A POSSIBLE AUTHOR OF THE ARABIC TRANSLATION OF OROSIUS’ *HISTORIAE*¹

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In a review of P. K. Hitti’s *History of the Arabs* (London, 1937), written in 1939, G. Levi della Vida² announced the discovery of a manuscript of the Arabic translation of the *Historiae adversus paganos Libri Septem* by Orosius³ (*fl.* at the beginning of the fifth century) in the Library of Columbia University, New York.⁴ From that time, various works have been published studying different aspects of the *Kitāb Hurushiyush*, as this translation is generally known.⁵

One of the questions regarding this Arabic translation which has raised most interest among modern scholars has been the problem of its authorship. Most studies of the question up to the present day have suggested Qāsim b. Aṣbagh or Aṣbagh b. Nabil as authors or co-authors of the translation. This hypothesis is based on commentaries made regarding the process of translation of Orosius’ original text by two Arab authors chronologically far apart from each other: Ibn Juljul (d. after 384/994) and Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406-1407).

Another author, however, has given us the key to formulate a hypothesis regarding the name of the author or one of the authors of the Arabic translation of Orosius’ *Historiae*. This writer is Abū ‘Ubayd al-Balīrī (d. 487/1094), who used the translation, apparently directly, as the basis for a large number of passages in his work *Kitāb al-Masālik wa-l-mamlak*.⁶

We shall return to this question later. First, we propose to analyse the texts of Ibn Juljul and Ibn Khaldūn with two aims in mind: first, to try to determine if the data they offer may be regarded as reliable, and second, to distinguish between the true and false elements, given that—as we shall see—their respective narratives give rise to a number of contradictions.

The information offered by Ibn Juljul, which presumably formed part of the prologue of his work *Tafsīr asmāʾ al-adwiya al-mufrada min Kitāb Diyyusquiridus*,⁷ refers to the arrival in al-Andalus of the original Latin text of Orosius from Byzantium, during ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Nāṣir’s caliphate (300-350/912-961). According to Ibn Juljul’s narrative, transmitted to us by Ibn
Abū Usaybi‘a (d. 668/1270) in ‘Uyūn al-anbā‘ fi ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā‘, the Byzantine emperor sent a letter to the Andalusi caliph together with some beautiful gifts, among which were a copy of the original text of Orosius and a copy of Dioscorides’ *Materia Medica*:

Armāniyūs, king of Constantinople, sent a letter [to ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Muḥammad] in the year 337 [948-949] --I think-- together with valuable presents. Among the presents was the book by Dioscorides, illuminated with marvellous Rūmī illustrations in the margins. The book was written in Greek, that is to say in yunānī. He also sent the book by the historian Ḥrūshīyūsh, which is a marvellous history of the Rūm, with descriptions of past times, stories about the early kings, and other very useful narratives. In the letter, Armāniyūs wrote to al-Nāṣir: “The book of Dioscorides will be of no use to you unless you can find a man who understands the terms in Greek and knows the properties of the medicines it describes. If there is anybody who can do this in your country, your Majesty will be able to profit by this book. As for the book by Ḥrūshīyūsh, there are Latin people in your country who read the Latin language. If you show it to them, they will translate it for you from Latin into Arabic”.

For his part, Ibn Khaldūn speaks of the translators of the *Kitāb Hurūshiyūš* in two different parts of his *Kitāb al-‘Ibar*. In the first passage, concerning the history of the judges in Israel, he comments that the book by Ḥrūshīyūsh, “was translated for the Umayyad al-ʿIjaam al-Mustanṣir by the qaḍī l-naṣārā [Christians’ judge] and their translator in Córdoba and by Qāsim b. Aṣbagh”.

Later on, after a passage attributed to Ibn Kurīyūn, Ibn Khaldūn records the version of Ḥrūshīyūsh on the era in which Rome was founded. The North African author considers the version of Ḥrūshīyūsh the preferable one, because this work, he says, was translated by two Muslims who worked for the caliphs of Islam.

Ibn Khaldūn’s information concerning the translators of the work of Orosius is contradictory, since a Christian, not a Muslim, held the post of qaḍī l-naṣārā, dealing with lawsuits arising within his community. The Christians’ judge cited first by Ibn Khaldūn cannot therefore be one of the Muslims mentioned in the second passage. If we suppose that Ibn Khaldūn was being intentionally misleading, it would appear that he had a motive to “lie” only in the second passage: to justify his preference for the account by
H.üşhiyüşh over that by Ibn Kuriyûn. His potential readers would certainly concede more credit to the version of H.üşhiyüşh if he told them that the authors of the translation had been two Muslims.

Analysis of the translated text, moreover, seems to confirm that one of the translators at least was a Mozarab, an arabised Christian. As has been noted, the Kitâb Hurûshiyûşh is not exclusively a translation of Orosius’ work but includes numerous and often extensive additions from various Latin sources –among them the Vulgate Bible–, as well as many references to the Christian faith.

If we accept that Ibn Khalûdûn “lies” in the second passage and that the first account is true, the next problem which arises concerns the other translator he mentions, Qâsim b. Aşbagh. It seems impossible that this personage should have participated in the translation if the facts stated by Ibn Juljûl with regard to the arrival of Orosius’ original text are correct. According to Ibn al-Farâdî (d. 403/1013),13 Qâsim died in the year 340/950-951, at the age of ninety-two years, five months and six days, but his mental faculties were impaired from the year 337/948-9. If, as Ibn Juljûl says, the Latin original text arrived in al-Andalus in the year 337/948-949, it is unlikely that Qâsim, whose mental capacity diminished that same year, should have participated in the translation of a work of the length of Orosius’ Historiae.

However, Ibn Juljûl’s account contains some factual errors, which make it of doubtful credibility. In the year 337 the Byzantine king was neither Romanus I (920-944) nor Romanus II (959-963), names whose Arabic transliteration could have given rise to Armaniylis, but Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (913-959). It is possible that Ibn Juljûl’s account refers, as Lévi-Provençal14 maintains, to the embassy sent to ’Abd al-rahmân III by this emperor in the year 336/947-8 (following Ibn Khalûdûn15) or in 338/949 (following Ibn Hayyûn [d. 469-1076]).16 Another possibility is that Ibn Juljûl’s account refers to an embassy sent by Armaniylis/Romanus I several years earlier, and that his narrative is corrupted with facts which, like the date, really belong to the embassy of Constantine VII. If the original text by Orosius arrived years earlier, in the days of Romanus I (919-944), Qâsim b. Aşbagh could indeed have participated in the translation. Anyway, Ibn Juljûl’s account is not to be relied on. It is surely reasonable to suppose that a work as widely disseminated as the Historiae by Orosius would have reached Mozarabic cultured circles before the year 948.17
According to Levi Della Vida, the Arabic translation of Orosius' work must have been circulating among the Christians in Córdoba before this date. In his opinion, the appearance of an Arabic translation of Orosius' work a little time before led Ibn Juljul to make the mistake of including the original Latin text of Orosius among the presents sent by the Byzantine king.

P.Sj. van Koningsveld maintains that Ibn Juljul's intention was simply to show the reader how difficult it was to find someone capable of translating Greek in al-Andalus, and how different this was from the case of Latin.

In my opinion, both theories are perfectly possible and, indeed, compatible. It would not be surprising for Ibn Juljul, aware of the existence of Arabic translations of Dioscorides' *Materia Medica* and Orosius' *Historiae*, to state in error that both texts arrived in al-Andalus at the same time, as part of the collection of presents sent by the Byzantine king to the Andalusi caliph. The fact that one was written in Greek and the other in Latin allowed Ibn Juljul to make a comparison between the knowledge of these two languages in al-Andalus. With regard to the Latin text, Ibn Juljul making the emperor himself provide the information, speaks of the presence in al-Andalus of people capable of translating the Latin language into Arabic. As for the Greek, Ibn Juljul goes on to tell how, as there was nobody in al-Andalus capable of reading this language, the Byzantine emperor sent a monk named "Niqîlā" to Córdoba at the caliph's request.

Previous studies on the authorship of the Arabic translation of Orosius' *Historiae* have confirmed or denied the possibility that Qāsim b. Aṣbagh collaborated on it. Researchers accepting this possibility have tried to discover the name of the other translator, while those who reject it have tried to identify the true translator or translators. To this end, both groups have centred their attention on the *qiicj* l-naifirīi mentioned by Ibn Khaldūn, in the hope of finding out his name.

Ibn Ḥayyān (d. 469/1076) and al-Maqqārī (d. 1041/1632) give the name of two judges of the Christian community: Walīd b. Khayyūrān and Aṣbagh b. Nābil. The first acted as interpreter, together with ʿUbayd Allāh b. Qāsim, metropolitan of Toledo, in the meeting between al-Ḥakam II al-Mustansīr (350-366/961-976) and Ordoño IV which took place in Madīnat al-Zahrā' in the year 351/962. The same ʿUbayd Allāh b. Qāsim was also employed as a translator at the side of Aṣbagh b. Nābil and other Christians from Córdoba for embassies sent from the Christian North in the years 361/971 and 363/973. Until now, research into the authorship of the Arabic translation
of Orosius’ *Historiae* has largely focused on these three personages as authors or co-authors of the translation.

As we have stated, Levi Della Vida took a sceptical view of the information given by Ibn Juljul regarding the arrival of the original text by Orosius, and believed that the translation was known to the Christians at Córdoba before the year 337. In his opinion, Qāsim b. Aṣbaqḥ could have participated in the Arabic translation of Orosius’ work. As regards his collaborator, the Italian researcher considered the possibility that it was the Christians’ judge Walid b. Khayzurān, contemporary of al-Ḥakam II. In conclusion, Levi Della Vida suggested that the translation was carried out by Qāsim b. Aṣbaqḥ and Walid b. Khayzurān for al-Ḥakam, who had been a disciple of Qāsim, before he succeeded his father ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III as caliph.

L. Molina also asserts that the original must have been translated before al-Ḥakam’s ascension to the throne in 350/961, and rejects the date assigned to the arrival of the original Latin by Ibn Juljul. The argument appears convincing: Ahmad al-Rāzī (d. 344/955), disciple of Qāsim b. Aṣbaqḥ, apparently made use of the Arabic translation of Orosius’ text to write his lost historical work. The translation must obviously have been made several years before 344/955, and several years before 337, if we accept the collaboration of Qāsim b. Aṣbaqḥ, whose intellectual capacity became impaired in that year.

Other researchers, such as van Koningsveld and 'U. Kuḥayla, believe that the translation was made after al-Ḥakam had succeeded as caliph. They therefore reject the possibility that Qāsim b. Aṣbaqḥ participated in the translation. Both scholars suggest the other qādī l-naṣārā mentioned by Ibn Ḥayyān, Aṣbaqḥ b. Nabil, as a possible translator. According to Kuḥayla, the translators were not one Christian and one Muslim, nor two Muslims, but one Christian with sufficient knowledge of Arabic to translate into this language a Latin book. Kuḥayla believes that the name Qāsim b. Aṣbaqḥ is the result of an error on the part of Ibn Khaldūn, who mixed the names Aṣbaqḥ b. Nabil and 'Ubayd Allāh b. Qāsim, confusing them with the celebrated Qāsim b. Aṣbaqḥ. The translation, according to Kuḥayla, was the work of one of the two or of both.

As I have already stated, in my opinion at least one of the translators was a Christian. It is possible that the other was Qāsim b. Aṣbaqḥ, whose task was perhaps to revise the Arabic text. With regard to the Mozarab translator, the qādī l-naṣārā mentioned by Ibn Khaldūn, there is evidence in al-Bakri’s
work *Kitāb al-Masālik wa-l-mamlāk* which leads me to suggest that it was possibly ʿAbd b. Albar al-Qūṭī, largely known up till now for his translation into Arabic of David's Psalms. Ibn al-Qūṭīyya\(^{29}\) (d. 367/977) mentions, among the descendants of Romulus, \(^{31}\) ʿAbd b. Albar “qādī l-ʿajam” (judge of the Christians). D. M. Dunlop\(^{32}\) has identified this personage with ʿAbd b. Albar al-Qūṭī, author of the Arabic translation of David's Psalms,\(^{33}\) a copy of which survives at the Ambrosian Library in Milan.\(^{34}\) The copy was made in 1625 by David Colville\(^{35}\) from a manuscript in El Escorial, possibly destroyed in the fire of 1671.\(^{36}\) As well as the Arabic translation of the Psalms, ʿAbd b. Albar wrote the introduction in *rajaz* (poetical) metre and the commentaries at the start of each psalm.\(^{37}\)

Regarding the question of the version of the Psalter on which his translation is based, the author states: “I translated what Jerome interpreted”.\(^{38}\) Although Jerome made three revisions of the Psalter, Jerome’s Biblical version *par excellence* is the Vulgate Bible, that is to say a Latin translation made from a Hebrew text.\(^{39}\) After comparing certain parts of the translation of the Psalms by ʿAbd with different versions of the Psalter, van Koningsveld\(^{40}\) arrived at the conclusion that the Milan translation is in fact based on a *Psalterium ex hebraico*. The Biblical interpolations of *Kitāb Hurūshiyūsh*, which in my view were taken directly from the Bible, also derive from a Vulgate.\(^{41}\)

As has been stated, Abū ʿUbayd al-Bakrī offers evidence which leads me to consider the possibility that this ʿAbd was the author or one of the authors of the Arabic translation of Orosius’ work. Among the writers cited by al-Bakrī in *Kitāb al-masālik wa-l-mamlāk* there is an individual named ʿAbd al-Qūṭī or simply al-Qūṭī, according to the graph of the manuscripts, and another named al-Qūṭī. A.P. van Leeuwen and A. Ferre\(^{42}\) maintain that the *nisba* (relationship) al-Qūṭī refers to the historian Orosius, since the passages whose explicit source is al-Qūṭī derive from the Arabic translation of Orosius’ work. With regard to ʿAbd al-Qūṭī, the scholars consider the possibility of his being Muhammad b. Kaʿb al-Quraṭī.\(^{43}\)

The passages attributed to al-Qūṭī do indeed derive from the translation, but so do the two attributed to ʿAbd al-Qūṭī, and al-Qūṭī, respectively. It is clear that al-Qūṭī is a scripitorial error of al-Qūṭī: wāw (w) has been confused with rāʾ (r) and tāʾ (t) has been turned into zāʾ (z). The first occasion on which al-Bakrī cites his source, he gives the *ism* (name) ʿAbd, and the *nisba*, al-Qūṭī (the Goth). On subsequent occasions, the *nisba*
THE ARABIC TRANSLATION OF OROSIUS' *HISTORIAE* suffices to identify the author of the source from which the corresponding information is taken.

All the passages in the work of al-Bakrī whose explicit source is (Ḥafṣ) al-Qūṭi/al-Q.r.zī derive from the Arabic translation of Orosius' *Historiae*. In spite of their brevity, it seems evident that the data attributed to Ḥafṣ al-Q.r.zī and al-Q.r.zī have been taken from this translation. The first passage (Passage A) refers to the age of Adam when he died.44

**Passage A**

*Kitāb Hurūshiyūsh*:

ثم عمر آدم حتى صار جميع عمره إلى أن مات تسعماثة سنة وثلاثين سنة
Then upon, Ādam lived to be nine hundred and thirty years of age.45

*Kitāb al-Masālik wa l-Mamālik*:

ويزعم أهل التوراة والإنجيل أن عمر آدم تسعماثة وثلاثون سنة، وذلك ذكر حفص الفرطني في تاريخه
People of the Torah and the Gospel say that Ādam lived nine hundred and thirty years. Ḥafṣ al-Q.r.zī (*sic*) mentions it in his history.46

The second passage (Passage B) refers to the time Noah took to build the Ark:

**Passage B**

*K. Hurūshiyūsh*:

فأنشأها في مائة سنة
And he built it in one hundred years.47

*Kitāb al-Masālik wa l-Mamālik*:

 وقال القرطبي في كتاب الدوائين إنه أنشأها في مائة سنة
And al-Q.r.zī says in the *Kitāb al-diwān* that he built it in 100 years.48
All the passages in al-Bakrī’s work attributed to al-Qūṭī may also be found in the Kitāb Hurūshiyūsh: David’s meeting with the Amalekite young who claimed responsibility for Saul’s assassination,

the construction of the Temple of Jerusalem beginning in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign and finishing in the eleventh; according to the Hurūshiyūsh, Solomon was eighteen when he ascended the throne, according to al-Bakrī, he was seventeen, and he ruled for forty years; Solomon’s just sentence on the case of the two women claiming the same baby; the plague which killed one hundred and eighty-five thousand soldiers in Sennacherib’s army; the number of soldiers in the first of the three battles between Alexander the Great and Darius, and Alexander’s sadness at the death of his adversary; Alexander the Great’s death by poisoning at the hands of his servants; the earthquake and eclipse which followed Jesus’ crucifixion. In all these cases, it is evident that the source of the fragment attributed by al-Bakrī to al-Qūṭī is the Arabic version of Orosius’ work.

In most cases, al-Bakrī uses the translation to add a single, complementary fact to the information from his principal source. Nevertheless, some passages taken explicitly from al-Qūṭī are rather more extensive, and we can appreciate better the similarity between them, although even in these cases al-Bakrī’s version is always shorter and more summarised than the version in the Hurūshiyūsh. An example is the passage (Passage C) describing David’s meeting with the young man who claimed to have assassinated Saul. It is evident that this passage derives from the translation, but al-Bakrī gives an abbreviated and quite free version of the text in the Arabic translation:

Passage C
K. Hurūshiyūsh:

من أخبار داود بعد موت طالوت أن رجلاً آتاه يخبر مقتل طالوت فقال: "إني وجدت طالوت جريحاً في هربته عن الفلسطينيين وسألني أن أجهز عليها ففعلت وأقبلت إليه بالراجح الذي كان على رأسه وبالسوار الذي كان على عراقه" وأعلمته فزعم بني إسرائيل وقتل بنطان بن تالوت فشاق ذلك على داود والرجال الذين كانوا معه وشاق كل واحد منهم طالوت وياكوا على طالوت وعلى بنطان وعلى بن تالوت وياكوا على إسرائيل وصاموا يومهم ذلك إلى الليل ثم سأل داوود الغلام الذي آتاه بالخبر فقال: "من أدت فئة" فقال: "أنا غريب من العمالقة فأمر به داود فقتل وقال: "دمك على رأسك إنك المقر بلسانك أنت مقتلت مقدس الله" وكان الغلام كاذباً وإذماً وجد طالوت مقتولاً.
Among the accounts concerning David after the death of Saul, it is told that a man informed David of Saul’s assassination. He told him: “I came upon Saul wounded, when he was fleeing from the Philistines. He begged me to kill him, and I did so. I have brought you the crown he was wearing on his head and the bracelet he wore on his arm.” Then he told David of the defeat of the Banū Isra’īl and of the death of Jonathan, Saul’s son. David was moved by this, as were the men in his company. They all tore their clothing, crying for Saul, Jonathan and the Banū Isra’īl, and they fasted all day until nightfall. Then David asked the young man who had brought him the news: “Who are your people?” He answered: “I am a foreigner, an Amalekite.” David ordered him to be killed and said: “Let your blood spill back upon your head. You have admitted killing the Lord’s Anointed.” The young man had lied, for when he met Saul, he had already been assassinated. 59

Kitāb al-Masālik wa l-Māmālik:

 قال القوطي: فأتي داود غلام حسن حين هزم الجيش من المسلمين الذين كانوا مع طالوت فقتل طالوت وآتي بسواريه وقال: وجدته جريحا فاغمه عليه لما علمت أنه عدوك وأتبت بسواريه لأحتفظك بذلك. فأمر داود بقتله وقال: قلت مقدمس الرم وآمر بني إسرائيل. وكان الغلام غريبًا من العماليق. 60

Al-Qūṭī says: A handsome young man presented himself to David when the army of the Muslims who were with Saul was defeated. He had assassinated Saul and had brought his bracelets. He said: “I came upon Saul wounded. On learning he was your enemy I fought against him. I have brought you his bracelets in the hope of gaining your favour.” David ordered him to be killed and said: “You have killed the Lord’s Anointed and the emir of the Banū Isra’īl.” The young man was a foreigner, one of the Amalekites. 61

In the following examples al-Bakrī is more faithful to the translation than in the passage above. Here we can appreciate the great similarity that exists between al-Bakrī’s text and that of the Kitāb Hurushiyīsh, although the version of the first is always a little shorter. The first passage concerns the sentence given by Solomon in the case of the two women claiming the same baby. 62
The first sentence he pronounced, for which the Banū Isrā'īl admired his wisdom, was in the case of the two women who came before him, both claiming to be the mother of a recently born baby. He sent for a sword and ordered (…) the baby and to divide him up between them. The woman who was not the mother agreed with that, while the mother refused and permitted (…) to the other, feeling compassion for her son. Solomon judged in favour of this woman. In this way, it was demonstrated that he was her child.

Kitāb al-Masālik wa l-Mamālik:

قال القروطي: أول حكم حكم به في الصبا في أمر الصبي الذي ادعاه المرأتين فدعا سيف و أمر بشق الصبي وقسمته عليهما، فرضيت بذلك التي لم يكن لها وقالت أمه: بل تعطيه الأخرى حيا فحكم به لها وعبح بنو إسرائيل من حكمه وفهمه.

Al-Qūṭi says: The first sentence he pronounced in his youth was in the case of the baby claimed by two women. He sent for a sword and ordered the baby to be cut in two and divided between them. The woman who was not the mother agreed with that, while the mother said: It is better to let her have him alive. He judged in her favour. The Banū Isrā'īl admired his wisdom and intelligence.

If in this fragment the relation is clear between the narrative attributed by al-Bakrī to al-Qūṭi and the account in the Kitāb Hurushiyūş, the evidence is even greater in the following passage in which, after a verse taken from Orosius’ work, the author of the Arabic translation continues the poem:
When the Jews committed their act of impiety against the Messiah, that same day there was all over the world a great noise and an earthquake, and as a result the mountains began to crack open and the rocks fell away from them, and most of the cities were destroyed. It was extraordinary, unlike anything the people had known up till then. That day there was an eclipse of the sun from the sixth hour until the end of the day, which meant that the rest of the day turned into night. The Roman poet Markush, who was a pagan, wrote about that:

"When people saw the eclipse, which altered the course [of the sun], they thought it an eternal night, "the whole world was frightened by it, and thought it would be everlasting"."66

Kitāb al-Masālik wa l-Mamālik:

Al-Qūf and others say: when the business of the Messiah occurred, there was a great earthquake that affected the whole world, East and West. As a result the mountains were destroyed and the rocks fell away, and the cities fell to the ground. Testimony and proof of which are the areas that were exempted from paying the territorial taxes for being in ruins. This is recorded in the archives. That day there was an eclipse of the sun from...
the sixth hour to the end of the day, which meant that that day turned into night. The poet of the yunāniyyin said about that, which we have translated into Arabic:

“The whole world was frightened by it, and thought that it was a night that would be everlasting.

When people saw the eclipse, which altered the course [of the sun], they believed it was an eternal night”.

It seems evident that the source of all the passages attributed explicitly to al-Qūṭi in the Kitāb al-Masālik wa-l-mamālik was the Arabic translation of Orosius’ work, although the versions given by al-Bakrī are quite free and summarized compared with the accounts in the Kitāb Hurūshiyūsh. The fact that the first time al-Bakrī mentions his source he gives the ism, Ḥafṣ, as well as the nisba enables us to identify this al-Qūṭi, almost without doubt, as Ḥafṣ b. Albar al-Qūṭi. His name perhaps appeared in the colophon and/or in the prologue of the translation as author of the work. Unfortunately the beginning and the end of the manuscript are missing. If Ibn Khaldūn’s information regarding the authorship of the translation is true, this qādī l-naṣārā worked alongside Qāsim b. Aṣbagh. But, when did Ḥafṣ al-Qūṭi live? Was he a contemporary of Qāsim, so that the collaboration of both on the translation is a possibility?

We scarcely know anything of the life and the character of Ḥafṣ. As noted earlier, Ibn al-Qūṭiyyya states that he was a descendant of Witiza and that he held the post of judge of the Christians. The imām al-Qurtubi (d. 671/1273) mentions him on various occasions in his work on antichristian polemics al-I’lām bi-mā fi dīn al-naṣārā min al-fasād. Al-Qurtubi includes quotations from one of Ḥafṣ b. Albar’s books, with an aim of rejecting their statements on Christian faith, but he says hardly anything about the author. Al-Qurtubi says that he was a priest, mentions his work as a translator and praises his intelligence and good judgement, although when he spoke of the Christian laws and sciences, “his tongue became twisted and he was no longer clear, because he based his pronouncements on the false opinions of the Christians and on their foolish judgements”.

The introductory urjūza (poem in the rajaz metre) of Ḥafṣ’ Arabic translation of the Psalter includes a datum that may help us to determine approximately the years in which he lived. In verse 128 of the urjūza mention is made of the year in which the translation of the Psalms was finished, but the year is given according to the abjad (alphabetical) system,
in which a number corresponds to each letter of the Arabic alphabet. Initially, Dunlop interpreted the date as 989\textsuperscript{76} following the Oriental abjad system. Later he conceded that the system could be the Maghribi (Western) abjad, and not the Oriental, in which case the date would read 889.\textsuperscript{77} If this last interpretation is correct, al-Bar, Ḥaš’s father, as Dunlop\textsuperscript{78} suggested, could be the famous Alvarus of Córdoba, who died in 861.

Van Koningsveld\textsuperscript{79} believes that the father of Ḥaš was indeed Alvarus. This is based on a reference to his Gothic descent which is found in a letter written by Alvarus, and also on the form of address used by the people with whom he corresponded,\textsuperscript{80} which suggests that he is a descendant of a family of the Visigothic nobility. Nevertheless, the question is not entirely clear. Alvarus does indeed claim on one occasion to belong to the Gothic race,\textsuperscript{81} but on another he makes clear reference to his Jewish descent.\textsuperscript{82} Confirmation of the father/son relationship between Alvarus and Ḥaš would resolve the chronological problem. Nevertheless, for the moment we lack solid facts that would enable us categorically to reject or accept this hypothesis.

However, there exists a further fact which seems to suggest that the translation of the Psalms was concluded in the year 889 and not in 989. In the introductory urjūza, Ḥaš mentions a bishop called Bālans, with whose permission the translation was made.\textsuperscript{83} This Bālans has been identified as the bishop Valentius, who was ordained Bishop of Córdoba in 862 and deposed two years later.\textsuperscript{84}

Let us suppose that the system used was indeed the Maghribi abjad. Ḥaš would have finished his translation of the Psalms in the year 889, when Qāsim b. Aṣbagh, who was born in 244/858-9, was in his early thirties. That is to say, Ḥaš and Qāsim would have been contemporaries, and it is therefore possible that both collaborated on the Arabic translation of Orosius’ Historiae. This would allow us to conjecture that the translation was made between the end of the third/ninth century and the beginning of the fourth/tenth century. If, as Ibn Khaldūn says, the translation was made for al-Ḥakam—who was forty-six when he ascended the throne in 350/961—it would have had to be some years after the Umayyad’s birth, that is to say at the early years of the second quarter of the tenth century.

The attribution to (Ḥaš al-Quṭṭ) al-Qūṭī of those passages in the Kitāb al-Masālik wa-l-mamālīk by al-Bakrī whose source is, as all the facts suggest, the Arabic translation of Orosius’ work, leads me to put forward the possibility
that Ḥafṣ al-Qūṭi was the author, or one of the authors, of this translation. If such an attribution is correct, the identification of this Ḥafṣ al-Qūṭi with Ḥafṣ b. Albar al-Qūṭi does not seem to pose any great problem. Leaving aside the account by Ibn Juljul which, as I have said, does not seem probable, the facts given by Arabic sources concerning Ḥafṣ b. Albar al-Qūṭi on the one hand, and the translator of Orosius’ work on the other, are not contradictory; indeed they are perfectly compatible. By way of recapitulation, let us consider the most significant data:

- According to Ibn Khaldūn, one of the translators of Orosius’ work was “qādi l-naṣārā” (judge of the Christians), whose name he does not mention. Ibn al-Qūṭiyya states that Ḥafṣ b. Albar was “qādi l-ajam” (judge of the Christians).

- Ḥafṣ b. Albar al-Qūṭi had already translated the Psalms of David into Arabic. His work as a translator of Biblical texts is also mentioned, alongside that of “Yarmūn” (Jerome), in al-Jā‘im by the imām al-Qūṭubī.

- According to Ibn Khaldūn, the other translator of Orosius’ work was Qāsim b. Ṭībghaṣ, who would have been a contemporary of Ḥafṣ b. Albar al-Qūṭi if, as all the facts seem to suggest, Ḥafṣ finished his translation of the Psalms in the year AD 889.

These coincidences support, or at least do not exclude, the possibility of the authorship of Ḥafṣ. Again, this possibility, however, one might argue that al-Bakrī is the only Arab author who mentions Ḥafṣ al-Qūṭi in connection with the translation. The authors Ibn Khaldūn and al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442), who, together with al-Bakrī, make the most extensive use of the translation -direct use, in my opinion-, cite their source explicitly as Ḥūṣayyiṣh or Kitāb Ḥūṣayyiṣh, or a similar form.

The fact that al-Bakrī is the only author who cites Ḥafṣ al-Qūṭi could have various explanations. We cannot discount the possibility that al-Bakrī, being familiar with the translation work of Ḥafṣ al-Qūṭi, erroneously attributed to this personage the Arabic translation from which he took various passages included in his Kitāb al-Masālik wa-l-ma‘ālīk.

However, there are other explanations that do not exclude the possibility of the authorship of Ḥafṣ. It is important to bear in mind that the version used by al-Bakrī is different from that used by Ibn Khaldūn and al-Maqrīzī. Their version is much more similar to the one conserved to this day -in my opinion it is very possibly the same. In this version, the source is always cited as Harūshiyūsh or Harūshiyush, while on the only occasion al-Bakrī gives the name of the author of the original Latin, the transliteration of the
name Orosius is closer to the original graph: in the conserved manuscripts it appears as Ushiyüşh (أورشيوش), apparently a scriptorial error for Urushiyüşh (أورشيوش), whereby /t/ is substituted for graphemic /w/, representing here phonetically /u/.

Supposing that the version used by Ibn Khaldūn and al-Maqrizi contained the name of Ḥafṣ as translator, it would only appear on one or perhaps two occasions, in the prologue and/or in the colophon of the work, neither of which, as I have said, have survived to us. On the other hand, we do not know if the copy used by al-Bakri --possibly the original-- included other data which would have permitted him to establish a connection between Ḥafṣ and the Arabic translation. Or perhaps, for some unknown reason, al-Bakri wished to exaggerate the part played by this personage in the composition of the work which he used as a source: not confining him, as we have seen, to the role of mere translator, but directly attributing to him, instead of to Orosius, the original authorship of the passages included in the Kitāb al-Masālik.

In the absence of further data we are unable either to accept unreservedly or completely reject the hypothesis that Ḥafṣ b. Albar al-Qūṭi participated in the Arabic translation of Orosius’ historical work. One indisputable fact, however, is that al-Bakri attributes to Ḥafṣ al-Qūṭi passages which, with almost total certainty, derive from the Arabic translation. If the attribution of these passages to Ḥafṣ al-Qūṭi is correct, and if the identification of this Ḥafṣ al-Qūṭi with Ḥafṣ b. Albar al-Qūṭi is likewise valid, a problem which has recently interested many researchers will have been resolved.

On the other hand, the proven falsehood of the attribution would raise new and interesting questions: if the “error” of al-Bakri was conscious, what motive did he have to attribute the work to Ḥafṣ al-Qūṭi? And if he was unaware of the mistake, was it owing simply to his familiarity with the translation work of Ḥafṣ al-Qūṭi? or, could it be that, although he did not collaborate directly on the translation, Ḥafṣ did indeed have some relation with it?
NOTES

1 I would like to thank M.L. Ávila, Ch. Burnett, M. Fierro and L. Molina for their useful suggestions.

2 This review was published in Journal of the American Oriental Society, 59 (1939): 121-126 (see p. 125). In actual fact, Levi Della Vida was not the first person to recognize that the manuscript in Columbia University was the Arabic translation of Orosius' work, but I. Kratchkovsky (in this regard, see N. Martinovitch, “Arabic, Persian and Turkish Manuscripts in the Columbia University Library”, Journal of the American Oriental Society, 49 [1929]: pp. 224-225; and Martinovitch, “Crusius or Orosius”, Journal of the American Oriental Society, 51 [1931]: 171-172). Nevertheless, Levi Della Vida was the first researcher to devote an in-depth study to the translation, considering its contents, characteristics and particularly, its sources (“La traduzione araba delle Storie de Orosio”, Al-Andalus, 19 [1954]: 257-293; reproduced in Note di Storia Letteraria Arabo-Ispanica, ed. M. Nallino [Rome, 1971], pp. 79-107).

3 Actually, the work is a translation of Orosius' work with numerous and extensive additions taken from various Latin sources.

4 The manuscript is at The Rare Book and Manuscript Library of Columbia University, New York, no. X893.712H. An edition exists by A.R. Badawi, entitled Ta'rikh al-‘alam (Beirut, 1982). This edition is not faithful to the manuscript. For instance, Badawi completes extensive gaps in the manuscript, himself translating the work of Orosius, and gives a transliteration of the proper names in line with the Latin original text, leaving the true reading of the manuscript to the critical apparatus. It seems that Badawi intended to emend the Arabic text so that his version should approximate as closely as possible to the Latin text. I have prepared a new edition, which constitutes an essential part of my doctoral thesis La traducción árabe de las Historias de Orosio. Edición y estudio (Autónoma University of Madrid, June 23, 1998). I hope that this work will be published shortly. In the present article, reference to the folios of the Columbia manuscript is made according to their present-day numeration. Page numbers of Badawi's edition are also given.

5 Nevertheless, the initial hāʾ (h) is not vocalized with damma (a) but with fatha (a); therefore the correct transliteration should be Harūshīyūsh.

6 The edition and Spanish translation of this work by I. Garijo (Ibn Juljul, Libro de la explicación de los nombres de los medicamentos simples tomados del libro de Dioscorides [Córdoba, 1992]) is based on A. Dietrich's edition of an anonymous commentary on the first four books of Dioscorides which includes quotations from Ibn Juljul (Dioscurides triumphans [Göttingen, 1988]), and on MS. CCXXXIII in the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid, which conserves part of Book III of the Taṣfūr, Book IV.
and part of Book V (F. Guillén Robles, Catálogo de los manuscritos árabes existentes en la Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, [Madrid, 1889], MS. CCXXXIII, p. 105). Garijo’s edition includes an account of the arrival of Dioscorides’ book and Orosius’ work in al-Andalus recorded by Ibn abi Usaybi‘a, who took it, in all probability, from the prologue to the Ta’fisr by Ibn Juljul (see Garijo’s introduction to his edition of the Ta’fisr, 26).

7 On the interchange of embassies and gifts between Córdoba and Byzantium, see for instance F.J. Martin Fernández, “Las relaciones diplomáticas y el derecho de embajada entre Córdoba y Bizancio (siglos IX-XI)”, Axerquia, 6 (1983): 87-97; M. Fierro, “Qāsim b. Aṣbag y la licitud de recibir regalos”, in Homenaje al Profesor José María Fórneas Besteiro (Granada, 1995), 977-981. On the caliph’s promotion of diplomatic relations with important local powers and the use of culture as a way of confirming his legitimacy and exhibiting his power, alongside other means such as military achievements, see J. Safran, “The Command of the Faithful in Al-Andalus: a Study in the Articulation of Caliphal Legitimacy”, International Journal of Middle East Studies, 30 (1998): 193.


10 Concerning the use of Yūsuf b. Kuriyūn’s work by Ibn Khaldūn, see W.J. Fischel, “Ibn Khaldūn and Josippon”, in Homenaje a Millas-Vallicrosa, volume I (Barcelona, 1954), 587-598.


18 MA YTE PENELAS


17 Orosius' historical work appears in a library catalogue conserved in the last folio (fol. 95) of the Codex Ovetensis (now at the library of El Escorial, R.II.18), which is believed to have been copied in a Mozarabic environment (catalogue in Ambrosio de Morales, Relacion del viaje que Ambrosio de Morales chronista de S. M. hizo por su mandado el año de M.D.LXXII. en Galicia y Asturias, pp. 94-95; also in Corpus Scriptorum Mozarabicorum, ed. J. Gil [Madrid, 1973], pp. 707-708). The Ovetensis is a miscellaneous codex, written between the seventh and the ninth centuries. Although the Codex was in Oviedo when Ambrosio de Morales was in this city (sixteenth century), it is thought to have been copied by the Mozarabs, probably in Córdoba. Concerning the Codex Ovetensis, see for instance, G. Antolin, “El Códice Ovetense de la Biblioteca del Escorial”, La Ciudad de Dios, 110 (1917): 59-67; M. Gómez Moreno, Iglesias mozárabes. Arte español de los siglos IX a XI (Madrid, 1919), p. 347, footnote 1; G. Menéndez Pidal, “Mozárabes y asturianos en la cultura de la Alta Edad Media, en relación especial con la historia de los conocimientos geográficos”, Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia, 134 (1954): pp. 156-165 and passim; M. Díaz y Díaz, “La circulación des manuscrits dans la Péninsule Ibérique du VIII° au XI° siècle”, Cahiers de Civilisation Médiéval (1969): pp. 226-227; M. Díaz y Díaz, “El Códice Ovetense del Escorial”, in Códices visigóticos en la monarquía leonesa (Madrid, 1983), 17-53.

18 “La traduzione araba delle Storie di Orosio”, in Note di Storia Letteraria Arabo-Ispanica, p. 82.


24 “La traduzione araba delle Storie de Orosio”, in Note di Storia Letteraria Arabo-Ispanica, pp. 82-84.


29 “Kitāb al-Tawārīkh li-Bawlus Urūsiyūs”, p. 136. See also by Kuḥayla himself, Taʿrīkh al-naṣārā'ī fī l-Andalus, p. 126.

“R.m.luh” seems to be a corrupt form of Aquila, one of the sons of Witiza (cf. Simonet, Historia de los mozárabes de España, p. 12, footnote 6).


On this person, see Dunlop, “David Colville, a Successor of Michael Scot”, Bulletin of Hispanic Studies, 28 (1951): 38-42.

This manuscript does not appear in the catalogue compiled by Casiri, Bibliotheca Arabico-Hispana Escorialensis (Madrid, 1760-1770). In the bilingual catalogue kept in the library of El Escorial (H.IV.10), attributed to Alonso del Castillo (sixteenth century) by Simonet (cf. Historia de los mozárabes de España, p. 724, footnote 2), there is an Arabic translation of the Psalms of David by Ḥafṣ al-Qurṭubi (cf. N. Morata, “Un catálogo de los fondos árabes primitivos de El Escorial”, Al-Andalus, 2 [1934]: num. 190, pp. 121 and 160; see also Simonet, Historia de los mozárabes de España, p. 770, footnote 2). Morata does not believe that the catalogue is by Alonso del Castillo but states that the author could be Diego de Urrea (cf. Morata, “Un catálogo de los fondos árabes primitivos de El Escorial”, pp. 101-102).

It would appear that Ḥafṣ was not the author of the prose introduction, which with slight variations is common to the translation of the Psalms in Milan and to those in the British Library (MS Add. 9060) and in the Vatican Library (MS. Ar. 3). Cf. Dunlop, “Ḥafṣ b. Albar - the last of the Goths?”, p. 138; van Koningsveld, The Latin-Arabic Glossary, p. 52b; M.-Th. Urvoy, Le Psautier Mozarabe, p. III.

Urjuza, verse 63 (translation by Dunlop, “Ḥafṣ b. Albar - the last of the Goths?”, p. 142; see also Le Psautier Mozarabe, ed. Urvoy, p. 17).

The other two revisions of the Old Latin texts made by Jerome are the Psalterium Romanum and the Psalterium Gallicanum. The first revision, made in Rome, was based on the Greek text of Septuagint. In Bethlehem Jerome made another revision, the Psalterium Gallicanum, based on Origen’s Hexapla. See T. Ayuso Marazuela, La Vetus Latina Hispana V. El Salterio (Madrid, 1962), pp. 37-39; B.I. Roberts, “The Old

40 P.Sj. van Koningsveld, “Psalm 150 of the Translation by Ḥāfṣ ibn Albar al-Qūṭī (fl. 889 A.D. [?]) in the Glossarium Latino-Arabicum of the Leyden University Library”, Bibliotheca Orientalis, XXIX, 5-6 (1972): pp. 279-280: Van Koningsveld compares Psalms 119, 120 and 150 of the translation of Ḥāfṣ with the versions in the Psalterium ex Hebraico, the Psalterium Romanum, the Psalterium Gallicanum and the Psalterium Visigothicum or Mozarabicorum (Psalter based on Vetus Latina Hispana used in the Hispanic Liturgy). The versions of Psalms 119 and 120 as provided by the three Hispanic-Arabic Psalters (that by Ḥāfṣ and the two in the Vatican Library and British Library) are compared by Van Koningsveld (The Latin-Arabic Glossary, 52-54) with the Psalterium ex Hebraico and the Psalterium Visigothicum. M.-Th. Urvoy believes that the version used by Ḥāfṣ was the Psalterium ex Hebraico, but points out that in some cases the Arabic translation is closer to the Psalterium Romanum. This fact leads her to conjecture that Ḥāfṣ made use of a Psalterium ex Hebraico corrupted with the text of the Psalterium Romanum or that Ḥāfṣ was himself influenced by another Arabic translation (cf. Le Psautier Mozarab, pp. V-VI).

41 The Kitāb Hurūshiyush also includes Biblical material taken not directly from the Bible, but from the Chronica Maiora by Isidorus of Seville (ed. Th. Mommsen in Chronica Minora II, M.G.H. Auct. Ant. XI [Berlin, 1892], pp. 424-481). In these cases, the Biblical data derive from Vetus Latina.


44 Genesis 5,5.

45 Hur. I, chap. 5, fol. 15r (Ta’rikh al-‘ālam, ed. Badawi, p. 82).


47 Hur. I, chap. 5, fol. 16r (Ta’rikh al-‘ālam, p. 85).


51 Hur. 1, chap. 10, fol. 35r (Ta‘rikh al-‘alam, p. 139); K. al-Masālik, §166, p. 132.

52 Hur. 1, chap. 10, fol. 35v (Ta‘rikh al-‘alam, p. 139); K. al-Masālik, §166, p. 132.

53 Hur. 1, chap. 10, fol. 42v (Ta‘rikh al-‘alam, p. 160); K. al-Masālik, §169, p. 133.

54 Hur. III, chap. 6, fols. 63r and 64r (Ta‘rikh al-‘alam, pp. 229 and 232); K. al-Masālik, §468, p. 299. In this passage, there is a significant discrepancy between the information provided by the Kitāb Hurūshiyūsh and that by al-Bakri on the number of soldiers comprising the armies of Alexander and Darius in the first battle. According to the Hurūshiyūsh (cf. Hur. III, chap. 6, fol. 63r [Ta‘rikh al-‘alam, p. 229]) Alexander’s army consisted of thirty-two thousand cavalry and sixty thousand infantry, while al-Bakri puts the figure at four thousand cavalry and thirty thousand infantry. Al-Bakri’s information is closer to that of the original text by Orosius (Historiae III, 16,3), according to which Alexander’s army was composed of thirty-two thousand infantry and four thousand five hundred cavalry. It seems reasonable to suppose that this discrepancy is owing to the fact that al-Bakri based his account on an earlier and better copy than the one which is kept in Columbia University of New York. The error in the Hurūshiyūsh possibly originated in the manuscript transmission, a抄写者 altering the order of the army divisions and substantially increasing the second figure.


56 Hur. VII, chap. 4, fol. 118v (Ta‘rikh al-‘alam, pp. 421-422); K. al-Masālik, §182, pp. 140-141.

57 As A. Ferre has observed, the passages attributed explicitly to al-Qūṭī are not the only ones whose source is the Arabic translation of Orosius’ Historiae (cf. “Les sources du Kitāb al-Masālik wa-l-Mamālīk d’Abû ‘Ubayd al-Bakrī”, IBLA, 158 [1986]: pp. 206-208).

58 2Samuel 1

59 Hur. I, chap. 10, fol. 34r.

60 So it appears in the edition. The evident anachronism seems to be owing to a mistaken reading of the Palestinian on the part of a copyist or of the author himself.


62 1Kings 3,16-28.
63 Hur. I, chap. 10, fol. 35v.

64 K. al-Masālik, §166, p. 132.

65 This first verse, whose source is Orosius' work (Historiae VII, 4,14), derives from Virgil's Georgics: "Impiaque aeternam timuerunt saecula noctem" (Georgics I, verse 468). With regard to the author of the other verses (in the Kitāb Hurūshiyūsh there are three more verses, that is to say five in all), Levi Della Vida ("La traduzione araba delle Storie de Orosio", in Note di Storia Letteraria Arabo-Ispanica, p. 94) suggested the possibility that it was the author of the Arabic translation himself.


68 Some intermediate folios are also missing from the manuscript in Columbia University, the only surviving copy of the Arabic translation of Orosius' work.

69 There are differences of opinion regarding the identity of this personage. C. Brockelmann (Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur, Suppl. I [Leiden, 1937], p. 737) includes al-‘lām among the works of Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Rahmān b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Qurtūbī (d. 671/1273), whose biography may be found in Ibn Farḥūn, al-Dībāj al-mudhayhab (ed. M.A. Abū l-Nūr, volume II [Cairo, 1972], num. 114, pp. 308-309. See also al-Maqṣūrī, Naḥṣ al-ṣīḥ, ed. I. ʿAbbās, volume II, pp. 210-212). M. Epalza ("Notes pour une histoire des polémiques anti-chrétiennes dans l'Occident musulman", Arabica, 18 [1971]: p. 104), believes that it is more likely to have been Abū Jaʿfar b. Naṣr al-Rawādī al-Qurtūbī, who wrote a work entitled Kitāb al-Amwāl in 677/1278. This work appears in the catalogue by Casiri (Bibliotheca Arabica-Hispana Escorialensis, volume I, p. 471, num. 1160).


71 Al-‘lām, p. 422.

72 Al-‘lām, p. 220.

73 Al-‘lām, pp. 422-423.

74 Cf. Le Psautier Mozarabe, p. 20; Dunlop, "Ḥafṣ b. Albar -the last of the Goths?", p. 145.

75 On this system, see G.S. Colin (updating O. Weil), "Abjad", in Ér, volume I, 97-98.
In Dunlop's words "there is no reason to suppose that it is subject [the date] to a deduction of thirty-eight years for the Spanish era" (cf. ibid.). It would seem that Dunlop overlooked the fact that in the previous verse the author himself makes clear that the year corresponds to the Christian era: "It was written in the era of Christ the Lord" (urjūza, verse 127 [translation by Dunlop, "I:Haš b. Albar -the last of the Goths?", p. 145]).


Van Koningsveld ("Christian Arabic Literature from Medieval Spain", p. 207) gives various examples. Juan de Sevilla, for example, addresses him as follows: "Inlustro, eximio celsoque Albaro" (cf. Epistle VI, in Corpus Scriptorum Muzarabicorum, ed. J. Gil, p. 197).

See Epistle XX, in Corpus Scriptorum Muzarabicorum, pp. 269-270.

See Epistle XVIII, in Corpus Scriptorum Muzarabicorum, p. 249, §5,18 and ff.


Cf. Simonet, Historia de los mozárabes de España, pp. 492 and 495.

Various passages of his book al-Mawā'iz wa-l-i'tibār bi-dhikr al-khiṭat wa-l-āthār, derive, apparently directly, from the Kitāb Hurūshiyiš. There is a great similarity between the passages of this work and the corresponding ones in the translation. See, for instance, the passage relating to the measurement of the world in the era of Julius Caesar (Hur. I, chap. 4, fols. 11v-12r; al-Khiṭat, ed. Cairo, 1907, volume I, p. 16), or the account of the war between the Egyptian king Vesozes and the Scythians (Hur. I, chap. 9, fol. 26r-26v; al-Khiṭat, volume I, p. 231).

Cf. Kitāb al-Masālik wa-l-mamālik, ed. van Leeuwen and Ferre, §1494, p. 893; Spanish translation by E. Vidal, Geografía de España (Kitāb al-Masālik wa-l-mamālik) (Saragossa, 1982), p. 19. This would not be the only occasion on which al-Bakri cites his source in this way if, as van Leeuwen and Ferre believe (cf. introduction to their edition of Kitāb al-Masālik wa-l-mamālik, p. 29), al-Ḥimyari also took from al-Bakri's work information relating to the size of the island of Sicily, although this information has been
lost in the remaining manuscripts of al-Bakri’s work. The explicit source of this passage
is Urushiyūs (cf. al-Ḥimyari, al-Rawḍ al-miṭār fi khabar al-aqtār, ed. I. ‘Abbās [Beirut,
1984, 2nd ed.], p. 367; see also, al-Bakri, Kitāb al-Masālik wa-l-mamālik, §812, p. 482).