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FALCONS AND FALCONRY IN AL-ANDALUS

Virgilio Martínez Enamorado

Il est cependant un sport que l'Arabe, aussi bien que le touranien, a toujours apprécié, celui de la chasse sous ses diverses formes et en particulier la chasse au faucon. Tout grand seigneur tenait en honneur d'avoir une équipe de fauconniers et de faucons venus à grands frais de pays où les oiseaux étaient les plus réputés. Les beaux sujets figuraient souvent au nombre des cadeaux que l'on échangeait entre souverains, que l'on offrait, comme gage de bienvenue, à un ambassadeur. De nos jours encore, le fauconnier (*al-bayzarī*) reste en honneur un peu partout en Islam.¹

There is no doubt that the falcon has come to possess an intense emotive force in the poetic and literary imagery of al-Andalus.² Represented for its own sake, without any associated object, it conveys extraordinary symbolism far and beyond its actual presence in the social and economic life of al-Andalus. In this respect, there is no difference between this region and the rest of the Arab world, medieval or not, where the falcon stands out as an icon. Though apparently timeless, we need to discover when this bird of prey came to have such strong meaning and the degree to which pre-Islam was responsible.³ We need to ascertain when and how this transfer took place, since there are still questions about its possible Germanic origin or Persian influence – the latter being more likely.⁴ In the specific case of al-Andalus, the abundance of Farsi loanwords led Pérès to suspect that the tradition was established in the Andalusī area by Persian Sassanid ancestors,⁵ and that it must have spread to the rest of the medieval Arab world. As we shall see, if there are Andalusī terminological particularities in the naming of falcons, they refer to a wide range of derived terms, such as *bayyāz*, *bayyāzī*, *biyāz*, *bāziyy*

1 Ibn Huḍayl al-Andalusī, *Paraute des cavaliers*: French transl. p. 400.

2 I would like to express my gratitude to Anna Akasoy, from the Oriental Institute in Oxford (United Kingdom), and to Mohamed Meouak, from the University of Cadiz (Spain), for their reference suggestions.

3 There are various states of affairs: Allen 1980; Ali 1996; al-Tamīmī 1992. The works by Viré (1980 & 2003), among others, are essential due to their precision and thoroughness; for al-Andalus, the contribution by Juez Juarros 1997, is highly recommended.

4 Viré 1980; Juez Juarros 1997: 68–70.

5 Pérès 1983: 351: “The vizier himself [Ibn Qabṭurnuh] makes a similar request to Abū Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdūn in which the Persian words *shāhin* [falcon] and *dastabān* [glove, from ‘guarda (bān)-mano (dast)] stand out, which gives us reason to believe that hunting with falcons is Persian in origin.”

and *bayzāra*, that relate to the concept of “falconer”.⁶ Significantly, F.J. Simonet does not include any “Romancism” in this semantic field (the forms derived from *falco-nis* are absent),⁷ a clear indication that this lexicon formed *ex novo*, without too many local interferences (although it has also been said that Romance was the “langue de la volerie par excellence”).⁸

Falconry was valued as a major element of the cultural transfer between the medieval elite of western Christianity and Islam, connecting the pre-Islamic world of the Near East with the Umayyad and Abbasid courts on one hand and Christian Europe on the other.⁹ In this respect, the role of al-Andalus was surely crucial, since part of this transfer sifted through to the Iberian Peninsula¹⁰ where there existed a high level of knowledge about the handling of these raptors and of how to use them in an almost ritual manner.

In studies on al-Andalus, the subject of falconry has been reduced to a few paragraphs in user manuals. This reflects the difficulty of establishing historical conclusions, due to a scarcity of information. In the section on “hunting and games” in chapter 7 (“Private Life”), Lévi-Provençal examines in detail some references to falcons in al-Andalus.¹¹ We will return to these later in this paper. To a large extent, the outstandingly accurate information provided by H. Pérès on literary references known at the time of his writing in the 1930s still holds true.¹² Recently there has been some insistence that iconography promoting falconry is another example of the staging of power by the sovereigns of ancient and medieval times and the territories that belonged to Antiquity. From Persia and Greece to the monarchies of the Christian West and the Muslim dynasties, as well as the Germanic kings, falconry belonged to a “rhetoric” of power which showcased “the hierarchical order of the court and drawing attention to the organiser’s economic capacity”.¹³

1. A TERMINOLOGICAL ANALYSIS WITHOUT CONCLUSION

Terminological analysis is needed before anything else can be considered. In the twelfth century, Ibn Hishām al-Lakhmī said that the term *ṣaqr* was used to refer to “[any] bird of prey employed in falconry, such as the *shawāhīn*, the

6 Viré 2003.

7 Simonet Baca 1888.

8 Viré 1965: 307, n. 2.

9 Akasoy 2007; Akasoy 2008.

10 Vernet 1999: 377–379.

11 Lévi-Provençal 1973: 285. He continues the considerations of Lévi-Provençal and Pérès, with new data primarily on the Nasrid period (Arié 1984: 314–315).

12 Pérès 1983: 350–352.

13 Juez Juarros 1997: 68.

eagles (*al-'iqbān*) and the falcons (*al-buzat*). It also referred to a specific and well-defined type of bird, the sacre in Spanish and Saker in English (*al-ṣaqr*),¹⁴ defined by the colouring of its plumage; according to the Dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy of Language (henceforth referred to as the DRAE), this type of falcon is characterised by its “grey-brown back and a paler head, typical of eastern Europe and Asia Minor”. Alcalá translates it as ‘kestrel bird’;¹⁵ therefore, it refers to a subspecies whose name has left the Arabism “sacre” in Spanish. Doubts concerning its etymological origin are significant, however, as Corriente argues:

sacre (Spanish and Portuguese) ‘type of falcon’: there are, as Coromines points out, serious phonetic difficulties for this word to have derived from the Arabic *ṣaqr*, and it is highly likely that there is a coincidence between the Romance reflection of Low Latin and that Arabic word, which seems native, or, at least, very deeply rooted, although its etymon has not been established either. The word has existed in Catalan with the same meaning, but it has not been preserved except in Valencian with the meaning of ‘vipér’, and it has not been possible to establish its community or etymon.¹⁶

According to the very reliable testimony of Pedro de Alcalá, the general term used for falcon/goshawk in al-Andalus was *bāz* (pl. *bīzān*). Andalusí toponymy and anthroponymy indicate that this was indeed the popular word used. Other examples exist besides the etymology of the toponym Albaycín, which has been explained without exception since ancient times¹⁷ as *rabaḍ al-Bayyazīn* (‘district of the falconers’), such as *bāb al-Ba’z* (‘falcon gate’) in the Albaycín itself on Cuesta de San Nicolás.¹⁸ Mármol calls this place *Beyz*, giving it the meaning of ‘work’¹⁹ or another name of peninsular geography derived from similar forms (e.g. Alvyázer, which comes from *al-Bayazira*, a northern locality near Leiria in Portugal).²⁰ Several

14 Ibn Hishām al-Lakhmī, *Madkhal*, p. 340, fol. 61r; study with partial translation, Pérez Lázaro 1988: 164.

15 Alcalá 1888 II: 166; Pezzi 1990: 118; Dozy 1967 I: 83: “crécérelle”.

16 Corriente 1999: 429–430.

17 Eguílaz y Yanguas 1881: 52–53, n. 2: “The word *بِيَّاز* plural *بِيَّازِين*, which is missing in classical dictionaries, is in the Vocabulista by Friar Pedro de Alcalá with this meaning, and in the one by Raimundo Martí, who gives it the meaning of Aztorer, azorero or alconero. The opinion of those who say that the district of the Albaicín owed its name to the fact that the Moors expelled from Baeza by Ferdinand III the Saint settled in that area is a vulgarity without basis. If it had this origin, the name Albaicín would be written with sin and not with zain. Apart from this, quarters with this same name are to be found in several other cities, such as Baena, where the Moors from Baeza and Alhama did not emigrate, where there was a high and low one.”

18 Seco de Lucena Paredes 1975: 41. It may have been this gate that was responsible for the district’s name.

19 Mármol Carvajal 1991: 37.

20 Lopes 1922, quoted in Lévi-Provençal 1973: 285, n. 97.

Andalusian localities (Alhama, Antequera, Coín, Alhaurín, Baena, and Cieza-Murcia, to name a few) still have quarters called Albaycín.²¹ Yet another example to add to these toponyms is the watercourse that used to be in the Ronda mountains “which is said to be of the falcon, which is said in the aravygo Handacalbis”, whose Arabic form can be restored without any difficulty: *Khandaq al-Ba’z* and, by *imēla*, *Khandaq al-Bi’z*.²²

Similarly, there is not much evidence on the profession of falconers.²³ One of the clearest is a mention by G. Rosselló Bordoy of a falconer called Cazem (*Qāsim*), found in the Catalan documentation written after the conquest of Mallorca:

in barrio Cazem falconerio, que en àrab es diu bizar, nom documentat a la ruralia [of the Island of Mallorca] sota la forma baysari.²⁴

The term *ba’z* is indisputably Persian in origin.²⁵ It is, however, compatible with a more precise lexicon that tried to define very specific realities within the specialised world of falconry. Consequently, the linguist Pedro de Alcalá added the following: “halcón borní” = *burnīyy-īn* (Lanner falcon), “neblí”²⁶ = *nabliyy-īn* (Eurasian peregrine falcon), the “halcón sacre” = *ṣaqrā-ṣuqāra* (Saker falcon), “halcón girifalte” = *jarāfan* (gyrfalcon), “halcón alfaneque” = *fanāka-fanāk* (North-west African Lanner falcon) or “halcón bahari” = *baḥariyy-īn* (Eleonora’s falcon).²⁷

In addition to those words mentioned by Alcalá, others such as *shawdāniq* (pl. *shawdāniqāt*)²⁸ appear to have the same definition as *bāz*, according to the conclu-

21 Eguílaz y Yanguas 1881: 52–53, n. 2; Asín Palacios 1944: 46.

22 Martínez Enamorado & Chavarría Vargas 2010: 46.

23 There must be quite a few examples, but searching for them (which would be rather laborious) would not contribute a great deal to our knowledge of this professional activity. One example, however, is the Valencia Repartiment, in which we come across a Mahomad Albayaz; *Llibre de Repartiment* 1979: 360, no. 3494.

24 Rosselló Bordoy 2002: 19.

25 See the interesting disquisitions by Viré (2003) for this term and its process of linguistic Arabization.

26 “Perhaps from the Hispanic Arabic *burní*, from Hibernia, the old name for Ireland; cf. Port. Nebrí. Bird of prey measuring 24 cm from the beak to the end of the tail and with a wingspan of 60 cm. Its plumage is bluish-grey-brown on the back, white with grey markings on the breast and brownish-grey on the tail, which ends with a black band, bluish beak and yellow feet. Due to its value and fast flight it was highly regarded for falconry hunting.” (DRAE)

27 “Bird of prey that is easier to tame than the others. It is about three decimetres long, ash-coloured, with grey-brown markings, sometimes completely white, and it has a large strong, curved beak, as well as strong talons.” (DRAE)

28 With different variations provided by Dozy 1967 I: 798. According to Viré (1965: 307, n. 1), “le terme *shadāniq*, d’origine persane, désigne un falconidé, de la classe des ‘yeux noir’ (*aswad al-‘ayn*), oiseau de leurre, à la différence des accipitridés aux yeux jaunes (*aṣfar al-‘ayn*) qui sont oiseaux de poing, avec l’Autour (*bāzī*) et l’Épervier (*sāf* en Occident, *bāshaq/bāshiq* en Orient). Les formes altérées de *shandāq*, *shadnāq* et *shdāniq* se trouvent encore au Magrib.”

sions reached by Pérès from several literary testimonies (including one belonging to the anonymous author of *Rawḍ al-miʿtār*, who introduces falcons (*shūdāmiqāt*)²⁹ almost obliquely in the memorable episode of the conquest of al-Andalus). The aforementioned term, included in Ibn Hishām al-Lakhmī's dictionary as *shāhīn* (pl. *shawāhīn*), is common to Eastern dictionaries. There is no doubt as to its translation into the various eastern languages, such as 'peregrine falcon' (*f. peregrinus*),³⁰ although this species can be classified into various subspecies depending on place of origin and nesting habits (for example, the *baḥrī* is a winter emigrant which comes from the sea, hence its name; *kūhī* (pl. *kawāhī*), from the Persian *kūh*, means mountain amongst other things).³¹

Obviously the semantic question does not stop here. Looking at various studies in connection with the "popular names" of falcons, it is observed that

dans l'espace culturel et linguistique formé par l'Espagne et le Maghreb, il existe un ensemble de dénominations stables, qui vont perdurer depuis le XIII^e siècle au moins jusqu'au XX^e siècle.³²

An initial differentiation can be observed in this popular taxonomy (which is also endorsed scientifically) between the accipitridae family, low-flight raptors with "yellow" eyes whose most outstanding representative is the goshawk, and the falconidae, with "black eyes" and higher flight. This is merely one classification ("yellow eyes" / "black eyes"). There are many others which are not based scientifically on the observation of the various species:

La plupart de ces qualificatifs ne suffisent pas à soutenir une identification, et il faut dans tout les cas tenir compte de l'ensemble des traits descriptifs, à vrai dire rarement nombreux ou entièrement concluants.³³

Etymology in this semantic field is under constant review. Numerous hypotheses have been put forward; while these may be thought-provoking they are also lacking in clarity.³⁴ Terminology for the falcon proves the existence of a corpus that is typical in the Muslim West (but is different from that of the Muslim

29 Al-Ḥimyarī, *Rawḍ al-miʿtār*: 8; transl. 11–12.

30 See, for example, the translation given to the term *shāhīn*, pl. *shawāhīn*, "faucon Pèlerin" in the indices of *Kitāb al-bayzara* of the anonymous great falconer of the Fatimid Caliphate, Viré 1967a: 71.

31 Viré 1967a: 50, n. 1.

32 Neyrod 2004: 338.

33 Van den Abeele 1994: 73.

34 Apart from Viré's contributions, the following studies can be highlighted: Newcomer 1952; Mettman 1961; Neyrod 2003; Neyrod 2004.

East), in which similar names are always repeated, such as *niblī/liblī*,³⁵ *balansī*,³⁶ and *burnī*.³⁷ If we rely on Viré, we have four *falconidae* designations for the Muslim West, all considered “noble” (*ḥurr*): saker (*ṣaqr*), which corresponds to the subspecies *nublī* or *lublī* (*f. sacre*); the Lanner falcon in the Berber area, called *Alfphanet* by the falconers in the Christian Middle Ages and *burnī* in many places in the Maghreb (*f. biarmicus*); another North-African subspecies, the Barbary falcon (*f. peregrinus peregrinoïdes*) called *turklī*; and, finally, Eleonora’s falcon (*f. eleonoraë*), which corresponds to the popular name *baḥrī*.³⁸ The classification given by Juan Manuel largely coincides with classifications provided by modern writers about Morocco, and, above all, Viré:

los falcones con que los omnes usan a caçar son de çinco naturas. La primera et mas noble es los falcones girifaltes [...] Et en pos estos son los sacres [...] Et en pos los sacres son los neblis [...] Et en pos esto son los baharis [...] Et en pos de estos son los bornis [...] Et destes ay dos naturas: los unos son de aquen mar, los otros allen mar; et a los de aquen mar llaman bornis, et a los de allen mar llaman alfaneques³⁹

This degree of semantic specialisation⁴⁰ provides solid evidence of the development of falconry in the Arab world, with the creation of a very extensive and specialised terminological and technological corpus; localisms are excessively detailed, with the same type encompassing various names, either due to plumage, age, or other considerations that cannot always be established by semantic criticism. This situation is explained as follows by Viré, who is considered to be the most illustrious specialist in falconry in the Medieval Arab world:

The Arabist is often puzzled by the abundance of terms designating sporting-birds, such abundance not being due to the multiplicity of types, but to the

35 The earliest mention of this term is in the *Cordovan Calendar*, p. 92, which states that in September the *lablī* falcons come from the ocean (*takhruju al-ṣhadānqāt al-lablīyya min al-baḥr al-kabīr*). The etymology is studied in a most convincing way by Neyrod (2004); we cite this source since all references in this regard are to be found there. Those who defend the supposed origin of the city of Niebla (Dozy 1967 II: 513, Lévi-Provençal 1973: 285 or Arié 1984: 314) have not considered that in these chorographic compendiums of the cora of *Labla* the presence of falcons is conspicuous by their absence; see García Sanjuán 2003: 179–185 and documentary appendix.

36 Discussed below.

37 Neyrod 2003.

38 Viré 2003. Notice that similar names are repeated, *mutatis mutandi*, in the terms for falcons concerning the Maghreb; see Neyrod 2004: 336–337.

39 Bleucia 1981: 525.

40 For the Andalusí case in poetic texts there is another term, which Pérès (1983: 350–351) cites as: *ajdal*, “gerifalte” (gyrfalcon); this is another name for the goshawk.

great variety of adjectives qualifying the innumerable shades of plumage worn by the bird according to its sex, its age and habitat.⁴¹

2. THE TRANSFER OF EASTERN TREATISES ON FALCONRY TO THE CHRISTIAN WEST

The transfer of part of the treatises on falconry generated by the Abbasid Eastern courts for the West most likely took place in al-Andalus. A previously confusing panorama began to be clarified with new data. The case of the *Moamin* sheds light on these problems.⁴² In 1240–1241, Frederick II of Sicily commissioned a translation into Latin of an Arabic treatise on falconry entitled *De arte venandi cum avibus*. As Akasoy explains,⁴³ the original Arabic text of this book (whose title is perhaps a corruption of the caliphal name par excellence) was *amīr al-mu'minīn* ('prince of the believers'); it stands, therefore, that it was most likely dedicated to the Abbasid Caliph. Although it has not been preserved, a Latin version written by Frederick II of Sicily does still exist. In actual fact, however, this work is a combination of two Arabic texts: one by Adham and Ghīṭrīf and the *Kitāb al-Mutawakkilī*, dedicated to the Abbasid Caliph al-Mutawakkil. Nothing is said about al-Andalus as the territory in which the tradition of falconry was adopted,⁴⁴ but it is logical to assume that the Andalusī caliphal court knew of some of these treatises on hawking and hunting. As through chancery manuals, they would have been included in the literary body of protocol and social relations, cuisine and agriculture, that informed the Abbasid court tradition.

While it has not been conveyed in Arabic in its entirety, there exists for this treatise a translation into Castilian, which was produced at the court of Alphonse X the Wise only ten years after the translation of the *Moamin* at the court of Frederick II. A significant part of the Arabic text is preserved in the "Hunting Book" (*Kitāb al-Ṣayd*) written for the Ḥafṣid sultan al-Mustaṣir bi-llāh in the middle of the thirteenth century.⁴⁵

Without entering into details that would be beyond our objective here, we would like to point to A. Akasoy's reflections on this text:

41 Viré 2003.

42 The bibliography on these problems is very extensive. The following is only a partial list of the studies: Tjerneld 1949–1950; Viré 1967b; Fradejas Rueda 1985; Seniff 1986a; Seniff 1986b; Seniff 1988; Montoya Ramírez 1989; Cárdenas 1986; Cárdenas 1986–1987; Cárdenas 1987; Cárdenas 1989; Montoya Ramírez 1992; Montoya Ramírez 1994; Vernet 1999: 377–379; Fradejas Rueda 2002; Akasoy & Georges 2005; Akasoy 2007; Akasoy 2008.

43 Akasoy 2008: 55.

44 It is insinuated by Vernet 1999: 378.

45 *Al-Manṣūrī fī l-bayzara* (ed. 'A. Manṣūr, 1989).

The parallel translations of the *Kitāb al-Mutawakkilī* in the West – in a compilation with the “work of Adham and Ghiṭrīf” at the court of Frederick into Latin, and separately into Castilian at the court of Alfonso – offer extraordinary possibilities for comparing the different techniques of translation at the two courts, and into two different languages. Generally speaking, a comparison of the three versions of the *Kitāb al-Mutawakkilī* reveals that the Castilian translation is much more faithful to the Arabic original than the Latin translation, as Stefan Georges demonstrates in his meticulous study of the *Moamin*. The translator at Alfonso’s court explains, for example, that he left out a particular passage of the Arabic text since it concerned only Muslims. This passage dealt probably with the legal problems described above, e.g. the question whether the meat of the game was Ḥarām or Ḥalāl. Also on the level of sentences and words the Castilian translation is far more literal than the Latin translation. An interesting phenomenon is that the Arabic text contains words scarcely comprehensible to an Arab reader. These are Persian names of minerals or plants which were definitely unfamiliar to at least one of the scribes (as the corruption of the term reveals) and which are often introduced by *yuqālu lahu* (‘which is called’). If such a word appears in an Arabic recipe, the Castilian translator usually renders the entire passage in his version including the distorted name, whereas the Latin translator leaves it out completely.⁴⁶

3. FALCONRY, THE SYMBOL OF CALIPHAL POWER

Independent of the lexicographical question – which remains very open, as Viré and Neyrod state – or the dissemination of Arabic treatises on falconry in the Christian world via al-Andalus, falconry in the Muslim world has a overtly political aspect that cannot be overlooked. In general, the issue has been examined by modern historiography in quite an appropriate manner.⁴⁷ The association of the falcon with the idea of legitimate power (*al-mulk*) has a consistent emotive force that is demonstrated, by way of example, in the nickname given to the first of the Umayyads: the emir of al-Andalus, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (I) al-Dākhil, called metaphorically by various Andalus chroniclers *Ṣaqr Banī Umayya* or *Ṣaqr Quraysh*, in an obvious reference to the nobility of his lineage.⁴⁸

The existence of the role of *ṣāhib al-bayāzira* (“head of falconry” or great falconer) in the Umayyad administration of al-Andalus, carrying with it the command of one of the Cordovan “magistracies” (*khuttāt*), proves this connection (even though we unfortunately do not know the precise functions that a role such as this may have included). However, comparing it with others (such

46 Akasoy 2008: 56–57.

47 See, for example, the work on the Abbasid caliphate by Akasoy & Georges 2005; Akasoy 2008.

48 Meouak 1991: 363.

as the *ṣāhib al-khīl* or *ṣāhib al-ṭirāz*) and, above all, the duties contained in other treatises on falconers of other contemporary Abbasid⁴⁹ or Fatimid⁵⁰ caliphates, we are forced to consider that their intervention in court matters was not at all testimonial.⁵¹ Given various texts found in the larger corpus of medieval Arabic literature,⁵² especially chancery manuals that extol falconry or hawking as a symbol of the absolute power of the sovereign exercising *mulk* (treatises which are regrettably lacking in al-Andalus), it is possible to establish what the duties of this role in the protocol of the caliphal court may have included: he was responsible not only for capturing or acquiring specimens in the market from (as we will later see) specific regions in al-Andalus, but also feeding them and training them so that they could display their skills on hunting days and at public events. Duties also included preparation of falcons as gifts, as it is well known that these animals were exchanged as valuable tokens of diplomacy between sovereigns or members of the *khāṣṣa*.⁵³ Such individuals must have also naturally performed an extremely important function of maintaining protocol, independently of the typical Umayyad official (whom we will consider subsequently). Therefore, they must have had many more tasks than those attributed to this role by Lévi-Provençal: “breeding purebred falcons for the sovereign to hunt with”.⁵⁴

From what we know and can deduce, the process of obtaining chicks was totally controlled by the authorities. The falcon is a bird that does not reproduce in captivity, and it has to be captured when it is young. Affected by various illnesses of the digestive system, it needs specialised veterinary treatment (as illustrated in medieval treatises on falconry).⁵⁵

49 For example, the Abbasid caliphal falconers, Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar al-Bāzyār (who wrote his treatise under the government of al-Mutawakkil (translation Akasoy & Georges 2005)) or Kushājīm with his *Kitāb al-maṣāyid wa-l-maṭārid* (written around 961, ed. Talas 1954).

50 The anonymous official of the caliph al-‘Azīz bi-llāh wrote his *Kitāb al-Bayzara* around 385/995. However, the editor of the work, Kurd ‘Alī, attributed it to Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Bāzyār, a supposition which Viré (1967: 2), rejects. See an earlier view on his translation of this work in Lewin (2001).

51 Lewicka-Rajewska 1997.

52 A state-of-the-art in Akasoy 2008.

53 In addition to the information to which Pérès refers, (1983: 350–351) reports a shipment of falcons (*shawdāniqāt*) made by the Murcian Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṭāhir to al-Manṣūr ibn Abī ‘Āmir, al-Manṣūr’s grandson who governed in Valencia; alternatively one finds a request made by the vizier Abū Bakr ibn Qabṭurnuh to the governor of Badajoz, al-Manṣūr ibn al-Aḥṣas, for the latter to give him a falcon (*bāzī*), a “specimen with long wings” whose “feet bring the wind from the north”. There is other later information as well; there are references to the gifts sent by the Merinid sovereign Abū I-Ḥasan ‘Alī to the sultan of Egypt al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalā’ūn, including “34 magnificent falcons (*al-buzāt*)”; Ibn Marzūq, *Musnad*: 308; transl. p. 374.

54 Lévi-Provençal 1987: 332.

55 Akasoy 2008: 52.

While paradigmatic, the description of finding young falcons in Mallorca in the Early Middle Ages,⁵⁶ is not the only one. According to the data, very similar conditions existed in Ottoman Turkey.⁵⁷ The very well explained process of extraction from the wild in Medieval Mallorca, however, included a search for the nest or breeding site, monitoring it, and, finally, capturing the bird. All such tasks could only be performed by specialists. Behind the procedure was the strict control of the feudal authority, either ecclesiastical or seigniorial. We have no reason to believe that the situation in al-Andalus would be radically different from the one described. Official calendars included these cycles of extraction; it is reasonable to suppose that if such data was included in documentation issued by the Umayyad *dīwān*, the process was backed and controlled by the highest authority in the matter, the *ṣāhib al-bayāzira*.

The “major falconer” of al-Andalus must have been responsible for managing a relatively large budget. Falconry was an activity that demanded resources; as a production, its goal was to achieve an edifying spectacle, one that would make patently clear the solemn and unshakeable hierarchy of an Eastern state rooted in the most ancient “Arabness” of the East, with the falcon representing both lineage and ancestry. In other words, the caliphal order manifested itself through falcons and falconry. Consequently, there was also a need for “minor falconers”: veterinarians specialised in avian diseases, officers, assistants (*ghulām*, pl. *ghilmān*), and other assistants. All together, these comprised the “falcon house” (while it was named *bayt al-tuyūr* in other contexts, we are unaware of its title in the Andalus territory). Such personnel were at the disposal of the major caliphal falconer, not only for carefully attending to the birds, but also for looking after other hunting animals (such as horses and dogs). This wide range of duties makes it possible for us to speak of a *ṣāhib al-ṣayd* rather than a mere *ṣāhib al-bayāzira*.

Where did the government find resources for this activity? Fortunately, we have a document which provides a great deal of information on this subject. The tax list described in detail by the eleventh century historian al-ʿUḍrī⁵⁸ makes it possible to assess the degree of collection in the Cordovan administrative division for what is known as *al-bayzara*, which M. Barceló translated as ‘falconry fee’.⁵⁹ This practice allowed a farmstead or groups of farmsteads (*qarya*, pl. *qurā*) in the rural districts (*aqālīm*) to use birds of prey for hunting, in return for payment to the state. In this body of work, *bayzara* is usually matched with *ṣadaqa* (which, in this context,

56 Bover & Rosselló 2004: 69–70. See especially Rosselló Vaquer & Bover 2003.

57 Inalcik 2003.

58 Al-ʿUḍrī, *Tarīḥ*: 124–127.

59 Barceló 1997: 108.

means *zakāt* for livestock and is only once associated with *ṭabl*). The use of *ṣadaqa-bayzara* allows us to calculate the approximate total amount collected (falconry fees are not recorded individually): 1,422 dinars and 24,186 dirhams. This represents nearly 5 percent of the total taxation of the 12 *aqālim* in the Cordovan administrative division (*kūra*), which consisted of 733 farmsteads (560 being Muslim and therefore active contributors).

In short, the falconry fee – as a straightforward tax item – implies acceptance by the State of an activity that obviously had a purely economic dimension. It could be quantified, if sufficient data existed. While on the whole we unfortunately lack details for the Muslim West on the trade of these birds, some data does exist for the East. There are records of the purchase prices of the best animals in Abbasid Baghdad,⁶⁰ as well as references to bird markets (such as Aleppo, where such two markets were in operation, the *sūq al-ṭayr* and the *sūq al-ṭayr al-ʿatīq*).⁶¹

The tax registry of al-ʿUḍrī throws light on the practice of falconry, a subject which suffers from a paucity of information. Among the taxes there, there is a record of a falconry fee of *qurā* being collected in rural areas. This indicates that there were groups of hamlets where the practice of falconry was an integral part of social customs at that time (the end of the 9th century and the beginning of the 10th century). Its absence in other districts is rather notable: the case of *iqṭim* of *Awliyyat al-Sahla*, with a volume of 102 farmsteads, is especially revealing, since the not inconsiderable sum of 511 dinars was collected here exclusively for the practice of falconry. This activity is only recorded in three other districts, always in association (as mentioned above): *Awliyyat al-Sahla*, with the *ṣadaqa*; *al-Mudawwar* with 90 farmsteads (where *ṣadaqa* and *bayzara* add up to 412 dinars); *al-Qaṣab* with 87 farmsteads (where the amount of gold coins collected totals 203 dinars); and *al-Hazhaz* with 73 farmsteads (making 148 dinars). The sum of these four *darāḥim arbaʿin* comes to the aforementioned total of 24,186 dirhams.

As falconry was an activity taxed by the State,⁶² it is logical to assume that the revenue collected by means of the falconry fee was for the Umayyads' *bayt al-ṭuyūr* expenses. While its precise location is unknown, we believe it was in *Madīnat al-Zabrāʾ* (as all administrative authorities moved there when al-Nāṣir was founded).

The prevalence of falconry among the Andalusī popular classes is worth highlighting, even if this was only minor hawking with species such as the sparrowhawk and the goshawk (rather than major falconry, which was reserved for the high

60 Some of the figures for the price paid in Baghdad at the beginning of the Abbasid government in Manazir Ahsan 1976: 104–105.

61 Chalmeta 1973: 133.

62 It has even been insinuated that this tax was one of the causes of the intensification of the revolts in the 9th century; Marín-Guzmán 1995: 196.

corridors of power, including circles of the *khāṣṣa* close to the court,⁶³ under the control of the highly specialised role of *ṣāḥib al-bayzara*). In any event, according to the al-ʿUḍrī register, the practice of falconry was also deeply rooted in these unprivileged social strata. It has been argued by F. Viré that “its practice was not limited to the privileged classes, as it was in the Christendom”.⁶⁴ The rural communities of the farmsteads practised the art of hawking. While this information in itself is contested, and has not yet been assessed (as far as we know), it does indicate the intensity of the phenomenon of Islamization in this period, either at the time of the emirs or at the beginning of the Caliphate. Independently of its ritual value – and even “sport” value – it possessed an economic dimension which is difficult to understand, since these communities added animals from hunting to their diet,⁶⁵ including, naturally, those derived strictly from hawking.

Undoubtedly, the hunting practice of the higher classes was promoted by an authority, which reflected its “eastern side” (to quote Lévi-Provençal) from the time of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān II onwards. There is absolutely no possibility that falconry belonged to an “indigenous” tradition (whatever the meaning of that word so beloved by Hispanic historiographers may be), as shown by the formation of new vocabulary in Andalusī Arabic (based on borrowings from Arabic and, in turn, mainly from Persian).

Who managed the collection of falcons? To answer this question, we must first establish when the magistracy of the great falconer (*ṣāḥib al-bayzāra*) was introduced in al-Andalus. The answer has already partly been given above: its existence can only be due to that “easternising” impetus which ʿAbd al-Raḥmān II embodied in the first half of the ninth century (206/822–238/852), with the invaluable Ziriyāb competition. And in fact, this institution, with precise duties in the administrative and bureaucratic apparatus of the Umayyad State, existed before the proclamation of the Caliphate (316/929) in al-Andalus, although not at the time of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān II: in the year 301/913–914, Fuṭays ibn Aṣḥbagh was appointed to replace *ḥājib* Badr ibn Aḥmad for the “falconry magistracy”.⁶⁶ The syntactic construction (*khuttat al-bayzāra*), comparable to *ṣāḥib al-bayzāra*, provides the first reference in al-Andalus to the role, proving that it already existed at that time, with precise duties outlined in the set of powers of the Cordovan *ḍiwān*.

63 See the relevant qualifications stated by Juez Juarros 1997: 68.

64 Viré 2003.

65 While a full study on the incidence of hunting in the Andalusī diet remains to be done, the assessments made by V. Martínez Enamorado (2009) can be consulted in this regard.

66 *wa-wallā Fuṭays ibn Aṣḥbagh khuttat al-bayzāra wa-sarrafa-hāʿan al-ḥājib Badr bn Aḥmad*: Ibn ʿIdārī, *Bayān* II: 159, French transl. p. 264; Meouak 1999: 44. This information is not included, however, in Ibn Ḥayyān, *Muqtabis* V: 97, transl. p. 84.

No doubt these included planning hunting parties for cranes (*gharāniq*), such as those that the emir ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II (emulating the highest Abbasid or Aghlabid dignitaries) joined in 301/913–914 in the cora (small territorial division) of Sidonia (even reaching Cadiz).⁶⁷ These hunting parties, in which the falcon was used, were so famous that the Andalusis ironically named the crane *‘abdarrahmiyya*, a word which passed into Spanish with the forms *abda/erramia*, *abdarmia*, *aberramia* and *averramia*.⁶⁸

Additional information on the role of *ṣāhib al-bayzāra* involves the right-hand man of al-Ḥakam II, Jawḍar,⁶⁹ who was also responsible for the management of precious metal craftsmanship (*ṣāhib al-ṣāgha*). The setting has changed from the time of the emirs mentioned above (301/913–914) to the caliphal scenario of *Madīnat al-Zahrā’*, on the first of *shawwāl* in the year 362/5 July 973. Al-Rāzī describes an “extremely solemn reception” at the fasting festival that year, where the *fatā* Jawḍar, serving as *ṣāhib al-ṣāgha* and *ṣāhib al-bayzāra* assumed a position in the hierarchy of the caliphate, below the viziers (*wuzarā’*) and the brothers of the Caliph al-Ḥakam.⁷⁰ It is certain that the relationship of extreme trust between Jawḍar and al-Mustansir contributed to his privileged status; he was the latter’s right-hand man, along with the *ṣāhib al-tirāz*, Fā’iq al-Nizāmī. In any event, it proves the significance attained by the position and its influence on the affairs of court. This was handsomely demonstrated when al-Ḥakam died, as both Fā’iq al-Nizāmī and Jawḍar tried to take advantage of the moment by staging a surprise attack.⁷¹

The raptor specialists of the Andalusī territory who worked for the Umayyad *ḍiwān* were perfectly aware of what areas produced the best specimens. It is not surprising, therefore, that information detailing aspects of the falcons’ nesting and breeding habits, or life cycles, was included in agronomic calendars. Yet again, this points to the economic dimension of falcon breeding, alongside scientific data

67 Ibn Ḥayyān, *Muqtabis*, II-1, fol. 156r, transl. p. 221: “‘Isā ibn Aḥmad al-Rāzī says: The emir ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Ḥakam went out to hunt cranes, which he enjoyed very much after returning from a distant campaign he had partaken in, and he extended his hunting party, as was his custom, since he sometimes reached the cora of Sidonia or Cadiz, and other places, but this time he went even further, as it was winter and the crane season, to the point where he made his companions feel uneasy and he annoyed them”; see Martínez Enamorado 2009, as well. Almost all the comments about this information place these hunting parties along the river banks of the Guadalquivir, data which is not included in the passage: Lévi-Provençal 1932: 55; Pérès 1983: 349; Lévi-Provençal 1973: 285; Lévi-Provençal 1982: 65; Lévi-Provençal 1987: 171 (note); Arié 1984: 314.

68 Corriente 1999: 74.

69 For more information about this person (besides what Lévi-Provençal (1987) states), see Meouak 1999: 217–219.

70 Ibn Ḥayyān, *Muqtabis* VII: 119, transl. p. 152.

71 Ibn ‘Idārī, *Bayān* II: 259, French transl. p. 431; Lévi-Provençal 1987: 402.

concerning diseases, food and the ethology of these birds. Such aspects of avian life were dealt with by the Muslim writers of treatises on falconry in medieval times.

It is clear that such information was known by the administration, whose representative official for this matter, the *ṣāhib al-bayzāra*, had to inform the caliph about all of the issues connected with “the art of falconry”.⁷² The fact that the producers of these official calendars of agricultural cycles paid attention to these details indicates, in case there was any doubt, that falconry was an economic activity, and that the Umayyad State was aware of it. Consequently, from the testimony of the Cordovan Calendar (dated 350/961), it has been interpreted that the falcons (*shadāniq*) in the regions of Valencia and the Balearic Islands (based on the expressions *balansiya* and *al-jazā’ir*, respectively) must have been very valued species.⁷³ This is confirmed by the anonymous calendar *Risāla fī awqāt al-sana*, which repeats very similar comments.⁷⁴ However, the explanation given by Viré for these expressions of *balansiya* and *al-jazā’ir* would rule out any possibility of a sharqī geographical origin. In his accredited opinion, the *balansī* (referring to the sedentary subspecies of the Peregrine Falcon called *brookei Sharpe*) belonged to the Romance substrate with the meaning of ‘pèlerin balancier’ (that is, ‘qui volent à la balance’).⁷⁵ The *al-jazā’ir*, on the other hand, is derived from the “fluvial islands”; this is not an explicit reference to the Eastern islands of al-Andalus (*al-Jazā’ir al-Sharqiyya*).

72 In general, this process of capturing and taming is explained masterly by Viré 2003.

73 *Cordovan Calendar*: 25: in January, the peregrine falcons (*al-shadānqāt al-balansiya*) make their nests; p. 41: in March, the peregrine falcons lay their eggs on the “fluvial” islands (*al-shadānqāt al-balansiya bi-l-Jazā’ir*), which they incubate for around 30 days until the beginning of April; p. 58: in May, the goshawks (*buzāt*) and falcons (*shadānqāt*) lose their feathers and moult until the end of the month of August, depending on their vitality and good condition and the chick of the goshawks (*firakh al-buzāt*) and of the sparrow-hawks (*sifān*) hatches, acquiring its plumage over thirty days. See the meticulous clarifications written by Viré 1965: 307, n. 1. In this translation and in the one of *Risāla fī awqāt al-sana*, on the basis of Viré’s notes, we have avoided adding the term “Valencian”; neither do we give a translation for the expression “pèlerin balancier”, opting instead for just “peregrine falcon”.

74 “[In February] the [peregrine] falcons (*al-shadānaqāt al-balansiya*) remain in their nests and start to acquire their plumage”, *Risāla*: 53; transl p. 167; “[in April] the chicks of the [peregrine] falcons (*firākh al-shadānaqāt al-balansiya*) peck the shell and acquire their plumage in thirty days”, *Risāla*: 80; transl. p. 191; “[in September] the [peregrine] falcons (*al-shadānaqāt al-balansiya*) come from the Ocean (*al-baḥr al-muḥīt*), and they are hunted until the beginning of spring”, *Risāla*: 120; transl. p. 223. Furthermore, the editor and translator of this work states in a note: “In the Cordovan Calendar, page 145: *al-shadānaqāt al-balansiya*, and in the *Kitāb al-anwā*, folio 30r.: *al-bazāt al-nabliyya*, falcons of the Niebla species. This seems more logical, since the text goes on to say: ‘come from the Ocean’, it is understood that this is the Atlantic, since Niebla is a city in Huelva”; Navarro 1990: 223, n. 406.

75 “On dit du faucon qu’il ‘tient la balance’ au-dessus du gibier arrêté par le chien. L’expression ‘tenir la balançoire’ a été relevée par tous les lexicographes et cette tactique est propre au faucon pèlerin”; see the explanation in Viré 1965: 307, n. 1.

Nevertheless, the tradition of falconry inherited from the Arabs in the eastern region, especially on the Balearic Islands, was such that,⁷⁶ aside from the etymological qualifications presented by Viré, it is logical to assume that these areas of *Sharq al-Andalus* were frequented by officials in search of specimens that could satisfy the governors and elite falconers.

Reports about falcon captures in the region of Lisbon are not as etymologically controversial. Arab-Andalusi authors agree that those regions of *Gharb al-Andalus* were exceptional for breeding falcons, so it can be assumed that they served as supply areas for Caliphal falconry, the Cordovan *buyūt al-ṭayr*. This is the only way to interpret the frequency with which falcons from this region appear in literary works. The references to falcons from regions close to Lisbon are relatively precise:⁷⁷ they are “a faster and purer species than any other”,⁷⁸ so they are ideal for hunting (“E en su termino [of Lisbon] crian açores, e los que han de su termino usan mas la caça”);⁷⁹ “they also breed some falcons there which are ideal for hunting (*wa bi-hā bazāt jayda li-l-ṣayd*)”,⁸⁰ highlighting the fact that they come especially from the Sintra mountains near Lisbon: “In its mountains there are good falcons”;⁸¹ “around it [Lisbon] there are mountains and nests of very good falcons for hunting, which can only be found in this place”.⁸²

It is known that falconry was a prestigious activity in the taifas. As the magistracy of the *sāhib al-bayzāra* could only be considered as emanating from the stable and lasting caliphal order, with its collapse the magistracy also disappeared as an autonomous administrative role. Falconry continued to be managed by an official close to the court, but without the privilege of duties as delimited and influential as in previous times. In other words, falconry lost the inherently “political” meaning that it had had under the auspices of the Cordovan caliphs. That said, it gained a poetic and recreational aspect. Indeed, according to the poems collected largely by H. Pérès,⁸³ falconry became an enjoyable pursuit, with some almost ritual content, which could be claimed as an example of good taste and an integral part of a multifaceted *adab*. The extraordinary development of

76 Bover & Rosselló 2004. Information provided by these authors contrasts with other information contributed by Ibn Ḥawqal on the absence of wild animals in Mallorca, a circumstance that was beneficial to the breeding of mules. These animals were even exported outside al-Andalus. The text is interpreted by Barceló (1984: 37).

77 Besides the references below, see the testimony of Ibn Ghālib, *Farḥa*: 291; transl. p. 380.

78 Al-Rāzī, in Lévi-Provençal 1953: 90.

79 *Crónica del Moro Rasis* [Chronicle of the Moor Rasis]: 88.

80 *Dīkr*: 51, transl. p. 57.

81 Yāqūt, *Muʿjam* IV: 356; transl. p. 271.

82 Qazwīnī (Roldán Castro 1990: 159, n. 3).

83 Pérès 1983: 350–352.

hunting poetry is a good example of this,⁸⁴ since this poetic genre was created in the eleventh century in a general environment of literary brilliance.⁸⁵

It is regrettable that such precise information does not exist for the Almoravid and Almohad periods, although it is said that “falconry became a consolidated hunting activity of sovereigns and great lords”.⁸⁶ The Nasrid sultanate, gathered in part by R. Arié,⁸⁷ offers more details; more is known about hunting activities then,⁸⁸ above all due to the outstanding quality of the first Castilian documentation.

While the hunting poems (*tardiyya*) of Ibn Zamrak hardly provide any information about falconry,⁸⁹ the chronicles mention the sultans’ overall liking for hunting (without entering into other details).⁹⁰ It is highly probable, nonetheless, that they are referring to falconry (especially as the last Nasrid sultan’s love of it is a well-known fact). After Granada was taken by the Castilians, Boabdil went hunting with his goshawks in the Campo de Dalías, escorted by his servants and followed by his greyhounds.⁹¹ This picture, as well as the paintings in the Alhambra,⁹² serves as a perfect representation of the significance of falconry as an activity in the court of the Alhambra.

4. SOME WORDS ON THE ICONOGRAPHY OF FALCONS AND FALCONERS IN AL-ANDALUS

A monographic study, largely completed by Juez Juarros,⁹³ distinguishes between different iconographies of falcons in al-Andalus, spanning artistic styles over time. One finds images of falconry with falconers on horseback, including the single rider (caliphal pyxis of al-Mughīra, no. 2774 in the Louvre Museum, and casket 10-1866 in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London; two caskets in Fitero

84 The concept is correctly explained by Rubiera Mata (1974), who points out (p. 569) that there are only some fragments of hunting *risāla-s* in al-Andalus, such as those by Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn Khafāja. On the falcon in the work of Ibn Khafāja, see Hājjajī 1992: 140.

85 On poetry in the 11th century, see Garulo 1998.

86 Juez Juarros 1997: 71–72. Falconry accompanied other activities in relation with the “sciences of animals”, *al-Furūsiyya* and *al-Bayṭara*; Mercier 1924: 431–459; Viguera Molins 1977: 23–24.

87 Arié 1990: 405–406.

88 For example, see Molina Fajardo 1967.

89 One of these poems was translated by García Gómez (1944: 207). See the Dīwān of Ibn Zamrak.

90 For example, for Muhammad IV, see Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Lamḥa*: 90; transl. p. 97.

91 According to a letter which Hernando de Zafra sent to the Catholic Monarchs dated December 1492, see Molina Fajardo (1967: 46).

92 Four large falcons hunting a prey can be observed in the paintings of the Partal, whilst on one of the vaults of the Hall of Justice, gyrfalcons and peregrine falcons are preparing to hunt some wading birds, most likely cranes; Arié 1984: 315.

93 Juez Juarros 1997: 72–83.

church dating from the 12th century; and a casket in Tortosa Cathedral, dating from the end of the 12th century or the beginning of the 13th century); the falconer with the captured prey in his hand (medallion on the shroud of St. Lazarus in Autun Cathedral, France, dating from the caliphate, perhaps representing al-Manṣūr's son, 'Abd al-Malik, al-Muẓaffar);⁹⁴ the falconer on horseback accompanied by a greyhound (chasuble in San Fermo Church in Italy dating from the Almohad period); the falconer pursuing his prey (pyxis of Ziyād in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and medallions on the lid of the Leire casket in the Museum of Navarre); and other variants of terrestrial falconry, which were absent in practice in the iconographic representations of al-Andalus. Juarros also points to the existence of images of falconers on foot and the absence of the complete cycle of hunting with falcons, whose model is the set of mosaics in the Palatine Chapel in Palermo (although the pyxis of al-Mughīra includes part of the process):

with the presence of the falconer on horseback, surely an impersonal representation of the Caliph, a pair of falconers on foot, perhaps the nobleman's assistants, and a strange scene in which two characters besieged by dogs are collecting eggs or birds from nest which are perhaps located in trees.⁹⁵

Without going into the details of these specific iconographies, which are explained in Juarros' study, it should be stressed that such motifs of falcons and falconers do not belong to al-Andalus in particular; they are in evidence in all Muslim, Mashriqi and Maghrebi art, spreading out from the Muslim territories and extending into early medieval Christian art.⁹⁶ The examples are so abundant that they merit an extensive monographic study. As an example of the ubiquity of this motif in the artistic production of the Muslim West, however, we may point to a well-known fragment in the ceramics of *Qal'at banī Hammād* in which a falcon attacks a gazelle (or perhaps even a giraffe) with their necks intertwined.⁹⁷

A review to establish definitive iconographic models is pending. To be completed, it is not only necessary to catalogue the appearance of falcons in fine materials such as ivory pyxides or textiles (and even palatine decorations),⁹⁸ but also more

94 Bernus-Taylor 2000: 136, no. 136 (a, b and c).

95 Juez Juarros 1997: 83.

96 The case of the chapel of San Baudelio de Berlanga (St Baudilus) is worth analysing; Guardia Pons 1982: 107–108.

97 Golvin 1965: 223, no. 1, pl. LXXXII.

98 As an example, see a decorative frieze preserved with a sequence of falcons, which may have belonged to the al-Ma'mūn palace in Toledo; Robinson 1992: 260, no. 48; Dodds, Menocal & Krasner Balbale 2008: 54.

“popular” media, like ceramics⁹⁹ and metal oil lamps.¹⁰⁰ An inventory still needs to be produced,¹⁰¹ yet we are convinced that a large part of the motifs that are grouped under the imprecise name of “birds” or “peacocks” belongs to the falconidae.

One of the most outstanding examples of ceramics with the falcon as subject is an unparalleled piece whose animal iconography has led to various interpretations. Here we cite the one written by J. Zozaya, writing about the association between the horse and the falcon, found in an explicit manner in the plate of *Madīnat Ilbīra*.¹⁰²

The horse with the goshawk is a combination of two concepts. The horse, on the one hand, and the goshawk/falcon on the other. Independently, the two have value on their own. This is usually also associated with the goshawk rider. I am again going to use the example of Oña as a prototype.¹⁰³ There are three types in Oña, actually three phases of the flight of the goshawk. I am using the best (fig. 14). The horse is a carrier of death and life, emerging from the night, and it is also a lunar figure. It signifies nobility and ennobles everyone who rides it. The rider has a bird on the nape of his neck (in this case a falcon), an allusion to the Koran 17:13, which reflects the soul. When the body dies, the soul normally flies to the “tree of paradise” or the “tree of life” where souls access the divine vision of God, as described by Muslim eschatology, and it is graphically expressed by the plate in the Archaeological and Ethnological Museum in Granada, from Madinat Ilbira (Granada) (fig. 15) and the Cuenca caskets in the National Archaeological Museum or the Silos casket in the Museum of Burgos, as well as the Minai ceramics or Nasrid pieces in golden lustre, such as those in the Louvre Museum, Gulbenkian Collection in Lisbon, Victoria and Albert Museum in London (fig. 16), or Oxford’s Ashmolean Museum.¹⁰⁴

In short, this issue of the symbolism of the falcon in all the iconography of al-Andalus needs a general and exhaustive inventory, as well as a review of the different types and the contexts in which the image of the bird appears. At the

99 The ceramic display in the Museum of Cordova, for example, includes a flat-based dish with a falcon with a curved beak and a crest on its head as the central iconographic motif; see Cano Piedra 1996: 31–32, fig. 56 (MC12).

100 See a couple of examples of oil lamps which include the falcon as a decorative element: one dating from the 11th century at the Instituto de Valencia de Don Juan Museum (Zozaya 2001: 119, n° 101) and another at the Museum of Algeciras dating from the 10th century (Torremocha Silva & Martínez Enamorado 2003: 44–45), although there are others.

101 There have only been partial attempts to cover the zoomorphic study of the iconographic system of symbols in al-Andalus. We quote two, which are radically different in their initial approach: Rosselló Bordoy 1978; Zozaya 2002.

102 See the examples of the presence of the goshawk in Andalusí iconography, provided by Casamar & Zozaya 1991: 49.

103 It refers to the Oña textile, studied in Casamar & Zozaya 1991.

104 Zozaya 2002: 128–129.

moment, we can confirm that this presence in Andalusí art is quite significant, and corresponds to the symbolism of the falcon in the Muslim world. In this respect, there are no considerable differences with the rest of *Dār al-Islām*.

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