

Malaga

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MALAGA

In the words of al-Shaqundi,

Malaga unites land and sea prospects, thus partaking of the advantages and productions of both; its environs are so covered with vines and orchards as to make it impossible for the traveller to discover a piece of ground which is not cultivated. Its towers, which I have seen, are like the stars in the sky, as numerous, and shining as bright. It is intersected by a river which comes to visit it in two seasons of the year, in winter and in spring, when, rolling its precipitous waters through deep ravines and down lofty hills, it empties them into the sea within the very precincts of the city. But what ranks Malaga far above any other country in the world is its figs called ar-Rayi, from Rayah, which was the ancient name of the city; I was told that they may be procured in Baghdad, where they are considered as the greatest delicacy, and as to the quantity annually exported by sea both in Muslim and Christian vessels, it is so enormous that I shall not venture upon a computation for fear of falling short of the real number... All the coast of Malaga may be compared to a port, so full is it all times of vessels belonging either to the Muslims or to the Christians.¹

The 14th century Moroccan traveller, Ibn Battuta, holds that,

Malaga is one of the principal cities of Andalus; it has an excellent territory, and abounds in fruits of all sorts; I saw once eight ratl of grapes sold in its market for a small dirhem; the celebrated pomegranate named al-Mursi, and another kind called Al-Yacoti (the rubi coloured), grow on its soil; figs and almonds form a considerable staple of trade, and are exported in great quantities to distant countries in the East and West, as also its golden pottery, which is quite wonderful. It has a large mosque, Jami, very much renowned for its sanctity, with a very fine open court, all planted with orange trees.²

Malaga was conquered by the Muslims in 711 by a force sent by Tarik Ibn Ziyad and soon became an important centre - the capital of the province of Reioyo.³ In the 11th century, following the death of Al-Mansur, Muslim Spain descended into a state of chaos breaking up into thirty or so states which were ruled by local princes, the Reyes de Taifas. Malaga suffered at the hands of these divisions,

'The states of Valencia and Malaga,' Scott notes, 'owing to the political imbecility of their rulers had descended to a position greatly inferior to that to which they were entitled by reason of the commercial and agricultural resources.'⁴

For a long time Malaga, governed by the Idrisids, was a centre of Berber influence. There was however a sharp contrast between the rulers and the ruled, which Scott points out,

¹ Al-Shaqundi, in Al-Maqqari: Nafh Al-Tib. Translated by P.De Gayangos: *The History of the Mohammedan Dynasties in Spain* (extracted from *Nifh Al-Tib* by al-Maqqari); 2 vols; The Oriental Translation Fund; London, 1840-3. vol 1; p. 48.

² Ibn Battuta, in Al-Maqari, Nafh al-Tib (De gayangos); p. 50.

³ E. Levi Provencal: Malaga; in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*; first series; 1936; vol 3; pp. 187-8; p. 187.

⁴ S.P. Scott: *History of the Moorish Empire*; in three volumes; The J.B. Lippincott Company; Philadelphia; 1904. vol 2; p. 154.

Its (Malaga) lords, enervated by the temptations of tropical climate, to the disgust of their martial followers, suffered their lives to pass in inglorious ease until their domain was finally absorbed by the growing power of Grenada.⁵

In 1238, when the rest of Muslim Spain (Cordova, Seville, Murcia, Valencia,...) began to fall to the Christians, Malaga and its province formed part of the land of the Nasrid kingdom of Grenada (also spelt as Granada).⁶ Malaga with Grenada remained the only two principal places of Spain and Portugal to remain in Muslim hands for another two and a half centuries. During this period, military conflict between Malaga and Grenada occurred on a couple of occasions until, in 1278, the Marinid sultan renounced his claims to Malaga and other places in favour of Mohammed II al-Fakih of Grenada. Henceforth a Nasrid governor was appointed to oversee the town.⁷ Malaga remained part of the Grenada enclave until the late fifteenth century when in 1487, after a bitterly fought siege, it was permanently lost to the Christians by the Muslims (Grenada was to fall in 1492).

Thriving Muslim Malaga

Malaga, known in the past as Malaka, is a Spanish city situated on the Mediterranean Sea and it was built at the centre of a bay overlooked by the hill of Gibralfaro (the Djabal Faroh according to the geographer Al-Idrisi).⁸ Malaga occupies a privileged position, dominated by the steep slopes of the Mountain of the Lighthouse (Djabal Faro) which peaks at 170 metres.⁹ At a lower level towards the south west, rose what in the Muslim era corresponded to a strong Al-Cazaba which has been restored in recent times. It served as a residence for the governor and included a mosque, which dates from the reign of Abd Ar Rahman who was the first Umayyad ruler of Spain and which is the work of Qadi Mu'awiya ibn Salih Al-Hadrami (d. 775), a Syrian immigrant who was the trusted man of Abd Ar Rahman.¹⁰ The city itself stretched between Al-Cazaba and the Rambla of a water stream, which descended from the neighbouring mountains, known as the Guadalmedina (Wadi al-Madina).¹¹ To the west stretches the Hoya of Malaga, a fertile plain formerly covered with various crops and especially tropical fruits but today severely damaged due to the enormous tourist development of the region.¹²

During the Muslim period the view of Malaga from any point was most enchanting. From Velez to Fuengirola - a distance of more than forty miles - the coast exhibited an unbroken series of fig plantations.¹³ Further back, covering the slopes of the Sierra, were groves of oranges and pomegranates; the vineyards were the most extensive and the grapes the most luscious of Muslim Spain; the belt of frowning grey walls which enclosed the city was relieved by the palm trees which at frequent intervals overtopped them.¹⁴ The mountains in the rear were enveloped in a haze of mingled tints of crimson, orange and violet and on the southern horizon, the sapphire blue of a cloudless sky blended almost imperceptibly

⁵ S.P. Scott: History; vol 2; p. 155.

⁶ J. Bosch Villa: Malaga; in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*; second series; vol 6; 1991; pp. 220-3; p. 222.

⁷ J. Bosch Villa: Malaga; op cit; p. 222.

⁸ Al-Idrisi quoted by E. Levi Provençal: Malaga; op cit; p. 187.

⁹ E.L. Provençal: *Histoire de l'Espagne Musulmane*; vol 3; Paris; Maisonneuve; 1953; p. 342.

¹⁰ E.L. Provençal: *Histoire*; p. 343.

¹¹ E.L. Provençal: *Histoire*; p. 343.

¹² J. Bosch Villa: Malaga; op cit; at p. 220

¹³ S.P. Scott: History; op cit; vol 2; p. 620.

¹⁴ S.P. Scott: History; vol 2; p. 620.

with the deep ultramarine of the sea.¹⁵ Viewed at a distance, the white buildings with their red roofs nestling in a wilderness of verdure whose foliage displayed every tint of green; the harbour dotted with hundreds of snowy sails; the numerous mosques with their elegant towers encrusted with glittering tile work; the palaces of the noble and the wealthy decorated with all the caprices of Muslim architecture and each surrounded by spacious and shaded grounds; the boundless profusion of limpid and refreshing waters bearing fertility to every garden and comfort to every household; the interminable plantation of every fruit that contributes to the sustenance and enjoyment of every human; all presented a landscape whose counterpart probably did not exist in the most well-known regions of the inhabitable world.¹⁶

Almost all the medieval geographers of Muslim Spain give enthusiastic descriptions of Malaga. Ibn al-Khatib stresses the elegance of its population, the liveliness of its streets, its markets and suburbs as well as the beauty of its buildings.¹⁷ It possessed remarkable buildings and many mosques. The great mosque was a great building and its courtyard was planted with orange and palm trees.¹⁸ The principal mosque is today the site of the principal cathedral which is very close to the sea.¹⁹ It had, according to the geographer al-Bakri, five naves. Al-Bakri also refers to the neighbourhood, known to us as Fontanella, and which opened to the exterior through a door called Bab Funtanella.²⁰ Walls of extraordinary height and thickness encompassed the entire circuit of the city. Within this line of circumvallation the different quarters and suburbs, in accordance with Muslim custom, were strongly fortified.²¹ The elaborate system of hydraulics perfected by the Muslims operated everywhere with the sparkling waters of the mountain streams.²² The general aspect of the city was strikingly Oriental, in the narrow and tortuous streets often covered by awnings to exclude the heat or spanned by arches; in the sombre dwellings whose frowning walls were occasionally broken by narrow, projecting lattices; in the bazaars, each allotted to a special branch of commerce, where transactions involving the expenditure of great sums were concluded; in the mosques, with their glittering minarets; in the baths, with their ever moving, ever changing crowds; in the long strings of camels, each one tied to the croup of his leader, laden with every variety of merchandise; in the groups of richly apparelled ladies; in the confusing babble of a thousand tongues. It faithfully reproduced the picturesque life of Cairo, Baghdad and Damascus.²³

The high quality of life of the city did not fail to make an impact on its visitors especially on the Italians of Genoa who formed the largest Western trading section in the city, as is here outlined by Scott,

‘In their private life, the Genoese inhabitants of Muslim Malaga exhibited the sybaritic luxury which might vie with in pomp and elegance with that of royalty itself. Their palaces were of great extent and of surpassing magnificence. Buried in groves of odoriferous trees, brightened by beds of gorgeous flowers, cooled by innumerable rivulets and fountains, they combined all the ingenious devices of the Moorish landscape gardener with the taste and symmetry of classic Italy. The most exquisite creation of the Arab artificer in tiles and stucco, in gold and silver, in porcelain and in

¹⁵ S.P. Scott: History; vol 2; p. 620-1.

¹⁶ S.P. Scott: History; vol 2; p. 621.

¹⁷ J. Bosch Villa: Malaga; at p. 220

¹⁸ J. Bosch Villa: Malaga; op cit; at p. 221

¹⁹ E.L. Provençal: *Histoire*; p. 343.

²⁰ E.L. Provençal: *Histoire*; p. 343-4.

²¹ S.P. Scott: History; op cit; vol 2; p. 616.

²² S.P. Scott: History; vol 2; p. 620.

²³ S.P. Scott: History; vol 2; p. 618.

*embroidered tapestry, decorated their apartments... Long familiarity with the customs of their infidel neighbours had erased the memory and the reverence associated with the country of their birth, so closely connected with the Holy See, to such an extent that their disregard of ancient traditions and laxity of faith might not unjustly merit the imputation of heresy.*²⁴

Malaga was the most cosmopolitan of all cities. No restrictions were laid upon her trade, no vexation or humiliating conditions attached to a residence within her walls. She numbered among her inhabitants natives of every clime.²⁵ In the words of Scott, it was

*celebrated from the highest antiquity for its picturesque surroundings, for its wealth, for the enterprise of its citizens, for the unusual advantages conferred by its situation, which made it the seat of an immense commerce, in the fifteenth century that city dividing with Almeria the lucrative trade of the Western Mediterranean. The keen sagacity of the Phoenicians had early recognised its maritime importance. Carthage inherited its dominion, and long maintained there the agencies and warehouses of her most opulent merchants. Under the Romans it enjoyed the highest prosperity, but it was reserved for the Spanish Arabs to develop to the utmost the mineral and agricultural wealth of its territory, and to extend the commerce of Malaga to the most remote and inaccessible countries of the Orient, to every port whose location or communications promised a profitable return.*²⁶

The port of Malaga was a centre of immense traffic and was visited by traders from all countries especially those from the mercantile republics of Italy and the Genoese in particular.²⁷ The tolerant and enlightened policy of the Muslims had assigned the enterprising Genoese a suburb which was designated by their name.²⁸ The great factories of the merchants of the Adriatic, who at that time possessed the larger share of the carrying trade of the world, lined the crowded quays of Malaga and their flag was always the most conspicuous among the ensigns of the maritime nations whose vessels rode the anchor in the bay.²⁹ The extensive and varied commercial relations of that republic (Genoa) were thus intimately connected with those of the principal seaport of the Grenada Kingdom, Malaga. Through its portal constantly passed a vast and growing traffic which bartered the commodities of every country for the silks, the weapons, the jewellery, the gilded pottery and the delicious fruits of Spain.³⁰

Malaga remained not just an important sea-port but also an active centre for shipbuilding.³¹ The Arsenal (Dar al-Sinaa) drew the admiration of the German traveller J. Munzer in 1494.³² The Ataranza, a great dockyard and arsenal provided with every facility for the construction and repair of shipping, occupied one side of the harbour. Its portals of polished marble and jasper were formed by horseshoe arches of an elegance that rather suggested the tranquillity of a sacred shrine than the noise and bustle inseparable

²⁴ S.P. Scott: History; vol 2; p. 616-7.

²⁵ S.P. Scott: History; vol 2; p. 616-7.

²⁶ S.P. Scott: History; vol 2; p. 615-6.

²⁷ J. Bosch Villa: Malaga; p. 220

²⁸ S.P. Scott: History; vol 2; p. 615-6.

²⁹ S.P. Scott: History; vol 2; p. 615-6.

³⁰ S.P. Scott: History; vol 2; p. 615-6.

³¹ E. Levi Provençal: Malaga; op cit; p. 188.

³² J. Bosch Villa: Malaga; op cit; p. 220

from an edifice devoted to the purpose of trade and war.³³ Embracing an area of more than eighteen thousand square feet, it was one of the most notable constructions of its kind in the world.³⁴ While no ships were actually built within its precincts, these works being carried on at the adjacent mole and quays, it contained, nevertheless, all the material and equipment necessary for the completion of every type of craft; with immense quantities of naval supplies and munitions of war stored in its ample magazines.³⁵ The city and the sea were approached through many gates but the massive wall which protected the city's western exterior disclosed no opening which might tempt the attack of an alert and daring enemy. The government of the Ataranza was entrusted to an officer of high rank, whose post was one of great responsibility, as a large portion of the city was at the mercy of its garrison.³⁶ For the benefit of the thousands of workmen employed there a mosque was provided from whose minaret, at the hours designated by Muslim ritual, the muezzin regularly called the faithful to prayer.³⁷

The Vega, now known as the Hoya of Malaga was cultivated in its entirety; the texts stressed the abundance of fruits, especially delicious figs, vineyards, groves of almonds, olives and pomegranates, without counting other crops and the timber plantations.³⁸ Al-Idrisi mentions two of its suburbs, praises the sweetness of its waters and the flavour of its fruits.³⁹

Figs occupied much of the Malaga countryside. Al-Shaqundi writes,

During my residence in that city I once travelled along the sea coast from Sohayl to Tish, a distance of three days march, and I declare I saw nothing else on the road but fig trees, whose branches, loaded with fruit, almost touched the ground, so that the little urchins of the villages plucked them without the least trouble, besides the great numbers that were scattered on the ground. Those at Tish are reckoned to be the best; it was of one of these figs that a Berber said, when he was asked how he liked it 'thou asked me how I liked it, and it has all melted down my throat,' and By Allah, the Berber was right, for I never tasted better figs in my life, and besides they are a blessing which God has refused to his country (Africa).⁴⁰

The Poet Abu'l Hedjadj Youcef, son of Sheikh al-Nalawi, quoted by Ibn Said and other writers, says,

*Malaga indeed bestows life with its figs; but also causes death by them.
During my illness my physician forbade me to eat them. How little does he care for my life.⁴¹*

It is known that at Cordoba, a Jordanian soldier named Safar took a fig tree cutting and planted it on his estate in the Malaga region, a species, named after him: *safri*, and which eventually became widely diffused.⁴² From the standpoint of production for the export market, Malaga was the most important fig centre, the city being surrounded on all sides by figs of the Rayyo (rayyî, also referred to as mâlaqi,

³³ S.P. Scott: History; vol 2; p. 617.

³⁴ S.P. Scott: History; vol 2; p. 617.

³⁵ S.P. Scott: History; vol 2; p. 617.

³⁶ S.P. Scott: History; vol 2; p. 618.

³⁷ S.P. Scott: History; vol 2; p. 618.

³⁸ J. Bosch Villa: Malaga; op cit; p. 221

³⁹ E. Levi Provencal: Malaga; op cit; p. 188.

⁴⁰ Al-Shaqundi; in Al-Maqqari Nafh al-Tib; op cit; p. 49.

⁴¹ Quoted in Al-Maqqari nafh al-Tib; op cit; p. 49.

Malagan) variety "which is the best class of figs and the largest, with the most delicious pulp and the sweetest taste."⁴³ Malagan figs were exported by Muslim and Christian traders and sold in Baghdad (according to al-Shaqundi) and as far away as India and China where they were valued for their taste and their ability to be preserved for over the full year's travel necessary for their transport.⁴⁴ In the Sierra Morena a wide variety of figs was grown, including the qūtiya (Gothic), sha'arī (hairy), and doñegal.⁴⁵ Such was the importance of figs in Malaga, it had two densely populated quarters, that of Fuentecilla and that of the fig merchants.⁴⁶

Malaga's prosperity and renown were also its industries. The manufacture of glazed and gilded ceramics, which, were a unique type, and were also an export product; the curing of fish and anchovies in particular, was a speciality of Malaga.⁴⁷ Other industries included leather and iron.⁴⁸

The local textile industry thrived, particularly from the 11th century onwards, especially in the manufacture of silk of different colours, one of its most important exports.⁴⁹ The silk industry thrived thanks to the large quantities furnished by the peasantry of the Grenada kingdom and was one of the most important branches of industry pursued in the city.⁵⁰ The manufactures of silk of Malaga are famous for all their colours and patterns, some of which are so rich that a suit made out of them will cost many thousands.⁵¹ The great buildings where it was carried on rivalled to an extent the famed establishments of Almeria, once the centre of silk manufacture in Europe. The superior quality and harmony of these colours that characterised the tissues and brocades that came from the hands of the Malagan artificers gave them a peculiar value and enabled them to readily command extravagant prices in the foreign markets.⁵²

The 14th century Moroccan traveller, Ibn Battuta, tells that a fine gilt porcelain was made at Malaga which was exported.⁵³ Malaga became, indeed, very famed for its glazed wares. The diffusion of glazed wares, introduced from the East by the Muslims, can be traced with greater precision, owing to the chemical specificity of glaze recipes.⁵⁴ Thus we know that blue glaze of cobalt oxide was introduced from the East to Malaga during the Taifa period whence it was diffused to Murcia and then to Christian Spain, to Valencia (beginning of the fourteenth century) and Barcelona (at the end of the century).⁵⁵ Also of eastern provenance were tin enamel glazes, producing an opaque white used by Malagan and Mallorcan potters of the eleventh century.⁵⁶

⁴² T. Glick: *Islamic and Christian Spain in the early Middle Ages*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1979. p. 76.

⁴³ In T. Glick: *Islamic*; op cit; p. 80.

⁴⁴ T. Glick: *Islamic*; op cit; p. 80.

⁴⁵ T. Glick: *Islamic*; op cit; p. 80.

⁴⁶ J. Bosch Villa: *Malaga*; op cit; p. 220

⁴⁷ J. Bosch Villa: *Malaga*; op cit; p. 221

⁴⁸ J. Bosch Villa: *Malaga*; p. 221

⁴⁹ J. Bosch Villa: *Malaga*; p. 221

⁵⁰ S.P. Scott: *History*; op cit; vol 2; p. 619.

⁵¹ Al-Shaqundi; in Al-Maqari: *nafh Al-Tib*; op cit; p. 49.

⁵² S.P. Scott: *History*; vol 2; p. 619.

⁵³ E. Levi Provencal: *Malaga*; op cit; p. 188.

⁵⁴ T. Glick: *Islamic*; op cit; p. 239.

⁵⁵ T. Glick: p. 240.

⁵⁶ T. Glick: p. 240.

Among the artistic techniques which were brought from the east to Spain was to be found the secret of the production of lustre faience. This movement of knowledge towards the west resulted in the fact that the city of Malaga was the only important centre for gold lustre ware which still existed in the 14th century.⁵⁷ Persian lustreware potters fled to Malaga in the late thirteenth century, fleeing the Mongols⁵⁸ and it is probable that they chose this destination because of its reputation as a lustreware centre.⁵⁹ In the later middle ages, lustreware (named malica after Malaga) was produced by Muslim potters at Manises near Valencia.⁶⁰ Malaga became a norm for the quality of excellent faience; the Italian word Majolica reminds us of this today.⁶¹

The Eastern kiln became the standard Spanish kiln; this is the Arabic horno still used by traditional earthenware potters today; the firing chamber located above the hearth from which the former is separated by a perforated floor.⁶² The foundation of an Andalusí kiln has been excavated in Almeria and there are citations of kilns in medieval Christian documentation.⁶³ Interestingly, temperatures requisite for common chemical operations were indicated in recipes by specifying the kind of oven needed.⁶⁴ Thus for slow-heating operations, the low-temperature *tanûr* (medieval Castilian or Latin *athanor*, *actanor*) was used; the next lowest, according to Gerard of Cremona's twelfth-century translation of *De aluminibus et salibus* attributed to al-Râzî, but with obvious Andalusí interpolations, was the *furnum panis*, the baker's oven; then, the potter's furnace (*furnum figuli*) and finally the glassmaker's oven (*furnum vitrearum or fusionis*). The diffusion of certain kinds of eastern kilns may well have been encouraged by the spread of apposite chemical processes.⁶⁵

At the beginning of the Islamic period, glass was in common use in Egypt and western Asia and glassmakers had access to a wide range of techniques, the most common of which were free blowing and blowing into a mould, and various methods of applying ornament, manipulation, and cutting.⁶⁶ The technique of cutting crystal was said to have been introduced in al-Andalus by Abbâs ibn Firnas, poet and scholar in the courts of Abd al-Rahmân II and Muhammad I.⁶⁷ Glass vessels were blown in Islamic Malaga just as they were in Almeria and Murcia, doubtless in imitation of eastern wares, such as the irakes - glass goblets - favoured on the noble tables of tenth-century León in Spain.⁶⁸

⁵⁷ Alice Wilson Frothingham, *Lustreware of Spain*, New York (1951), pp. 15-78; Luis M. Liubi'a, *Ceramica medieval española*, Barcelona 1967, pp. 91-105.

⁵⁸ See Baron G. D'Ohsson: *Histoire des Mongols*, in four volumes; Les Freres Van Cleef; la Haye and Amsterdam; 1834.

⁵⁹ T. Glick: Islamic; op cit; p. 240.

⁶⁰ T. Glick: p. 240.

⁶¹ R. Schnyder: Islamic Ceramics: A Source of Inspiration for Medieval European Art in *Islam and The Medieval West*; ed; S. Ferber; A Loan Exhibition at the University Art Gallery April 6 - May 4, 1975. State University of New York at Binghamton.

⁶² T. Glick: Islamic Spain; op cit; p. 240.

⁶³ T. Glick: 240.

⁶⁴ T. Glick: 240.

⁶⁵ T. Glick: 240.

⁶⁶ D. Whitehouse: Glass in *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*; J.R. Strayer Editor in Chief; Charles Scribner's Sons; New York; 1980 fwd. vol 5; pp. 545-8. at p. 545,

⁶⁷ T. Glick: Islamic; op cit; p. 241.

⁶⁸ T. Glick: 241.

The Scholarship of Malaga

On the scholarly and learning front, Malaga was amongst a number of the principal cities of Spain (that also included Cordova, Toledo, Seville and Granada) which had academies that taught mathematics, astronomy, geography and medicine. And they were staffed not only with Muslim scholars, but Christians and Jews also took part in the teaching.⁶⁹

Malaga produced two scholars of great renown who, through their scholarship, managed to mix science with Malaga's greatest accomplishments of commerce and farming; one, Al-Saqati, wrote an essential treatise on *Hisba* (roughly commercial practice and law) and the other, Ibn al-Baytar, wrote the greatest treatise of medieval times on botany and herbals.

Al-Saqati's work on hisba and the Muhtasib has been edited by G.S. Colin and Levi Provencal under the French title *Un manuel hispanique de hisba* (a Hispanic treatise of Hisba). This treatise of Abu Abd Allah Muhammad B. Abi Muhammad as-Saqati of Malaga deals with the inspection of corporations, the repression of fraud in Muslim Spain and includes the Arabic text, a glossary and an introduction totalling at least 700 pages altogether.⁷⁰

Following Levi Provencal and Colin, Chalmeta and J. D. Latham made further decisive and welcome contributions to raising the awareness of this highly important work. Thanks to Chalmeta, there is now a version of this work in a Western language.⁷¹ Then, in a number of essays, 1973 fwd, Latham has put at the disposal of the reading public three articles which enlighten on diverse aspects included in Al-Saqati's work.⁷²

Al-Saqati's treatise is the first treatise in the Islamic West of *hisba* and is a guide for the state official who is in charge of this function of Muhtassib. The author al-Saqati exerted his functions of muhtassib at Malaga towards the end of the 12th century or at the beginning of the 13th century.⁷³ Latham points out that today Al-Saqati's work is of primary importance for the economic history of Spain.⁷⁴ Latham also points to the important fact of how Al-Saqati, as the Muhtassib, commits his practical observations of his trade to paper.⁷⁵ Indeed, both functions of Muhtassib and the information contained in this work make it a crucial element in the study of Muslim economic history in Spain and its subsequent impact on the rest of Europe.

⁶⁹A. Whipple: *The Role of the Nestorians and Muslims in the History of Medicine*. Microfilm-xerography by University Microfilms International Ann Arbor, Michigan, U.S.A. 1977, p. 32.

⁷⁰G.S. Colin et Levi Provencal: *Un manuel hispanique de hisba; traite d'Abu Abd Allah Muhammed B. Abi Muhammad as-Saqati de Malaga sur la surveillance des corporations et de la repression des frauds en Espagne musulmane*; Texte Arabe, introduction, notes linguistiques et glossaire; xiii + 722; publication de l'Institut des hautes etudes Marocaines; Paris Leroux; 1931.

⁷¹*El-Kitab fi adab al-Hisba* (Libro de buen gobierno del zoco), in *Al Andalus* (1967-8); trans into Spanish by P. Chalmeta y Gendron.

⁷²J. D. Latham: *From Muslim Spain to Barbary*; Edited by J.D. Latham; variorum reprints; pp. 283 fwd.

⁷³J. D. Latham: The Interpretation of a passage on scales (Mawazin) in an Andalusian Hisba manual. In *From Muslim Spain to Barbary*; pp. 283-90; at p. 283.

⁷⁴J. D. Latham: The Interpretation of a passage; p. 283.

⁷⁵J. D. Latham: Towards the Interpretation of Al-Saqati's observations on grain and flour milling. In *From Muslim Spain*; op cit; Pp. 64-87; at. P. 65.

It is important here to dwell a little on the role of the Muhtassib to explain the importance of the treatise by al-Saqati. The word hisbah is derived from the root hasaba, which means to take into account.⁷⁶ Hisbah is a judicial system, which is based on a few broad principles and a set of jurisdiction.⁷⁷ Glick notes that both the market and the urban artisans who produced for the market required governmental control.⁷⁸ In the Islamic world, supervision of urban economic life gave rise to a specialized body of secular, customary law and a special jurisdiction called *hisba* (literally calculation) executed in Umayyad times by a Master of the Market (*sāhib al-sūq*) and later by a muhtasib with both deriving their authority from the qadi.⁷⁹

However there is another interpretation from Conrad which goes as follows: Muhtassib is the Arabic title for an official roughly equivalent to a market inspector, although this rendering is in some respects unsatisfactory. In the most general sense, a muhtasib was any Muslim whose conduct reflected hisba.⁸⁰ In the first two centuries of Islam, it came to be closely associated with the frequent Quranic exhortation "Enjoin the good and forbid the evil."⁸¹ It therefore seems that as an ethical term, hisba meant the promotion of good deeds as a responsibility enjoined by God.⁸² It was in this sense that theological and hortatory literature in medieval Islam considered the duty of hisba to be incumbent on all Muslims: For the sake of his soul, every believer should do good and eschew evil, and, for the welfare of the community, should encourage others to do likewise.⁸³ This latter obligation implied a notion of personal responsibility for the moral rectitude of society, the scope and extent of this responsibility depending upon the position and capacity of each individual (for instance, a slave could remonstrate with his master if the latter committed an evil act but could not try to correct him by threat or force)⁸⁴. From this graduated concept of hisba followed that the highest responsibility and the role of primary muhtasib, as it were, should fall upon the holder of public authority. The evolution of these ideas and their development into the theoretical foundation for a specific institution took several centuries.⁸⁵ The sources mention the muhtasib and other guarantors of public morality from earliest Islamic times. At first, regulation of public conduct and economic activity was the concern of one's kin, and personal behaviour and business practice were deemed acceptable so long as they brought no disgrace to the family or tribe.⁸⁶ Disputes were settled within the clan and intertribal quarrels were referred either to the governor (emir) or to a mediator acceptable to all parties. The expansion of cities (especially in Iraq) soon compelled the caliphs and their governors to try to maintain urban order in some uniform fashion and, to this end, to establish and uphold certain basic standards of public conduct, especially in the marketplace which was the most important social and economic forum of the early Islamic towns. The Umayyad caliphate (661-749) marks the appearance of the sahib (or amil) al-suq (market master).⁸⁷

⁷⁶ M.I. H.I. Surty: The Institution of Hisbah and its impact on the health sciences; in the *Islamic Quarterly*, vol XLIII (1999) pp. 5-20; at p. 6.

⁷⁷ M.I. H.I. Surty: The Institution of Hisbah; p. 6.

⁷⁸ T. Glick: *Islamic*; op cit; p.122.

⁷⁹ T. Glick: *Islamic*; op cit; p.122.

⁸⁰ L. I. Conrad: Muhtassib; in *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*; op cit; vol 9; pp. 526-7; at p. 526.

⁸¹ L. I. Conrad: Muhtassib; p. 526.

⁸² L. I. Conrad: Muhtassib; p. 526.

⁸³ L. I. Conrad: Muhtassib; p. 526.

⁸⁴ L. I. Conrad: Muhtassib; p. 526.

⁸⁵ L. I. Conrad: Muhtassib; p. 526.

⁸⁶ L. I. Conrad: Muhtassib; p. 526.

⁸⁷ L. I. Conrad: Muhtassib; p. 526.

At the heart of the Muhtassib duties were the probity of weights and measures and the inspection of artisan manufactures and edible produce for adulteration; the muhtasib, thus, is pictured as making the rounds of the market with an assistant who carries a balance with which to certify that products sold by weight were accurately priced.⁸⁸ If a fraudulent practice was discovered in the commission, the muhtasib could punish the offender summarily, typically by ordering the destruction of the bad product.⁸⁹ The regulations, as collected in the treatises of Andalusi muhtasibs such as ibn Abdun of Seville and al-Saqati of Malaga, ranged from the general (prohibition of scandalous or irreligious behaviour in the marketplace) to very specific (stipulation of the number and kinds of thread per unit in various kinds of cloth; proportions of raw materials permissible in products containing multiple ingredients; procedures to be used in preparation and sale of meat).⁹⁰ In the field of health sciences, for instance, Al-Saqati maintains that people are engaged in the pharmaceutical industry as professionals whose scope is very wide and whose methods are very numerous and complicated.⁹¹ Identification of fraud is very difficult, and the consequence of such fraud can neither be reckoned nor imagined.⁹² It is therefore essential that the muhtasib deals with such complex problems.⁹³ The muhtasib also looked into violations of what would now be called building codes, particularly as regarded the disposal of market and household refuse in the streets and the overbuilding of upper stories in such a way as to occlude the sunlight, making it impossible for muddy streets to dry.⁹⁴ These public health functions were viewed as intimately intertwined with the functioning of the marketplace which, together with the mosque, was the primary focus of public life over whose cleanliness and traffic the muhtasib also had some jurisdiction.⁹⁵

All these issues find expression in one way or another in al-Saqati's treatise. It is divided into 18 parts, preceded by a general introduction on the application of the hisba in early Islam; the chapters dealing with weight and measures, the various trades of bakers, butchers, perfume sellers, druggists, and the makers and sellers of manufactured objects.⁹⁶ The work also deals with all sorts of frauds and fraudsters amongst trade dealers and craftsmen who work in the markets, their tricks and frauds in relation to weights and measures and the means they use to cheat their customers.⁹⁷ The treatise on hisba by al-Saqati also offers a vivid and expressive account on customs, corporations, the price of foodstuffs and so on.⁹⁸

One of Latham's articles is an excellent essay on the Interpretation of a passage on scales (mawazin) in Al-Saqati's treatise.⁹⁹ It is highly technical and includes very interesting descriptive passages and diagrams such as of an equal armed beam scales suspended upside down for agricultural purpose.¹⁰⁰ Other articles by Latham include Al-Saqati's observations on grain and flour milling,¹⁰¹ and also the bread trade in medieval Malaga.¹⁰²

⁸⁸ T. Glick: *Islamic*; op cit; p.122.

⁸⁹ T. Glick: *Islamic*; p.122.

⁹⁰ T. Glick: p.122.

⁹¹ In M.I. H.I. Surty: *The Institution of Hisbah*; op cit; p. 15.

⁹² In M.I. H.I. Surty: *The Institution of Hisbah*; p. 15.

⁹³ In M.I. H.I. Surty: *The Institution of Hisbah*; p. 15.

⁹⁴ T. Glick: *Islamic*; op cit; p.122.

⁹⁵ T. Glick: p.122.

⁹⁶ G.S. Colin et Levi Provençal: *Un manuel hispanique de hisba*; op cit.

⁹⁷ G.S. Colin et Levi Provençal: *Un manuel hispanique de hisba*.

⁹⁸ J. Bosch Villa: *Malaga*; op cit; p. 221.

⁹⁹ J. D. Latham: *The Interpretation of a passage on scales*; op cit; pp. 283-90.

¹⁰⁰ J. D. Latham: *The Interpretation of a passage on scales*; p. 286.

¹⁰¹ J. D. Latham: *Towards*; op cit.

Dhya Eddin Abu Mohammed Abdallah ben Ahmed al Malaky (from Malaga) (1197-1248) was known as Ibn al Baytar (translated as son of the vet). He is the author of the richest repository of medical natural history amongst Muslims.¹⁰³ Ibn-al-Baytar was born in Malaga but travelled in Spain and North Africa as a herbalist and later lived in Cairo as chief herbalist.¹⁰⁴ There he was appointed by the Ayyubid Sultan Malik al-Addal as an inspector of all herbalists of Cairo according to one version and as the head of Cairo's medical profession, according to another.¹⁰⁵ From Egypt he travelled extensively through Syria and Asia Minor and died in Damascus in 1248. A pupil of Ibn-i-Rumia (Abu al-Abbas al-Nabati [the Botanist]), Ibn al-Baytar was also greatly influenced by the work of Al-Ghafiqi (d. 1165) named *Kitab al-Adwiyat al-Mufradah* (The Book of Simple Drugs). Max Meyerhof has made a good outline of the works of Ibn al-Baytar and his predecessors.¹⁰⁶ Of his outstanding works, one was on *materia medica*, the other on simple remedies - medical preparations containing but one ingredient.¹⁰⁷ The latter was a description of animal, vegetable and mineral ingredients obtained from his own research and experiments as well as data that he had learned from Greek and Muslim sources.¹⁰⁸

A great deal of Ibn al-Baytar's science comes from his travels and his personal collection and observation of plants of medical interest. He began his extensive travels through the then vast lands of Islam in 1216-7 in search of plants. He thus collected a number of new medicinal plants which were introduced into the pharmaceutical know-how. Hence in Bejaia, Algeria, he found and describes lengthily the Athrilal (Latin: *ptychotisverticillata*) which a local tribe traded as a specific remedy against leprosy.¹⁰⁹ Ibn al-Baytar makes the same discoveries and collections of many other plants in Constantine, Tunis, Tripoli and other places he visits.¹¹⁰ Wherever he went, Ibn al-Baytar entered into contact with local scholars to seek further information on local plants and amongst his better known colleagues was Rachid Eddin al-Suri (d 1241) who was another botanist who used to take a painter with him in his outings in search for medicinal plants, recording each of them that was of worth by having them painted at different stages of their growth for inclusion in his book.¹¹¹ In his encounter with the 13th century medical historian Ibn Abi Usaybi'ah, who wrote the *Tabaqat al-Atibba* (The Classes of the Physicians, 1242),¹¹² we are informed how in the study of their Greek predecessors - Galen, Dioscorides and others - they came across and raised the errors and contradictions amongst such Greek authors.¹¹³

It is held, that there was not a fruit or vegetable known in horticulture at that time that was not grown in the vicinity of Malaga in the Islamic period.¹¹⁴ It is likely that Ibn al-Baytar was largely instrumental in the foundation of the

¹⁰² J.D. Latham: Some observations on the bread trade in Muslim Malaga (ca. 1200); in *From Muslim*; op cit; pp. 111-22.

¹⁰³ N.L. Leclerc: *Histoire de la medecine Arabe*; 2 vols; Paris; 1876. vol 2; p. 225.

¹⁰⁴ A. Whipple: *The Role*; op cit; p. 34.

¹⁰⁵ L. Leclerc: *Histoire*; p. 226.

¹⁰⁶ Max Meyerhof: *Esquisse d'Histoire de la pharmacologie et de la botanique chez les Musulmans d'Espagne*, *al-Andalus* 3.; pp. 1-41.

¹⁰⁷ Whipple; 34.

¹⁰⁸ Whipple; 34.

¹⁰⁹ L. Leclerc: *Histoire*; op cit; vol 2; p. 226.

¹¹⁰ L. Leclerc: *Histoire*; p. 226.

¹¹¹ I.R. and L. L al-Faruqi: *The Cultural Atlas of Islam*; Mc Millan Publishing Company New York, 1986. p 328.

¹¹² G Le Bon, *La Civilisation des Arabes*; Syracuse; 1884; p. 358.

¹¹³ L. Leclerc: *Histoire*; op cit; pp. 228-9.

¹¹⁴ S.P. Scott: *History*; vol 2; op cit; p. 620.

science of botany; his knowledge of plants acquired through his travels and studies enriching considerably the flora of his country with many additions useful for both their culinary and medicinal properties.¹¹⁵

Ibn al-Baytar produced his work *Al-Mughni fi al-Adwiyah (the Sufficient)*, which is extant in many copies, notably in Paris, No 1008, and 1029 in Arabic. The work subdivides in 20 chapters, dealing with simples for the cure of head diseases; simples for the cure of ear diseases; simples for cosmetics; simples used as counter poisons; the most commonly-used simples in medicine; simples used for fevers and atmospheric alterations and so on.¹¹⁶ In this work, the author makes many observations such as the following on small pox,

*As soon as the pustules appear on a child, he must be treated at the sole of the feet with henna, which then will prevent the disease spreading to the eyes. I have many times observed this.*¹¹⁷

However Ibn al-Baytar's best known work is *Kitab-ul-Jami fil Adwiyah al-Mufradah* (Dictionary of Simple remedies and food) and is the most comprehensive encyclopaedic work on simple drugs. It was the greatest medieval treatise on this subject,¹¹⁸ a fundamental work on botany describing 3000 simples, all of which are listed in alphabetical order. In the preface of the work, Ibn Al-Baytar claims that his objective is to make a thorough study of all simples and diets, which can be used in a continuous manner, whenever there is a need whether it is night or day; the objective is also to provide something that people will make good use of just like the clothes they wear.¹¹⁹ The information in the work derives from over 150 authors, whilst including personal observations by Ibn al-Baytar himself.¹²⁰ On this, he states in his preface,

*I have added to the ideas of the modern cures of vegetal, mineral and animal origins they do not know of. I have written this work relying on the most trusted sources, whether amongst the modern or amongst the botanists, whatever they did not pay attention to. I have always granted each author their own words. I have established the chain of my references by citing my sources. I have only given my authorship to what belongs to me alone; and have only written what I am certain is correct, and that can be relied upon with great confidence.*¹²¹

As already stated, Ibn al-Baytar collected plants, and in his treatise he offers every single detail relating to their place of collection and also the local names of the plants.¹²²

A Latin version of the book was published in 1758, and its complete translation appeared in 1842. It was translated by the Frenchman Leclerc and recently re-edited.¹²³

Before that, a number of 17-18th century Western scholars gave their focused attention and interest to the work, including Hottinger - who greatly appreciated it, Golius and Bochart - who used it abundantly in their

¹¹⁵ S.P. Scott: History; vol 2; op cit; p. 620.

¹¹⁶ L. Leclerc: Histoire; op cit; p. 235-6.

¹¹⁷ L. Leclerc: Histoire; p. 236.

¹¹⁸ A. Whipple: The Role; op cit; p.34.

¹¹⁹ M. Souissi: En parcourant les prefaces des ouvrages scientifiques en langue arabe; in *Cahiers de Tunisie*; vol 22; pp. 147-62; at pp. 156.

¹²⁰ Juan Vernet and Julio Samsó: Development of Arabic Science in Andalusia, in *Encyclopaedia of the History of Arabic Sciences*; Edited by R. Rashed; Routledge; 1996; Vol 1, pp 243-76; at pp. 271-2.

¹²¹ M. Souissi: En parcourant les prefaces; op cit; p. 156.

¹²² L. Leclerc: Histoire; op cit; p. 226.

own works, Herbelot - who praises it in his *Bibliothèque Orientale* (Oriental Library), Galand - who made a limited translation of it into French, Schultens and the Spanish Orientalist Casiri - who is equally in full praise of the work.¹²⁴ 19th century Western scholars also made their use of Ibn al-Baytar's works in one way or the other: Amon making a limited translation of it into Spanish; De Sacy referred to it; Meyer, a historian of botany devoting interested attention to the Muslim author; Dietz making a partial Latin translation whilst Sontheimer made a full German version of the work.¹²⁵

Ibn al-Baytar illustrates Muslim science in a crucial aspect: experimentation. He says in his preface of *Kitab al-jamii* (Treatise on simples) (p. 2):

What for me is accurate, is what is reached by the means of experimentation; the facts obtained through experimentation and observation, and not through hear and say, I will keep like precious treasures, and I will rely on them, and nothing else, except God's assistance. As for facts which, whether with regard to their potential, quantity, material observation in relation to their effectiveness, and their identification, which are opposed to reality and truth, those whose authors have deviated from the right path, and who load them on my back, I walk away from them with all my strength, telling their author:

*'You are telling a counter truth.' I have not given priority to the Ancient because of his being an Ancient, nor to the modern in whom others have put their faith.*¹²⁶

Ibn al-Baytar sees the royal path of natural sciences,

*it is through direct observation and experiment that we must base research. In case of conflict between the authorities of the text and observation, it is the latter which must prevail, and followed under every consideration.*¹²⁷

Ibn al-Baytar, in fact is so meticulous, he makes it clear that he has given the names of all medicines in different languages but only listing the medicines he is confident about. He tells that he cited the names of such medicines under the name they are known in their countries of origin, using for instance Berber or Latin and the foreign languages of Andalusia.

*"I have," he says, "taken great care to get the perfect, precise spelling whether in the form of the letters, in diacritics points, so as to make sure that no error is made by the readers, or get into confusion, or distortion, for indeed, errors and mistakes made by the readers come from bad reading or from certain omissions.*¹²⁸

Ibn al-Baytar is the author of several other books which were translated into various European languages such as a treatise on weights and measures which is located in Leyden and Madrid.¹²⁹

¹²³ Ibn al-Baytar (1874) *al-jami*I-IV, Cairo, 1291, French translation by Lucien Leclerc, I-III, Paris, 1977-83.

¹²⁴ L. Leclerc: *Histoire*; op cit; p. 233.

¹²⁵ L. Leclerc: *Histoire*; pp. 233-4.

¹²⁶ M. Souissi: *En parcourant les prefaces des ouvrages*; op cit; pp. 156-7.

¹²⁷ M. Souissi: *En parcourant les prefaces des ouvrages* pp. 161.

¹²⁸ M. Souissi: *En parcourant les prefaces des ouvrages* pp. 158.

¹²⁹ L. Leclerc: *Histoire*; p. 236.

Ibn al-Baytar, however, as Sarton recognises, was one of the last 'heroes' of the period, which symbolises the relative decadence of Spain.¹³⁰ A decadence which began in the 13th century by the loss of such great centres of Islamic learning as Murcia, Valencia, Seville, Cordova, Jaen, etc... and which, two and a half centuries later, ended in the loss of the last enclave of Muslim Spain - Grenada and, preceding that, Malaga.

The End of Muslim Malaga

Muslim Spain was lost in the 13th century. Cordova, the once mighty city and symbol of Muslim brilliance was lost in 1236. Valencia, the city of industry, the centre of the paper industry and many crafts and trades, of prodigious farming and exceptional irrigation skills was lost in 1238; Murcia, another great city of Islamic scholarship that deserves future attention, was lost in 1266; the last capital of Muslim Spain, Seville, with its great splendour, with its observatory of the Giralda, was lost in 1248. In those few decades other Muslim towns and cities; Jaen, Majorca, Minorca, etc... were all taken one after the other during the 13th century. Only the southern enclave of Grenada, which also included the city of Malaga, remained in Muslim hands. This southern territory remained in Muslim hands for roughly another two and a half centuries but their turn came in the years 1482-1483.

The loss of the last Muslim southern enclave, which included Malaga, was due to the fact that when the Christians launched their vast offensive against this last Muslim outpost and at the time the Muslims needed all their forces to face the Christian attack, they were seriously weakened by divisions caused by jealousies in the harem of the emir.¹³¹ The Catholic monarchs were happy at the divisions amongst Muslims, supporting one side against the strongest so as to neutralise the Muslim fighting spirit.¹³² This Muslim infighting involved Abu'l Hassan Ali (Mulay Hassan), ruler of Grenada, and his son Muhammad XII, known as Boabdil.¹³³ It was Boabdil's alliance with the Spanish Christian monarchs against his father Mulay al-Hasan, and above all against his uncle, al-Zeghal (the Brave), which contributed as much as any other cause towards the overthrow of Muslim power in Andalusia.¹³⁴ Whilst division was rife in the Muslim camp, the Christian side was enthusiastically united in such devotion that Spain had seldom witnessed before.¹³⁵ To stimulate the spirit of unity, the sovereigns did their utmost to instil into their troops the conviction that the war was a war for religion.¹³⁶ Further impetus to the Catholic rulers was given by the Pope's call for a crusade.¹³⁷

The civil war between Muslims raged until 29 April 1487, when at last Boabdil had the upper hand in Grenada, and could install himself in the Alhambra after having all the supporters of al-Zeghal put to death.¹³⁸ Profiting from the civil war between Muslims, the Spanish Catholic monarch Ferdinand occupied

¹³⁰ G.Sarton: *Introduction to the History of Science*; 3 vols; The Carnegie Institute of Washington; 1927-48. Vol II, p. 485.

¹³¹ R. Merriman: *The Conquest of Grenada*; from R. B. Merriman: *The Rise of the Spanish Empire in the Old World and in the New*; New York; The Macmillan Company; Copyright; 1918; pp. 62-75; reprinted in *The Islamic World and the West*; Edited by A.R. Lewis; John Wiley and Sons, Inc; London; 1970; pp. 137-144; at p.138.

¹³² R. De Zayas: *Les Morisques et le racisme d'Etat*; la Difference; Paris; 1992; p. 182.

¹³³ J. Read: *The Moors in Spain and Portugal*; Faber and Faber, London, 1974. p.196.

¹³⁴ S. Lane-Poole: *The Moors in Spain*; Fisher Unwin; London; 1888. p. 246.

¹³⁵ Roger B. Merriman: *The Conquest of Grenada*; op cit; p.139.

¹³⁶ Roger B. Merriman: *The Conquest of Grenada*; op cit; p.139.

¹³⁷ H. Terrasse: *Islam d'Espagne*; Librairie Plon; Paris; 1958; p. 243.

¹³⁸ R. De Zayas: *Les Morisques*; op cit; p. 187.

Loja, Illorca and Moclin;¹³⁹ more crucially, because of Boabdil, the way to Malaga lay open for the Spanish Christian attack.¹⁴⁰

The battle for Malaga in 1487 was particularly fierce and Queen Isabella herself was present at the siege. Malaga was one of the richest and best fortified of the Muslim cities, the walls flanked by eighty strong towers and four huge citadels, the Gibalfaro and Alcazaba facing the land and the Geneves and Atarazanas on the harbour protected the city and all were connected with one another by underground passages.¹⁴¹ The position of the Gibalfaro was such as to bid defiance to any military engines or ordnance at the command of the captains of the 15th century and the steep and rugged escarpments of the cliff below it made successful assault impossible.¹⁴² It could not be mined; no means could be employed successfully to reduce the city except through starvation.¹⁴³ The city, on the other hand, was extremely cut off from the rest. During the siege of Malaga, the vigilance of the Castilian fleet prevented any relief by sea coming from North Africa.¹⁴⁴

The city suffered a long, relentless siege but its defence was led by Ez Zegry who inspired the citizens and his North African troops to fight to the last.¹⁴⁵ When the Spanish King tried to bribe him, he dismissed the messenger with courteous disdain and when the city was summoned to surrender, Ez Zegry said,

*‘I was set here not to surrender but to defend.’¹⁴⁶
‘My countrymen have shown by choosing me that they think me worthy. Thou wouldst make me base. If the insult be renewed, the messenger shall be treated as an enemy.’¹⁴⁷*

The Spanish monarchs then tried to bribe the inhabitants, thinking that the rich merchants and Jews would never endure the rigours of such a siege but Ez-Zegri discovered what was going on and threatened to turn his canon on them if he saw any sign of treachery.¹⁴⁸

Ez Zegry and his followers resisted the bombardments and renewed assault; the walls were mined by the Spaniards yet the garrison held out.¹⁴⁹ In the words of the ancient chroniclers, the Muslim ‘fought so desperately that they seemed to have a greater desire to kill the Christians than to save their own lives’.¹⁵⁰ They offered nor accepted quarter;¹⁵¹ with one exception though. In one of the Muslim counter-attacks, they came across a group of young Spanish boys playing outside their camp. The Muslim leader patted them gently with his lance and bade them to run away to their mothers.

¹³⁹ J. Read: *The Moors*; op cit; p. 215.

¹⁴⁰ J. Read: *The Moors*; op cit; p. 215.

¹⁴¹ C.M. Yonge: *The Story of the Christians and Moors of Spain*; London; 1878; p. 272.

¹⁴² S.P. Scott: *History*; op cit; p. 621.

¹⁴³ S.P. Scott: *History*; op cit; p. 621.

¹⁴⁴ R. Merriman: *The Conquest of Grenada*; op cit; p. 140.

¹⁴⁵ S. Lane-Poole: *The Moors in Spain*; op cit; p.253-4.

¹⁴⁶ S. Lane-Poole: *The Moors in Spain*; op cit; p.253-4.

¹⁴⁷ C.M. Yonge: *The Story of the Christians and Moors*; op cit; p. 272.

¹⁴⁸ C.M. Yonge: *The Story of the Christians and Moors*; p. 272.

¹⁴⁹ S. Lane-Poole: *The Moors in Spain*; p.253-4.

¹⁵⁰ S.P. Scott: *History*; vol 2; op cit; p. 625.

¹⁵¹ S.P. Scott: *History*; vol 2; op cit; p. 625.

‘Why not let them taste the point of the lance?’ said a fierce warrior. ‘Because I saw no beards,’ answered the generous chief.¹⁵²

And whilst Ez-Zegri and his men fought fiercely, the city’s population - whose commercial pursuits, for the most part, rendered them averse to fighting - was ready to make any sacrifice for the sake of peace.¹⁵³ To these wealthy merchants, every patriotic consideration was subservient to the enjoyment of momentary quiet and safety.¹⁵⁴ This group was headed by Al Dordux, a citizen of immense fortune, distinguished lineage who was related to the House of Grenada and respected by his countrymen., Through his mediation, an attempt was made to deliver the city to the Christians.¹⁵⁵

The situation was growing desperate, especially as the numbers of the fighters dwindled every day. And when Al-Zeghal hand-picked a group of Muslim warriors who set out from Guadix to relieve besieged Malaga, Boabdil, whose spies had informed him, ambushed the relieving party and decimated them before they reached Malaga,¹⁵⁶ and thus, for this infamous service - thoroughly in keeping with his character - Boabdil earned himself the congratulations of the Catholic ruler, Ferdinand.¹⁵⁷

Eventually, despite Ez Zegry and his men’s fighting to the near last, the starved people of Malaga, after a siege of countless months, forced Ez-Zegry to open the gates of the city.¹⁵⁸ The Spaniards took possession of the city in August 1487; Ez-Zegry was cast into a dungeon never to be heard of again.¹⁵⁹ Ferdinand imposed the harshest conditions on the Muslim city: the whole population was condemned to slavery.¹⁶⁰ One third was transported to North Africa to be exchanged for Christian captives detained there; another third was appropriated by the state as payment for the expenses of the campaign; the rest were distributed among the nobles, the Pope and the sovereigns of friendly lands.¹⁶¹ All Christians who had converted to Islam found they were tortured to death with sharp pointed reeds; all conversos* were burnt alive.¹⁶² Thousands more were massacred and young boys were picked up by priests to catechise them; soon after much of Malaga was burnt down.¹⁶³

Malaga was to be a Christian city; many mosques were ‘purified’ or pulled down, and churches erected. The beautiful lands and houses of the Muslims were freely given to settlers from Aragon and Castile.¹⁶⁴ The chief Muslim remains in the late 19th century were the great citadel of the Gibalfaro and a beautiful marble horse shoe arch, the

¹⁵² C.M. Yonge: *The Story of the Christians and Moors of Spain*; p. 273.

¹⁵³ S.P. Scott: *History*; vol 2; op cit; p. 623.

¹⁵⁴ S.P. Scott: *History*; vol 2; op cit; p. 628.

¹⁵⁵ S.P. Scott: *History*; vol 2; op cit; p. 628.

¹⁵⁶ R. Merriman: *The Conquest of Grenada*; p. 140.

¹⁵⁷ S.P. Scott: *History*; vol 2; op cit; p. 635.

¹⁵⁸ S. Lane-Poole: *The Moors in Spain*; op cit; p. 254.

¹⁵⁹ S. Lane-Poole: *The Moors in Spain*; op cit; p. 254.

¹⁶⁰ R. Merriman: *The Conquest of Grenada*; op cit; p. 141.

¹⁶¹ R. Merriman: *The Conquest of Grenada*; p. 141.

* A Spanish or Portuguese Jew who converted outwardly to Christianity in the late Middle Ages so as to avoid persecution or expulsion, though often continuing to practice Judaism in secret

¹⁶² H.C. Lea: *The Moriscos of Spain*; Burt Franklin; New York; 1968 reprint. p.17.

¹⁶³ T.B. Irving: *Dates, Names and Places: The end of Islamic Spain*; in *Revue d’Histoire Maghrebine*; No 61-62; 1991; pp 77-93. at p.80.

¹⁶⁴ C.M. Yonge: *The Story of the Christians and Moors of Spain*; p. 278.

entrance to the Muslim dockyard, but now left far inland by the retreating sea.¹⁶⁵ On the 18th August - the anniversary of the great victory - the great bell of the cathedral sounds three times.¹⁶⁶

Writing in 1936, precisely the year in which the Spanish civil war began (1936-9), Levi Provençal tells us that hardly any monuments of the Muslim period survived in Malaga.¹⁶⁷ The old chief mosque has become the cathedral. The old Muslim citadel is still called Alcazaba.¹⁶⁸ The previously-mentioned arsenal - named *dar al-Sinaa* in Arabic and from which the current term *Atarazana* is derived - occupies the actual site of a market and one of the gates with the motto of the Nasrids - *La ghaliba illa Allah* (there is none to overpower but Allah) - is still standing.¹⁶⁹

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¹⁶⁵ C.M. Yonge: *The Story of the Christians and Moors of Spain*; p. 278.

¹⁶⁶ C.M. Yonge: *The Story of the Christians and Moors of Spain*; p. 278.

¹⁶⁷ E. Levi Provençal: Malaga; op cit; p. 188.

¹⁶⁸ E. Levi Provençal: Malaga; op cit; p. 188.

¹⁶⁹ E. Levi Provençal: Malaga; p. 188.

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