

TO CREATE AN EMPIRE: *ADAB* AND THE INVENTION OF CASTILIAN CULTURE¹

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When considering the role of 'intermediaries', it is appropriate to begin with an excerpt from a rather classic example: the first edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Below is the entry for '*adab*', written by the great Orientalist Ignaz Goldziher. Although it is often rendered as 'belles-lettres', a term that is perhaps no longer as evocative of a cultural *gestalt* as it once was, the word '*adab*' notoriously, and appropriately, has no real translation. The following passage is taken from Goldziher's expressive definition of the word:

A term meaning, in both the heathen and the Islamic times, the noble and humane tendency of the character and its manifestation in the conduct of life and social intercourse . . . Parallel to this practical designation of this word there is also a metaphorical one: the knowledge that leads to an intellectual culture of a higher degree and enables a more refined social intercourse, especially the knowledge of Arabic philology, poetry and its explanation, and the ancient history of the Arabs. The latter application of the word *adab* arose from the influence of the cultural tendency, after the Persian model, towards a more refined tone and the growth of profane literature since the second and third centuries of the Hidjra . . . The different branches of *adab*, being profane belles-lettres, are strictly distinguished from '*ilm*', which sums up the religious sciences . . . Besides the real attainments sometimes also social qualities and skill in sport and in ingenious, mostly imported games, are included in the term *adab*. Persian influence on *adab* is reflected in the following maxim of the vizier al-Hasan b. Sahl:

'The arts (*al-adab*) belonging to fine culture are ten: Three Shahradjanic (playing lute, chess, and with the javelin), three Nushirwanic (medicine, mathematics and equestrian art), three Arabic (poetry, genealogy and knowledge of history;) but the tenth exceeds all: the knowledge of the stories which people put forward in their friendly gatherings'.²

Kalila wa Dimna, to begin where this essay shall end, is not only a collection of these stories that 'people put forward in their friendly gatherings' but is also a paradigmatic work in the tradition called *adab* in Arabic. It is, perhaps, the paradigmatic work. As is well-known, the *Kalila* also plays a pivotal role in the history of translations from Arabic into the vernacular of Castile. I propose that we conceptualize the Alfonsine cultural project as an instance of complex cultural

memory at work, as a latter-day version of the original Persian *adab* project. That Persian translation enterprise is far less familiar, particularly to non-specialists, than the Baghdad translation movement, but it played at least as vital a role in the creation of an imperial Arabic culture during what is termed its 'classical' period.

The whole of the Alfonsine era, including its texts and its ideologies, is best understood in terms of an Arabic tradition converted into a Castilian one. It must be considered in the broadest terms of its own early, somewhat specialized efforts as an intermediary between the older written Arabic tradition and the fledgling vernacular. This very broad, and ultimately not very original, conceit also requires that we have some sort of concept regarding the nature of Castilian culture in its first several centuries. What would have made such an intimate involvement with the Arabic cultural universe not only possible, but natural? Given that this essay explicitly intends to raise more questions than it pretends to answer, it is vital to address a possibly unsuspected entanglement: the relationship of the nascent Castilian ethos with the massively influential Latin translation projects which flourished during the long century after the conquest of Toledo in 1085. Today we might be tempted to call that period the precursor to the invention of Castilian as the new imperial culture, a replacement for both Rome and Cordoba in Iberia. In other words, this essay indulges in what R.W. Southern once wonderfully termed the 'portrait of a landscape'. I provide only a sketch, however, rather than a finished painting.

We have traditionally understood the Castilian translation movement as the logical, if not natural, consequence of the preceding Latin translation movement. The traditional conception of the turn to Castilian as the product of the methods used to produce Latin texts, which necessarily involved the use of the spoken vernacular among the teams of translators, is a model to which has been added both complexity and intentionalities. Nevertheless, we still tend to operate with the unspoken and seemingly obvious notion that the Castilian follows on and from the Latin, just as the vernacular itself replaces the classical in the broader linguistic panorama. Let us leave aside the matter of whether we can really believe that the vernacular-classical linguistic relationship is anything like a straightforward one, especially in this post-Roger Wright era.³ There is a certain benefit to be gained conceptually by understanding the relationship between the Latin and the

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¹ This paper is drawn from work currently being completed in collaboration with Jerrilynn Dodds and Abigail Krasner, to appear as a book with Yale University Press entitled, *Our of Arabic: Conversion, Translation, and Memory in the Invention of Castilian Culture, 1085-1369*. This paper has also been adapted from a plenary talk given at King's College London in March 2006 for the conference entitled, *Intermediaries: Translating Cultures in the Medieval and Early Modern Hispanic World*.

² *The Encyclopaedia of Islam. A Dictionary of the Geography, Ethnography and Biography of the Muhammadan Peoples*, Vol. I (A-D). Ed. M. Th. Houtsma, T. W. Arnold, R. Basset and R. Hartmann (Brill, 1913) p. 122.

³ Roger Wright's *Late Latin and Early Romance in Spain and Carolingian France* (F. Cairns, 1982) revolutionized the ways we think about the often amorphous relationship between what we call Latin, on the one hand, and Romance, on the other. For a long period these were not imagined by speakers (and readers) to be anything more than variants of the same language, the former the static written form, the latter the spoken version of the same language, with significant geographic variation in its pronunciation. It is only with the acute self-consciousness of local difference from 'universal' Latin, and the concomitant production of written texts (and writing systems) in the new vernaculars in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, that the Romance vernaculars can be said to crystallize as distinct new languages, although this is hundreds of years after distinct differences had arisen and developed among speakers. Wright has more recently published a collection of studies further developing these themes, *A Sociophilological Study of Late Latin* (Brepols, 2003).

Castilian translation movements as something other than linear. Although the parallelism is inexact, there are provocative resonances with the earlier Arabic pair: the ninth-century 'rivalry' between Baghdad's translations of the Greek philosophical corpus and the roughly simultaneous cultivation of *adab* in the far east of the Abbasid empire.

There are several ways to describe that relationship between the two earlier moments of cultural mediation that were so vital to the construction of an imperial Arabic culture. Broadly speaking, it could be described as 'classical' versus 'vernacular': the translation of the Greek canon in Baghdad versus the incorporation of a whole range of traditional or semi-popular materials about daily life and how it may be more finely lived, drawn from a range of disparate linguistic cultures from the eastern end of the Islamic empire. The dichotomy and its supplementary nature can also be understood, however, as that between scholarship, or the philosophical tradition with its natural ties to both the sciences and theology, and secular culture, including much of what we today would call literature. It is a very old truism that the Arabic translation movement conspicuously did not include literary texts. Any number of scholars has puzzled over why that might have been so, and Borges wrote a sublime story, *La Busca de Averroes*, which is in part a meditation on the analytical blind spots created by that presumed absence.

The more accurate truth, however, is a far more restricted and simple one: Greek literary texts were not translated in Baghdad. If there was one thing that did not need to be imported during that expansive moment in the formation of a 'big tent' civilization, it was certainly verse, the Arabic art form *par excellence*. But, as Goldziher's delightful definition of *adab* makes clear, prose texts of all sorts, those 'stories that people put forward in their friendly gatherings', were in fact absorbed into the Arabic canon. They lie at the very heart of the broad cultural movement that is *adab*, a culture very different from that of the precise scientific translations and scholarly commentary characteristic of Baghdad. *Adab* as a cultural practice revolved instead around the concepts of intermediaries and cultural adaptations. The Persians were intent on integrating themselves, along with their courtly refinements and their remarkable literature, much of which was already self-consciously translated from Indian traditions, to the nascent imperial culture of Islam. This mediation is not between two essentially alien cultures, of course, but is instead between already overlapping and entangled peoples. This kind of 'cultural traffic' marks moments of historical passages, when one empire aspires to replace another, in part through the naturalization of older communities, and of at least some parts of their cultures. In contradistinction to the powerful philosophical ethos of Baghdad's translation enterprise, the Persians brought vast quantities of narrative prose into the Arabic universe. These texts included both what we would call prose fiction as well as a variety of kindred works and 'genres' as seemingly diverse as history and hunting manuals.

Here I propose the first part of my argument stripped to its most formulaic, and perhaps its most simple-minded, Toledo's Latin translation movement of the twelfth century is the obvious heir, or second iteration, of Baghdad. It was an essentially scholarly endeavour intently focused on the intellectual traditions bound up with philosophy and with philosophy's relationship to theology. It

follows that the Alfonsine project, and thus the creation of Castilian, does not stand in a derivative relationship with respect to Toledo's Latin translation movement. It instead stands in a rivalrous and complementary relationship to it, much as *adab* did, and does, to philosophy, to both *falsifa* and *kalam*. Within this broad landscape, the Alfonsine project's transformation of Castilian into an imperial language is the culmination of the political aspirations of the Castilian monarchy. The kings of Castile, with the important and telling exception of Alfonso VIII, had vigorously promoted Toledo along with its explicitly cosmopolitan culture as the seat of their expansive dominion. It was their 'cabeça del reinado', to use the language of the *Alexandre* poet, and reading Julian Weiss has made me realize that, of course, the competing empires in Alexander's universe are the Greek and the Persian.⁴

The conversion of the local vernacular into the vehicle of a cosmopolitan culture, rather than either a merely local or scholarly one, is thus a rather explicit recapitulation of the conversion enterprise of the Arabo-Persian *adab* tradition whose pivotal and iconic text was, in fact, the *Kalila wa Dimna*. The scholar-king's personal and visionary efforts over little more than three decades focused on the creation of the many different individual components of 'a more refined social intercourse' and 'an intellectual culture of a higher degree', to reprise Goldziher's charming characterization. From prose narratives like his own *Kalila* to the legal system he had codified in the *Siete Partidas*, the kaleidoscopic variety of Alfonsine projects provides the foundations of such a cultural empire. Not incidentally, they all contribute to the minting of a language that can depict an entire universe of day to day human behaviours, foibles and transgressions, a universe of rich linguistic, descriptive and imaginative possibilities that would serve all subsequent prose so very well, not least of course the novel.

Seeing *adab* as the conjunction of these seemingly disparate parts, and understanding that it was a coherent and even obvious cultural category in the medieval Arabophone world, also allows us to appreciate more fully the extent to which Alfonso's project, indeed, the whole project of the invention of Castilian culture beginning in 1085, was always in fundamental tension and rivalry with the 'Latin' project. The 'Latin' project extended beyond the Latin translation movement itself, which was so intimately tied to the presence of Cluny throughout Castile and which brought so many international Latin scholars to Toledo, especially in the second half of the twelfth century. Other facets of the cultural dynamics of the period, from the architectural rivalry between the so-called *mudéjar* and the Gothic, to the struggles between the Castilian monarchy and the papacy over matters such as the continuing presence of Jews and Muslims in Castile, are part of a larger picture of intra-Christian struggle. That struggle was greater than mere local politics, and trumped the inter-religious struggles on a regular basis. We have moved beyond many of the old pieties that for so long cast

⁴ My thanks to Julian Weiss for sharing his chapter 'Dreaming of Empire' from his forthcoming book scheduled to appear in November, *Mester de clerecia: intellectuals and ideologies in thirteenth-century Castile* (Tamesis Books, 2006).

this cultural scene as little more than details in the history of the *Reconquista*, painting all Christians as 'Christians' and thus necessarily enemies of Islam and champions of the Church. A great deal of work remains to be done, however, to fully reimagine an alternative Castilian cultural panorama for the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, one that can comfortably represent this embryonic moment and its often counterintuitive temper, the tensions with other Christians, and the many aspects of Arabic culture converted into their own heritage.

Understandably, most scholars of the Latin translations and translators devote themselves to the daunting complexities of the intellectual and textual history at hand. By and large, they ignore the immediate Castilian context and do not take into account the 'local conditions', or what a Castrista is tempted to call 'la realidad histórica': Castilian culture at the time and place during which the Arabic library was translated into Latin. To some extent, this oversight can be attributed to disciplinary divisions since the scholars of the Latin translation movement are necessarily that rare and admirable breed of Arabists and classicists, rather than Romanists, Hispanists or 'Castilianists'. The lack of contextualization is also not unrelated, however, to a series of broader assumptions that seem questionable. There is the notion I began with, that the Castilian movement is essentially derivative of the Latin. There also exists the further assumption that, even though the Latins (scholars and clerics from throughout Christendom) were flocking to the Castilian capital of Toledo throughout the twelfth century, especially during its latter half, the culture of the Castilians is largely irrelevant since they were not the direct patrons of that earlier translation movement.⁵ Finally, there remains the assumption that it was, in any event, the other local communities – Jews, Mozarabs and Mudéjares – who played the roles of cultural intermediaries between the Islamo-Arabic universe and the Christian-Latin one, not just for scholars from Cluny or London but at times for the Castilians themselves. These premises are remnants of those earlier eras of scholarship that rarely saw this universe in anything other than polarized terms. These perspectives are thus in need of a little shaking up.

After all, evidence of various sorts – including much that remains standing and very visible in the buildings of Toledo – suggests that, in the first several centuries after the conquest of Toledo, Castilian culture readily shaped itself in the image of the flourishing and sophisticated Taifa. It became an avatar of sorts, both by preserving the libraries that were translated and by cultivating the social conditions that kept Arabic and Arabic-speakers in the mix. Vitally, for the translation movement in particular as well as for this medieval Christian culture more generally, the Castilians granted what was in effect *dhimmi* status to both Jews and Muslims. This was one practice among many, including considering rival Christian

⁵ There is of course a vast bibliography on the Latin translation movement, whose principal and prolific scholars are Marie-Therese d'Alverny and Charles Burnett. For some of the most recent scholarship in the field see the forthcoming Volume 33 of *Miscellanea Mediaevalia*, titled *Wissen über Grenzen: Arabisches Wissen und lateinisches Mittelalter* (Cologne, 2006) including a particularly thought-provoking essay by Dimitri Gutas entitled 'What Was There in Arabic for the Latins to Receive?'

kingdoms as legitimate enemies on par with any Muslim ones, which long puzzled and frustrated Rome. It remains an underappreciated irony that by the second half of the twelfth century, a period that encompasses both the height of the Latin translation movement and the lifetimes of the great philosophers Ibn Rushd and Ibn Maymun, the new 'cabeça de España', Toledo, was a remarkably cosmopolitan and even 'Andalusian' city.

With its populations of Muslims and Jews, as well as a still-vigorous community of Mozarabs (the Arabophone Christians who had lived within the Islamic polity for centuries), Toledo was far more polyglot and multi-religious than contemporary Almohad-controlled cities such as Cordoba and Seville, where increasingly fewer *dhimmi* remained. There is more than one irony involved in recognizing that when the Almohads began anti-Jewish campaigns, the Andalusian Jews by and large turned to the Christian kingdoms for refuge. They sought protection there, especially in the great metropolis of Toledo, despite a certain degree of contempt for the Christian kingdoms long held by the cultured Arabized Jews of Andalus. Thus, one of the notable professions of the Jewish community in Toledo, with its Castilian version of protection for the other Peoples of the Book, was within the translation industry. It began its true boom shortly afterwards, and not at all coincidentally.

This accommodation of *dhimmi* through that granting of second-class citizenship was only one of the features of Andalusian life that the Castilians attempted to reproduce, with greater or lesser success and with greater or lesser opposition from the Church. We need to remember, of course, that even a term such as 'the Church' must be used with care. Thanks to the astonishing scholarship of Peter Linehan, we now know that Cluniac Archbishops in many cases were really the king's men.⁶ In addition, the kings of Castile did not stand in support of Christianity in any abstract sense, let alone in opposition to a kind of abstract Islam, but were most of all the champions of their own dominion, with its distinctive and obviously hybrid culture. The primacy of cosmopolitan Toledo itself stood as the very heart and soul of their explicitly imperial polity. How can we not recognize that it was *this*, the social and intellectual ethos of post-1085 and Toledo-centric Castile, that made it possible for the Latin translation movement to flourish? How can we not acknowledge that this was based on a cultural symbiosis that grew, rather than retreated, when the Castilians encountered their first real Islamic metropolis? The cosmopolitanism – the successful imperialism – was in all sorts of ways derived from that Arabic culture that, as the Castilians understood, was *not* uniquely that of the Muslims.

Au contraire, from architectural to poetic styles, from foods both eaten and not eaten to formulaic greetings and notarial practices, the civilization of the dominant religious community was obviously also a communal and shared one. It was a 'big

⁶ Linehan's astonishing body of work in this area includes indispensable tomes such as *History and the historian of medieval Spain* (Oxford University Press, 1993) and *Spanish church and the Papacy in the thirteenth century* (Cambridge University Press, 1971). I am indebted to his work for many of these observations about the complex relations among the various Christian communities.

ment' that gave aesthetic shape and voice to the daily life and intellectual aspirations of various groups: the Jewish community; other local Christians, notably the Mozarabs who would be an ultimately doomed minority under the Castilians;⁷ and, after the Christian conquest, those other traditional 'intermediaries', the Muslims known as the 'Mudéjares', or those who 'remained behind'. Arguably, the most problematic analytical cultural concept in the study of medieval Spain is, in fact, *mudéjar*. This term began its life as a description of the religious community of Muslims who chose to remain in Christian territories, even when there were adjacent Islamic territories to which they might have migrated. Nevertheless, ever since Amador de los Ríos' seminal mid-19th century work, *mudéjar* is also widely used to describe an aesthetic style. In fact, it describes an entire range of aesthetic styles, not only in architecture but also in literature and the other arts. No matter how disparate they may be from each other, they are lumped together under this exoticizing rubric. *Mudéjar* is defined as 'the "Islamic" (or "Moorish") style when it is used by Christians or Jews', a definition that suggests natural ties between confession and aesthetics. At the same time, this definition obscures the extent to which the Castilians who converted Toledo into the heart and heartland of their own empire did so voluntarily. There is no question here of Mozarabic-like coerced submission, after all.

What also ends up falling between the cracks is the extent to which the real 'clash of civilizations' – the opposition or rivalry in styles and ideologies in which the Castilians were invested during both the twelfth and thirteenth centuries – was not between those abstractions of Christianity and Islam, but rather between the '*mudéjar*' as their distinctively native Christian style, with its numerous conversions and adaptations from the native Arabic, versus the foreign Christian styles from beyond the Pyrenees.⁸ It is crucial to note that this, by the way, is not necessarily nor exclusively a secular matter: *mudéjar* as a style flourished precisely in the church-building of Castilian Toledo. This is a city with dozens of churches built in a style that unabashedly embodies the extension of the aesthetics of that little mosque of Bab al-Mardun, hard by the city-gate, still celebrated as the one through which the conqueror Alfonso VI (and, in some versions of the legend, the

Cid, *al-Sayyid*, himself) entered into what was the Taifa of Tulaytula. In both serious scholarship and hackneyed tours, however, it is all too commonplace to hear virtually any aspect of the *mudéjar* style – from the brick-work of small neighborhood mosques to the kufic-covered robes of the wealthy, with song forms in between – attributed not to Castilian aspirations and desires, but rather to the presence of Muslim workmen. These explanations assume that the conquerors were the passive recipients of those products made for them by the natives or, perhaps worse, the callow collectors of mere trophies. All of these assumptions mask the complex imperial ambitions of the Castilians who might instead be seen as explicitly neo-Umayyad, in both senses of the word *neo*: they not only wanted to be more like the Umayyads culturally, but wanted to replace them politically as well. Without this attitude, and the cosmopolitanism of Toledo that followed, it is difficult to imagine a Latin translation movement at all.

The ascendancy of Castilian in the thirteenth century as the vehicle for a secular and belletristic culture able to give voice to the new Christian empire is thus purposefully distinct from the scholarly culture of Latin translation that had thrived in Toledo since the mid-twelfth century. We might understand it, instead, as the culmination of the cultural aspirations of Castilian kings living and governing as latter-day versions of Andalusian rulers. I would thus like to conclude by returning very briefly to the question of *adab*, and to the establishment of the first cornerstones of Alfonso's new venture in translation into the vernacular. This he did almost as soon as he arrived in Seville in 1248, with his father's victorious armies. During those heady first several years in Seville after the Castilians had triumphed over the Almohads, and before his father's death made him king in 1252, Alfonso tackled the translation of two texts. Both were iconic works of the Arabic *adab* tradition, and both eventually would become iconic in their Castilian versions as well. A long-admired treatise on falconry and other hunting practices, the Baghdadi *Kitāb al-yawarīh* became the first work of *adab* translated into Castilian under Alfonso's patronage.⁹ The *Libro de las animalias que caçan* deals with both the theory and practice of hunting with animals such as birds and dogs, and it has an even more rarefied reading public today than others from that collection of seemingly idiosyncratic books constituting this first library of Castilian prose. It is, however, almost perfectly paradigmatic of the whole project. The 'original' Arabic text comes from the very heart of the *adab* tradition, in which hunting manuals spoke to a significant aspect of the refined courtly life. These matters of both etiquette and skill extended as far back as the Umayyad hunting lodges in Syria, with later incorporations of the natural historical material

⁷ The fate of the Mozarabs illustrates some of the many ironies and cultural surprises in the history of medieval Spain: this Christian community that had survived for hundreds of years in al-Andalus was forced to abandon its beloved liturgy, as well as other distinctive cultural characteristics, once the *Reconquista* made them citizens of Christian, rather than Islamic, polities. See 'The Mozarabs' by H. D. Miller and Hanna E. Kassis in *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature. The Literature of al-Andalus*. Ed. Maria Rosa Menocal, Raymond P. Scheindlin and Michael Sells (Cambridge University Press, 2000), as well as the masterful *Religious Polemic and the Intellectual History of the Mozarabs, c. 1050-1200*, by Thomas Burman (Brill, 1994).

⁸ This point has been made by art historians such as J. D. Dodds [*inter alia*, "Hunting for Identity." *Imágenes y promotores en el arte medieval: Miscelánea en homenaje a Joaquín Yarza Luaces*. Ed. Moneo, Bertrán, Alsina and Camps. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2001: 89–100] and D. F. Ruggles [*inter alia*, 'Representation and Identity in Medieval Spain: Beatus Manuscripts and the Mudéjar Churches of Teruel'. *Languages of Power in Islamic Spain*. Ed. R. Brann. CDL Press, 1997: 77–106].

⁹ This book had not long before inspired the famous treatise on falconry, *De arte venandi cum avibus*, one of the masterpieces of the court of Alfonso's cousin, Frederick II. For more information on hunting literature, one can turn to the work of Dennis Seniff. He wrote about the subject in general for *Medieval Iberia: An Encyclopedia* (Ed. Michael Gerli, Routledge, 2003: 401–402) and has written more specifically, on Alfonso X's hunting treatise, in "'Munchos libros buenos': The New MSS of Alfonso XI's *Libro de la montería* and Moamyn/Alfonso X's *Libro de las animalias que caçan*' and 'Notes', *Studia Neophilologica*, 60 (1988): pp. 251–62 and 61 (1989): pp. 249–50.

that followed from Aristotelian-based scholarship. This pioneer Castilian text also speaks to the dramatically different concepts of translation that distinguish Castilian *adab* from the Latin philosophical and scientific *gestali*, as the Persian was distinguished from the Greek. The necessarily contingent nature of culture created attitudes about translation quite different from those of the philosophical and scientific traditions, which were so explicitly concerned with universality. *Adab* involves more practical rather than abstract truths, with many of its texts forming part of the 'wisdom' traditions. Thus these works are focused on providing always-translatable guidance, and general modes and attitudes about living. These are necessarily mutable narrations of civilized life.

Even more axiomatic than the *Animalias que caçan* was Alfonso's choice of the *Kalila wa Dimna* itself just one year later, which happened to be just one year before his father's death would leave him king. *Kalila wa Dimna* had a complicated and telling past life before becoming the foundational text of Castilian prose fiction. It had begun as something described as a Buddhist preaching or wisdom text, known as the *Panchatantra*, the first of whose five books involves the two jackals, Kalila and Dimna, whose names give later versions of the book its title. From the Sanskrit masterwork the volume moves into other manifestations: its Pahlavi avatar was converted by a young Islamic culture still inventing itself, and the eighth-century Arabic version tellingly involves a prefatory narrative accounting for the migration of the text from India to Persia. The pivotal translator of that Arabic *Kalila Wa Dimna* was the great architect of *adab* in its most expansive and literary chapter: the writer Ibn al-Muqāffa' was a convert to Islam, an Iranian who, in turn, devoted his career to the conversion of the cultural heritage of his native Persia into the language of the conquering empire. A man for whom the differences between originals and translations famously seemed fatuous, Ibn al-Muqāffa' belongs to a whole coterie of non-Arabs who were fundamental to *adab* and who thus became major figures in the Arabic literary tradition.

Kalila wa Dimna for Castilian culture as well as for Arabic, is deeply entangled with gnomic and other traditions that are aphoristic rather than narrative, and yet in both cases it is an expansive vehicle in that search for 'the knowledge that leads to an intellectual culture of a higher degree' (to turn once again to Goldziher's felicitous formulation) which, in turn, is the bedrock of that secular cultural identity that we call 'literature'. Antonio Nebrija would one day, in his 1492 dedication of the *Gramática* to Isabel, justly identify Alfonso as his predecessor, noting that 'siempre la lengua fue compañera del imperio'.¹⁰ Perhaps to this recognition we can also add a more thorough appreciation of the deep cultural memory at work here, and its painful irony in 1492: the extent to which Alfonso's concept of the cultural empire as the necessary handmaiden of a political one derives organically from the *adab* of the Arabic cultural empire he dreamt Castile could succeed.

¹⁰ Nebrija, Antonio de. *Gramática de la lengua castellana* (1492) Ed. Antonio Quilis. (Editorial Centro de Estudios Ramón Areces, 1989) p. 109.