institutional reactions to these encounters, these pages provide material for a history of the construction of sexual and gender self-conciousness and stress the need to integrate cross-cultural perspectives. As we have seen, homosexual desire was a vehicle for the construction of organised networks in which social hierarchies were sometimes reversed. At the same time, gender crossings and ambiguity were even more radical sites of subversion that could challenge not only the patriarchal order but the imbalanced power relations between the Catholic majority and religious minorities.

Luiz Mott

Muslim Sodomites in Portugal and Christian *Bardassi* in North Africa in the Early Modern Period

1. *Introduction*

The Portuguese used the term "moor" not only for the natives of northwestern Africa, known as "Barbary" or the "Land of the Moors" (*Mourama*), but for all followers of Islam, including Arabs and converts of other origins, and their descendants who, from the 8th century onwards, had invaded and occupied much of what would become the kingdom of Portugal, a territory that was gradually reconquered by the Christians until King Alfonso III's final capture of the Algarve in 1249. The period of Islamic rule over Portuguese lands ended then, though Muslim presence in the region remained significant and contributed greatly to hybridisations and to varied socio-cultural manifestations, from the many Arabisms in the language to the remarkable Islamic influence on the arts, architecture, cooking, agriculture and scientific knowledge.[1]

Between the medieval and and early modern periods, Muslims and moriscos,[2] along with Jews and conversos, suffered severe discrimination in Portugal: they were forced to wear special clothing and haircuts, to pay heavy taxes and they were forbidden from moving about freely and coupling with or marrying Christian women. Muslims undertook various productive and commercial activities, especially in the secondary sector: they were shoemakers, blacksmiths, potters, basketmakers, squires, saddle-makers, bricklayers and carpenters.[3] The relatively peaceful coexistence between Muslims and Christians in Portuguese territory

1. António Henrique de Oliveira Marques, "A persistência do elemento muçulmano na história de Portugal após a Reconquista: o exemplo da cidade de Lisboa", in António Henrique de Oliveira Marques, *Novos ensaios de história medieval portuguesa*, Lisbon, Presença, 1988, pp. 96-107.

2. Neither Raphael Bluteau nor António de Morais Silva distinguished between "moor" and "morisco" in their dictionaries, although some authors identified "moriscos" as baptised Muslims. See Raphael Bluteau, *Vocabulário Portuguez e Latino*, 10 vols, vol. 5, Lisbon and Coimbra, Colégio das Artes da Companhia de Jesus, 1712-1728, p. 613; Antonio de Morais Silva, *Diccionário da Língua Portuguesa*, 2 vols, vol. 2, Lisbon, Typographia Lacérdina, 1813, p. 324.

3. Rogério de Oliveira Ribas, *Ser Mourisco em Portugal durante o Século XVI*, in *Anais do XII Encontro Regional de História ANPUH-RJ*, 2006, URL: http://www.rj.anpuh.org/resources/rj/Anais/2006/conferencias/Rogerio%20de%20Oliveira%20Ribas.pdf.

suddenly ended at the time of King Manuel I, when, in 1496, using religion as a pretext, the former were forced to choose between expulsion or baptism.[4]

To explore the daily life of moriscos in the Iberian peninsula between the 16th and 18th centuries, there is a very rich documentary source: over 1,000 trials and other records of the Portuguese Inquisition. The three scholars Ahmed Boucharb, Isabel Drumond Braga and Rogério Ribas have already worked carefully on these materials.[5] From their work it is clear that the Holy Office tried 349 moriscos in the 16th century and 376 in the 17th century, far fewer than both the conversos persecuted in Portugal and than the prisoners of Muslim origin arrested by the courts of the Inquisition in Spain and Italy.[6] In the vast majority of cases, the moriscos' crime consisted of practicing Islam secretly, especially their observance of rituals prescribed by the Qur'an: circumcision, prayers, fasting and ablution, but also blasphemy against the Christian religion and the purchase of weapons and other products banned by Christians. In this documentary core, 19 trials against Muslims and moriscos for cases of sodomy have been identified, to which we should add 5 complaints recorded in the *Cadernos de Nefandos* series, which covers the period from 1547 to 1754. Additionally, we can consider the cases of 9 "renegade"[7] *bardaxos*,[8] who were prosecuted by the Inquisitions of Murcia, Mallorca and Sardinia between 1576 and 1678.[9] Based on this corpus of sources, which concerns over 30 defendants, we are able to reconstruct the daily lives of Muslim sodomites in the kingdom of Portugal, as well as the homoerotic affairs of a dozen Christian sodomites.

2. *Sodomy, the "vice of the Arabs" in the Christian imagination*

From the Iberian peninsula to the Germanic world, there was quite a widespread belief in the Christian popular imagination – which was reflected

4. François Soyer, *The Persecution of the Jews and Muslims of Portugal: King Manuel I and the End of Religious Tolerance (1496-7)*, Leiden and Boston, Brill 2007.

5. Ahmed Boucharb, *Les crypto-musulmans d'origine marocaine et la société portugaise au XVIe siècle*, 3 vols, Ph.D. thesis, Université de Montpellier, 1987; Isabel M. R. Mendes Drumond Braga, *Mouriscos e cristãos no Portugal quinhentista, duas culturas e duas concepções religiosas em choque*, Lisbon, Hugin, 1999; Rogério de Oliveira Ribas, *Filhos de Mafoma: mouriscos, cripto-islamismo e Inquisição no Portugal*, 2 vols, Ph.D. thesis, Universidade de Lisboa, 2004.

6. Marcus Vinícius de Macedo Cysneiros, "A questão mourisca", *Em Tempo de Histórias*, 17 (2010), pp. 5-32; Ana Echevarria, *The Fortress of Faith: The Attitude Towards Muslims in Fifteenth-Century Spain*, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 1999.

7. Christians who abjured the Christian faith to embrace Islam.

8. *Bardaxos* was a widely used term to address young (passive) sodomites in Western Christianity from the Middle Ages to the 19th century (*bardassi* in Italian). It originates from the Arabic word *bardaj* (young slave). On this, see William Roscoe, "How to Become a Berdache: Toward a Unified Analysis of Gender Diversity", in *Third Sex, Third Gender: Beyond Sexual Dimorphism in Culture and History*, ed. by Gilbert Herdt, New York, Zone Books, 1994, pp. 329-372: 331.

9. I am grateful for the generosity of Professor Bartolomé Bennassar, who indicated this document to me in a letter from 1987.

within both theological discourse and inquisitorial praxis – that "Muslims are very inclined to commit the abominable crime of sodomy and that the Muhammadan sect allows this abominable turpitude to be practiced with both men and women", as the morisco João de Noronha declared to the inquisitors of Évora in 1580.[10] According to various trials of the Portuguese Holy Office, when faced with a morisco or a North African Christian, the inquisitorial judges often insisted upon this suspicion: in 1566 the morisco freedman Gil was asked if "in Muhammad's law it is legal to commit the sin of sodomy by sleeping with a young man". He replied that "in his land it is not, but in that of the Turks it is allowed". Later he rectified this: "in his homeland in Barbary, when he was Muslim, he often lay with young men behind him, because in his homeland this was not punished except with arrest and release for payment, but after he became Christian he had no longer committed this sin".[11] In 1593 the farmer Diogo Fernandes, from the island of Graciosa (Azores), was asked with the same insistence "if he thought well of the law of Muslims or gentiles because they grant the freedom to sin, especially through the sin of sodomy".[12]

When Catholic children were socialised, they were taught to be on their guard against Muslims, who were considered to be accustomed to the practice of the "evil sin" (*mau pecado*): in 1556, an Indian woman employed in the orphanage of the College of the Company of Jesus in Lisbon told a boy "not to sleep near the morisco João de Távora if he was under the age of 25, because in their homeland the Turks did evil things with children".[13]

In the Catholic world it was a recurrent and almost universal practice when catechising non-Christian populations to demonise those who were classified as "barbarian" and "savage"; Muslims, in particular, were hyperbolically accused of practicing the gravest mortal sins condemned by Catholic morality: nudity, polygamy, incest, genital mutilation but above all "the foulest, filthiest, and most dishonest sin", that is, "the abominable crime of sodomy", whose name could not even be pronounced.[14] It was such a shameful sin that it was criminalised and equated by royal justice with the crimes of lèse-majesté and treason. Worse still: love between people of the same sex was considered a *peccatum ad caelum*

10. Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Lisboa [ANTT], *Inquisição de Évora*, proc. n. 8056. On this, see also the chapter by Vincenzo Lavenia published in this volume.

11. ANTT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, proc. n. 2033.

12. ANTT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, proc. n. 3208.

13. ANTT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, proc. n. 6018. On the college of catechumens in Lisbon, see José Alberto da Silva Tavim, "Educating the Infidels Within: Some Remarks on the College of the Catechumen of Lisbon (XVI-XVII centuries)", *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa. Classe di Lettere e Filosofia*, 5/1/2, *Inquisizioni* (2009), pp. 445-472.

14. King Sebastian (1557-1578), in promulgating the "law on the nefarious sin of sodomy" (1571), seemed to suggest that the evil customs spread in Portugal came from outside: "Having observed that for some time now some people of my kingdom and domains have been condemned for the nefarious sin, it struck me greatly due to the gravity of such an abominable sin from which my kingdom, out of divine goodness, had long been immaculate": *Leys e provisões que elrey Dom Sebastião Nosso Senhor fez depois que começou a governar*, Coimbra, Real imprensa da Universidade, 1816, pp. 158-160.

clamans, which invoked the divine wrath that chastised humanity with earthquakes, plague and famine.[15]

The association between Islam and homoeroticism was soon welded onto the Christian imagination, thanks to an emblematic episode in the struggle to expel the "Saracen" invaders and reconquer the Iberian territories: the martyrdom of Saint Paio, also known as Sampaio or Saint Pelagius, who died in Andalusia in 925. Paio was a young and virtuous Christian, born in Galicia, and between the ages of 10 and 13 had the misfortune of becoming a prisoner of the Umayyad Caliph ʻAbd ar-Rahmān III, governor of Cordoba, who, attracted by his ephebic beauty (Pelagius is represented in the iconography as a pale and blue-eyed boy), attempted to convert him to Islam, seeking to seduce him with many promises of material goods, so that he might become another Ganymede in his harem. Paio, who was a grandson of the pious bishop of Tui, outraged by such an immoral proposition, supposedly shouted: "Get away, dog! Do you think me to be one of your effeminate lackeys?"[16] Because of the audacity of his response, he was tortured barbarously, his arms and feet were mutilated and he was eventually beheaded and thrown into the Guadalquivir River. His dramatic story spread rapidly throughout the Christian world in three versions written in prose and verse, extending and strengthening the association between Muslims and the "abominable sin" of sodomy.[17]

The broader coexistence of the Portuguese with Muslims, Turks and people from the Maghreb both in Portugal and in North Africa certainly reinforced the view that Muslims possessed more licentious sexual codes than those imposed by the laws of the Portuguese crown and the Church: in addition to the generalised practice of polygamy, and despite the condemnation of the "sin of Lot's children" in the Qur'an, the love whose name no one dared pronounce was much more visible and tolerated on the other side of the Mediterranean than in the lands subject to the courts of the Holy Office.[18] When we explore the cases of Christian

15. Luiz Mott, "Pagode português: a subcultura gay em Portugal nos tempos inquisitoriais", *Ciência e Cultura*, 40 (1980), pp. 120-139; Miguel Ángel de Bunes Ibarra, *Los moriscos en el pensamiento histórico. Historiografia de un grupo marginado*, Madrid, Edicione Catedra, 1983; Miguel Ángel de Bunes Ibarra, *La imagen de los musulmanes y del Norte de Africa en la España de los siglos XVI y XVII. Los caracteres de una hostilidad*, Madrid, CSIC, 1989.

16. Jessica A. Coope, *Martyrs of Cordoba: Community and Family Conflict in an Age of Mass Conversion*, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1996; Mark D. Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy in Christian Theology*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1998; Verdel Amos Kolve, "Ganymede/Son of Getron: Medieval Monasticism and the Drama of Same-Sex Desire", *Speculum*, 73 (1998), pp. 1014-1067; Gregory Hutcheson, "The Sodomitic Moor: Queerness in the Narrative of the Reconquista", in *Queering the Middle Ages*, ed. by Glenn Burger and Steven F. Kruger, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2001, pp. 99-122.

17. Stephen L. Wailes, *Spirituality and Politics in the Works of Hrotsvit of Gandersheim*, Selinsgrove, Susquehanna University Press, 2006; Kenneth Baxter Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988.

18. On the Qur'an and the condemnation of sodomy, see Jim Wafer, "Muhammad and Male Homosexuality", in *Islamic Homosexualities: Culture, History, and Literature*, ed. by

renegades who adopted Muslim customs and religious practice further on, we will find various episodes that confirm the greater visibility and tolerance of homoeroticism within Islamic society.

Another factor may contribute to explaining the belief that Islam was more permissive towards the "nefarious sin", a view shared above all by theologians and inquisitors: they were, in fact, aware of the theses of the Franciscan theologian Alonso de Espina († 1491), rector of the University of Salamanca, confessor to the king, bishop of Orense and author of the famous treatise *Fortalitium fidei contra judeos, sarracenos aliosque christianae fidei inimicos*, which he began to compose in 1458 and which was published in print several times in Germany and France (for the last time in Lyon in 1525). Although it was not the first work in which the Qur'an was accused of showing an openness towards homoeroticism, it was undoubtedly the most widespread incunabulum of theological content in the Christian world.[19] In its four parts, Espina vehemently rejected the four main enemies of the Christian faith: heretics, Jews, Muslims and devils. It was in Book III, among other perversions allegedly found among the followers of Islam, that he included the shared tolerance for anal copulation. I have not found any copy of the *Fortalitium fidei* in the library of the Holy Office of Lisbon, but the Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal retains four copies: three French editions published in Lyon in 1487, 1511 and 1525, respectively, and one printed in Nuremberg in 1494. Perhaps it was on the basis of the reading of one of these editions that in 1579, when he presented his accusation of the aforementioned morisco João de Noronha – a prisoner of the bishop of Portalegre who had been born forty years earlier in Ksar el-Kebir in North Africa – the public accuser of the Inquisition of Évora included among his indictments:

> the presumption linked to his origin (*nação*), because he was a Muslim, born in Barbary, and wishes that, God willing, he will no longer be one after this day, since his co-religionists are very inclined to the practice of the abominable crime of sodomy and in the sect of Muhammad is it is permitted to practice this abominable turpitude both with men and with women, as stated by *Fortalicio fidei de bello Sarracenorum et de erroribus legis Mahometi*.[20]

Stephen O. Murray and Will Roscoe, New York, New York University Press, 1997, pp. 87-96. For a development of the history of homosexual relations in the Islamic world in the past and in the contemporary world, see *Sexuality and Eroticism among Males in Moslem Societies*, ed. by Arno Schmitt and Jehoeda Sofer, New York, Haworth Press, 1992 (a sociological and anthropological text that refers above all to the contemporary world); Khaled El-Rouayheb, *Before Homosexuality in the Arab Islamic World, 1500-1800*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2005; Scott Siraj al-Haqq Kugle, *Homosexuality In Islam: Critical Reflection on Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Muslims*, Oxford, Oneworld, 2010 (a text on theological topics, for use by today's gay and queer Muslims, with many historical references).

19. The association between the Qur'an and homoeroticism had already been advanced, in the mid-14th century, by the Portuguese theologian Álvaro Pais. I consulted the edition translated from the Latin by Frei Álvaro Pais, *Colírio da fé contra as heresias*, 2 vols, ed. and trans. by Miguel Pinto de Meneses, Lisbon, Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa, 1954-1956.

20. ANTT, *Inquisição de Évora*, proc. n. 8056.

3. *Muslim sodomites in Portugal*

The first instance of a morisco implicated in a case of sodomy in Portugal brings us back to the spring of 1547 when inquisitors, although still without express papal authorisation to act against the "nefarious sin", began to prosecute the "sons of dissidence".[21] The scandal was raised by Fernando de Meneses Coutinho e Vasconcelos, the Archbishop of Lisbon from 1540 to 1564: they reported to the Holy Office that in the city there were "one or more houses and people involved in the abominable crime of sodomy".[22] The investigations led to the dismantling of a network of a few dozen intrepid sodomites, which included above all servants and prisoners of nobles, and even of the royal house, but also elites, both youth and adults. Among them was "the morisco Fernando Castro, slave of the noble knight Afonso d'Ataíde", also referred to as "Fernão de Castro, a morisco of Dona Filipa, who slept with Nicolau Pessanha, 20 years old, and who said he was his pimp". A boy called André "the moor" was also mentioned, with no other references.[23] Of the first 30 sodomites reported to the Inquisition, 17 were arrested and sentenced to exile and imprisonment, including 2 blacks and a mulatto who were not Muslim. Their faults were then judged not to be serious enough to merit punishment.

Five years later, in 1552, the first Muslim sodomite in Portugal was arrested: he was the master Francisco Levantisco, an officer (*meirinho*) in charge of the Vitória royal prison. He was accused by the 13-year-old cabin boy Luís, originally from Coimbra, of having slept with him in the same bed for two months: "his master sinned with him, ordering him to keep quiet". The trial shows that Francisco came from a place on the island of Corfu and was the son of Greek parents who were both born in lands subject to the Republic of Venice. He himself recounted how he had been "captured in Algiers by the Turks, who had taken him prisoner", that he had rowed in their galleys for years and that he was then intercepted by the Portuguese in the waters of the Algarve. He remained in the Inquisition's prisons for seven months until he was sentenced to five years of rowing in chains on the galleys, in addition to the usual spiritual penances.[24]

The following year, the arrest of the second Muslim occurred, a 30-year-old prisoner of the administrator Fernão Rodrigues Castelo Branco, who the Portuguese sources register with the name Alle; he had been "on Christian soil for four years", was then living in Lisbon and was denounced by another servant of his master who had caught him in the stables on top of "a mulatto boy who lay prone, half undressed, with his socks down, while he committed the wicked sin". We should add that the Muslim Alle "had a bad reputation" and had tried to buy the silence of his informers with money. His sentence, issued eight months after his arrest, established that

21. Luiz Mott, "Os filhos da dissidência: o pecado da sodomia e sua nefanda matéria", *Revista Tempo*, 6/11 (2001), pp. 189-204.

22. ANTT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, proc. n. 4170. I owe the indication of this document, back in 1983, to Ahmed Boucharb, whom I thank.

23. ANTT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, proc. n. 6614 and 4030.

24. ANTT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, proc. n. 9677.

> he committed the abominable and nefarious sin of sodomy against nature many times and with consistency over time, as an agent, but since he declared that he wants to become a Christian and receive holy baptism, after adequate instruction in the things of our holy faith necessary for salvation, he is sentenced to ten years in prison.[25]

The cases of the first two Muslims tried for sodomy anticipate, with minimal variations, a recurring trend in the homoerotic relations of other Muslims reported to or tried by the Portuguese Holy Office between 1547 and 1754, including 16 in the 16th century, 6 in the 17th and 2 in the 18th: the preference for very young children and boys, accompanied by authoritarian and sometimes violent behaviour, was quite clear. In the early modern Iberian world, however, this preference was not exclusive to Muslims.[26]

On the level of onomastics, only 7 of these 24 moriscos retained their original Arabic names, although they were transcribed with evident distortions in the Portuguese documents: Alle, Osmam/Osmão, Barria, Salim/Celema, Ali de Bona, Hamet (two instances). The 26-year-old Muslim named Francisco, who had been born in Morocco, offered the most detailed information about his ancestors: he remembered the name of his father Amed and that of his mother Golizae, but also those of his grandparents, Amatamançor and Fátima.[27] Some of those reported or tried were identified based on their places or conditions of origin: Francisco Levantisco, Thomas Marunita, Felipe Mourisco, João Mourisco. Most, however, used Christian names, with no further qualifications: Gil, Joane, Francisco, João Baptista. A minority boasted a surname, in rare cases even of illustrious lineage, certainly transmitted to them by the owners of the houses in which they served: António de Brito, Manuel de Meneses, António José Noronha. The Muslim João Távora reported having adopted the name of his godfather. In two cases there is the use of a double name: João Morisco or de Noronha, and Manuel de Meneses or Ali de Bona. They were referred to in the trials, and certainly in their respective social contexts, as "moors" (*mouros*), "moriscos" and "moors by origin" (*mouros de nação*), while only two were identified as Turks. The mentioned Thomas Marunita was Egyptian and derived his surname from the Maronite Catholic Church, which was based in Lebanon and in communion with the papacy. These sodomites came from a large area of the Mediterranean, in most cases from North Africa – in particular from Morocco (Ceuta, Ksar El-Kebir, Tetuan, Fez) – but also from Corfu, Cairo and Anatolia .

The appearances and clothes of the Muslim sodomites were quite varied because of their different origins: 17-year-old Hamet, a "boy who was showing signs of a beard", was described as a "white man, with a robust build"; Joane, on the other hand, a 30-year-old "moor by origin" and a slave to the Cardinal-Infante and General Inquisitor Henrique was described as "black". Some were beardless, like João Pereira, a morisco of about 15 years of age who was described as a "beardless boy", or the aforementioned Francisco, who "is of good stature, has little beard and

25. ANTT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, proc. n. 6636.
26. See Tomás Antonio Mantecón Movellán's chapter in this volume.
27. ANTT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, proc. n. 10469.

frizzy black hair", or 20-year-old Gil, of medium height, "beardless, [who] goes around dressed in red, with cloth socks". On the other hand, Manuel de Meneses, a 35-year-old "moor by origin" who had become a Christian and lived in Leiria, was said to have been "tall, with a black beard and a large face". The most accurate description is that of Osmão, a 55-year-old non-Christian Turk from Anatolia, who was "tall and big, with a trimmed and almost white beard, a long moustache", and who, despite being a prisoner of the Marquis of Santa Cruz, dressed in a refined way: he "wears a black hat, a woolen cape and a green tunic, gray socks, he uses socks and shoes". He was the only Muslim sodomite burned at the stake whose name is recorded in the Inquisition's *auto-da-fé* lists.

Some sodomite moriscos, before falling into the hands of the inquisitorial tribunal, had led very troubled lives. Often, they had been captured by pirates and then sold as prisoners. This happened to Manuel de Meneses, who, at the time of his arrest in 1583, declared that he had "arrived in Portugal in the year in which the Turks besieged Malta but did not take it", after being intercepted aboard his galleon by Spaniards of the Count of Altamira near Sardinia. He had then rowed on the galleys for 20 years straight, and it was during this time that he had adopted the name of Ali de Bona. Then, two years before his arrest, he had fled while in Leiria, remaining in the home of a cleric for eight months and then moving to the home of the marquis of Vila Real. There, he was baptised by the marquis himself and his son, the count, receiving the certificate of baptism and beginning work in the stable.[28]

The mentioned Levantisco also recounted a troubled life story: he was first captured by the Turks in Algiers, taken prisoner, and then, after having served as an oarsman on the Muslim fleets, he was captured by the Portuguese in the Algarve waters. Fifteen-year-old João Pereira reported that two years prior he had come from Tetuan, where he had "good relatives and a knighted father", and that he had brought with him to Portugal two Christian prisoners who had baptised him.[29] We can, therefore, find both Muslims who had arrived in Portugal recently, such as this Moroccan teenager, and others who had lived there for longer, such as 42-year-old Hamet, who said he had resided in the land of Christians for four years. Unfortunately, other information of this type is largely missing. Thirteen of those denounced claimed to live in Lisbon, while the others came from Leiria, Portalegre and the city of Angra on the island of Terceira (Azores).

Of the 21 Muslims whose age is known, 6 were under the age of 20, 5 were in the range from 20 to 30, 7 between 30 and 40, 2 between 40 and 50, while the oldest was 51. Just over half, therefore, were minors according to the parameters of the time in Portugal, which set the age of majority at 25. These were people in the prime of their years and in full of exuberance, much younger than the average age of Muslims arrested by the Inquisition for heresy, more than half of whom were over 40 years old.[30]

As for their occupations, about one-third (7 of them), were prisoners, 3 of whom served in the royal galleys, either because they had been captured in the

28. ANTT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, proc. n. 1728.
29. ANTT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, proc. n. 1617.
30. Boucharb, *Les crypto-musulmans*; Ribas, *Filhos de Mafoma.*

midst of war or because they were serving sentences imposed on them by civic authorities. Some were slaves to people of great importance, such as the Cardinal-Infante and General Inquisitor Henrique, the Marquis of Santa Cruz, the Bishop of Portalegre (likely Amador Arrais), other prisoners of the judge Simão da Cunha, the administrator Fernão Rodrigues or the debt collector (*almoxarife*) of the Casa da Índia. Several worked in the stables of wealthy houses, such as the Muslim Joane, who served the Cardinal-Infante in 1576, and the morisco Francisco, "who cares for the stables of the Count of Ribeira Grande" in 1677.[31] The stables were, in fact, often precisely the spaces where homoerotic encounters took place.[32] There was also a cook, a steward of the marquis of Santa Cruz, an infantryman for the governor of Brazil, Alexandre de Sousa Freire, and two moriscos who occupied command functions, one as an officer in charge of a royal prison and the other as a jailer at the Limoeiro, the main prison in Lisbon at the time.

A great degree of variety also emerges within the evidence for homoerotic practice, both in terms of the frequency and morphology of the acts and in the choice of partners and the homo-social coexistence with other lovers of the same sex. The freedman Gil, who was "less than 20 years old", apparently fell into the hands of the Inquisition immediately after his first infraction: he raped Baltasar, a boy of about 10 years of age, and "made him lose a lot of blood to the point that two or three days later he could no longer carry out his duties and for four or five days he could not sit down, and the next day he wanted to give him twenty *réis* to tell the master that he had done nothing wrong, that he had only beaten him with a belt". After this episode, they dismissed Gil from their service.[33] Another of the accused, identified only as a 19-year-old morisco, repeated the same pattern of sexual assault against a pre-adolescent in 1576: a convert for one year who was fleeing his homeland, he committed sodomy with two young men, one of whom was found with traces of blood by the witnesses. Once arrested, he confirmed the abuses but defended himself by claiming that "he was used to doing so in his country and it was customary to do so among the Muslims where he was born". In this case, however, it is important to remember that in the Iberian world such behaviours were also common in Christian orphanages and educational institutions.[34] He was sentenced to five years in prison "because he is a minor, has only been a convert for a year and in the hope that he will be corrected".[35]

Various defendants from the Maghreb, such as the latter convert of Muslim origin, confirmed that they had become accustomed to homoeroticism since they had lived in North Africa. In 1691, a 30-year-old registered as Thomas Marunita, born in Cairo where he had been baptised according to the Maronite rite and who then served in Lisbon as an assistant coachman in the home of the French ambassador, said that in his hometown when he had been between the ages of 15 and 23 he had

31. ANTT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, liv. 141 (14º Caderno de Nefandos), f. 160r.

32. On the importance of the stables as a meeting place for Lisbon's moriscos, and as a space for religious celebrations, see Ribas, *Filhos de Mafoma*.

33. ANTT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, proc. n. 3592.

34. See Mantecón Movellán's chapter in this volume.

35. ANTT, *Manuscritos da Livraria*, 1238.

had numerous relationships with different men, at times as the active partner and at times as the passive. Among them were "some Turks, Egyptians, all followers of the Muhammadan sect, but he is unable to remember them all". He added that eight years earlier he had embarked for Venice and that for six months he had committed acts of sodomy with a cabin boy, son of a captain, acting as the active partner three or four times. From there he had gone to Paris in the company of Monsieur de Amelot, in whose service he was employed, and he had copulated for two months, always as an active partner, with a Frenchman who was the cook for his master's mother. He had now lived in Lisbon for six years, where for three years he had copulated three times with the French Charbam and twenty times with Guilherme, a 16-year-old son of a German woman, in addition to having had relationships with a 7- or 8-year-old boy in the ambassador's house. Ignoring that in Portugal the Inquisition, unlike in Spain, did not persecute sexual relations with animals, he also confessed that "out of great temptation from the devil, he twice coupled carnally with a goat, always through the natural vessel, spreading out his seed, and also with a donkey in the stable". He went on to say that for three years he had lived in the house of the marquis of Nice, in São Roque, where he had sodomitic intercourse twenty times with a Frenchman who appears in the documents as Zeladon, a servant of the ambassador, and with three other French servants of the latter, including a 12-year-old. In his erotic account he also included fornications through both the "natural" vessel and the posterior one with a Castilian lady who lived in Lagar. He implored forgiveness for his many sins of the flesh. Undoubtedly also to avoid problems with Louis XIV's court, the inquisitors mercifully decided that this frenchified Egyptian who had lived so passionately was to be banished forever from the kingdom and that his sentence would be read in private, which did take place, though in the meantime the French ambassador had cleverly taken it upon himself to have his assistant coachman leave Portugal by sea.[36]

In the depositions the Egyptian underlined how in his homeland he had committed the "nefarious sin" with many different men, "sometimes as the active partner, sometimes as the passive", although in the act of identifying his lovers in over fifty sodomitic relationships consumed in the previous eight years he always insisted that he had been the "active" partner. The mentioned morisco freedman João de Távora, who was under the age of 25 and who had been baptised in Ceuta seven years prior, then arrested in 1556, said he had stained himself by engaging in the same sin with some young people in Lisbon as the "active partner". And, boasting of his erotic performances, he revealed that he was a good connoisseur of that art: at the time that he resided in the Society of Jesus boarding school in order to be catechised, "he turned off the light, he spat on his hand, moistened the rear vessel of 12-year-old João and introduced his virile member into it: the boy tried to shout, but the accused prevented him, threatening him with death, and he repeated the act for many other nights".

Francisco, a 25-year-old Moroccan servant captured in 1662, who had previously lived in Mazagão, the Algarve, Vila Galega and Óbidos and who was

36. ANTT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, liv. 142 (15º Caderno de Nefandos), f. 4r.

also baptised in the Jesuit church in São Roque, acted as an active partner five times with the mulatto João Róis and, after three months, "took him to his lord's house and tried to commit the nefarious sin; rejected, he put his hands in his underwear, but was turned away again".[37] The Muslim Alle, caught red-handed behind a mulatto, was sentenced to ten years in prison "because he committed the wicked sin many times as the active partner".[38]

Moreover, as we will see later, in the accounts of those Portuguese who lived as *bardaxos* in North Africa it is clear that the public performance of the penetrator was considered a value and proof of masculinity, a tendency that appears to have been weaker on the Christian side of the Mediterranean where there was also greater versatility among the moriscos: several of them had assumed different roles in the sodomitic act, *sodomia ad invicem*, to return to the inquisitorial lexicon. The aforementioned João Pereira, a 16-year-old Moroccan from Tetuan, confessed to having been the passive partner with Hamet and Gonçalo, while with Felipe he had been both active and passive. In 1552 the Muslim who is called Salim in the sources, having been taken prisoner in Algiers, admitted not only to having been the passive partner to a Muslim prisoner of the debt collector of the Casa of Índia, but also to have had a "coupling from behind" with 17-year-old Hamet.[39]

Several North Africans arrested by the Portuguese Holy Office revealed that they had participated in the extensive and diverse network of those who practiced homoeroticism, which included other men from the Maghreb, Indians and Africans, as well as Portuguese. Reference has already been made to a 30-year-old black Muslim named Joane, employed as a slave in the stable of the Cardinal-Infante Henrique. He had a circuit of eleven sodomite accomplices to whom he turned his attention, and with some of them he came to "put his nature in [their] ass". Almost all of them were young people linked to his world: morisco slaves who worked in the stables, an Indian cook for the Cardinal-Infante and a slave who he penetrated and to whom he gave twenty *réis* in exchange, but also white men, like signor Jerónimo's servant, who was employed working on the farmlands of the Company of Jesus, or Belchior, a servant to the Cardinal-Infante's chief cook.

João António, an 18-year-old Turk and a servant of Mr. Bartolomeu Veiga, was captured in 1562 and fit into the inquisitorial category of the "convinced and practicing sodomite", which the common people, however, called "queer" (*fanchono*), for his frequency and audacity in making advances and accepting invitations from other men. He certainly frequented the homoerotic meeting places of Lisbon's "gay" scene,[40] as had happened on the eve of his arrest: he told the judges that "yesterday, under the portico of São Francisco, a 40-year-old foreigner who speaks seven languages, well-dressed, with a hat, beard and

37. ANTT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, proc. n. 10469.

38. ANTT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, proc. n. 6636.

39. ANTT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, proc. n. 10872.

40. The issue of using the term "gay" to describe past homoerotic lovers is debated. The writer finds it appropriate: see Mott, *Pagode português*; James Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1980.

a ruffled cloak, twill socks and a golden dagger, had conversed with him saying that he was a friend of foreigners and young people of his type and that he had a home, and that he was afraid to be alone and wanted him to stop by him". Having certainly become accustomed to this type of baiting, he instructed João so that, if questioned, he would say that he was bringing him a letter from the Algarve. Since it was very hot, the man had taken off his socks and they had started to touch each other when a white-haired Muslim arrived with two of his neighbors; when they had been left alone again, they had undressed, not without some fear, and the foreigner had embraced and kissed João, trying three times to practice sodomy. João refused the man's advances, alleging that "it was a mortal sin and that he did not do it", to which the polyglot stranger replied, "shut up, fool, you don't know what you're saying".[41]

This was the original confession of the young Turk, who, however, was discredited by some charges previously collected against him in the trials of other sodomites investigated by the Inquisition: a young 21-year-old named Pero declared that he had lived six months with the aforementioned Turk, who had slept with him often despite his opposition, and he had also called the 17-year-old Inácio Lopes Mesquita, originally from Guimarães and a servant of the scribe of the Casa de Ceuta, and other boys to commit sin; the 16-year-old Miguel, who had lived with the defendant for a year and who had invited him to sleep with him once, "asked that he show his shameful parts and he, although embarrassed, showed them to him and the other touched him". This had been repeated several times. He provided various details on the meetings between these young people of different origins and social backgrounds: "well-disposed young beardless people went to his house, including knight's servants and even single women", and he went to buy bread and wine, then they embraced and kissed, and he had slept there twice "and for this he left his home". Mesquita reported that the Turk "touched him and touched his shameful parts and slept with him by force". The accused admitted in his confession that he had driven many young people to sin and that some had refused, but with dishonest touches and "pollution"[42] he had achieved his goal, and that once "he had shaved his dishonest parts and had done the same to the young man [who was with him]". He claimed that Francisco de Melo, a noble knight who had served in the royal fleet, and many foreigners, as well as two Portuguese servants, also frequented his home, and that he had practiced sodomy twice after dinner at his home in the Mouraria neighborhood with someone named Pedro against the latter's will, three times with Mesquita and others, and that he "was always the one to provoke, but who in most cases ejaculated outside,[43] and he was always buzzed from the wine when he sinned in this way".

41. ANTT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, proc. n. 1600.

42. "Pollution" (*polução*) in some processes concerning sodomy meant ejaculation, but it was also synonymous with "wanking" (*punhetas*) or "doing the dirty things" (*fazer as sacanas*), that is, individual or mutual masturbation, respectively.

43. This is an essential detail in the inquisitorial casuistry, since only *intra vas* ejaculation, i.e. in the posterior vessel, was understood to be a crime of sodomy. See Harold B. Johnson,

Some of them emerge as more assiduous in the practice of the "nefarious sin": the mentioned Alle, who resided on Christian soil for four years, was "very infamous", and João de Noronha, "had a public reputation as a sodomite" and had once tried to kiss a 10-year-old boy, who had fled "because he had the reputation of taking advantage of boys". The freedman Felipe Morisco said that on the day of Saint John in 1557, after he had already been baptised, he was "going in the company of another poor young man, Gonçalo, to the farms of this city [i.e. Lisbon] to look for work and eat fruit, [and] not having anywhere to sleep, they went to a stable where other Muslims were sleeping". It was the stable of the Muslim Hamet, located in the Rua Nova dos Ourives, the place with the greatest concentration of sodomites of Muslim origin in Lisbon, who were always accompanied by Christian partners. The Moroccan João Pereira, who was about 15 years old, said he was also invited by Felipe Morisco to the same stable and that he slept on a mattress with Francisco de Argel, who had been a slave to the viceroy of India, and with Hamet and Felipe and they all coupled with Gonçalo, "who sometimes laughed, sometimes cried, and seemed to give consent". While still in the stable he had been penetrated by Hamet and had penetrated Felipe twice and Gonçalo once. When questioned, the latter declared that three moriscos had blocked his legs and sodomised him, "one at a time".[44]

These stories reveal a prevailing model by which moriscos courted and had sexual relations with their countrymen and, to a lesser extent, with the Portuguese. They were driven to practice a kind of homoerotic endogamy, which depended on the social separateness into which they were forced and perhaps on their generally despised appearance on the European pleasure market, where beauty was strongly linked to the whiteness of one's skin.[45] Muslims who harassed adult white Christians were rare due to the dominant traditional codes that established a clear separation between Christians of ancient origin and people with "tainted Jewish, Muslim, black or Indian blood", to use the lexicon of the statutes of blood purity in force at the time. However, in addition to the episode mentioned above in which the young Turk reported having been seduced by a foreigner in his forties who had told him that he adored "young people of his type", we can mention another instance of an interreligious relationship that highlights the seduction technique adopted by an incorrigible white sodomite with a dark-skinned Muslim. Maestro Felipe Correia, a surgeon arrested by the Inquisition of Évora in 1553, was originally from Torres Vedras, married, with only a thin beard, of medium height, dark-skinned and with long hair. This is how the morisco Domingos de Miranda expressed himself when he denounced him: "he showed him a part of his

Francis A. Dutra, *Pelo Vaso Traseiro: Sodomy and Sodomites in Luso-Brazilian History*, Tucson, Fenestra Books, 2007.

44. ANTT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, proc. n. 12108. Also for Cox (Valencia, Spain), there is the story of a young man who died in 1587 and who had been sodomised by nine men from his own group. See Rafaël Carrasco, *Inquisición y represión sexual en Valencia. Historia de los sodomitas (1565-1785)*, Barcelona, Laertes, 1985, p. 128.

45. Although we have seen that there was a strongly "maurophilic" vein in Spanish homoerotic sociability: see Mantecón Movellán's chapter in this volume.

chest and took him by the hand, telling him that he too had a breast like Francisca, and at night he took his hand and put it on his chest while caressing his belly and thigh, calling him 'brother' and telling him that he had a very beautiful shape and then: 'out there I will dress myself in other perfumed clothes and shirts, I will make ointments to make my face more beautiful and I will make you a little remedy to make your beard grow and your face look more pure'"; he then put his hand on the "nature" of the Muslim, warning him that if someone came, they had to change the topic, and promising him 4,000 *cruzados* if he would accompany him to his country. He added that "the master surgeon bows like a woman, is a whore and wanted me to fuck him".[46]

To end this first discussion of the presence of Muslim sodomites in Portugal, some considerations must be made regarding the inquisitorial repression of minorities of Islamic origin. Of the 19 Muslims arrested and tried for sodomy, 5 were whipped either in prison or publically in Lisbon's streets, 5 were tortured on the suspicion that they were hiding their sins, 13 were sentenced to row on the galleys for a variable period between two and ten years, in most cases for five, while only the Turk João António was sentenced to perpetual imprisonment. His sentence was justified as follows: "to the great detriment of his conscience and damage to the community (*república*), he practiced for a long time the abominable sin of sodomy with numerous people in various places". Those who were already baptised had to perform spiritual penances, including daily prayers, confession and communion in the main liturgical feasts; the renegades or those suspected of apostasy signed the act of abjuration, committing themselves to faithfully observe the Catholic precepts, vesting the penitential habit and receiving education in the Jesuit college. Only the Turk Osmão was sentenced to death at the stake and of all those tried he was the one who suffered the most, being one of the rare sodomites who suffered two types of torment: "led to the torture room, he was stripped and placed on the rack, [and] given a turn of the rope, but since he did not confess anything, the minister [i.e. the deputy of the Holy Office] poured water into his mouth through a linen cloth, with the permission of the inquisitor, after the latter first inquired if the accused ran any risks by giving him a drink, and after giving him a few cups of water the accused said that he wanted to tell the truth". Since he had not confessed all of his faults, the General Council of the Inquisition did not use any clemency, considering him incorrigible, and wrote in his sentence: "he committed the horrendous crime of sodomy with numerous young Christians, many times, with great insolence". They handed it over to the general auditor of the prison so that he might be chastised, determining that "it is justified to do as is done with those released [i.e. those condemned to death] for the crime of heresy on the orders of His Majesty".[47] His execution entered the casuistry of the Holy Office, since, according to the *Regimentos do Santo Ofício* (Regulations of the Holy Office), the death penalty was not applied to those who were being sentenced for the first time, "except for a Turk called Osmão, who being of this sect [i.e.

46. ANTT, *Inquisição de Évora*, proc. n. 8874.
47. ANTT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, proc. n. 312.

Muslim] and this birth [i.e. Turkish], was not useful nor was there reason that he should enjoy this privilege".[48] Xenophobia and homophobia went hand in hand.

There is no trace of him in the lists of *auto-da-fé* of the Portuguese courts, nor is he mentioned in the *História dos principais actos e procedimentos da Inquisição em Portugal* (1845),[49] but a chronicle erroneously attributed to the Benedictine Alexandre da Paixao records that on 22 August 1679 five Muslims who had orgiastic relations with a former page of the treasurer of the Cathedral of Lisbon had been captured by secular officials. After being examined by the Holy Office, they were returned to the civil judges. The page, being a minor, was flogged and forced to pass over the fire three times, and then he was exiled to Cape Verde for the rest of his life. As for the Muslims, three converted and were baptised in front of an altar set up for the occasion on the Carvão dock, the scene of the crime, while the other two were not spared. A large crowd attended their burning at the stake, during which, the narrative relays, the heavens sent an edifying signal: having become Christians, the moriscos "changed their appearance after their baptism, because in them one could see the grace they had received", while the two who had not converted "went to hell together".[50]

It is important to recognise that in many trials for Muslims implicated in homoerotic practices by the inquisitors, mercy prevailed over justice in the punishment of the accused. In 1582, for example, the morisco Manuel de Meneses was accused of being seen kissing and hugging a 12-year-old boy. The inquisitor ordered that they "carry out investigations external to the trial (extra-judicially) and with the utmost caution to verify if it is true, considering that it is only one witness who claims to have seen and heard it: therefore, go to the crime scene to evaluate if it was possible to see and hear it". At the end of the investigation, the deputies of the Holy Office concluded "that there is no act of sodomy, since there was only one witness, but that the suspects are to be separated, without imprisonment, [and that the accused] is acquitted due to an absence of evidence, but that he is to return to the jail from which he fled, to avoid meeting his accomplice again".[51]

Sometimes the inquisitors imposed lighter penalties if a Muslim defendant had recently converted, was drunk when he committed the "nefarious sin", was a minor, or if there was hope that he would repent, since some of the repentant reported that they wished to change their lives: the aforementioned Turk João António, sentenced to imprisonment in perpetuity, after five years of service in exchange for a coin a day from the king for his maintenance, declared that he had built many galleys that were then in the Algarve to defend the kingdom and that he had not been taken aboard

48. *Ibid*.

49. José Lourenço D. Mendonça, António Joaquim Moreira, *História dos principais actos e procedimentos da Inquisição em Portugal*, Lisbon, Círculo de Leitores, 1980. The work is based on a review and study of the *auto-da-fé* lists.

50. Alexandre da Paixao (attributed), *Monstruosidades do tempo e da fortuna. Diario de factos mais interessantes que succederam no reino de 1662 a 1680, até hoje attribuido infundadamente ao benedictino fr. Alexandre da Paixão*, ed. by João Augusto de Graça Barreto, Typ. da Viuva Sousa Neves, 1888, p. 316.

51. ANTT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, proc. n. 1728.

because the Turks or other Muslims "would have done him much harm if they had captured him, and in addition his only will is to marry, settle on his land and serve God". The inquisitors, acting with mercy, revoked the perpetual character of the punishment, freeing him with the following recommendation: "that you marry and not go back to sin" – almost an exact paraphrase of the Pauline adage, "it is better to marry than to burn" (1 Cor. 7:9).

4. *Christian* bardassi *in North Africa*

"The land of [the] evil sin", sodomy, was the expression with which the inquisitors referred to North Africa, thus reflecting the homophobic imagination and xenophobia dominant in Christianity from the Middle Ages onwards, especially during the Reconquista and in the early modern period.[52] The inquisitors asked more than one defendant if he held a positive opinion of Islam for the freedom it gave to commit the sin of sodomy.

European travelers such as the Englishman Joseph Pitts, who lived as a prisoner in Algiers for fifteen years in the mid-17th century, confirmed the image of the exuberance of homoeroticism in the Islamic world: "the horrible sin of sodomy is so far from being punished among the Arabs, as it is part of their normal topics of discussion and they brag about this detestable practice. It is as customary for a man from Algiers to fall in love with a boy as it is in England with a woman".[53] Even the French writer Charles-Nicolas-Sigisbert Sonnini, who visited Egypt in 1777, stated that "love against nature, this inconceivable appetite that dishonored the Greeks and Persians in antiquity, represents the delight and infamy of the Egyptians. It is not to women that they write their love verses or turn their lewd caresses: the distant object that makes them glow is different".[54]

John Boswell, on the other hand, recalled that the Arabic language has a rich erotic vocabulary, with a dozen words just to describe prostitutes.[55] Among the different terms it is worthwhile to highlight that of *bardaxo*, which appears in at least five 16th-century trials of renegades in Morocco and Algeria, as will be seen later, demonstrating the spread of its use not only in the Mediterranean but also in the New World. According to Wayne Dynes and Claude Courouve, *bardaxo* derives from the Persian *bardag*, which originally meant "young, sexually passive slave" and which was then propagated in the Mediterranean by the popular Arabic *bardaj* (البردج), "prisoner, captured", and written as *bardaxo* or *bardacho* in Portuguese, *bardaje* or *bardaxe* in Spanish, *bardassa* or *bardascia* in Italian, *berdache*, *bardache*, *bredache* or *bredaixe* in French, and *bardashe* in English. The first occurrence of *bredaiche* in French dates back to 1537 and was used

52. On this aspect, see also Vincenzo Lavenia's chapter in this volume.

53. Joseph Pitts, *A Faithful Account of the Religion and Manners of the Mahometans* (1738), cit. in El-Rouayheb, *Before Homosexuality*, p. 3.

54. Charles-Nicolas-Sigisbert Sonnini de Manoncourt, *Travels to Upper and Lower Egypt* (1799), cit. *ibid*.

55. Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance*, p. 195.

again in the following decade by Rabelais, *bredache* (1548), written *bardache* when, in 1575, the French missionary André Thevet used the term to refer to the Tupinamba Indians who practiced sodomy.[56]

It was upon the capture of Ceuta, Morocco in 1415 that the Portuguese found themselves faced with the shocking presence of same-sex lovers throughout North Africa, common across the popular social strata, in the public baths and inside homes.[57] It was, however, a scenario very similar to that which had existed for centuries in Andalusia and in other Iberian Christian kingdoms inhabited by Muslims.[58]

In the inquisitorial documentation – in Portugal as well as in Spain and Italy – we find hundreds of trials against renegade Catholics, the "Christians of Allah", to use Bartolomé and Lucile Bennassar's definition.[59] Some, beyond their sincere or opportunistic conversion to Islam, adopted Muslim clothes, customs and sexual practices, including the "vice of the Persians" or "vice of the Arabs", expressions used by Christians since the Middle Ages to indicate the "sin whose name cannot be pronounced".[60] The renegades were chastised as heretics for their offense to the sacrament of baptism and for their denial of the true religion when they adopted the teachings and ceremonies of the Qur'an. When they were arrested by the Holy Office, many of them had already been denounced and some confessed to having committed the "wicked sin" *in partibus infidelium*.

The accounts of these apostates allow us to observe the existence of at least two categories of homosexual lovers in North Africa: Christians, either free or imprisoned, who had spontaneous sexual relations with the locals; and Christian prisoners used for sexual purposes by their masters, as was customary with the *bardaxos*.[61] In the archival papers of the Portuguese Inquisition I have identified 9 references to homosexual renegades between 1557 and 1567, 5 from the 16th

56. Wayne R. Dynes, *Homolexis: A Historical and Cultural Lexicon of Homosexuality*, New York, Scholarship Committee, Gay Academic Union, 1985, p. 20; Claude Courouve, *Vocabulaire de l'homosexualité masculine*, Paris, Payot, 1985, p. 59. From the mid-19th century onwards, the concept of *berdache* was widely disseminated by anthropologists, above all to describe trans-sexuals native to North America.

57. Bernard Rosenberger, "Le Portugal et l'Islam maghrebin: XVe-XVIe siècles", in *Histoire du Portugal, Histoire Européenne. Actes du colloque*, Paris, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian – Centre Culturel Portugais, 1987, pp. 57-83; Bernard Rosenberger, "Mouriscos et elches. Conversions au Maroc au début du XVIe siècle", in *Relaciones de la Península Ibérica con el Magreb siglos XIII-XVI. Actas del coloquio*, ed. by Mercedes García-Arenal and María Jesús Viguera, Madrid, CSIC, 1988, pp. 621-664.

58. *Queer Iberia: Sexualities, Cultures and Crossings from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance*, ed. by Josiah Blackmore and Gregory S. Hutcheson, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 1999.

59. Bartolomé Bennassar, Lucile Bennassar, *I cristiani di Allah*, trad. by Sergio Atzeni, Milan, Rizzoli, 1991; Geraldo Pieroni, "Renegados e excluídos: cristãos islamizados perseguidos pela Inquisição portuguesa", in *Anais do XXIII Simpósio Nacional de História. História: Guerra e Paz*, Londrina (Parana, Brasil), Editora Midia, 2005, URL: http://anpuh.org/anais/wp-content/uploads/mp/pdf/ANPUH.S23.1247.pdf.

60. Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance*, p. 200.

61. Arno Schmitt, "Different Approaches to Male-Male Sexuality/Eroticism from Morocco to Usbekistan", in *Sexuality and Eroticism*, p. 3.

century and 4 from the 17th century. They include 7 Portuguese, 1 Frenchman and 1 Catalan. There are also 8 other indications concerning *bardajes* and *putos* processed by the Inquisitions of Murcia, Majorca and Sardinia between 1576 and 1678, concerning 2 Spaniards, 2 Portuguese, 1 Greek, 1 Sardinian, 1 Maltese and 1 Corsican. Like the Muslims arrested in Portugal for sodomy, these renegades were also in the prime of their years: they were between 21 and 33 years old when they engaged in sodomitic acts, particularly in Algiers, Tangier and Fez, but also in more remote regions of the Islamic world. This is also what happened to Pedro Medina, born in Mexico but the son of a Portuguese father, who was 30 years old when he was imprisoned by the Holy Office of Lisbon in 1657. He had sailed as a soldier to reach distant subjugated kingdoms or places in the wider sphere of influence of the Portuguese and Spanish empires and had maintained homosexual relations across these regions, sometimes even with Muslims: "in the town of Mogor (*sic*), in Persia", in Sri Lanka, in Malacca, in the Philippines, in Jakarta in Indonesia. It was in Persia that he had denied the Christian faith. Captured by the Dutch in Sri Lanka two years prior, he had sought to escape with the Portuguese, but he had been taken and confined to a ship for six months without being able to go ashore – and there he had committed sodomy 15 times.[62]

The 25-five year old Catalan Salvador, also a sailor, originally from Mosteros near Barcelona, was tried in 1557. He said he had been captured by the Turks at Carthage (Tunis) and then converted to Islam, observing the fasts and prayers and coming to harrass and frustrate Christian prisoners. He accused himself of having committed "the evil sin, in a passive position".[63] As in other similar confessions, the inquisitors ignored these references and their sentences only responded to the crimes of heresy and apostasy, without mentioning sodomy. Also from this core of inquisitorial documents comes the news that in the kingdom of Fez there was a mulatto "who as a Christian is called Clemente and as a Muslim Cara Mustafa, and he practiced sodomy with an 18-year-old Jew named Jacob, who acted as the woman in the sin against nature".[64] Even the young merchant converso Gonçalo Pires, whose parents were "Jews from Thessaloniki, the Jewish heart of Turkey (*Judéia de Turquia*)", which he had fled from to Rome and then from there to Lisbon, confessed to having had five sodomitic relationships in the Ottoman Empire with Turks and Jews sometimes as the active partner and at other times as the passive, and then returning to sin in a bathroom in Rome, in Venice, on the island of São Tomé and in Bahia, Brazil.[65]

Among the Christians who had free sexual relations with Arabs was a 25-year-old from Estremoz, Jorge Mendes Morato, arrested by the Holy Office in 1576. He is the renegade about whose homoerotic habits we have the most details. He said that as a boy he had gone "of his own and free volition" to Tangier and then for years remained between the kingdoms of Morocco and Fez, where he "lay with the Muslims of Africa and distanced himself from our holy Catholic faith,

62. ANTT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, proc. n. 3710.
63. ANTT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, proc. n. 13192.
64. ANTT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, proc. n. 6465 and 6465-1.
65. ANTT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, proc. n. 4307.

passing to the damned sect of Muhammad": he circumcised himself, attended mosques, performed all the ritual ablutions, prayers and fasts, fighting in war against Christians and marrying twice. His valour earned him the title of "erche" (*sic*).[66] He also emerged as a valiant captain, highly esteemed by the *sharīf*, who showered him with favours and revenue.[67] For unknown reasons, he abandoned Tangier, taking four Christian prisoners with him and returning to Portugal, bearing a letter of praise signed by the governor of Morocco, Duarte de Meneses, and by the dean of the chapter of the city cathedral, which attested to his and his companions' reconciliation with the Christian religion and the Church. Despite these credentials, he was imprisoned by the Inquisition on the suspicion that he remained a Muslim in secret. Among his informants was the mulatto António Esperança, who had also returned from Morocco, and who recounted that at the time that he was in the home of the *sharīf* and under the power of the Alcade Morato, the latter

> had two young *bardaxos* who slept behind him and he knows it because the aforementioned Morato lay down with the mentioned young men on their backs in front of him and there this was considered an act of gallantry, and it is a public conduct known to all, and whenever he went riding he always brought the two *bardaxos* with him, and [it is true that] the coachman who was his servant and also António Froes, because he was his soldier and because it is the truth, might be informed of this.[68]

Another witness, João Cordeiro, was asked if

> when he lived in Barbary he saw or heard that there were *erches* that made use of young boys instead of women and practiced the sinister sin of sodomy with them and he heard what they were called and where they now reside. He replied that when he was in Barbary, he heard that Jorge Mendes Morato, an *erche*, who now resides in this city of Lisbon, made use of young men instead of women and kept two young *erches* at home, one of whom was called Amet, this being his Muslim name, 16-years-old, and the other Morato, 20-years-old, who died in the war between the Madman (*Maluco*, sic) and the *sharīf*, while Amet remained in the Madman's house. And it was known to all among the *erches* that Jorge Mendes used these two as women and practiced the nefarious sin of sodomy with them, and that the witness, because he saw when the aforementioned Morato entered the bathroom to wash, sometimes commanded one of the two and at other times both, that they would bring him something he needed and, once they were inside, he closed the door and they stayed there alone, and he doesn't know if this happened for any reason other than that he could meet them in the bathroom. And when he was asked if after each of these young men came out of the bathroom they complained, or if he had heard that they

66. According to the aforementioned dictionaries of Bluteau and Moraes, "elche is the Christian made Muslim (*moro*), who, passing to the law of Muhammad, becomes a transfugue of the sacred militia of Christ". On the other hand, in Felipe Maíllo Salgado, *Vocabulario de historia árabe e islámica*, Madrid, Akal, 1997: "elche comes from Arabic, and is synonymous with barbarian, non-Arab, non-Muslim. The elches held important positions, as artillerymen of the North African armies, in some cases reaching the status of notables, captains and great men".

67. António Dias Farinha, "Os xarifes de Marrocos: notas sobre a expansão portuguesa no Norte de África", in *Estudos de História de Portugal. Homenage a A.H. de Oliveira Marques*, 2 vols, vol. 2, Lisbon, Editoria Estampa, 1982-1983, pp. 59-68.

68. ANTT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, proc. n. 6465 and 6465-1.

complained to someone else because he practiced the sin of sodomy with them, he said that the two young men had never complained to him about this.[69]

The former *erche* Morato attempted to diminish these accusations, claiming that the *sharīf* had chosen him to take care of his two wives, his daughters and the young *bardaxos* "because he was chaste and if he had committed sodomy, he would have been killed by the *sharīf*". Later, however, he declared "that all the renegades have the custom of possessing boys instead of women for their pleasures (*sensualidades*), and with them they practice the sin of sodomy and boast about it". But the accused "boasted only because the Muslims did not pay attention to the fact that he was a Christian, but he did not commit it, and the *sharīf* entrusted all the young men to him because he trusted him and greatly detested all the people who practiced it, from which [he decided] to give him all the boys and women so that he might take care of them". It was a difficult excuse to take seriously.

The inquisitorial documentation suggests the existence of a second category of men who practiced homoerotic relationships in North Africa: Christian prisoners used for sexual ends by the masters as they usually did with the local *bardaxos*. Various renegades were categorical in claiming to have been victims of sexual abuse by their Muslim owners. In 1558 the Inquisition arrested 25-year-old François, originally from Languedoc, captured by the Turks at the age of 12 in the countryside around Marseille and transported to Algiers, where he had adhered to Islam for three years, claiming, however, that "he never had the heart of a Muslim". He had served as a washerman in his master's jail, who "used him in wicked sin", until he was redeemed on the Algarve coast.[70]

Francisco Freitas, imprisoned in Algiers in 1619, reported to the Inquisition of Lisbon in 1638 that his lord, the Turk Mustafá, had sodomised him for the eight months of his imprisonment, "and he had consented because he was his prisoner".[71] Juan Carbonell, 33, originally from Palma de Mallorca, was arrested by the local Inquisition in 1644 because, when he resided in Alexandria, Egypt, "he practiced sin against nature with his lord in both the active and passive positions".[72] In this case it seems that there was complicity on the part of the Christian prisoner, because the active position in anal copulation implies consent in the venereal act.

Two renegades applied the *bardaje* epithet to themselves. The 22-year-old Portuguese António Velho, captured when he was 15, had denied the Christian faith and donned Turkish clothes. Prosecuted by the Inquisition of Murcia in 1587, he declared that he had been a "*bardasso* of his lord".[73] Similarly, Clemente Saura, Aragonese from Mallorca, arrested by the Sardinian Inquisition in 1585, "served his lord as a *bardasso* for four years", until he had managed to escape and reconcile himself in Corsica.[74] Only 1 of these 15 renegades said he had always

69. *Ibid*.
70. ANTT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, proc. n. 9682.
71. ANTT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, liv. 133 (5º Caderno de Nefandos), f. 399r.
72. Arquivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid [AHN], *Inquisición*, *Mallorca*, Lib. 864, f. 62v.
73. AHN, *Inquisición*, *Murcia*, Leg. 2022, Exp. 19.
74. AHN, *Inquisición*, *Cerdeña*, Lib. 782, f. 381r. "Reconcilitation" was the name of the process by which renegades returned to the Catholic faith.

resisted and reacted to the master's homoerotic assaults: Valerio Alum, a 35-year-old from Malta arrested by the Sardinian court in 1670, said that when he was still a slave his master Ali Mustafá had wanted to make him a "prostitute (*puto*) and use his back" and, since he opposed it, "he was tied to a stump".[75]

Another tragic story is that of Manuel Ribeiro, who was both the victim of abuse by his master but also the habitual consumer of "nefarious" relationships with Muslim boys: 22 years old, "short in stature, with blue eyes, of a clear complexion and with brown hair", he was denounced because around 1647 "he found company with a Turk whom he served as a slave and who used him as his woman". However, he had been freed by his lord, who had sent him to work in town until he could pay the ransom. He had the bad reputation of being an "active sodomite with Muslim boys, and other captive Christians were irritated by the offense he caused to our people (*nação*) and religion, and because they saw him lying with a Muslim, they tied him up and they beat him a lot, then offended him heavily by saying insulting words against his vice and sin". Outraged by so many insults and such violence, the young sodomite renounced his faith in Christ and uttered the customary words by which one converted to Islam.

The defendant's mother, who was also a prisoner with her seven other children, learned of his foolish action and tried to redeem him but with no success. Meanwhile, his former master struck him hard and broke his arm, told him that he had to renounce his Christian faith in the public square among Muslims and not only Christians, and then locked him up because he had returned to being a Christian and sent him to Tetuan. It seems that the boy remained handicapped, but he gave signs of being a practicing Christian, wearing short hair and saying that he was eager to go to Christian lands. He also went about with some Muslims and "followed the custom of gallant and courtly Muslim lovers, making a wound on his left arm in front of his [female] beloved and pouring blood into the wine he then drank, thereby proving his love", and he repeated this gesture several times, "cutting from his wrist to his back, and he was seen making the same wounds six or seven times". Despite such acts of gallantry, his informant gave an interesting estimate: "more than two or three thousand prisoners were aware of his reputation as a sodomite". Other witnesses confirmed that Manuel Ribeiro practiced sodomy with Muslims, Turks and a Neapolitan prisoner, that he was very close to Muslims, that he drank and ate with them and that he was treated generously by his master and lover.[76] The same bad reputation surrounded another Portuguese prisoner, "João Baptista, who denied the faith and dressed like a Muslim, and now he has become a Carmelite in Maranhão after having confessed everything to the Inquisition".

Another episode, as unusual as the one just reported, is that of Gaspar Barreto, who must have been so enchanting that he had been the *mignon* of two powerful Moroccans of the Sa'adian dynasty. Born in Mazagão, he resided in Belém, at the gates of Lisbon. In 1637 he confessed that about 35 years earlier, when he had been in Marrakesh

75. AHN, *Inquisición*, *Cerdeña*, Lib. 783, f. 330r.
76. ANTT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, liv. 139 (12º Caderno de Nefandos), f. 158r.

> he became a prisoner of the *sharīf* […] who had him led to his room, where by placing himself at his side the *sharīf* put his virile member in his rear and ejaculated, forcing him in turn to put himself on top of him, but he did not scatter seed nor did his nature rise.

He repeated the "nefarious act" six times. When the master died, he was succeeded by his brother who, in turn, "throwing him to the ground on a carpet and forcibly removing his trousers in a prone position", sodomised him. He added that the Alcalde of Morocco, the Portuguese renegade Roduão, also forcibly penetrated him, abusing him in his lord's stable. Finally, he said that he had relations with a donkey, a sheep and with seven of the *sharīf*'s donkeys, which were loaded with food.[77]

Three of these Portuguese sodomites said that they had served as soldiers in King Sebastian's historic expedition and had been captured after the king's tragic defeat and disappearance in Ksar el-Kebir in 1578: Bartolomé Corro, originally from Santarem and tried by the court of Murcia in 1588, had been in the army for five years and ended up as a prisoner for twenty years;[78] António Velho, from Cascais, was only 10 years old when he was drafted into Sebastian's troops and he was 13 when he had been captured. He was also tried by the Inquisition of Murcia on charges, in addition to having adhered to Islam, of having been the "*bardasso* of his lords". The third veteran of the battle of Ksar el-Kebir denounced for sodomy was a settler in Brazil, which confirms the great transcontinental mobility of the Portuguese in the 16th century, when it took between two and three months to cross the Atlantic, depending on the currents and winds. Gaspar Róis, a "short and thin man" born in Torres Novas, was 30 years old when he was reported to a visiting inquisitorial agent in Salvador da Bahia in 1591: an 18-year-old African black said that "he had slept with him [who had taken him] from behind by force and who bound him for this purpose".[79] The story of this young man from Portugal's interior is full of adventure: at 17 he had enlisted as a "loyal" in King Sebastian's army and, after his defeat in the desert, he had been captured by Muslims and sold as an oarsman in the Turkish galleys in Algiers, sailing on the seas between Istanbul and Greece. Four years later "he had accumulated more than a hundred Spanish gold shields, with which he redeemed himself and returned to Portugal. He then moved to the island of Terceira aboard the fleet of the Marquis of Santa Cruz, and from there he arrived in Brazil" around 1586. In Salvador he began to work as a farmer on the property of Manuel de Mello, brother of the canon Bartolomeu de Vasconcelos, who reported him to the Holy Office a few years later when Gaspar Róis, a tireless traveler who, after having gone to the territory recently conquered by Sergipe del-Rey, was now in the city of Cuzco in the vice-kingdom of Peru. Because of the sin committed with the African black man, an investigation was opened up against him, but he shrewdly paid the Bishop's scribe ten *cruzados* to burn the documents, so no further action was taken against him. Among those of

77. ANTT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, liv. 133 (5° Caderno de Nefandos), ff. 188r-198v.

78. AHN, *Inquisición*, *Murcia*, Leg. 2022, Exp. 20.

79. ANTT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, proc. n. 11061; Luiz Mott, *Homossexuais da Bahia. Dicionário Biográfico: Século XVI-XIX*, Salvador, Editora Grupo Gay da Bahia, 1999.

his eight accusers, the deposition of Father Baltasar Lopes is of particular interest for our purposes: "he heard that when he was a prisoner on Islamic soil, Gaspar Róis committed the aforementioned sin of sodomy and wore a shaved neck".

Without a doubt, it was another veteran from Sebastian's army to have spread such a compromising detail in the New World, namely that even before the alleged sodomitic assault on the African black man of Salvador da Bahia, Gaspar Róis had "committed the said sin of sodomy", adding a revealing detail: "he wore a shaved neck". Browsing through the images of men with their hair shaved off the back of their necks, I came across a splendid drawing from the late 18th century, from a Turkish-Ottoman homoerotic treatise, which depicts a masseur from a *hamam* with the lower part of his head shaved (Fig. 1).[80] Apparently, these young men "regularly provided sexual services".[81] Perhaps the haircut was a signal by which to identify the *bardaxos*, as if to signify their passivity when they were laying and turned the back of their neck to the men who rode them from behind? In Brazil, still today, the expressions "to eat neck meat" (*comer carne de pescoço*) or "to inhale the cervix" (*fungar no cangote*) are used to indicate the position taken by the active partner who lies on top of the passive partner.

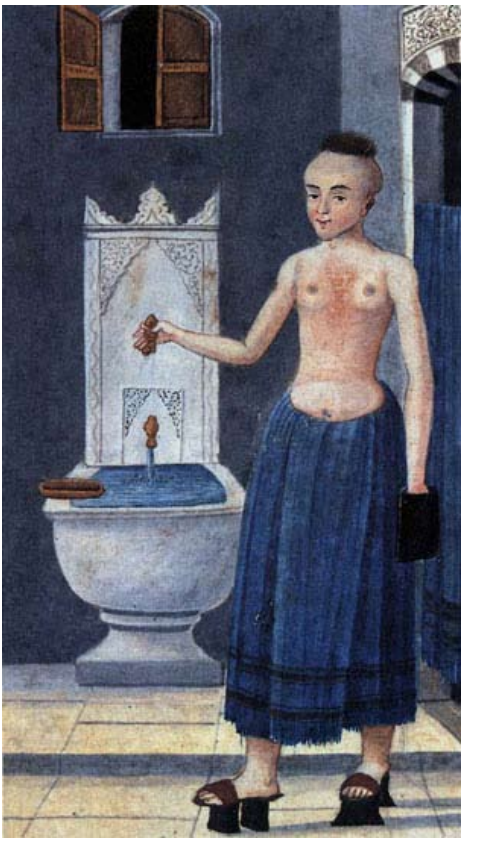

Fig. 1. Young masseur in a Turkish bath with a shaved neck. Drawing taken from Fazil-i Enderuni, *Hubanname* (*The Book of Handsome Men*), c. 1780.

Another document seems to confirm that shaving was part of the erotic habits of those who practiced homoeroticism in the Islamic world: the mentioned João António, "who was a Turk" and who was then serving a Lisbon nobleman, after he was captured in 1552 confessed to the Holy Office that he had had a dozen homoerotic exchanges with foreigners, both Muslims and Portuguese, and that he had "once he had shaved himself in the dishonest parts in front of a young man

80. On this literary tradition, see also the chapter by Selim S. Kuru published in this volume.

81. Ömer Fatih Parlak, *On Syphilis in the Ottoman Empire and Turkish History Writing*, M.A. Thesis, Eastern Mediterranean University (North Cyprus), 2012.

and had done the same to the young man". Out of about 600 processes for sodomy, which involved over 5,000 "accomplices", these are the only two instances I have encountered regarding the cutting of the hair on the neck or the shaving of the genitals, in both cases in relation to homoerotic practices related to Islam. This is a path that deserves to be pursued by scholars of the Muslim world and of homosexuality.

(*Translated by Kalina Yamboliev*)

Umberto Grassi

~~Transgressive~~ Sexualities, Gender and Conversion in the Mediterranean World: The Case of Susanna Daza

1. *Introduction*

The theme of religious conversion has played a central role in the history of interfaith relations and conflicts in the Mediterranean during the early modern period. Conversions were a feature of early modern Mediterranean and European societies to an extent unequalled since the time of the Christianisation of the late Roman empire.[1] In part, it was a matter of forced conversions, such as those of the Jews and Muslims of Spain.[2] Yet, beyond this, in a period characterised broadly by

1. Simon Ditchfield, Helen Smith, "Introduction", in *Conversions: Gender and Religious Change in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Simon Ditchfield and Helen Smith, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2017, pp. 1-17: 1.

2. The bibliography on Spanish *Judeoconversos* and *moriscos* is too vast to be summarised in a footnote. To mention just some of the recent contributions on Spanish religious minorities: *After Conversion: Iberia and the Emergence of Modernity*, ed. by Mercedes García-Arenal, Leiden, Brill, 2016; David Nirenberg, *Neighboring Faiths: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism in the Middle Ages and Today*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2014; James Amelang, *Historias paralelas. Judeoconversos y moriscos en la España moderna*, Madrid, Akal, 2012; María Rosa Menocal, *The Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews, and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain*, Boston, Little Brown, 2012 (this book is controversial; for a review, see Mercedes García-Arenal, "Review to Menocal M. R., *The Ornament of the World*", *Speculum*, 79/3 (2004), pp. 801-804). Baer can be considered the founder of modern scholarship on Spanish Jews. His work was first published in Hebrew in 1945, but its impact is due to the Spanish translation: Yitzhak Baer, *Historia de los judíos en la España cristiana*, trans. by José Luis Lacave, Madrid, Altalena, 1981. Another benchmark is Benzion Netanyahu, *The Marranos of Spain: From the Late 14th to the Early 16th Century, According to Contemporary Hebrew Sources*, 3rd ed., Ithaca (NY), Cornell University Press, 1999. Some recent contributions: Miriam Bodian, *Dying in the Law of Moses: Crypto-Jewish Martyrdom in the Iberian World*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2007; Yirmiyahu Yovel, *The Other Within: The Marranos. Split Identity and Emerging Modernity*, Princeton (NJ), Princeton University Press, 2009; *Late Medieval Jewish Identities: Iberia and Beyond*, ed. by Carmen Caballero-Navas and Maria E. Alfonso, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010; Ángel Alcalá, *Los judeoconversos en la cultura y sociedad españolas*, Madrid, Trotta, 2011.

On the history of Moriscos, see the seminal work of Vincent Bernard, Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, *História de los moriscos: vida y tragedia de una minoría*, Madrid, Revista de Occidente, 1978. A recent and fascinating collection of records is found in *This Happened in My Presence:*

the redefinition of the spiritual and political boundaries of western Christianity, a substantial portion of the believers was also affected by conflicts provoked by the emergence of new Protestant confessions.[3] Voluntary conversions were numerous, and they were variously motivated. Of these, a significant part was comprised of Christians who converted to Islam. While in smaller numbers, the opposite movement from Islam to Christianity is also documented in the sources.[4]

Moriscos, Old Christians, and the Spanish Inquisition in the Town of Deza, 1569-1611, ed. and trans. by Patrick J. O'Banion, North York (Ontario), University of Toronto Press, 2017. See also: Javier Irigoyen-García, *"Moors dressed as Moors": Clothing, Social Distinction, and Ethnicity in Early Modern Iberia*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2017; Bernard Vincent, *Islam d'Espagne au XVI^e siècle: résistances identitaires des morisques*, Saint-Denis, Éditions Bouchène, 2017 (a collection of essays from the 1970s to 2016); *Expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain: A Mediterranean Diaspora*, ed. by Mercedes Garcia-Arenal and Gerard Wiegers, trans. by Consuela Lopez-Morillas and Martin Beagles, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2014; Trevor J. Dadson, *Tolerance and Coexistence in Early Modern Spain: Old Christians and Moriscos in the Campo de Calatrava*, Woodbridge (Suffolk) and Rochester (NY), Tamesis, 2014; Mercedes García-Arenal, Fernando Rodriguez Mediano, *Orient in Spain: Converted Muslims, the Forged Lead Books of Granada, and the Rise of Orientalism*, trans. by Consuela Lopez-Morillas, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2013. Increasing attention has been paid to the ties between moriscos and colonial history: Karoline P. Cook, *Forbidden Passages: Muslims and Moriscos in Colonial Spanish America*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016; Antonio Garrido Aranda, *Moriscos e Indios: Precedentes hispánicos de la evangelización en México*, Mexico, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 2013; Louis Cardaillac, *Dos destinos trágicos en paralelo: Los moriscos de España y los Indios de América*, Jalisco, El Colegio de Jalisco, 2012.

3. *Living with Religious Diversity in Early-Modern Europe*, ed. by C. Scott Dixon, Dagmar Freist and Mark Greengrass, Farnham, Ashgate, 2009; Benjamin J. Kaplan, *Divided by Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge (MA) and London, Harvard University Press, 2007; Keith P. Luria, *Sacred Boundaries: Religious Coexistence and Conflict in Early Modern France*, Washington, D.C., Catholic University of America Press, 2005. On the narrative of conversions: Abigail Shinn, *Conversion Narrative in Early Modern England: Tales of Turning*, New York and London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018; Peter Mazur, Abigail Shinn, "Introduction: Conversion Narratives in the Early Modern World", *Journal of Early Modern History*, 17 (2013), pp. 427-436; Ryan Szpiech, *Conversion and Narrative: Reading and Religious Authority in Medieval Polemic*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013; D. Bruce Hindmarsh, *Evangelical Conversion Narrative: Spiritual Autobiography in Early Modern England*, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 2005; Patricia Caldwell, *Puritan Conversion Narrative: The Beginnings of American Expression*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983. For a global approach: *Conversion: Old World and New*, ed. by Kenneth Mills and Anthony Grafton, Rochester and New York, University of Rochester Press, 2003; and *Emotions and Conversion*, ed. by Jacqueline Van Gent and Spencer E. Young, special issue of the *Journal of Religious History*, 39/4 (2015).

4. Bartolomé Bennassar, Lucile Bennassar, *Les Chrétiens d'Allah XV^e -XVII^e siècles*, Paris, Perrin, 1991; Lucia Rostagno, *Mi faccio turco. Esperienze ed immagini dell'islam nell'Italia moderna*, Naples, Istituto per l'Oriente C. A. Nallino, 1983; Lucetta Scaraffia, *Rinnegati. Per una storia dell'identità occidentale*, Rome and Bari, Laterza, 1993; *Conversions islamiques. Identités religieuses en Islam méditerranéen*, ed. by Mercedes García-Arenal, Paris, Maisonneuve et Larose, 2001; Tijana Krstić, *Contested Conversion to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2011; *Diaspora Morisca*, ed. by Giovanna Fiume and Stefania Pastore, special issue of *Quaderni Storici*, 144 (2013); *Religious Conversion: History, Experience and Meaning*, ed. by Ira Katznelson and Miri Rubin, Farnham,

Historians initially concluded that the phenomenon of conversion affected primarily men, in part due to their greater mobility, while women were believed to be more inclined to remain anchoured to their ancestral cultural and religious traditions. According to this interpretation, attachment to a spiritual and material heritage was the result of women's social and economic weakness, which led them to seek refuge in faith more than men were inclined to. Furthermore, their links with the domestic sphere secured them a central role in the transmission of the material culture of the communities to which they belonged, in whose daily life ritual was an integral part.[5]

However, more recent studies have shed light on the phenomenon of female conversions, though they appear less frequently in the sources. Although women were more constrained in their movements, in the early modern period they still crossed the (geographical and cultural) boundaries that separated faiths. No less than men, they used the tool of conversion to improve their living, economic and material conditions. Some sought to escape oppressive or unsatisfactory familial control through apostasy, yet their emotional and sentimental relationships exerted a decisive influence on their decision-making processs. In most cases, given the universality of women's subordination across early modern societies, movement between religious and cultural spheres was almost always accompanied by their passage from one male protection network to another.[6]

The case presented here follows a different trajectory. Susanna Daza, a morisca (that is, a "new Christian" of Muslim origins) was tried by the Sicilian Inquisition for having first professed the Muslim and then the Jewish faith, yet without ever officially denying Catholicism. While her multiple conversions were triggered by her relationships first with a Muslim man and then with a Jewish partner, none of these ties were ever sealed by marriage. According to the sources, it seems that she was rather free in her sexual conduct throughout her life. Then, after her second relationship ended, she allegedly decided to integrate into her daily life religious practices from all of the faiths to which she had drawn close, thus creating a unique mosaic of symbolic and ritual gestures that were accompanied by her lukewarm and formalistic participation in the shared rites of the post-Tridentine Catholic liturgy.

It was perhaps her independence and lack of scruples that aroused the suspicions which led her to the inquisitorial court. The investigation into her life concluded in a condemnation to perpetual penitential isolation following an accusation of witchcraft. This final trial had been preceded by an initial judicial procedure in which her apostasy had already been investigated and rebuked.

Ashgate, 2014; *Conversion and Islam in the Early Modern Mediterranean: The Lure of the Other*, ed. by Claire Norton, London and New York, Routledge, 2017. For a contemporary perspective, see *Religious Conversions in the Mediterranean World*, ed. by Nadia Marzouki and Olivier Roy, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

5. For a historiographical appraisal, see Eric R. Dursteler, "To Piety or Conversion More Prone? Gender and Conversion in the Early Modern Mediterranean", in *Conversions: Gender and Religious Change in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Simon Ditchfield and Helen Smith, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2017, pp. 21-40.

6. See below, notes 38-50.

In addition to the relationship between gender and religious conversion, Susanna's story allows us to explore the phenomenon of multiple conversions, which was not uncommon in the early modern period. We will not only try to comprehend the motivations that drove her to embark on a religious path characterised by such experimentation and variability. We will also seek to understand the effects of these multiple transitions on her spirituality, interrogating the relationship between conversion and the development of indifferent or skeptical positions towards institutionalised religion.

2. *The first trial*

In the second half of the 16th century, Susanna Daza, a 40-year-old "moor"[7] woman and Christian convert (*cristiana de mora*) who lived in Palermo, denounced herself before the judges of the Spanish Inquisition in Sicily. She said that she had gone to confession only to fulfill a formal obligation, without believing in the validity of the sacrament. For a long time, she had received communion in "mortal sin". Moreover, she reported that she had had sex with a "Turk" man for one and a half years. After breaking up with him – she reportedly said – Daza eventually decided to abandon the "Holy Catholic faith" and convert to the "wicked sect of Muḥammad", believing "in her heart" that she could also save her soul through Islam.[8] She had practiced the Muslim faith for six months, but then she started a relationship with a Jewish man and, following his advice, she turned to the "Law of Moses" for one month. From then on, she deemed Judaism the true religion. She maintained this certainty in the secret of her heart for eight years, confessing three times a year without revealing her apostasy to anyone. During this period, she developed a personal hybrid religion, privately praying "Turkish" prayers aloud "as the Turk had taught her" and celebrating Jewish rites as she learned from her other lover. She confessed to the judges that she would have liked to go to Barbary to freely profess her beliefs. She was finally reconciled to the Christian faith by a secret abjuration, without any public ceremony.[9]

3. *Social and political background, and the scattered evidence of a life's journey*

The first problem, in a case like Susanna Daza's, is to determine the social identity of the protagonist. This question has no simple solution, since the only available sources are the summary reports of the two inquisitorial processes – we will deal with the second later – contained in the *Relaciones de causas* of the Sicilian Inquisition, kept at the *Archivo Histórico Nacional de Madrid*. In

7. In the early modern period "moor" often meant Spanish Muslim, even though the term was occasionally also used with other meanings. Salvatore Bono, "Schiavi in Italia: maghrebini, neri, slavi, ebrei e altri (secc. XVI-XIX)", *Mediterranea*, 19 (2010), pp. 235-252: 238.

8. Archivo Histórico Nacional de Madrid [AHN], Inquisición, L. 898, f. 530v.

9. *Ibid.*, f. 531r. The case is also reported *ibid.*, ff. 613r-619r.

fact, except for a few fragments, much of the material from this archival court is no longer preserved.[10] However, as Mary Elizabeth Perry noted in her analysis of a case based on equally vague sources, the problem of the limited nature of the documents available and their intrinsically biased nature is an element one must accept when writing the history of women in marginal conditions. Perry nevertheless defended the ability to conduct research with methodological rigour by reading texts "'against the grain', looking beneath surface meanings for subtexts and silences that can tell us more than the formulaic questions and responses that inquisitors sought and recorded in official male-centered documents". This work is possible if we use all of the information available to us regarding the larger context, in order "to recover some of the missing evidence".[11]

Indeed, Susanna's case should not be read in isolation. Her troubled life must be situated against the backdrop of an animated and culturally diverse society that, since the beginning of the 16th century, had been confronting the increasing control of the Spanish Inquisition. Due to its geographical position, Sicily was a crossroads in the Mediterranean in which "renegades" (Christians who embraced Islam), Muslims slaves (both converts and non),[12] Jews,[13] Eastern Christians[14] and Protestants from every corner of Europe lived side by side in a precarious but dynamic balance.[15] Moreover, a diversified popular culture was reflected in a large number of charges of unorthodox rituals and beliefs, which sometimes conflated with erudite speculation on natural philosophy, alchemy and necromancy.[16] Accusations of sexual and gender ~~transgressions~~ were equally frequent, and the inquisitorial sources attest to a great variety of ~~transgressive~~ beliefs about sexual behaviours.[17]

Sicily had been under the control of the Aragonese crown since the 14th century, and the authority of the Spanish Inquisition extended to the island in

10. Ferdinand IV of Naples (III of Sicily), at the request of the viceroy Domenico Caracciolo, marquis of Villamarina, considered the Holy Office an anachronism and decreed its suppression on 16 March 1782. In the opinion of the "enlightened" intellectuals of the time, it was the end of a history of infamy, and as such Caracciolo wanted to destroy its legacy, ordering on 27 June 1783 that the archives of the Inquisition be destroyed. Evidence of the court's activity is therefore almost exclusively comprised of the collections of reports sent regularly by local inquisitors to the headquarters in Spain. Manuel Rivero Rodríguez, "Sicilia", in *Dizionario Storico dell'Inquisizione*, ed. by Adriano Prosperi, Vincenzo Lavenia and John Tedeschi, Pisa, Edizioni della Normale, 2010, pp. 1421-1423: 1422-1423.

11. Mary Elizabeth Perry, "Finding Fatima, a Slave Woman of Early Modern Spain", *Journal of Women's History*, 20/1 (2008), pp. 151-167: 153.

12. Francesco Renda, *L'Inquisizione in Sicilia. I fatti. Le persone*, Palermo, Sellerio, 1997, pp. 341-375.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 275-308.

14. AHN, Inquisición, L. 898, f. 290r ("renegades" from Moscow); f. 290v (from Sclavonia); ff. 566v-567r (Pedro alias Norces, a Greek Christian, "son of Greek or Armenian parents who were among those who were used to give their children as a tribute to the Great Turk").

15. Renda, *L'Inquisizione in Sicilia*, pp. 309-340.

16. See Maria Sofia Messana, *Inquisitori, negromanti e streghe nella Sicilia moderna (1500-1782)*, Palermo, Sellerio, 2007.

17. Renda, *L'Inquisizione in Sicilia*, pp. 385-388.

the early 16th century. In the Spanish European domains, and later in the colonies overseas, the Inquisition was a powerful tool by which to assert the political control of the centre over the peripheries of the Empire. When the rise of the Protestant Reformation provided the Inquisition with a pretext to reinforce its authority over Sicilian society, it had already almost succeeded in extirpating Sicilian Judaism through violent repression.[18] Growing attention was also directed towards Islam,[19] although political considerations led to the adoption of a more tolerant policy. After it had exhausted Charles V and troubled the reign of his son Philip II, the war against the Ottoman Empire remained a source of ongoing concern in western Christendom. It is not by chance that after the battle of Lepanto (1572) trials for crypto-Islamism rose steeply.[20]

Islamic presence on Sicilian soil was conspicuous throughout the 16th century. The remarkable system of coastal fortifications (improved in the 1940s) did not prevent North African corsairs from preying on the Sicilian coasts. At the same time, Muslim merchants challenged the kingdom's prohibitions on selling their products on the island and participating in local fairs. For their part, not all Sicilians lived in fear of raids. Some, pursuing the "Turkish dream", crossed the sea and voluntarily denied the Christian faith in search of better economic and social opportunities.

On the other hand, the close contact with Islam led to a large number of captives being poured into the main ports on the island, in particular at Palermo, Messina and Trapani. The slaves were then sold to other Italian and European merchants or purchased by local notables, ecclesiastics and artisans. The island was also frequented by Muslim brokers who dealt with the exchange and redemption of their co-religionists, although many of the slaves decided to remain on the island, where they married and established roots.[21] However, it was not only Muslim slaves that lived in Sicily. A large number of moriscos also moved there from Spain. First there were those who came from the southern region of Granada – survivors from the morisco Rebellion of Alpujarra (1568-1569) – and then later, when Susanna's destiny had already been decided, exiles from the mass deportations that culminated in the moriscos' final expulsion from Spain between 1609 and 1614.[22]

What were the institutional attitudes towards this diverse Islamic presence on the island? There were substantial reasons that justified the inquisitorial tribunal's adoption of a strategy of lenient negotiation rather than repressive control. The majority of inquisitorial cases that focused on Islamic beliefs involved "renegades"

18. Francesco Renda, *La fine del giudaismo siciliano*, Palermo, Sellerio, 1993.

19. Maria Sofia Messana, "La 'resistenza' musulmana e i 'martiri' dell'Islam: moriscos, schiavi e cristiani rinnegati di fronte all'inquisizione spagnola di Sicilia", *Quaderni Storici*, 42/3 (2007), pp. 743-772.

20. Renda, *L'Inquisizione in Sicilia*, p. 351.

21. Bruno Pomara Saverino, *Rifugiati. I moriscos e l'Italia*, Florence, Firenze University Press, 2017, pp. 126-127.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 752. On the moriscos in the Italian peninsula after the expulsion, see Pomara Saverino, *Rifugiati*. See also Fiume, Pastore, *Diaspora Morisca*.

(840 defendants).[23] The phenomenon was so widespread that, after much discussion, the inquisitors decided to punish those who voluntarily accused themselves before the court with only a light spiritual penitence. This decision aimed explicitly to favour the return and reintegration of Christians from Muslim-majority countries.[24] Despite the resolution agreed upon in January 1571 to absolve those who spontaneously denounced themselves, we know that only 46% were absolved, while 34% were obliged to abjure, 13% received various penances and 0.1% were eventually sentenced to death.[25] At the same time, the condition of Muslim slaves living in Sicily was determined by the nature of diplomatic relations with Islamic authorities. During the ongoing war against the Ottoman empire, political and religious institutions, and religious orders, often negotiated the exchange of prisoners with their adversaries.[26] The harsh treatment of Muslim slaves could thus affect the condition of Christian slaves still held in Islamic lands.

The liberation of converted slaves was a thorny problem, and their position was widely discussed within theological circles. The instances were manifold yet local responses differed. Generally, minors and those who had been forced to apostatise were to be reintegrated into the Catholic faith and freed. However, research has shown that this did not always happen. Liberation was not automatic, and clarifying whether or not they had been baptised was the crucial element in determining whether it would be implemented or not.[27] Given the absence of an institution comparable to the many Houses of Catechumens established elsewhere in the Italian peninsula from the mid-15th century on, it is not easy to know how the conversions of Muslim slaves took place in Sicily.[28]

23. Bennassar, Bennassar, *Les Chrétiens d'Allah*.

24. Renda, *L'Inquisizione in Sicilia*, pp. 352-359.

25. Messana, "La 'resistenza' musulmana", p. 746.

26. Giovanna Fiume, *Schiavitù mediterranee. Corsari, rinnegati e santi di età moderna*, Milan, Bruno Mondadori, 2009, p. xv.

27. Not that conversion was the only way they could get freedom. In fact, they could also be freed if they purchased their own freedom, paying a sum to their master with the money they earned by working in their free time or receiving alms. Pomara Saverino, *Rifugiati*, pp. 229-250. On Bologna, see Raffaella Sarti, "Bolognesi schiavi dei 'turchi' e schiavi 'turchi' a Bologna tra Cinque e Settecento: alterità etnico-religiosa e riduzione in schiavitù", *Quaderni Storici*, 36/2 (2001), pp. 437-473: 454; on Naples, Peter A. Mazur, "Combating 'Mohammedan Indecency': The Baptism of Muslim Slaves in Spanish Naples, 1563-1667", *Journal of Early Modern History*, 13/1 (2009), pp. 25-48: 41-48; on Sicily, see Renda, *L'Inquisizione in Sicilia*, pp. 349-350.

28. The Houses of Catechumens were institutions that aimed to provide support and education to Jews and Muslims willing to renounce their faith and embrace Catholicism. The first House of Catechumens was founded in Rome by Paul III under the influence of Ignatius of Loyola in 1543. The example was followed in the early modern period by many other Italian cities. On the Roman House of Catechumens, see Wipertus Rudt de Collenberg, "Le baptême des musulmans esclaves à Rome aux XVII[e] et XVIII[e] siècles. I. Le XVII[e] siècle", *Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome. Italie et Méditerranée*, 101/1 (1989), pp. 9-181; on the Este's domains, Matteo Al-Kalak, Ilaria Pavan, *Un'altra fede. Le Case dei catecumeni nei territori estensi (1583-1938)*, Florence, Olschki, 2013; on Bologna, Sarti, "Bolognesi schiavi dei 'turchi'"; on Naples, Mazur, "Combating 'Mohammedan Indecency'"; on Turin, Luciano Allegra, "Modelli di conversione", *Quaderni Storici*, 26/3 (1991), pp. 901-905.

Although it is quite likely that she had a slave background, we still know nothing of Susanna's past: who she was; where she was born; if she was a slave from North Africa or a Spanish morisca escaping persecution; if she converted to Christianity during her life or if she was born to morisco parents. All of these questions are destined to remain unanswered.

4. *Gender and conversion*

Everything we know about her begins with her "abjuration" of Catholicism and her "return" to the Islamic faith. However, her case allows us to reflect upon the ways in which gender relations affected the dynamics of religious conversion in early modern Mediterranean society, which was characterised by a high degree of contamination and miscegnation. As we have already noted, the historiography on religious conversion has long considered women to be less prone than men to change their faith. Women's greater religiosity has been attributed to multiple factors, ranging from their social, economic and political vulnerability, to their structural position within society and to the peculiar characteristics of their socialisation.[29]

The example of the moriscas has drawn particular attention. As historical research in the last decades has shown, women played a crucial role in Spanish morisco communities. After their forced conversion, men lost their public roles as religious leaders within their social groups. As long as every public profession of faith could lead to an inquisitorial trial, the private domain of the house became crucial for the transmission not only of the religious beliefs of crypto-Muslims, but also of their material and cultural heritage.[30] This forced secrecy opened new opportunities for women. That the Inquisition imposed specific restrictions on female cultural practices is evidence that their role was acknowledged, and feared, by Catholic authorities.[31] In fact, many moriscos put on trial by the Inquisition noted that they had learned Arabic – a language they were not allowed to speak – from a female member of their family.[32] While men often adopted Christian-style clothing, women frequently continued to wear the

29. Dursteler, "To Piety and Conversion More Prone?", pp. 24-25.

30. Bernard Vincent, "Las mujeres moriscos", in *Historia de las mujeres en Occidente*, vol. 3, ed. by Arlette Farge and Natalie Zemon Davis, Madrid, Taurus Ediciones, 1992, pp. 585-595; Ronald E. Sturtz, "Morisco Women, Written Texts, and the Valencian Inquisition", *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 32/2 (2001), pp. 421-433; Mary Elizabeth Perry, *The Handless Maiden: Moriscos and the Politics of Religion in Early Modern Spain*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2005, pp. 1-18; Mary Elizabeth Perry, "Moriscos, Gender, and the Politics of Religion in 16th- and 17th-Century Spain", *Chronica Nova*, 32 (2006), pp. 251-266; Renée Levine Melammed, "Judeo-conversas and Moriscas in Sixteenth-Century Spain: A Study of Parallels", *Jewish History*, 24/2 (2010), pp. 155-168.

31. Galia Hasenfeld, "Gender and Struggle for Identity: The Moriscas in Sixteenth-Century Castile", *Medieval Encounters*, 7/1 (2001), pp. 79-100: 97.

32. García-Arenal, *Inquisición y moriscos*, p. 25.

traditional Muslim garb.[33] However, as Bruno Pomara Saverino noted in a recent study on moriscos in Italy after the expulsion, it seems that morisco women, in their state of exile, showed more pragmatism, flexibility and propensity for religious change than did men.[34]

Attitudes towards religious preservation were, thus, not shared by all. Historical studies have revealed how female conversions took place in the most diverse circumstances. Some women were motivated by the desire to remain caregivers (domestic slaves, concubines, wives). Others decided to abandon their family and children, in search of social promotion or an improvement in their economic condition.[35] New emotional relationships could play an important role in these choices. Even in Susanna's case, her two conversions to Islam and Judaism were motivated by sentimental ties, before she eventually adopted a hybrid approach to her faith. Hers was certainly not an isolated episode. Numerous testimonies have been brought to light by the most recent historiography.[36] Marianna di Fiori, for example, was a Jewish woman from Poland who immigrated to Italy from Gdansk via Tripoli, in a tormented succession of events that included a period of slavery. A convert to Catholicism, Marianna was later accused of apostasy and of returning to Judaism. If her choices appear to have been dictated mainly by her desire for social integration, freedom and survival, her affection for a man had also played an important role. The witness Angelo Balbi gave the following testimony concerning his conversations with Marianna: "She told me that she had the intention of becoming a Christian because she liked him [Giovanni, (her husband: editor's note)]" and "I have talked several times to this woman, who told me that she wants to go to Rome and find her Christian husband, to whom she is drawn by feelings of affection".[37]

Mixed marriages, and any conversions associated with them, were kept under close surveillance in early modern Mediterranean society. However, although cross-faith sexual intercourse was prohibited by Christian theology and law, some interactions were tolerated to the degree that they contributed to maintaining the imbalance in power relations between Jews, Christians and Muslims. The problem of cross-faith sexuality was regulated in different ways in the three religious traditions, but there were similar dynamics in the Jewish

33. Vincent, "Las mujeres moriscos", pp. 589-590. For further reading on morisco women, see James B. Tueller, "The Assimilating Morisco: Four Families in Valladolid", *Mediterranean Studies*, 7 (1998); Mary Elizabeth Perry, "Behind the Veil: Moriscas and the Politics of Resistance and Survival", in *Spanish Women in the Golden Age*, ed. by Magdalena S. Sanchez and Alain Saint-Saens, Westport, Greenwood Press, 1996, pp. 37-53.

34. Pomara Saverino, *Rifugiati*, p. 248.

35. Dursteler, "To Piety and Conversion More Prone?", p. 28.

36. Eric R. Dursteler, *Renegade Women: Gender, Identity and Boundaries in the Early Modern Mediterranean*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011; Marina Caffiero, *Legami pericolosi. Ebrei e cristiani tra eresia, libri proibiti e stregoneria*, Turin, Einaudi, 2012; Dagmar Freist, "One Body, Two Confessions: Mixed Marriages in Germany", in *Gender in Early Modern German History*, ed. by Ulinka Rublack, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. 275-304.

37. Kim Siebenhüner, "Conversion, Mobility and the Roman Inquisition in Italy around 1600", *Past and Present*, 200 (2008), pp. 5-35: 27.

and Islamic contexts. In general, *sharī'a* accepted a man's marriage with a free *kitabiya* (a Christian or Jewish woman) but not with a "heretic" or a polytheist. However, there were controversies among the main legal schools about the legitimacy of marrying a slave *kitabiya*. At the same time, *dhimmi* wives – Jews or Christian women living under *dhimma*, that is, the treaty regulating the rights and duties of non-Muslims in Islamic countries – enjoyed fewer civil and legal rights than their Muslim counterparts. There were contrasting opinions about whether they should be permitted to go to church, eat pork and drink wine, and some authors, driven by fears and anxieties related to religious impurity, ultimately criticised the practice of mixed marriages. On the other hand, Muslim women were never allowed to marry outside their faith, and Jewish and Christian men were strictly forbidden from marrying Muslim women. According to the Maliki school, a male *dhimmi* who wed a Muslim woman and consummated the marriage was liable for the death penalty, since he had broken the conditions of the *dhimma*. Conversion did not make an illegal marriage legal if it had not taken place before the wedding.[38]

Conversely, within Christianity any kind of sexual intercourse between "believers" and "unbelievers" had been strictly forbidden since the Fourth Lateran Council (1215).[39] Sexual intercourse with "unbelievers" was regarded as a source of pollution. Moreover, civil and religious institutions feared that acquaintance with non-Christians could lead to apostasy. Despite this severe prohibition, research on the Iberian world has proven that not only sexual relationships with slaves, but also concubinage with non-Christian women, was tolerated and largely practiced.[40] Prostitution also played a central role in the exchange of female bodies between the male members of the three religious groups.[41]

In this context, the relationship between female conversion, the religious and secular institutions delegated to govern it and the informal networks through which men exercised their control over women, was extremely complex. Many women sought shelter in the religious and civic institutions of foreign countries in order to escape the authority exercised over them by their families. As Marina Caffiero showed, in many cases Christian authorities were keen to contribute to the integration of new converts by easily granting dispensations that allowed

38. Ragnhild J. Zorgati, *Pluralism in the Middle Ages: Hybrid Identities, Conversion, and Mixed Marriages in Medieval Iberia*, London and New York, Routledge, 2012, pp. 104-106.

39. Caffiero, *Legami pericolosi*, p. 232.

40. Zorgati, *Pluralism in the Middle Ages*, pp. 129-139.

41. An exchange that, however, as David Nirenberg has pointed out, was crucial for maintaining the boundaries separating Jews, Muslims and Christians: David Nirenberg, "Religious and Sexual Boundaries in the Medieval Crown of Aragon", in *Christians, Muslims, and Jews in Medieval and Early Modern Spain: Interaction and Cultural Change*, ed. by Mark D. Meyerson and Edward D. English, Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 2000, pp. 141-160; David Nirenberg, "Conversion, Sex, and Segregation: Jews and Christians in Medieval Spain", *American Historical Review*, 107/4 (2002), pp. 1065-1093; David Nirenberg, "Love between Muslim and Jew in Medieval Spain: A Triangular Affair", in *Jews, Muslims and Christians in and around the Crown of Aragon: Essays in Honour of Professor Elena Lourie*, ed. by Harvey J. Hames, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2004, pp. 127-155.

them to annul previous marriages and create new families.[42] However, in some circumstances patriarchal authority was stronger than religion, and the authority of former male relatives prevailed over the interest of the Church in making new acolytes. For example, starting in 1408, Venice, which was tied to the Ottoman empire by economic and political interests, negotiated a number of agreements with Ottoman authorities to resolve certain border incidents. As a result, powerful Ottoman households sometimes managed to recover women who had played the card of conversion to free themselves from their familial bonds.[43] Even when they succeeded, women needed to find protection – that is, new forms of subordination – under a new male authority.[44] As has been shown by studies focusing on the religious conversion of Jewish and Christian women to Islam in the Ottoman Empire, this dynamic seems to have been identical on both shores of the Mediterranean Sea.[45] In some cases, therefore, the constraint of patriarchal power seems to have exerted a greater weight than religious belonging in determining institutional attitudes towards the conversion of women.

It seems that the conclusive and dramatic outcome of Susanna's story is due to the fact that she did not follow any of the traditional pathways that, at the time, allowed a woman who crossed the boundaries between faiths to reach a form of social inclusion, even if it was partial or instrumental. In fact, she not only contravened the rules of the Church through multiple apostasies, but she also rejected the social script which dictated that the change of religious identity be accompanied by acceptance within a new male protection network to which she was to be subordinate. Furthermore, it does not appear that she was a prostitute, at least not one over whose activities the authorities could exercise control.[46] The way in which Susanna allegedly used her body thus seems to question not only the division between faiths, but also the patriarchal order that dominated both Catholic and Muslim societies. Her relationships with men were apparently unstable, and she does not appear to have maintained a singular allegiance to any male partner or protector. As shown by her second trial – which we will analyse soon –, it seems that she had an iron will when she set her eyes on a partner, no matter how risky and forbidden the object of her desires was. At least, this was what seemed to concern the judges about her moral conduct.

42. See Marina Caffiero, "I sottili confini tra tolleranza e intolleranza. Dispense matrimoniali e matrimoni 'misti' come strumenti di controllo e di integrazione delle minoranze a Roma in età moderna", *Storia delle donne*, 11 (2005), pp. 193-211.

43. Stephen Ortega, "'Pleading for Help': Gender Relations and Cross-Cultural Logic in the Early Modern Mediterranean", *Gender and History*, 20/2 (2008), pp. 332-348: 338. On religious conversions in Venice, see also E. Natalie Rothman, "Becoming Venetian: Conversion and Transformation in the Seventeenth-Century Mediterranean", *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 21/1 (2006), pp. 39-75.

44. *Ibid*.

45. Marc Baer, "Islamic Conversion Narratives of Women: Social Change and Gendered Religious Hierarchy in Early Modern Ottoman Istanbul", *Gender and History*, 16/2 (2004), pp. 425-458.

46. On the unstable distinction between formal and informal prostitution, see Ruth M. Karras, *Common Women: Prostitution and Sexuality in Medieval England*, New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996.

5. *Shifting identities*

As we have already mentioned, research on religious conversion has played a central role in studies on both social ties and conflicts between Jews, Christians and Muslims in the early modern era. Focusing attention on the boundaries between the faiths (and their permeability) allows us to understand how the same cultural differences were structured within different social groups, thereby helping us investigate the relationship between the phenomenon of cultural crossing and the strengthening of the sense of belonging in a community. In fact, it was not isolation that created group identity but the complex interactions with "others" and the reactions, even those that were defensive, to their influence.[47]

Understanding the reasons for conversion is a crucial element. A taxonomy of possible causes includes: physical security; the desire to gain and maintain civic or cultural inclusion and the toleration, perhaps also the affection, of the cultural majority; collective decisions; the desire to create a syncretic amalgamation, avoiding an absolute choice. More than one of these reasons could exert influence at the same time.[48] In Susanna's case, the last element seems to have been preponderant.

However, the use of the term syncretism is not neutral. If in using it we wish to indicate the "blending of elements from different religious traditions", this definition, as Tijana Krstić recently noted, "has come under heavy criticism in recent years from many quarters of academia because it presupposes purity of religious traditions and ignores precisely the longue durée interaction and elaboration of common cultural material".[49] Krstić invites us to analyse the points of contact that, from the outset, brought the major Mediterranean monotheistic faiths closer, including the common cultural heritage of the classical world, in particular the Greek. Conversely, defining this kind of religious commingling in terms of syncretistic solutions stems directly "from the Christian conceptualization of orthodoxy", above all when one implies that these solutions were the result of "imperfect" conversions.[50]

In Susanna's case, in the few fragments upon which we can reflect, the aspect of doctrine seems relegated to a secondary, background position, compared to that of the materiality of religious practice.[51] In such episodes, it appears that the profound link between belief and "historically contingent social practices" facilitated "a process of social, political or religious acculturation" that enabled crossings "which did not need a comprehensive relinquishing of previous identities".[52] We can refer to this phenomenon as an example of religious

47. Rubin, Katznelson, *Religious Conversion*, pp. 12-13, with reference to Fredrik Barth, "Introduction", in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference*, ed. by Fredrik Barth, Bergen and Oslo, Universitetsforlaget, 1969.

48. Rubin, Katznelson, *Religious Conversion*, p. 14.

49. Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam*, p. 16.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

51. See *Religion and Material Culture: The Matter of Belief*, ed. by David Morgan, London and New York, Routledge, 2010.

52. Norton, *Conversion and Islam*, p. 1; Mills, Grafton, *Conversion: Old World and New*.

"adhesion", that is, the process by which a new religious affiliation is added to another as a supplement, without constituting a radical fracture with a previous identity or leading to sudden and traumatic changes in space or community affiliation.[53] In the instance of multiple conversions, in which the subject returned to the faith they had previously abandoned, "even the return to tradition, however, was a return with a difference, a return to an 'invented tradition' no less than a received one".[54] In general, the experience of multiple conversions ultimately led to a profound change in religious attitudes.[55]

This phenomenon has radically marked the history of the Iberian world in the early modern period. Iberia has always played a central role in the history of the cross-cultural interactions between Muslims and Christians in the medieval and early modern worlds. Despite the ongoing wars carried on by Christian armies against the Muslim rulers of al-Andalus, Jewish and Christian minorities were governed by their own laws and authorities in medieval Muslim Spain, and similar patterns of cohabitation survived the so-called Christian Reconquista. Though marked by recurring outbreaks of violence,[56] this experience represents the most enduring historical example of cultural coexistence in the Mediterranean region after antiquity.[57] The situation, however, began to deteriorate around the 14th century and came to an end in the 15th, when the Catholic monarchy gained control of the whole Iberian Peninsula with the conquest of the Muslim emirate of Granada (1492). The Jewish minority first, and later the Muslim one, was forced to convert to Christianity. The entire history of early modern Spain is the history of those traumas.[58] The political option of mass conversion generated an ongoing conflict between the Christian majority and the morisco population. Religious issues were often interwoven with economic and social claims. Moriscos were forced to give up not only their beliefs, but also their language, clothes, make-up, hairstyles, habits and diet. Every manifestation of cultural diversity could be seen

53. Rubin, Katznelson, *Religious Conversion*, pp. 14-15. See also Arthur D. Nock, *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion, from Alexander to Augustine of Hyppo*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1993.

54. Michael Heyd, "'Double Conversions' in the Early Modern Period: The Road to Religious Scepticism?", in *Religious Conversion*, pp. 233-259: 234. See also Yosef Kaplan, *An Alternative Path to Modernity: The Sephardi Diaspora in Western Europe*, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2000.

55. Heyd, "'Double Conversions'", p. 253.

56. David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1996.

57. The idea of *convivencia* in medieval Spain was forged by Américo Castro, *España en su historia: christianos, moros y judíos*, Buenos Aires, Losada de Argentina, 1948. For a critical re-reading of the historiography on *convivencia* see: Kenneth Baxter Wolf, "Convivencia in Medieval Spain: A Brief History of an Idea", *Religion Compass*, 3/1 (2009), pp. 72-85; Maya Soifer, "Beyond Convivencia: Critical Reflections on the Historiography of Interfaith Relations in Christian Spain", *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies*, 1/1 (2009), pp. 19-35.

58. Mercedes García-Arenal, "Creating Conversos: Genealogy and Identity as Historiographical Problems (after a recent book by Ángel Alcalá)", *Bulletin for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies*, 38/1 (2013), pp. 1-17: 1. See also Mercedes García-Arenal, "Introduction", in *After Conversion: Iberia and the Emergence of Modernity*, ed. by Mercedes García-Arenal, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2016, pp. 1-19: 2.

as potential proof of religious and social transgression. This conflict came to an end in 1609 when King Philip III made the radical decision to definitively expel the moriscos from Spanish soil.[59]

Forced conversions stimulated religious dissimulation, fostering skepticism towards institutionalised religion. Most *conversos*, both Jews and Muslims, did not experience a clear, new religious identity, but rather ambivalence and tensions. They often adopted hybrid solutions[60] and developed fluid and shifting identities.[61] Moreover, mass conversions raised doubts even among Christians.[62] Paradoxically, by trying to pursue the strategy of assimilation, Catholics created their own internal enemies and became trapped in a growing anxiety rooted in the fear of infiltration.[63] The policy of *limpieza de sangre* ("blood purity"), pursued by retracing the genealogy of moriscos and conversos so as to exclude them from guilds, confraternities and certain labour activities, led to profoundly cynical positions. The proto-racialisation of religious identities in early modern Spain represented a blatant failure of the Church in asserting belief in the universal benefits of Catholic baptism.[64] The case of Susanna, in which multiple conversions did not lead her to the adoption of any single stable religious identity, seems to confirm this attitude. If it did not show her skepticism, it at least attests to her indifference in matters of faith and, moreover, testifies to the tendency to rely on individualistic positions rather than search for new and conclusive forms of social, cultural and religious affiliation.

6. *The second trial: Susanna, the witch*

In 1582, Daza voluntarily confessed further infractions. Deceived by the Devil – she reportedly said – she finally decided to completely give up the sacramental confession. Madly in love with a man she could not have, she invoked the Devil out of desperation. According to her deposition, she repeated three times "Come Devil, come Satan, come Lucifer, your greatness of Hell, help me with this need of mine, shall I have this man whom I desire".[65] While she was performing this rite, the man she loved (a friar) magically appeared before her and asked for her body and soul. She consented and denied the Christian faith, allegedly by saying: "I renounce Jesus Christ and all the Christian deeds, baptism, all Christian ceremonies, and I give myself, body and soul, to the Devil and his devotees,

59. See above, note 2.

60. García-Arenal, "Introduction", p. 2.

61. Stefania Pastore, "Doubt in Fifteenth-Century Iberia", in *After Conversion*, pp. 283-303: 285.

62. Mercedes García-Arenal, "*Mi padre moro, yo moro*: The Inheritance of Belief in Early Modern Iberia", in *After Conversion*, pp. 305-335: 305.

63. García-Arenal, "Creating Conversos", p. 18.

64. García-Arenal, "*Mi padre moro*", pp. 324-325.

65. AHN, Inquisición, L. 898, f. 531r: "ben demonio ben stanas, ben Lucifer grande del infierno y ayudame en esta necesidad y hazme aver este hombre que deseo".

and I will not leave them, even in the afterlife".[66] She sealed her promise with her own blood and finally had sex with the friar. From then on, she had never confessed, believing the Devil able to fulfill all of her desires. She reported to the judges that every now and then during Communion she hid the particle to commit outrageous acts of blasphemy later, such as introducing the holy host into her vagina before having casual sex with men.[67] This time, the reaction of the inquisitors was merciless, and Daza was sentenced to spend the rest of her life segregated in a monastery in perpetual spiritual penance.[68]

Susanna's disposition, which, from the elements at our disposal, seems to have stood out because of her independence and lack of scruples, could have aroused suspicions and antipathy in her neighborhood and led someone to raise the accusation of witchcraft against her, although material reasons unknown to us (a rivalry in love, an unpaid debt) may also have contributed. However, we also cannot exclude *a priori* that Susanna herself was familiar with popular magical practices.

In premodern societies, the occult touched every aspect of everyday life, from the structures of the universe to the social and natural order, and even the humblest and most regular tasks of daily life. Belief systems mixed elements of official Christianity, Christianised magical traditions and also, albeit marginally, practices that were totally disconnected from the dominant religion.[69] As Richard Kieckhefer had already noted in 1976, although the idea of the demonic contract was a construct that ecclesiastical judges imposed on witchcraft cases, many complaints seem to have started "from below", in the wake of the widespread popular fear that some subjects who had extraordinary powers could actually harm individuals or communities.[70] Women were particularly suspect.[71] Many

66. *Ibid*.: "yo reniego de Jesu Xro y de todas sus obras y del baptismo y todas las cerimonias delos xrianos y me doy en anima y cuerpo al demonio y sus sequazes delos quales viva y muerta no me apartare dellos".

67. *Ibid*.

68. *Ibid*, f. 531v.

69. See Stephen Wilson, *The Magical Universe: Everyday Ritual Magic in Pre-Modern Europe*, London and New York, 2000. Michael D. Bailey, *Magic and Superstition in Europe: A Concise History from Antiquity to the Present*, Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield, 2007.

70. Richard Kieckhefer, *Early European Witch Trials: Their Foundation in Popular and Learned Culture*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1976.

71. The first readings that critically articulated the gendered dimension of the witch hunt matured in the context of the political activism of first-wave feminism: Matilda J. Gage, *Women, Church, and State: The Original Exposé of Male Collaboration against the Male Sex*, Waterton (MA), Persephone Press, 1980 (or. ed. 1893). This historiographical synthesis on women history and witchcraft relies upon Alison Rowlands, "Witchcraft and Gender in Early Modern Europe", in *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America*, ed. by Brian P. Levack, New York, Oxford University Press, 2014, pp. 449-467. These interpretations were articulated again in the waves of the movements of the 1960s and 1970s: Andrea Dworkin, "Gynocide: The Witches", in Andrea Dworkin, *Woman Hating*, New York, Dutton, 1974, pp. 118-50; Mary Daly, "European Witch Burnings: Purifying the Body of Christ", in Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1978, pp. 178-222. Although these initial investigations were not written with the greatest degree of accuracy in terms of their historical reconstruction, recent studies have successfully integrated a gender approach, feminism and

explanations have been given for the phenomenon: some, drawing on psychology, have recalled the emotional tensions aroused by women who, no longer in their reproductive age, were believed might attack younger fertile women out of jealousy; others claimed that suspicions were directed towards older women because, in pre-modern societies, those in this age group were attributed greater prestige and power; and still others underlined how the gendered expectations of society required a woman, especially if she was poor and needed support, to express an attitude of docile gratitude towards the community, one which those accused of witchcraft had quite often not shown throughout their lives.[72]

In Susanna's case, anxieties over gender were probably compounded with deep-rooted suspicions towards moriscas and Jewish-conversos, particularly because of her double conversion. Indeed, the acquaintance of Christians with Jews was often associated with the practice of magic.[73] The stereotype of the Jewish sorcerer and necromancer dated back to the Middle Ages. They were held responsible for ritual homicides and the profanation of the holy host. Yet, beyond the rhetoric of Christian polemicists, in their daily lives common people within Christianity often turned to Jews as mediators with the occult.[74] The obscurity of the Hebrew language exercised a powerful force of attraction over those who were susceptible to magical beliefs. Alongside a learned tradition of studies on the Jewish Kabbalah, many books with spells and incantations circulated, which were written with deformed and often nonsensical Hebrew characters.[75]

The association between Islam and magical practices also had roots in the central centuries of the Middle Ages. The first theories of diabolical magic initially developed in response to concerns raised by the spread of magical knowledge that had its origin in secret cults, in the underground world of necromantic practices that was developing within the Church.[76] A significant part of the classical cultural heritage that, with the rebirth of the 12th century, had been brought to light through texts preserved in the Islamic world, included works of magic. They were mostly astrological and alchemical texts, but also included treatises of spiritual magic centered on the manipulation of supernatural entities that ecclesiastical authorities undoubtedly identified as demons. It was, therefore,

methodological accuracy: Elspeth Whitney, "International Trends: The Witch 'She'/The Historian 'He'. Gender and the Historiography of the European Witch-Hunts", *Journal of Women's History*, 7 (1995), pp. 77-101. See also: Willem de Blécourt, "The Making of the Female Witch: Reflections on Witchcraft and Gender in the Early Modern Period", *Gender & History*, 12 (2000), pp. 287-309.

72. Rowlands, "Witchcraft and Gender". See also Lyndal Roper, "Witchcraft and Fantasy in Early Modern Germany", in Lyndal Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, Sexuality and Religion in Early Modern Europe*, London and New York, Routledge, 1994, pp. 199-225, and Lyndal Roper, *Witch Craze: Terror and Fantasy in Baroque Germany*, New Haven (CT), Yale University Press, 2004; Robin Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft*, London, Harper Collins, 1996.

73. Caffiero, *Legami pericolosi*, pp. 121-180.

74. *Ibid.*, pp. 121-122.

75. *Ibid.*, pp. 122-123. See: Federico Barbierato, *The Inquisitor in the Hat Shop: Inquisition, Forbidden Books and Unbelief in Early Modern Venice*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2012.

76. R. Kichard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 153.

no coincidence that the fear of diabolical magic first manifested itself in areas of intense contact with Islamic culture.[77]

In the early modern period popular magical practices transmitted by moriscos gave rise to suspicion among Catholic authorities. In the 17th century, the main accusations against Sicilian moriscos were magic, bigamy, heresy, blasphemy and resistance to the Holy Office.[78] Morisco women were often accused of transmitting love magic, and many charms for capturing the person one loved circulated in *aljamiado* literature.[79] Suspicions about these practices survived for a long time. In 1611 in Genoa, Antonio Quintini's *Relazione di quello che trattavano i moreschi di Spagna* was published, a text that unabashedly praised the Spanish king's decision to expel the moriscos and celebrated the "glorious victory against the enemies of the faith".[80] The author sustained his anti-morisco hatred by citing the instance of a Valencian woman who Botero had already mentioned in "Part Five" of his *Relazioni Universali*.[81] A witch and clearly obstinate, the woman had been accused of having lived according to the "Mohammedan" law and for the murder of three men. Sentenced to death, she was nevertheless spared after she promised to reveal secrets of public interest of which she claimed to be aware. According to the narrative, she revealed the correspondence between Algiers and the "moors" of Valencia, which would have disclosed how the latter were planning a revolt using the weapons and armies of the Muslim sovereign. The letters would then have testified to the king's willingness to grant the moriscos all the goods stolen from Christians through plunder and invasion, with the sole provision that they spare women's lives. They, confirming the stereotype of the polygamous Muslims' lust, would have been the prize for their victory, with five women for each soldier. The moriscos, according to Quintini, would have subverted all the rules of Christian society. Work on holidays would have been blessed and the murder of the "cristianos viejos" would have secured "plenary indulgence" for the perpetrators. A baker from Zaragoza, the fanciful story continues, would have been forced to hide the crucifix in a pastry and cook it in the oven. The text reports the horror aroused by the cry of the Messiah that emerged from the burning oven while blood flooded the kitchen. The moriscos would have washed the heads of the newly baptised children in an attempt to erase the effects of the sacrament.[82]

77. Michael D. Bailey, "Diabolic Magic", in *The Cambridge History of Magic and Witchcraft in the West: From Antiquity to the Present*, ed. by David J. Collins, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2015, pp. 361-392: 363-364.

78. Messana, "La 'resistenza' musulmana", pp. 753-754.

79. Perry, *Handless Maiden*, p. 56. *Aljamiado* refers to the transliteration of romance languages in Arabic characters. On morisco women and witchcraft, see also Hasenfeld, "Gender and Struggle for Identity", p. 93. More broadly on moriscos and witchcraft: Ana Labarta, "Supersticiones moriscos", *Awrāq*, 5-6 (1982-1983), pp. 177-178.

80. Antonio Quintini, *Relazione di quello che trattavano i moreschi di Spagna contro la Maestà del re Cattolico don Filippo III*, Genoa, Pavoni, 1611, p. 2, cit. in Pomara Saverino, *Rifugiati*, p. 46.

81. Giovanni Botero, *Le relazioni universali*, Venice, i Giunti, 1640 (or. ed. Rome, 1591), vol. 3, pp. 76-77, cit. in Pomara Saverino, *Rifugiati*, p. 46.

82. Quintini, *Relazione*, pp. 3-8, cit. in Pomara Saverino, *Rifugiati*, pp. 45-48.

Although the pamphlet was subsequent to Susanna's conviction, it collects a long-term history of anti-Islamic prejudices that likely influenced the judges' attitudes towards her.[83] The accusation of witchcraft seems to have embodied all of the fears that a woman like her, with her ethnic and cultural background and her unrestrained sexual conduct, aroused in the populace and within ecclesiastical hierarchies. However, we must not exclude *a priori* that her disposition led her to a real interest in the occult. Someone could have introduced her to magic, although there is absolutely no evidence of any relationship between her training in the mysteries of the occult, her morisco background and her relationship with a Muslim and then a Jewish man. She might have worked out the rituals she performed by gathering scattered fragments of disparate knowledge collected randomly from acquaintances, neighbours or some of the many swindlers that took advantage of the credulity of people at that time. We cannot uncover the realities that underlay her choices. What we do know is that she did not comply with any of the conditions of the time that could make a foreigner, especially a woman, acceptable to society. Furthermore, in her case the changes of faith do not seem to have been functional to the construction of new networks of social integration.[84] Susanna's story seems rather to confirm how, in a society marked by religious conflict and the constant renegotiation of boundaries between faiths, some subjects opted for original integrations that ultimately undermined the doctrinal assumptions of the institutionalised religions.

However, the instability of Susanna's religious allegiance did not result in a completely skeptical approach. Apparently, her relationship with the supernatural continued to play a role in her life during her multiple conversions. We can assume that she was not completely aware of the doctrinal differences between the faiths she moved through, or of those between them and the various forms of magic and superstition that played such a crucial role in early modern society. Her experience invites us to rethink the rhetoric of conversion developed in confessional narratives. In Catholic contexts, this rhetoric was sometimes imposed on common people by means of institutional intervention. The latter could be implemented either via the educational efforts of the many Houses of Catechumens that took in converts to Catholicism in post-Tridentine Italy, or through the repressive action of inquisitorial tribunals. The everyday experiences of people like Susanna, however, prove that the process was not always clear-cut or traumatic and that it could sometimes be the result of individualised rearrangements and negotiations. Despite the efforts of religious and secular institutions to establish orthodoxy, in part by emphasising the rhetoric of conversion as a radical shift, people used their creativity to adapt religion to their needs, navigating across fluid and uncertain religious boundaries and refusing to crystallise their experiences into predetermined sexual or confessional scripts.

(*Translated by Kalina Yamboliev*)

83. See Lavenia's chapter in this volume.

84. On the acceptance of strangers, see Simona Cerutti, *Étrangers: étude d'une condition d'incertitude dans une societé d'Ancien Régime*, Montrogue, Bayard, 2012.

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Contributors

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