

Catalonia's Islamic Past: History, Language and Culture

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The Bayt al-Thaqafa association, based in Barcelona, wished to commemorate the Islamic past of the lands we now call Catalonia with a series of events. With this in mind, it organised the 1st Gatzara Conference, which was not held due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The objective was to raise greater awareness of the Arab world through a deeper understanding of the history that links Catalonia with Islam, which started from the invasion by the Arab and Berber ethnic groups in the Iberian Peninsula and resulted in the territory of al-Andalus, which lasted from the 8th to the 12th centuries. This invasion, which was peaceful and involved the settlement of both ethnic groups in today's Catalonia, gave rise to a series of influences of Islamic culture. Of all of them, those that have persisted clearly until today are the Arabisms, which form part of the lexicon and onomastics of peninsular languages.

As is known, between the years 610 and 632 a new way of understanding and serving God that constituted the monotheistic religion known as Islam was preached in the Arabian Peninsula.¹ Its followers immediately began a territorial expansion and created an empire that extended from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic. As a continuation of the Islamic advance through North Africa, a series of Arab and Berber contingents crossed the Strait of Gibraltar and penetrated the Iberian Peninsula in an organised way from the year 711.

Islam's relationship with Catalonia and, therefore, Spain and Europe, has had different and varying degrees, but, above all, it must be made very clear from the outset that part of what was and is Europe belonged to the world of Islam. In other words, people were born and

lived in the territories of the Iberian Peninsula, the Balearic Islands and Sicily – currently considered Western – that helped expand Islam in all fields of human activity, such as politics, science and the arts. These people were and must be considered as Muslim as any Arab, Berber, Sub-Saharan, Persian, Turk, Central Asian or Oriental could be at that time.

The terms *Islam* and *Catalonia* cannot always be considered together because they are two entities with their own, different, opposite and differentiated life: the territories we call Catalonia today were part of Islam. In other words, we Catalans, before being Catalans, were Muslims.

With the settlement of Muslims in Hispania, the Visigoth dominion became an Islamic dominion. This political change must be under-

1. This article is the opening speech of the 1st Gatzara Conference of the Fundació Bayt al-Thaqafa.

stood as a break with previous history because, thereafter, peninsular society was included in a new system of government that was ruled from Damascus and according to the guidelines of Islam. For this reason, the Hispanic territories – which we have agreed to describe as Western – experienced a strong Orientalisation. Similarly, the continuous influx of Islamised Berbers into the peninsula would gradually lead to a good deal of Africanisation.

I think it is worth repeating that the invading Muslims were the first to highlight this political rupture and they expressed it very clearly through a radical change of nomenclature: henceforth, the territory would be called al-Andalus and when Andalusians gradually dialectalised classical Arabic the tonic syllable moved to the end of the word. The term *Andalusian* must be applied to the areas of the ancient Gothic Hispania and Gaul while they were under the rule of the Muslims. The geographical extension of al-Andalus was, therefore, variable depending on the moment in time: Narbonne and its people, for example, were Andalusian until 759; Girona and its people, until 785; Barcelona and its people, until 801; Tortosa and its people, until 1148; Lleida and its people, until the year 1149. The last Andalusian redoubts in the lands that currently make up Catalonia were Siurana and the Prades mountains, incorporated into the House of Barcelona by Count Ramon Berenguer IV in 1153.

As much for the peninsula as a whole as for the lands that we now call Catalonia, I do not think that we can speak globally of conquest – or even of later Reconquista – because it was, fundamentally, an invasion, a successive takeover and a progressive settlement of Muslims in the territory. Within the current Catalan sphere there were only military clashes in Tarragona, Iluro (today's Mataró), Bétulo (now Badalona), Égara (Terrassa) and Empúries, although it is clear that they could also have been found in

other places not specified by the documentation; but the capitulation of cities as important as Barcelona and Girona is recorded.

The complex ethnic range that characterised Visigoth Hispanic society was thus increased with the establishment of a foreign population, mainly of Arab and Berber ethnic groups. The impact of the invasion caused the flight of the Hispanic population beyond the Pyrenees, but it is obvious that the number of those who chose (or, rather, those who were able to choose) exile was very low and closely related to their economic and/or geographical situation. We know about the cases of the bishops of Toledo and Tarragona, as well as the anonymous *Hispani*, who appear in the Frankish sources from the 8th century.

In the cities, those who made a pact with the newcomers, in addition to the authorities designated by them, remained. This urban depopulation is recorded in both the Arab and Latin chronicles

Some time ago Miquel Barceló pointed out that the Visigoth coins minted in the name of Achila and found in the towns of Roses, Castell Rosselló, Perpignan and Céret (along with Besalú) marked a clear path of withdrawal. He also noted the displacement of the Gothic Hispanic population from the city to the countryside and from the countryside to the mountain. In this situation, in the cities, those who made a pact with the newcomers, in addition to the authorities designated by them, remained. This urban depopulation is recorded in both the Arab and Latin chronicles, and both relate it to the entire peninsular geographical area.

However, this movement of people should not be understood in any way as a massive replacement of indigenous population by a foreign population. With the exception of casualties of wars and the number – inevitably small, as I said – of those who went into exile,

the continuity of most of the previous population – that is, of Hispanic Goths – within the new Andalusian state seems likely. By this I mean very expressly that one cannot believe that there was a substitution of the former population – Christian, Jewish or pagan – by a different one and of Muslim religion, just as so many texts wrongly suggest when they systematically call the inhabitants of al-Andalus *Arabs*. In this respect, it is wrong to speak, for example, of the Arab Balaguer or Tortosa, the Arab *suda* of Lleida or the Arab army of Almanzor that destroyed Barcelona in 985. In all these cases, the proper term is Andalusian.

The rapid political and social triumph of Islam and the progressive cultural and religious change of the indigenous population can only be understood if the free acceptance of the new belief is taken into account

I believe it is necessary to stress that not only was there no mass substitution of people but that the number of newcomers was relatively so small that the rapid political and social triumph of Islam and the progressive cultural and religious change of the indigenous population can only be understood if the free acceptance of the new belief is taken into account along with the consequent Islamisation and Arabisation of most of the Hispanic Goths of the time. I explain why next:

Despite the enormous difficulties involved in the attempt to count people in such a remote time, there is unanimity in considering that, in 711, Tariq ibn Ziyad crossed the Strait of Gibraltar with about twelve thousand men, apparently all Berbers. The following year, Musa did so with an army made up of a number of combatants, mostly Arabs, which ranged from twenty-two thousand to twenty-five thousand, depending on the source. Nor is the documentation unanimous in the number of Arabs that

Damascus sent to quell the Berber uprising that occurred in the years 739-740, but apparently it can be estimated at between about seven thousand and twelve thousand men, and it is obvious that another contingent, also of Arabs and more specifically Syrians, would accompany the last eastern Umayyad who fled the massacre that led to the change of government in the caliphate, which ended up in the hands of the Abbasid dynasty. It seems that in the year 755, Abd al-Rahman I disembarked in Almuñécar with a thousand followers, a figure that is reasonable to imagine would increase with the arrival of other Eastern pro-Umayyad individuals, dissatisfied with the new leaders of the newly-established Caliphate of Baghdad.

Considering the maximum amounts cited here and accepting the logical possibility of a flow of Berbers that would be settled in al-Andalus taking advantage of the existence of the same system of government on both sides of the Strait, we can assume the arrival of a maximum total of one hundred thousand people between 711 and 755. It is also important to recall, as Pedro Chalmeta warned, that little importance has been attached to the fact that some of the main Arab figures who came in the first wave returned to the East or to North Africa when Musa left al-Andalus in the year 714, on being called by Caliph al-Walid.

If we compare these figures with the estimates made on the Hispanic population at the time of the Islamic invasion (ranging between six and nine million people who very unequally occupied Hispanic soil), we will have to acknowledge the enormous disproportion between the number of new arrivals and the native population during the first years, *grosso modo*, of al-Andalus history.

At this point, it is worth taking into account two other considerations. In the first place, I must warn that, despite highlighting this ethnic disproportion and arguing for the continuity of the majority of the Hispanic population, I

still agree with the unorthodox contributions made by Pierre Guichard and, therefore, I do not at all support the conventional theses of others who argue that the small number of invaders would have been quickly assimilated by the large mass of indigenous population. This last group of historians – whose interpretation, as I say, I disagree with – argue that, despite the Islamic invasion, the essence of “Spanishness” would have been maintained.

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Secondly, I am considering only the population data related to the 1st century of Islamic dominion and I include in these one hundred years the continuous and aforementioned influx of Berbers (with more possibilities, for reasons of geographical proximity, of bringing the family). I only deal with this period because it is the one that coincides chronologically with the al-Andalus government in the area that would afterwards be called “Catalunya Vella” (Old Catalonia); and I do so because none of the other mass waves of African Muslims that took place from the late 11th century towards al-Andalus, with the exception of the Almoravids (1099-1153), could affect the ethnic composition of the inhabitants of the rest of today's Catalan territory.

As regards the religious change that took place in ancient Hispania, the curves of conversion to Islam created by Richard Bulliet in 1979 from the statistical analysis of 154 genealogies of Andalusian wise men (where the appearance of a non-Arabic name in the corresponding onomastic chains would indicate the father of the first convert) are not very representative or indeed completely unrepresentative. However,

we do have some elements that enable us to observe an early change of religion.

Thus, a fragment of the *Crónica del Moro Rasis* (10th century) makes the permanence of the local population in various castles in the territory of Lleida very clear when it says: “When the Moors entered Spain, the people who lived in these castles rendered allegiance to them and remained, offering no resistance.”

Similarly, the Andalusian al-Udhri (d. 1085) explains what happened in the town of Huesca when, after a siege of seven years, the native population turned to the invaders to request a peace pact. According to this historian, generally very well informed, “he who converted to Islam remained the owner of his person, his property and his privileges, but he who remained faithful to Christianity had to pay the poll tax.” Then he adds some essential information for the issue at hand, concluding that in his time – that is, in the 11th century – in Huesca there was no “pure Arab who was a descendant of Arabs of origin, with the exception of those who trace their lineage to those who then embraced Islam.”

The Cordoba-born polymath Ibn Hazm (994-1064) wrote that the Visigoth count who would be considered the eponym of the lineage that thereafter received the name of Banu Qasi “went to Syria, converted to Islam in the presence of [Caliph] al-Walid ibn Abd al-Malik and was attached to his *clientela*.” Ibn Hazm also referred to other families of Muladi (that is, Hispanics converted to Islam) who came to have a certain degree of power on the upper border: in addition to the aforementioned Banu Qasi, he mentions Banu Amrus and Banu Shabrit. Note that they all have family names that can be easily linked with Hispanic etymons; in the cases mentioned, with the anthroponyms Casius, Amorós and Saporitus, respectively.

Moreover, an anonymous Maghrebian author who wrote between 1344 and 1489 tells us that the inhabitants of Fraga “are Arabs of

established stock because Yemen tribes were established there at the start of the conquest and their descendants still live there.”

In this case, the Catalan place name Mas-salcoreig (in the current region of Segrià) and the Aragonese Mazalcoras (in the province of Zaragoza) seem to support this information, despite the fact that both names derive from a tribe in northern Arabia, the Quraysh, to which the Prophet belonged. However, the aforementioned Ibn Hazm does not mention any Arab or Berber lineage in the territory of today's Catalonia in his *Libro de la selecta colección de genealogías de los árabes*. Moreover, the analysis of this work shows very clearly that the Andalusian Arabs of origin – real or supposed, as we have said – were always a minority throughout the state. This same author quite categorically asserts that in the 10th century it was no longer possible to distinguish the Arab, Berber or indigenous origin of the Andalusian population. This statement constitutes clear evidence that a very intense standardisation process had occurred and to which, in my opinion, the progressive Islamisation of the Hispanics and the gradual Arabisation of their names of origin (that is, of their *nisbah*) must have contributed, as well as the Berber names for reasons of *clientela* (*wala*?) or for other diverse motives.

I am far from suggesting that the conversions to Islam were straightforward or classifying this religion as simple or easy, but it is obvious that the acceptance of the new faith by the Hispanic population was favoured by the flexibility of the Quran doctrine that, at that time, had not yet been corseted by the jurisprudence developed within the four legal schools, expanded between the 8th and 9th centuries, and which is still in force today among Sunnis.

On the other hand, it should be remembered that studies on the religious situation of the population of the Iberian Peninsula in the Visigoth period show that Christianity was only fully rooted in the metropolises and around the

great transport links. In addition, as the experts tell us, there were pockets of paganism in Hispania that Islam could not tolerate and which, by law, had to integrate through conversion.

With the successive Christian conquests and by virtue of the established pacts, the defeated Andalusians were able to remain under the new Christian dominion and retain their religion, institutions and own law with some limitations. Thereafter, these subdued Muslims appear in the contemporary documentation as Moors or Saracens, although historiography has given them the modern name Mudejar (a term derived from Andalusian Arabic and meaning tamed or subdued), and that of Moriscos after their generally forced baptism.

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Through the documentation that has survived, we know that in the towns the Mudejars had a year to leave their homes – later divided between victors and re-settlers – and move to a neighbourhood generally peripheral and separate, but it is obvious that those in the more southern territories had greater possibilities of emigrating to the still Andalusian zone, subject to, of course, first paying an exit tax. In this respect, although we know that after the Frankish conquest of Barcelona in the year 801 some Barcelona Muslims stayed and participated in riots against their correligionists, I believe that this cannot be understood as a general rule in the lands that constitute Catalonia today, where until the conquests of the mid-12th century it does not seem that one can speak of an Islamic remnant of any size without considering the captives and slaves settled in Catalan lands against their will.

Therefore, from the 12th century, the advance towards the south could not eject Muslims from the conquered territories because they were necessary to continue the economic activity of the places incorporated under Christian dominion. Mostly working in agriculture and livestock, most Mudejars subsisted on the banks of the rivers Ebre, Segre and Cinca, where there were also artisans and merchants. It is well known that both paid substantial special taxes.

Some aspects of Catalan Saracen *aljamas* or communities are still unknown to us and it is difficult to establish, for example, the percentages of population in relation to the Catalan total. With the current state of research, it seems that the Mudejars went from being 2% in the year 1496 to 1.5% or even less in 1610. Even so, in the current region of Ribera d'Ebre, for example, and according to Professor Pascual Ortega, more than 40% of the population was part of the Morisco minority. Due to this numerical diversity (and other differences that are not relevant), the researcher affirms, rightly, that "the question of the Catalan Moriscos cannot be posed in relation to almost isolated individuals in the midst of a multitude of Christians."

Over time, the Hispanic monarchy tried to homogenise all its subjects, while the Church was increasing its proselytism towards religious minorities considered dissident. Mass baptisms then began, first in the Crown of Castile (1501-1502), then in Navarra (1516) and, finally, in the Crown of Aragon, during the revolts of the Brotherhoods (1525-1526).

In terms of Catalan Mudejars, the baptism books of the Seu de Lleida record mass conversions in the year 1526 and in the decade between 1536 and 1546, but in the documentation from many towns on the banks of the Baix Ebre region, the descendants of Andalusians appear with Christian names from the early 16th century. The degree of assimilation of

these Moriscos was much greater than in the case of the Aragonese or Valencians and, on this, Professor Pau Ferrer Naranjo observed that, in the area of the Ebre, one of the reasons expulsion was avoided was precisely the existence of 59.3% of mixed marriages, with levels ranging between 19.4% of the population of Benissanet and 100% of that of Tivenys (towns, respectively, in the Ribera d'Ebre and Baix Ebre).

However, all over the peninsula, Christian mistrust of the low adherence to the new faith shown by the Moriscos crystallised in the General Edict of Expulsion, carried out between 1610 and 1614. It should be noted, however, that not all Catalan Moriscos were expelled. Some belonging to the Bishopric of Tortosa, thanks to a report by its bishop, Don Pedro Manrique, were able to stay through to a *licencia* granted to them for various reasons. Others very soon managed to return to their places of origin.

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In fact, and again according to Pascual Ortega, there is no solid indication of confrontations between old Christians and Catalan Moriscos and there is no indication of a difficult coexistence in this regard. Finally, and although experts cannot give even approximate figures, it is undeniable that the number of these "new Christian Moriscos" who continued to live in the so-called "Catalunya Nova" (New Catalonia) after the expulsion, gradually diminished and, sooner or later, abandoned the practice of Islam.

For all these reasons, I think it can be said that many of those who now reside in Catalonia have ancestors who, at some time, were

Muslims. This unquestionable reality does not mean, in any way, that all were necessarily of Arab or Berber ethnic groups but that many of them came from Hispanics who became Muslims during the al-Andalus period and remained faithful to Islam when the lands where they lived were under Christian dominion. The systematic destruction of their society and institutions, the attempt to get rid of the burdensome living conditions imposed on them by the dominant Christians, forced baptism or other reasons affecting privacy led them to their gradual disappearance as Islam believers.

Some Influences of the Islamic Past

From this point, I widen the territory covered so far because the cultural and, above all, linguistic influence of the Islamic past also embraces the field of the current regions of the south of France, today's Valencian Community and the Balearic Islands. Islamic rule in the Roussillon, Conflent and Vallespir regions and what we call "Catalunya Vella" lasted for only 100 years, but for four centuries in the so-called "Catalunya Nova" and five in today's Valencian Community and the Balearic Islands. When looking at its influences in these territories, it is also necessary to consider the time that the Islamic, that is, Mudejar, population remained there: five centuries in the Ebre and Segre basins, four more in the Kingdom of Valencia and, with a lower number of individuals, in the Balearic Islands. This presence lasted longer in the Morisco period until their expulsion in the early 17th century.

It is clear that these nine hundred years of contact between Islamic and Christian communities created influences of all kinds and such influences embrace the most diverse fields of society as a whole. In the field of clothing, for example, there is the series of Arabisms that derive from the Andalusian *aljúbba*/*aljuba*

(now obsolete) but that survive in the Catalan words *gipó*, *gipat*, *jupa*, *jupó* and *engiponar*; in the Spanish *chupa*, *jubón*, *jubetero*, *jubonero* or *jubetería*; in the Galician-Portuguese *gibao*, *jubao*, *aljubeta*, *algibeta*, *algibetaria* or *aljubeteiro*; and in the Aragonese *chipón*, *chubón* and *chibón* (in addition to *gippone* and *giubbone*, *gipon* and *jupon* and *jupe*, in Italian, Occitan and French, respectively).

We can also talk about gastronomy in a similar way, with the introduction of numerous products, above all vegetable, as shown by the many Arabisms, and the existence of new dishes, such as *turrón* (nougat) and *menjar blanc*, or the generalised use of spices as a condiment. In this respect, it is important to note that the use of most spices was being lost because this could be discovered by the Spanish Inquisition, and has only very recently been re-introduced. This can be seen by consulting the medieval recipe books, such as the *Llibre de Sent Soví* or the *Llibre del Coch*, which feature many spices both for savoury and sweet dishes.

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In other cases, the Arabism has changed its original meaning, as happens, for example, with the term *rabadán*/*rabadà* (shepherd), which comes from the Andalusian compound *rabb ad-dann*, meaning "owner of sheep" and came to designate a shepherd or young servant, similar to *zagal*/*sagal* (shepherd boy), evoking pastoral language.

In a theoretically Christian society as a whole, the establishment of the Spanish Inquisition meant that its suspects had to conceal their practices, so new Christians sought to eliminate any apparent Muslim influences. As a consequence of the action of the so-called Santo Tribunal,

there was a systematic attempt to ignore all traces of the Islamic and, of course, also Jewish past. A good example of this multi-religious world survives in the Spanish expression *hacer sábado*, in the Catalan *fer dissabte* and in the Galician-Portuguese *face-lo sábado*, meaning cleaning your home in depth on Saturday, which, obviously, could and can be done on any day of the week. Cleaning your home on Saturday, changing clothes on Sunday and washing and hanging them out on Monday was a way of proclaiming that the family observed Sunday as the Christian holy day and were, at least on this point, safe.

Elsewhere, but in the same sense, we know that in the universities, although the Hebrew chairs were retained for Bible studies, the Arabic language was forgotten. This was apparent when King Charles III wanted to re-establish Arabism studies and, to do so, had to turn to foreign scholars, in particular Maronite monks.

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So it is apparent that of all the influences of our Islamic past, only Arabisms have survived clearly to the present, which are part of the lexicon and onomastics of peninsular languages. It is obvious that the highest number of Arabisms entered them during the Mudejar period and those that alluded to things that became obsolete over time (clothing, cooking, different techniques, etc.), disappeared.

At first, Arabisms designated things hitherto unknown. This is the case of many agricultural products (*arroz/arròs* [rice]; *azafrán/safrà, açafrião, safrana* [saffron]) and pharmacological products (*azúcar/sucre, açúcar, açucre* [sugar]; *alcanfor/càmfora, cânfora* [camphor]); new techniques (*aceña/cénia* and *sínia, acenha, acea* [watermill]; *alquitrán/quitrà, alcatrán,*

alcatrão [tar]); different utensils (*jarra/gerra, xarra, xerra* [jug]); nautical names (*jabeque/xabec, xaveco* [xebec or zebec]); exotic animals (*gacela/gacela* [gazelle]; *papagayo/papagai, papagaio* [parrot]), etc.

There are Arabisms found in Spanish and Galician-Portuguese but not in Catalan (*acelga, acelca, azelga* [Swiss chard]; *aceite, aseite, azaita, azeite* [oil]; *albáitar, albeite, alveitar* [veterinary], the latter still used in the Basque language). But the reverse also happens, where Catalan has retained Arabisms that were used by Spanish or Galician-Portuguese speakers and have now fallen into disuse. This can be seen in Spanish terms such as *alhamel* (porter) or *alfóstigo* (pistachio), which correspond to *camàlic* and *festuc*, still used by Catalans. As a consequence of the shorter duration of the Islamic period in Catalonia, Catalan and Galician-Portuguese retain synonyms that come from Arabic and Latin, such as the Catalan words *tramús* and *lloví* (lupine) as against the Spanish *altramuz* and the Galician-Portuguese *tremoço; alfals* and *userda* (alfalfa) or *almàssera* and *trull* (oil mill).

The Catalan Arabisms that were not adopted by Spanish or Galician-Portuguese are more difficult to identify and this is the case of some highly characteristic Catalan verbs (*engiponar* [arrange quickly], *entabanan* [cajole], *nafrar* [wound], etc.) or of other common terms such as *caliu* [embers], *escalivada, enjaneta, galzerans* and *gallerans* [butcher's-broom] or *rajola* [tile] and Catalan expressions such as *a la babalà*, literally "in God's providence"; *en doina*, which means "from one side to the other" or "in disorganised movement" and *de gaidó* and *de gairell*, which mean crooked or inclined. One of the Catalan words whose Arabic origin has gone most unnoticed is the adjective *tafaner* and the verb *tafanejar*, equivalent to the Spanish *fisgón* and *fisgonear*, which means "poking your nose into other people's business." The origin of the Catalan terms *tafaner* and

tafanejar are found in the Arabic *tahuna*, from which come *tafona*, *atafona*, *tahona*, *tafona*, which mean mill. The Andalusian miller was the *tahhán*, a word transformed into *taffan*, origin of the current *tafaner*. The metonymy is easy to understand because *figgoneaban* (or *feien el tafaner*) means poked their nose in while milling the grain.

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In general, Spanish and Galician-Portuguese Arabisms are characterised by a more frequent inclusion of the Arabic article /al/ than those of Catalan. Thus it can be seen in the series *algodón/algodão*, *cotó* [cotton] or *algarroba/alfarroba*, *algarrofa*, *garrofa* [carob] or *algazara/gatzara* [racket]. In Catalan the loss of the final radical of the Arabic etymon is very frequent, above all in /n/, as in *mesquí* (mean), which returns in its derivatives (*mesquins* [mean in plural], *mesquinesa* [meanness]); but also happens, albeit less frequently, with other consonants, such as the /b/, as in *al'aqrab* > *alacrà* (scorpion), or /q/, in *alambîq* > *alambí* (still). Catalan often introduces a parasite /r/ in terms of Arabic origin (*sindiyyah* > *sínd[r]ia*, *sandía* [watermelon]; *alhabaqah* > *alfàb[r]ega* [basil]), and there is sometimes a change between the Arabic consonants /l/ and /r/, which pass into Catalan converted into /r/ and /l/, as can be seen in *gurfah* > *golfà* (attic) or *gandûr* > *gandul* (idler, slacker). The phenomenon, called *tafkhîm* in Arabic and that involves the tendency of the vowel /a/ to become an /o/ in velar or labial environments, is reflected, in its turn, in *xarâb* > *xarop* (syrup) or in *alqawwâdah* > *alcavota* (procuress). The same happens with Andalusian dialects, with the phenomenon called *imâlâh*, which consists of the spontaneous tendency to

change /a/ for /e/ and even /i/, as shown by the Catalan series *sâniyyah* > *sènia*, *sínia* (waterwheel); *sâqiyyah* > *sèquia* or *síquia* (irrigation ditch) or *satl* > *setrill*, *sitrell* (cruet).

Finally, and given the continued loss of Arabisms in all peninsular languages, it should be noted that, while Spanish and Galician-Portuguese lost terms some time ago like *chafariz* and its variants *jaraíz*, *zafareche*, *zafariche* and *xafariz*, Catalan still has *safareig* as a container with water for washing or as a room with a *safareig* or a washing machine. However, the profusion of small dwellings is leading to the disappearance of the term, which now only remains to denote the activity of “gossiping” by people using the old public places for washing clothes; in other words, as a synonym of *tafaneig*. So Catalan toponymy also reflects, and very clearly, its Islamic past.

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