

Constellations, plants and Arab poetry in a Medieval Berber text

Vermondo Brugnatelli

This paper discusses one paragraph of the *Kitāb al-Barbariyya*, a medieval Berber commentary on Abū Ḡānim's *Mudawwana*. The brief note examined is a comment on the answer to a legal question, which mentions the ancient Berber names of a constellation and of a plant, quoting two lines of Arabic poetry. The passage occupies seven lines (f. 126b, ll. 8-14) of the manuscript MS.ARA 1936 found at the Bibliothèque universitaire des langues et civilisations (BULAC) of Paris. The Berber words retrieved from this text are *Amanar*, the name of the constellation of Orion, and *tabduyt*, the name of the cotton plant. Moreover, in this ancient text, the word (*a*)*kermus*, which in the contemporary Berber languages applies to some specific plants (figs, prickly pears, dates), and which, in this case, seems to mean simply 'fruit', which supports a possible etymology from the Greek *karpós*. A list of Arab authors quoted within the *Kitāb al-Barbariyya* is added at the end of the paper.

Keywords: Berber languages; Berber manuscripts; Ibadism; Arab poetry; Berber lexicon.

1. Introduction

The learned Abū Ḡānim Bišr b. Ḡānim al-Ḥurāsānī (2nd/3rd century h.=8th/9th CE) is considered a fundamental point of reference within the Ibāḍī community, above all for his role as a collector of traditions from the earliest members of the movement. Through his vast "*Compendium*" of jurisprudence (*Mudawwana*), he handed on a mass of legal opinions on every aspect of the life of believers.

In the chapter on repudiation (*ṭalāq*), some paragraphs tackle the question of the number of times the formula "I repudiate you" must be pronounced for a divorce to be valid. As is known, the canonical number is three. The *Compendium* deals with a fairly rich series of case studies, one of which is the specific case of a husband who, instead of explicitly using the numeral "three," makes reference to

different expressions, for example “a number equal to that of the stars.” Here is the relevant passage, according to the 2007 printed version:¹

قلت: فرجل قال لامرأته: أنت طالق عدد النجوم؟
قال ابن عبد العزيز: بَلَّغْنَا عن ابن عباس أنه كان يقول: «يُبيئُها منك رأس الجوزاء»؛
وقد بَلَّغْنَا عن ابن مسعود أن رجلا سأله فقال: يا أبا عبد الرحمن إني طلقت امرأتي عدد النجوم؟ قال: «فما يقول الناس
عندكم؟» قال: يقولون باننت منك. قال: «فهو كما قلت».
ثم قال: «من طلق كما أمر الله لم يندم. وقد بيّن الله تعالى لكم الطلاق، ومن لبس على نفسه جعلناه كذلك، ولا تلبسوا على
انفسكم، ونحمله عنكم. هو كما تقولون»

(2007: II, 365 = 2006: 193 = 1984 - *Ṣuġrâ* vol. 1, 282 = 1984 - *Kubrâ* vol. 2, 114)

I said, “And (what about) a man who said to his wife, ‘You are divorced (as many times as) the number of the stars’?”

Ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz replied: “It has been handed down to us concerning Ibn ‘Abbās that he used to say: ‘the head of Orion separates her from you;’ and it has been handed down to us concerning Ibn Mas‘ūd that a man had questioned him saying, ‘O Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, (what happens) if I divorced my wife in number (equal to that) of stars?’” and he answered: ‘And what do people say in your country?’ ‘They say: she is separate from you’ ‘then it is as you said.’ Then he added: ‘Whoever divorces his wife as Allah has commanded, will not repent, and God has made divorce clear to you, and he who creates complications (know that) we have constituted it thus, and do not create complications: we have relieved you of it, it is as you say.’”²

The Berber commentary on the *Mudawwana*, known under the name of *Kitāb al-Barbariyya*,³ devotes some explanatory notes to this passage. The answer that Ibn ‘Abbās gave to the question is particularly interesting, as there is a mention of the name of a constellation. Similar interrogatives about the

¹ The text of the *Mudawwana*, still preserved in numerous manuscripts, is known under two redactions: the “shortest” (*Ṣuġrâ*) and the “longest” (*Kubrâ*). Both have been published in various printed editions, which are recapitulated at the end of this paper.

² The authorities referred to in this passage are: ‘Abdallāh Ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Baṣrī (2nd century h., one of the main sources of Abū Gānim, quoted more than 1100 times in his *Mudawwana*); ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās (c. 618–688 CE, celebrated traditionist and teacher of ‘Abd Allah ibn Ibāḍ); Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abdallāh Ibn Mas‘ūd (d. c. 32h. / 652 CE, a companion of the Prophet, considered to be the greatest interpreter of the Quran of his time).

³ Authorship of this commentary is credited to Abū Zakariyā’ Yaḥyà al-Yafrānī, of whom very little is known besides the name and the affiliation to the Nukkārīte sect of Ibāḍism. In particular, the time in which he lived is unknown. As to the title of this commentary, besides *Kitāb al-Barbariyya* written in the first page of the largest manuscript, mentions of its author as *Ṣāḥib al-Barbariyya* are attested both in a marginal note within the same manuscript (f. 332b) and in other Ibāḍī works (Salimi & Madelung 2014: 132; Salimi 2021: 21).

number of times a man has to pronounce the formula to divorce his wife are recorded by many traditionists. The most resembling hadith, where the “head of Orion” is mentioned, appears in the Shi‘ite collection *Kitāb al-Kāfi*, among a series of questions the genealogist al-Kalbī asked ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan: “قلت: أخبرني عن رجل قال لامرأته: “أنت طالق عدد نجوم السماء” فقال: تبين برأس الجوزاء.”⁴

The Berber passage under scrutiny appears in ll. 8-14 of f. 126b of the manuscript MS.ARA 1936 found at the *Bibliothèque universitaire des langues et civilisations* (BULAC) of Paris.⁵

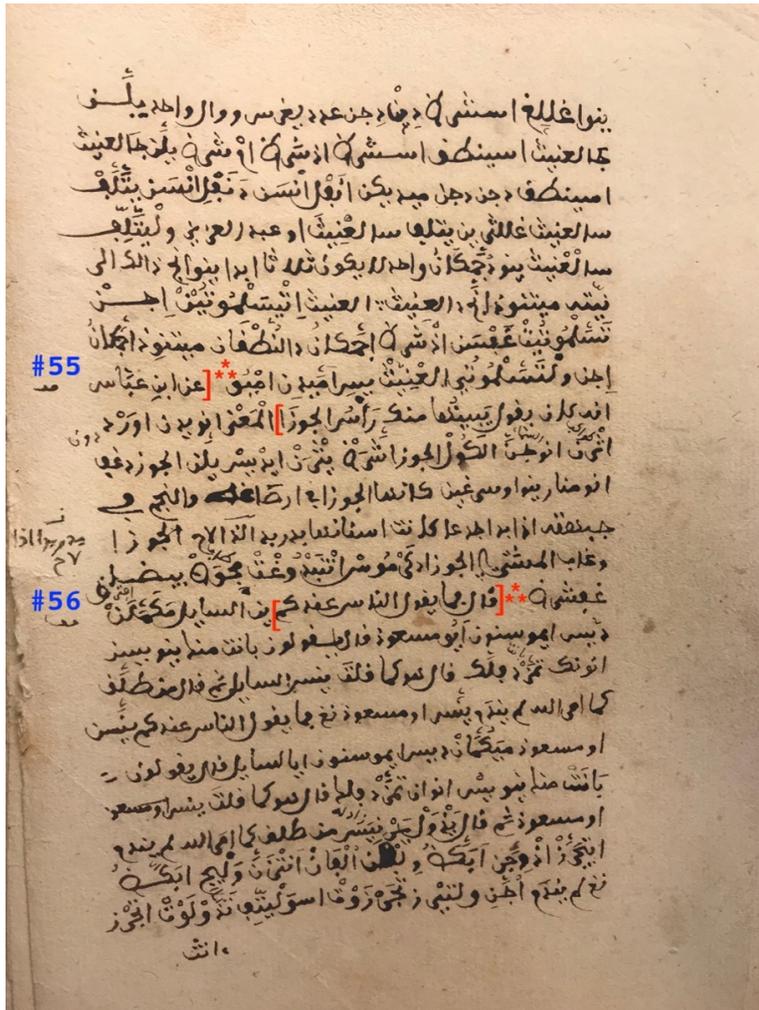


Fig. 1. f. 126b of the manuscript MS.ARA 1936 (BULAC Library-Paris)

⁴ Al- Kulaynī (2007: 216). Ḥadīth #6 of chapter 138 (*Bāb mā yuḥṣalu bi-hi bayna da‘wā al-muḥiqqi wa al-mubṭili fī ‘amri al-‘imāma*).

⁵ The commentary is divided into “paragraphs,” each of which comments on a word or a short passage from the *Mudawwana* (see Brugnatelli 2016: 154-155). According to my calculations, the present passage is the fifty-fifth paragraph of the commentary on the *Kitāb al-Ṭalāq “al- Kabīr”* (named thus to distinguish it from another shorter chapter on the same subject called *Kitāb al-Ṭalāq “al-Saḡīr”*). To be precise, the Berber commentary also devotes two other paragraphs to commenting on the final part of the question (§§ 56 and 57), but these will not be considered here.

As is customary in this commentary, first of all, the text takes up the sentence it is about to elucidate (عن ابن عباس انه كان يقول يبيئها⁶ منك رأس الجوزا) and follows it with observations, aimed first of all at explaining the overall meaning of the sentence, and then at focussing on the Arabic term الجوزا. For greater clarity, I have reproduced the text here by dividing it into three parts of homogeneous content, each followed by its translation. The Berber text is in a Latin rendering, the Arabic is left in Arabic characters:

elmeena n waydin: awerdi iṭran n uǧenna ^{GLOSS dūna kawākibi s-samāʿi} *elkul.*

Eljuza⁷ eš šared yetran ay diy-es yellan

Eljuza d iyef n Umanar.

The meaning of this is: “more than all the stars in the sky.”

As for “الجوزا”, three are the stars that are part of it.

“الجوزا” is the head of Amanar (Orion).

Yenwa useryin :

كانها⁸ الجوزاء في ارساغه⁹ والنجم في جبهته اذا بدا
جدعا كانت اسنانها بدر اذا لاح الجوزا وغاب المشتري

An Arab said:

“(the horse) seemed to have the stars of الجوزاء in his hocks, and the Pleiades on his forehead, when he appeared.”

جدعا (?)¹⁰

“her teeth were (like) the full moon that appeared when الجوزاء dawned and Jupiter disappeared.”

Eljuza d akermus en tebduyt (انتبذو غث) maǧǧ_iwed ^{GLOSS tāba} *yebda* ^{GLOSS iftaraqa} *af šared.*

⁶ Sic. The vocalization of the manuscript is reproduced here.

⁷ This transcription, like others of Berber words without vowel marks, is only conjectural and is based on the observation that most loanwords from Arabic have a form similar to that of modern dialects, in which, in particular, diphthongs are often monophthongized and the *hamza* is not pronounced.

⁸ Reading of the Berber manuscript. All modern publishers have كانما (Haitsma 1773:88; Scheid 1786:7; Boisen 1828:40ar.).

⁹ Reading of the Berber manuscript. All modern editors have ارساغه. On this, see below.

¹⁰ The meaning of جدعا between the first and the second quoted verse remains unclear. If one excludes the possibility of some writing error, one could hypothetically think that a Berber expression marks here a transition between one line by Ibn Durayd and another line by a different author. In this case, a possible interpretation—yet not the only one—would be (with haplography of an *alif*) *aǧ_ǧedea* (= *ay_yedea*) “which [direct object] (re)calls ...”

“*eljuza*” is the fruit of the cotton plant, which, once it has reached maturity, splits into three.

2. The meaning of the Arabic verses

It frequently occurs that the commentary, written by a Berber for an audience of Berbers with little knowledge of Arabic, uses Arabic verses to illustrate the meaning and use of some rare or very specific term.¹¹ In some cases, these verses are taken from known compositions, while in others the authors or poems are difficult to identify. The author’s name is never expressed, and each quotation is usually preceded by the phrase *yenwa useryin* ‘an Arab said’ (*aseryin*, literally ‘Saracen,’ is the term employed for ‘Arab,’ whilst the feminine form *taseryint* means ‘the Arabic language’).¹² In this case, two lines are cited. The first is by a known author, whilst the second—as far as I know—is of unknown attribution. The former is a verse from the *Qaṣīda Maqṣūra* by Ibn Durayd (c. 837-933 CE). This poet and lexicographer must have been particularly dear to the author of the commentary, given that, in addition to this line, in other parts of the work there are no less than five more quotations from him.¹³ Two are found in the chapter on prayer (*Kitāb al-Ṣalāt*, f. 4b, l. 7 and f. 5a, l. 5-6;), two in the chapter on fasting (*Kitāb al-Ṣiyām*, f. 61a, l. 19 ff. and f. 72b, l. 21) and one in a passage on forbidden beverages (*Kitāb al-ʿaṣriba wa al-ḥudūd*, f. 195a, l.1-2).

Boisen (1828: 84) thus describes the meaning of the passage in question: “This verse describes a horse with white marks on his legs and forehead, which among the Arabs was considered, for horses, not only a sign of beauty but also of nobility of lineage.”¹⁴ Interestingly, from the point of view of Arabic dialectology, the spelling *ارصاعه* of the term meaning ‘pasterns,’ contains an emphatic *ṣ* instead of *s*. Although almost all lexicons report only the form with *sīn* (*s*), the annotations of the Andalusian

¹¹ In-depth research on the origin and use of these poetic quotations (*ṣawāhid*) is out of the scope of the present paper. The main reference on the subject are the works by Gilliot (1996a and b). The noticeable lack of attribution for almost all the quotations suggests that no real philological intent is at stake here, and that the quotations are barely used for a basic lexical explanation.

¹² On the other hand, when an Arab proverb or idiom is quoted, the typical expression is *nnan iseryinen* “the Arabs use to say.”

¹³ Given the length of the text and the difficulty of identifying all the sources of the cited verses, the list of authors and citations is still largely incomplete. The poets I could identify so far—without systematic research—are about thirty-three, from the pre-Islamic ones, such as Imru’ l-Qays or Ṣanfara, up to those of the 10th century, such as Ibn Durayd (see the list in the appendix). The fact that up to now no authors from later periods have been found supports the hypothesis of an early dating of the commentary.

¹⁴ The original reads: “Describitur hocce in versu equus, qui albis pedum et frontis notis ornatus est, id quod apud Arabes non solum per se in equis pulchrum, verum etiam nobilioris generis signum habebatur.”

grammarian Ibn Hishām al-Lakhmī (d. 1181-82) affirm that this word might be written in both ways.¹⁵ Most probably, this emphasis, apparently limited to the Maghreb, derives from its proximity to an emphatic *r*, this being a realization of the vibrant that is rather frequent today in the Maghreb and that also seems to be an ancient feature.

In the *Lisān al-‘Arab* of the North African Ibn Manẓūr (1232 – 1311), الرُّصْنُ is considered a “known variant” of الرُّسْنُ in the language “of the common people” (الْعَامَّةُ):

«الرُّصْنُ: لُغَةٌ فِي الرُّسْنِ، مَعْرُوفَةٌ؛ قَالَ ابْنُ السِّكِّيتِ: هُوَ الرُّسْنُ، بِالسِّينِ، وَالرَّسَاغُ وَالرَّصَاغُ: حَبْلٌ يُشَدُّ فِي رُسْنِ الدَّابَّةِ شَدِيداً إِلَى وَتْدٍ أَوْ غَيْرِهِ، وَيَمْنَعُ الْبَعِيرَ مِنَ الْإِنْبِعَاتِ فِي الْمَشْنِيِّ، وَهُوَ بِالصَّادِ لُغَةٌ الْعَامَّةُ»

(1883: 310)

Ibn Durayd’s verse is followed by another, which can hardly be considered a continuation of the previous verse even though the introduction in Berber hints at a single *aseryin*. What follows, in truth, is more uncertain also due to a scribal error, corrected in a note in the margin, itself written in an unclear way. Up to now, I have not been able to find the origin of this second quotation. It must be from another poem in which the name of the constellation occurs, and in which an allusion is made to white teeth (اسنانها: of a mare? of a woman?) whose whiteness would be compared to the luminosity of the stars. The error corrected in the marginal note appears to be a *lām* instead of *alif* as the first letter of اذا. Anyway, it seems certain that the line deals with the appearance (لاح) of الجُوزَاء along with the disappearance (غاب) of Jupiter (المشتري). It must be said that usually الجُوزَاء has a feminine agreement, but apart from this detail the interpretation seems safe.

3. Eljuza

All three early European editors of Ibn Durayd’s text, Haitsma (1783:75), Scheid (1786:31), and Boisen (1828:93) identify الجُوزَاء as the constellation of Gemini.¹⁶ However, this is not straightforward: as Kunitzsch remarks (1961: 22), although a correspondence of Arab names to the Greek names of the twelve mansions of the Zodiac was easily established, possibly as a consequence of a common heritage from old Mesopotamia, “it is evident that the Arabs have only very vaguely preserved the location of

¹⁵ “الارساغ جمع رسغ وهو ما بين الحافر والوظيف (والوظيف) ويكتب بالسين والصاد” in Boisen (1828: 30).

¹⁶ Haitsma 1773 (p. 75, v. 88): “Ac si esset signum Geminorum in tarso eius, atque Stella in ejus fronte, quando exorta fuit”; Scheid 1786 (p. 31 v. 84): “Haud secus ac si in tarsis ipsius astrum appareret Geminorum; in fronte autem Pleiades, primulum promicantes”; Boisen 1828 (p. 93, v. 91): “Ubi procedit, astrum Geminorum in tarsis, Pleiades vero in fronte eius esse videntur”.

the corresponding patterns in the sky (...) their *jawzā*³, which corresponds to the Gemini, is located in Orion.”

As a matter of fact, *jawzā*³ was often used for the constellation of Orion, both as a whole and limited to the three central stars that make up Orion’s belt (as reported, for example, by the dictionary of Lane s.v.). In the text of the *Mudawwana* and its commentary, the reference to its “head” (رأس الجوزاء in Arabic, *iyef n Umanar* in Berber) makes it clear that in this case Ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz wanted to allude precisely to the anthropomorphic figure of Orion. This agrees even more closely with the context, in which reference must be made to not two but at least three stars to obtain a number that justifies the legitimacy of the divorce. And this is what the Berber commentary underlines, recalling that this constellation is made up of three stars.

In the schematization of asterism, the head of Orion is identified as a star cluster (Collinder 69 or Lambda Orionis Cluster) in which three stars stand out,¹⁷ of which the brightest is Meissa (λ Orionis, actually a binary star), below which are φ^1 on the right and φ^2 on the left.

¹⁷ According to Monteil (1949: 209), the name of the three stars of the head of Orion (5th lunar mansion) in the Ḥassaniya Arabic of the Moors in Mauritania and southern Morocco is *lhaqqa*. This is consistent with the description of *al-haqqa* (properly ‘tuft of hair’) by Kunitzsch (1961: 64): “nach Ibn Qutayba 41, 6 (auch 45, 9) drei kleine Sterne, die Ṣūfī 268, 21 (Yehuda XXXIV, 4) mit den drei von Ptolemäus als 1. Stern des Orion = λ $\varphi^{1,2}$ Orionis zusammen gefaßt identifiziert”.

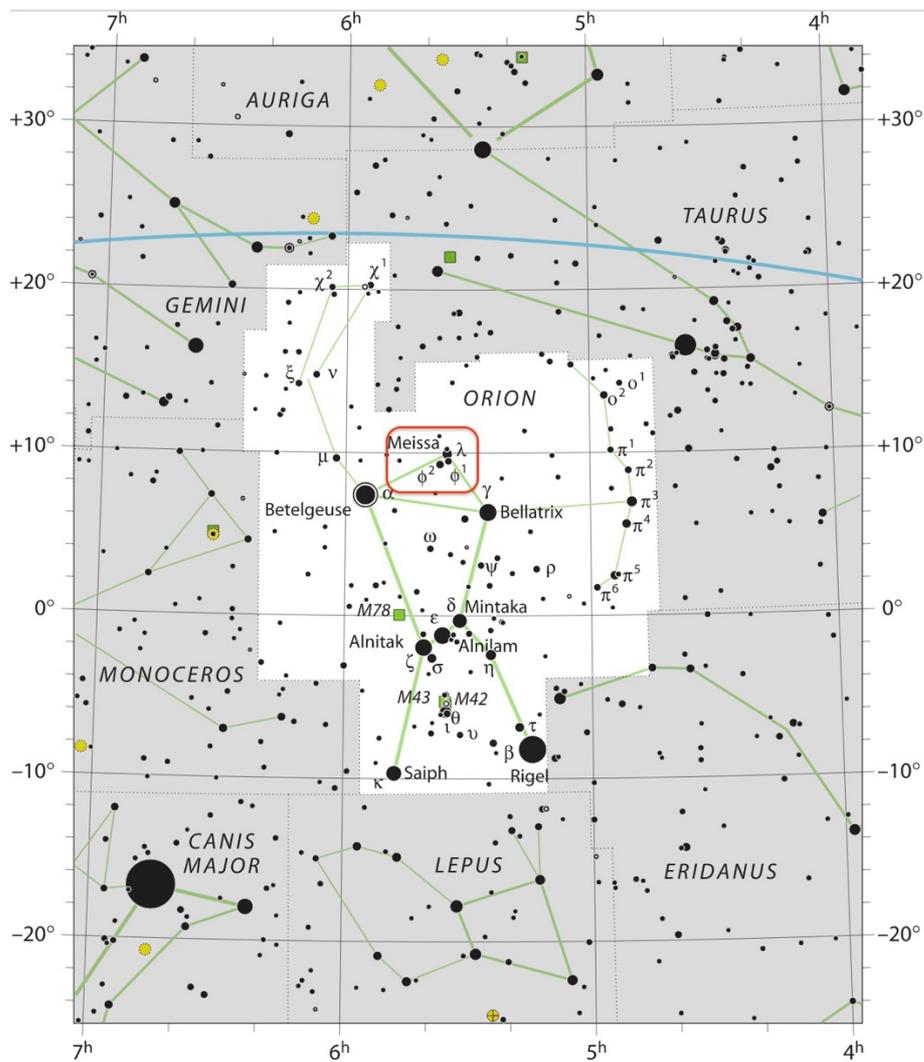


Fig. 2. A chart of Orion showing its ‘head’ (from Wikimedia Commons)

Amanar “the guide” is attested as the name of the constellation of Orion in several Berber-speaking communities, starting with the Tuaregs,¹⁸ for whom *amānar* is generally considered a verbal noun derived from *anar* ‘to guide.’ Prasse *et al.* (2003: 622) give the following explanation: “so named because the caravans navigate with it.”¹⁹ Curiously, however, Ch. de Foucauld reporting on the form *āmanar* of the Ahaggar dialect, connects it to the verb *ar* ‘to open,’²⁰ perhaps since in that dialect the common noun for ‘guide’ derived from the verb *anar* ‘to guide’ is *emānir*. This vocalism in -i- is present in the Mزاب, where Delheure (1984: 119) records, as “vieux mot,” *amnir* ‘rider; name of the constellation

¹⁸ See, among others, Bernus and ag Sidiyene (1989: 145) and Aghali-Zakara (2014: 379).

¹⁹ Similarly, Heath 2006: 430: “Orion. Star used for navigation in the cold season.”

²⁰ Foucauld (1940: 358; 1955, vol. 4: 1553).

Orion.²¹ Souag (2019: 209, 217) states that the constellation name *amanar* is also in use among the Ait Khebbach of Tabelbela Oasis. Also in the Anti-Atlas, *Amanar*, Orion, acts as a guide in the winter season, and in 1968 the Chleuh singer Ahmed Amzal entitled an anthology of his own production *Amanar* (Kratochwil 2002: 284). Among the Berbers of central Morocco, the term *amanar* has not been recorded in the numerous recently published lexicons and seems to have been preserved only among the Ait Izdeg, no longer in the specific meaning of ‘Orion’ but as a generic term for ‘constellation, starlight’ (Taïfi 1991: 424).

The use of the name *amanar* for Orion (as a translation of the Arabic الجُوزَاءُ) has also been attested in the oldest Arab-Berber lexicons, such as that of Ibn Tūnārt of the 12th century and that of ‘Abdallāh al-Hilālī of the 17th century (Van den Boogert 1997: 119). To these ancient attestations from Morocco, the passage from the *Kitāb al-Barbariyya*, now adds the testimony of Medieval Eastern Berber, thus confirming the pan-Berber dimension of this astronomical designation.

4. (a) *kermus* ‘fruit’

In this passage, *akermus* is evidently used in the generic sense of ‘fruit,’ whilst currently in North Africa this term is used—both in Berber and in Arabic—to designate specific varieties of fruit (and fruit plants), such as figs, prickly pears, and dates. Beaussier’s dialectal Arabic dictionary states, under the entry *kermūs* (p. 862): «(du berb. *akerbūz* mauvaise figue) figue; figue sèche.» In the Maghrebian Arabic dialects, this designation is widespread almost everywhere, from the Maltese (*karmus* ‘a fig, or other fruit, which does not ripen’, Aquilina 1975: 302) up to southern Morocco (*karmus* ‘figs,’ but *karma* ‘fig plant,’ Socin and Stumme 1895: 50; Marçais 1911: 449).

In the Berber world, however, the related terms seem limited to the north-eastern and central regions, with the exclusion of the Tuareg and Moroccan dialects, the only exception being the Rif (Amret), where we also find *tagarbazt* “figue non mûre” (Renisio 1932: 352). Among the Berber dialects that use terms of this family we observe: Ouargla *akerbus* «variété de dattier,» *takermust* «variété de datte bleu-noir,» Mzab *akerbuš* «espèce de dattier,» Touat *akaḥbuš* «fig,» Aures *akermus* «fig» (Saed 2013: 84). In Kabyle, there exist both *akermus* «figuier de Barbarie» and *kurbuz* «figue non mûre.»

This variety of results, combined with the testimony of the medieval Berber text, seems to suggest that at its origins this was a generic term for ‘fruit,’ which would then settle on designating, according to the climatic conditions, the types of fruit par excellence: meaning dates in the desert and pre-desert

²¹ Even among Ḥassaniya speakers, Monteil (1949: 220) records the borrowing «*āmnēr* pl. *imnīran* ‘guide.’»

(Ouargla, Mzab) and the fig or prickly pear elsewhere. This consideration led us to return to the question of the etymology of these terms. If on the one hand the pansemitic *karm* ‘vine’ (Fronzaroli 1969: 291-292) seems to put forward a basis from which the North African dialectal word would later be derived by means of the suffix *-us*,²² it is well known that this traditional etymology is not without problems. Firstly, because a shift of meaning from ‘vine’ to ‘fig tree’ requires an explanation,²³ and secondly because the origins and functions of the ending *-us* are not clear. Schuchardt (1908: 375-381) devotes several pages to the question of the relationship between the (classical) Arabic term *karm*, *karma* and the dialectal Berber and Arabic words of this family.

From the point of view of meaning, Schuchardt (1908: 375-381) limits himself to pointing out that the fig and vine plants are “not dissimilar in terms of trunk and leaves, and in any case culturally related (*kulturell verschwistert*).” As for the suffix, considering that Dozy’s dictionary qualified this word ending in *-us* as straightforward Berber, he notes that many typically Berber words have a similar, but not identical, suffix *-uš*, often with a diminutive value, but not *-us*. On the contrary, the *-us* ending is present in various names of plants and animals, and above all in loanwords from Latin (*asnus* ‘donkey’ < *asinus*; *qattus* ‘cat’ < *cattus*; (*a*)*fullus* ‘chick’ < *pullus*, etc.). With great prudence,²⁴ the hypothesis is therefore advanced that it could be an ending preserved in very ancient loans, prior to the arrival of the Arabs and also to the neo-Latin evolution of African Latin, which would entail the loss of this ending. That said, however, Schuchardt does not propose any Latin or Greek word to be placed at the origin of this term, which will not even be included in his subsequent examination of loanwords likely to be traced back to Latin or to the Romance languages (Schuchardt 1918).

Taking into account the different forms that the terms of this family have both in Berber and in Arabic from North Africa, the fact that they refer to different types of fruit, and above all the observation of an evident generic value of ‘fruit’ in this medieval text, it seems to me that we can imagine a link with the Greek *karpós*, with the typical phenomenon of alternation between a bilabial stop and the corresponding nasal (typically *b/m*: Berber consonantism does not include a voiceless stop [p]). It is known, in fact, that among the borrowings from Latin and Greek into Berber and North African Arabic, many examples belong to the domain of cultivated plants. Furthermore, the alternation *b/m* is

²² This position has also been recently reaffirmed by Behnstedt and Woidich (2010: 491-2), who speak of “Bedeutungswandel ‘Feigengarten’ > ‘Feigenbaum’ womöglich unter berberischem Einfluss.”

²³ Nowadays, all authors agree on a shift from a general meaning of ‘orchard’ to that of a specific plant and fruit. The generic meaning of ‘orchard’ (*kárm* ‘*šneḅ*, *kárm tīn*, *kárm fāstoq*, respectively ‘vineyard,’ ‘fig plantation’ and ‘pistachio plantation’) is reported in Barthélemy (1935: 713).

²⁴ “Meine Vermutung, ich darf nicht sagen Ansicht” (Schuchardt 1908: 379).

found in many other terms, the most famous of which is the hydronym *Bagrada* (from the Latin era) attested today as *Medjerda*, a river in Tunisia.

There are many examples that can be cited, not only among proper names (toponyms such as Julius Honorius' *Mons Gurbessa*, corresponding to what is now called *Guermessa*, or anthroponyms such as *Meqdeš*, a character in folktales from various Berber regions, but *Biqdeš* in Ouarsenis).²⁵ This also occurs among common names (the pan-Berber *tamuryi* 'grasshopper' in Ghadames is *tomaršé*, but *buryes* in Jerba; *tabejna* «head» in Mzab but *tamegna* and *tabegna* in Touat/Gourara²⁶, etc.), and even in grammatical elements such as the interrogative *batta/matta* 'what?': in the Mzab, both forms are used, in Jerba, Cheninni and Zuara only *matta*, but in Sokna *ba ta* (Sarnelli 1924: 14) and *matta* (Souag 2015:187) and in Ouargla *matta*, but in the nearby oasis of Ngouça *batta*.²⁷

5. *tabduyt* 'cotton plant'

As for *tabduyt* (here probably *tebduyt* in the annexed state), it is evidently the cotton plant, not only due to the comparison with the related terms found in other Berber languages, but also due to the description given here, of a fruit which, having reached maturation, opens into several parts (bringing out the fibre which is collected for the textile industry).

The terms attested in modern dialects are: Sokna (Libya) *tabdayt/tabduxt*, Tuareg *tabdoq*, Ghat *tabduq*, Ouargla and Jerba *tafduxt*, all meaning 'cotton plant.' This lexeme is also present in the treatise on phytonymy *Umdat at-ṭabīb* by Abū l-Ḥayr al-Iṣḥābī (11th-12th century): *tābuduyt, tābadyīt*, *Gossypium herbaceum* L. (Tilmatine-Bustamante Costa 2002: 437). In this case too, the attestation in eastern medieval Berber confirms the pan-Berber extension of this designation. Whilst this Berber term to designate the cotton plant is already known, I have not yet found the denomination *eljuza* for its fruit, homonymous with the astral figure, and perhaps even derived from it if the analogy with the fruit split into three sections put forward by the commentator of the *Mudawwana* can be considered a reliable etymon. However, this is probably an ad hoc etiological explanation, given that the term *eljuz*, widespread almost everywhere in North Africa, is clearly a loan from the Arabic *jawz*, normally used to

²⁵ Other toponyms in Abdul-Wahab (1939: 201).

²⁶ Bellil (2000: 227) records *tamegna* for 'head' but remarks: «pronounced *tabegna* in certain ksours.»

²⁷ This alternation, reported sporadically but never systematically, and to date little studied, was the subject of a talk I gave at the Centro Studi Camito-Semitici in Milan on 4 May 2005 ("On some little-investigated phonetic phenomena of Berber"). See also the considerations by Brugnattelli (2021) regarding the connections between *Byzac-* of the ancient toponym *Bizacene* and **Muzaq*, plural of **Maziq* (the *Mazices* of the ancients) today (*a*)*maziq*.

indicate walnuts or almonds, given its original sense of ‘kernel, nut.’ In this case, it is possible that it could apply to any infructescence with a shell such as the cotton boll.

Appendix: Provisional list of Arab authors quoted in the *Kitāb al Barbariyya*

1. Imru’ l-Qays (f. 62a, l. 3; f. 71a, l. 16-17) [preislamic]
2. Ta’abbaṭa Šarran (f. 147b, l. 6-7) [preislamic]
3. Maṭrūd b. Ka‘b al-Khuzā‘ī (f. 300a, l. 20-21) [preislamic]
4. Šanfara (f. 195a, l. 5-6) [d. c. 525]
5. al-Muṭaqqib al-‘Abdī (f. 11b, l. 4-7) [d. c. 590]
6. Nābiḡa (f. 61b, l. 21-22; 209a, l. 23-209b, l. 1) [c. 535 – ca. 604]
7. Zuhayr b. Abī Sulmā (f. 10a, l. 2-3; f. 140a l. 4-5; f. 228a, l. 4-5; f. 242b, l. 13) [c. 520 – c. 609]
8. ‘Antara Ibn Shaddād al-‘Absī (f. 9a, l. 16-17; f. 15b, l. 17-19 = 194a, l. 1-3) [525–615]
9. Umayya b. ‘Abdallāh b. Abī ṣ-Šalt b. Abī Rabī‘a b. ‘Awf aṭ-Ṭaqafī (f. 67b, l. 3-4) [d. 626]
10. Maymūn al-‘A‘šā (f. 4b, l. 16-18; f. 147b, l. 11-12) [570– 629]
11. al-Qattāl al-Kilābī (f. 5b, l. 4-5 = 9b, l. 21-22) [unspecified time]
12. Ḍābi’ b. al-Ḥārīt b. Arṭā al-Burjumī (f.70b, l.4) [d. c. 650]
13. Qays b. Al-Mulawwaḡ (Majnūn Laylā) (f. 283a l. 10) [c. 645-688]
14. Yazīd b. Mufarriḡ al-Himyarī (f. 249a, l. 27-249b, l. 1) [d. 69 h. (688/9)]
15. Sawwār b. al-Muḍarrab [or Muḍarrīb] al-Sa‘dī al-Māzinī (f. 117a, l. 7-8) [d. 76 h. (695/6)]
16. Jamīl ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Ma‘mar (f. 176a, l. 16-17) [d. 701]
17. Hudba b. al-Khashram al-‘Udhri (f. 193a, l.7) [Umayyad era, *rāwiya* of Jamīl]
18. ‘Amrān b. Ḥiṭṭān (f. 38a, l. 9-10) [d. 84 h. (703)]
19. al-‘Aḡṭal (f. 60b, l. 10-11) [c. 640-710]
20. ‘Umar ibn Abī Rabī‘a (f. 252b, l. 4-5) [644-712]
21. Sābiq al-Barbarī (f. 209b, l. 3-4; f. 249a, l. 15) [d. c. 100h. (718)]
22. Abū Sa‘īd ‘Umayr b. Ši/uyaym al-Taḡlibī al-Quṭamī (f. 208a, l. 12) [d. c. 719]
23. Farazdaq (f. 249a, l.18) [c. 641 - c. 728-730]
24. Ḍū r-Rumma (f. 16b, l. 2-3; f. 179b, l. 4; f. 269a, l. 10-11) [d. 735]
25. al-‘Abbās b. al-‘Aḡnaf (f. 25b, l. 11-13) [c. 750-810]
26. al-‘imām aš-Šāfi‘ī (f. 317b, l. 18-19) [150-204 h. (767 - 820)]
27. a poet (*rājjiz*) of the Banū Ja‘da ibn Qays quoted by Abū ‘Ubayda (d.825) (f. 300a, l. 18-19) [< 825]
28. al-Aṣma‘ī? (f. 144a l. 4-5) [c. 740-828]
29. Abū Nahšal Muḡammad b. Hamīd, quoted by al-Marzubānī (d. 994), (f. 222a, l. 6) [3rd century h.?)

30. Abū Ḥukayma (f. 269a, l. 13-14) [d. 240 h. /854-85]
31. Ibn Abi Mayyās al-Murādī (f. 53a, l. 2-3) [839 – 923]
32. Abū Bakr ibn al-Sarrāj al-Nahwī (? credited to him) (f. 153b, l. 9) [d. 316 h. (928/9)]
33. Ibn Durayd (f. 4b, l. 7; f. 5a, l. 5-6; f. 61a, l. 19; f. 72b, l. 21; f. 126b, l. 11-12; f. 195a, l.1-2) [837 – 933]

References

1. Editions of Ibn Durayd

Haitsma 1773 = Poemation Ibn Doreidi cum scholiis arab. excerptis Chaluwiae et Lachumaei e codicibus manuscriptis, latine conversum, et observationibus miscellaneis illustratum ... curavit et edidit Aggaeus Haitsma. Franquerae [Franeker, NL] apud Henricum Dionysium Lomars 1773.

Scheid 1786 = Abu Bekri Mohammedis Ebn Hoseini Ebn Doreidi Azdiensis Katsijda 'l Meksoura sive Idyllium Arabicum latine redditum et brevissimis scholiis illustratum. Edidit Everardus Scheidius. Harderovici Gelrorum [Harderwijk, NL] apud Ioannem van Kasteel 1786.

Boisen 1828 = Abou Bekr-Mohammed Ibn-Doreid, Carmen Maksura dictum Abi Becri Muhammedis Ibn Hoseini Ibn Doreidi Azdiensis cum scholiis integris nunc primum editis Abi Abdallah Ibn Heschaimi collatis codicibus parisiensibus, havniensibus nec non recensione Ibn Chaluviae editum (...) fecit Laurentius Nannestad Boisen, Havniae [Copenhagen], Fabritius De Tengenagel, 1828.

2. Editions of Abū Ġānim's *Mudawwana*

Abū Ġānim al-Ḥurāsānī al-'Ibādī, *al-Mudawwana al-Kubrâ*, Salṭanat 'Umān, Wizārat at-Turāṭ al-qawmī wa ṭ-ṭaqāfah, 1984, 2 vols.

Abū Ġānim al-Ḥurāsānī al-'Ibādī, *al-Mudawwana al-Ṣuġrâ*, Salṭanat 'Umān, Wizārat at-Turāṭ al-qawmī wa ṭ-ṭaqāfah, 1984, 2 vols.

Mudawwanat Abī Ġānim al-Ḥurāsānī : mulḥaq bi-hā, Kitāb Ibn 'Abbād, wa-Kitāb al-ribā. Yaḥyâ b. 'Abdallāh an-Nabhānī & Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-'Asākir (eds.). Masqat : Maktabat al-Ġil al-Wā'id, 2006.

al-Mudawwana al-Kubrâ li 'Abī Ġānim Bišr b. Ġānim al-Ḥurāsānī min 'Ulamā' al-Qarn at-Tānī al-Hiġrī bi Ta'liqāt Quṭb al-A'imma aš-Šayḥ Muḥammad b. Yūsuf Itfayyīš. Ed. Muṣṭafâ b. Šāliḥ Bāġū. 3 vols. Muscat: MHC, 1428/2007.

3. Secondary sources

Abdul-Wahab, Hassen H. 1939. "Du nom arabe de la Byzacène." *Revue Tunisienne* 37 n.s.: 199-201.

Aghali-Zakara, Mohamed. 2014. "Essai comparatif des conceptions astronymiques chez les Touaregs du Sahara et du Sahel." In: *Els noms en la vida quotidiana. Actes del XXIV Congrés Internacional d'ICOS sobre Ciències Onomàstiques (ICOS)*. Annex, edited by Joan Tort i Donada and Montserrat Montagut

- i Montagut, 378-384. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya | Departament de Cultura | Direcció General de Política Lingüística.
- Aquilina, Joseph. 1975. "The Berber Element in Maltese." In: *Hamito-Semitic*, edited by James and Theodora Bynon, 297-313. The Hague - Paris: Mouton.
- Barthélemy, Adrien. 1935. *Dictionnaire Arabe-Français. Dialectes de Syrie: Alep, Damas, Liban, Jérusalem*. Paris: Geuthner.
- Behnstedt, Peter and Manfred Woidich. 2010. *Wortatlas der Arabischen Dialekte. Band I: Mensch, Natur, Fauna und Flora*. Leiden: Brill.
- Bellil, Rachid. 2000. *Les oasis du Gourara (Sahara algérien) III Récits, contes et poésies en dialecte tazenatit*. Paris-Louvain: Peeters.
- Bernus, Edmond and Ehya Ag-Sidiyene. 1989. "Étoiles et constellations chez les nomads." *Awal. Cahiers d'études berbères* 5: 141-153.
- Brugnattelli, Vermondo. 2016. "Un témoin manuscrit de la « Mudawwana d'Abū Ġānim » en berbère." *Études et Documents Berbères* 35-36: 149-174.
- Brugnattelli, Vermondo. 2021. "À propos d'amaziɣ et tamaziɣt." In: *Libellules arabes, sémitiques, italiennes, berbères. Études linguistiques et littéraires offertes à Jérôme Lentin par ses collègues, élèves et amis*, edited by Nadia Comolli, Julien Dufour and Marie-Aimée Germanos, 665-683. Paris: Geuthner.
- Delheure, Jean. 1984. *Ağraw n yiwalen tumzabt t-tfransist. Dictionnaire mozabite-français*. Paris: SELAF.
- Foucauld, Charles de. 1940. *Dictionnaire abrégé touareg-français de noms propres*, Paris: Larose.
- Foucauld, Charles de. 1952. *Dictionnaire touareg-français*. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale de France (4 voll.).
- Fronzaroli, Pelio. 1969. "Studi sul lessico comune semitico. VI - La natura domestica." *Rendiconti dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei*: 285-320.
- Gilliot, Claude. 1996a. "Šhawāhid" in *Encyclopédie de l'Islam* 2ème éd., IX, p. 382-384.
- Gilliot, Claude. 1996b. "Les citations probantes (šawāhid) en langue." *Arabica* 43: 297-356.
- Heath, Jeffrey. 2006. *Dictionnaire touareg du Mali tamachek-anglais-français*. Paris: Karthala.
- Ibn Manẓūr, Abū l-Faḍl Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad b. al-Imām Jamāl al-Dīn Abī al-‘Izz Mukarram b. al-Shaykh Najīb al-Dīn aka. Ibn Manẓūr al-Ifriqī al-Miṣrī. 1883. *Lisān al-‘Arab*, Juz’ 9-10. Bulaq: al-Maṭba‘a al-Mīriyya.
- Kratochwil, Gabriele. 2002. *Die Berberbewegung in Marokko. Zur Geschichte der Konstruktion einer ethnischen Identität (1912-1997)*. Berlin: Schwarz.
- al-Kulaynī, Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb. 2007. *Uṣūl al-Kāfi. Al-juz’ al-‘awwal*, Beirut: Manshūrāt al-Fajr.
- Kunitzsch, Paul. 1961. *Untersuchungen zur Sternennomenklatur der Araber*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- Marçais, William. 1911. *Textes arabes de Tanger*. Paris: Leroux.
- Monteil, Vincent. 1949. "Notes sur la toponymie, l'astronomie et l'orientation chez les Maures." *Hespéris* 36: 189-219.
- Prasse, Karl-G., Ghoubeïd Alojali, Ghabdouane Mohamed. 2002. *Dictionnaire Touareg-Français (Niger)*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press (2 voll.).

- Renisio, Amédée. 1932. *Étude sur les dialectes berbères des Beni Iznassen du Rif et des Senhja de Srair*. Paris: Leroux.
- Saëd, Xadiğa. 2013. *Amawal Tamaziyt-Taerabt. Tacawit*. s.l. (Béjaïa): Tira éditions.
- al-Salimi, Abdulrahman. 2021. *On the Reception of Early Ibadi Theology. A Commentary on the Book on Monotheism by ‘Abd Allāh b. Yazīd al-Fazārī (2nd/8th Century)*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- al-Salimi, Abdulrahman and Wilferd Madelung. 2014. *Early Ibādī Theology. Six kalām texts by ‘Abd Allāh b. Yazīd al-Fazārī*. Leiden–Boston: Brill.
- Sarnelli, Tommaso. 1924. *Il dialetto berbero di Sokna*, (supplement to “L’Africa Italiana” 1924-1925).
- Schuchardt, Hugo. 1908. “Berberische Studien II. Zu den arabischen Lehnwörtern.” *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 22: 351-384.
- Schuchardt, Hugo. 1918. “Die romanischen Lehnwörter im Berberischen.” *Sitzungsberichte der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien – Philosophisch-historische Klasse* 188/4: 1-82.
- Socin, Albert and Hans Stumme. 1895. “Der arabische Dialekt der Houwāra des Wād Sūs in Marokko.” *Abhandlungen der philosophisch-historischen Classe der königlichen Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften* 15: 1-144. Leipzig: Hirzel.
- Souag, Lameen. 2015. “Sokna re-examined: Two unedited Sokna Berber vocabularies from 1850.” In: , *La lingua nella vita e la vita della lingua. Scritti in onore di Francesco Beguinot, I vol.*, edited by Anna Maria Di Tolla, 179-206. Napoli: Unior.
- Souag, Lameen. 2019. “Astronomy among the Ayt Xebbac of Tabelbala.” *Études et Documents Berbères* 42: 215-219.
- Taïfi, Miloud. 1991. *Dictionnaire tamazight-français*. Paris: L’Harmattan-Awal.
- Tilmatine, Mohand and Joaquín Bustamante Costa. 2002. “La fitonimia amazige en la ‘Umdat aṭ-ṭabīb.” *Al-Andalus Magreb* 8-9: 413-462.
- van den Boogert, Nico. 1997. *The Berber Literary Tradition of the Sous*. Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten.

Vermondo Brugnatelli was born in Milan, where he also completed his studies in Hamito-Semitic (Afroasiatic) Linguistics. He received his “habilitation” in Paris (Sorbonne). He is a specialist in historical linguistics and his main interests are particularly focused on the Berber world. He is currently Associate Professor at the University of Milano-Bicocca. He is director of the “Centro Studi Camito-Semitici di Milano” which he founded in 1993, and president of the Berber Cultural Association in Italy.

Vermondo can be reached at: vermondo.brugnatelli@unimib.it