**Sounds of Loss and Misfortune (Nakba) Ring out From the Andalusian Poems of Lamentations**

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**Abstract**

The term ‘Nakba’ (نكبة, misfortune) is commonly used to refer to the displacement of the Palestinians from their homeland in the wake of the creation of the State of Israel. While adhering to the principles that characterize the modern meaning of the term, this article deals with its use in the context of the events that took place in Andalusia from the rise of the Muwaḥḥidūn to the Reconquista, the re-occupation of Muslim cities by Christians.

The poetry of the period resounds with mournful wailing and cries for redemption lamenting the cities and communities destroyed by the Christians. This article to reviews images of destruction and sorrow that characterize the Andalusian Nakba and examines whether the term “Nakba” can rightfully be used to refer to the persecution of Muslims and Jews at this time.

**Key words:** Muwaḥḥidūn period, Nakba – نكبة- misfortune, Murābiṭūn, Reconquista

## Introduction

This study is concerned with the persecution, massacres, and forced conversions that occurred in Andalusia and are known in Arabic as the Nakba (النكبة, the great misfortune). This is a weighty Arabic term that was first used by period historians and poets whose works documented the events in great detail.[[1]](#footnote-1) Modern scholarship in Arabic uses the term ‘Nakba’ to refer to three historical events in which both Muslim and Jews were involved: the Andalusian Nakba, the Holocaust, and the Palestinian Nakba. Although there are great similarities between what the Muslims and Jews experienced in medieval Andalusia and the Holocaust of the Jews in 20th-century Europe, it is clear that these calamities differ in the scope of death, their mode of conduct*,* and their motivation.[[2]](#footnote-2) Notably, in contrast to the first two calamities, the Palestinian Nakba was not driven by a religious motivation.[[3]](#footnote-3) Yet all three calamities resulted in the uprooting of entire communities, who were forced *en masse* to abandon their homes and flee their former homes as refugees.

Below I argue that the details encapsulated in poems of grief and lamentation should leave no doubt why these events are referred to as a Nakba. Scholars of Arabic poetry in Spain devoted a separate chapter to these poems, which they categorized as “Nakba Poetry” (*Bāb al-Nakabāt*). Originally a poetic division within the genre devoted to the Lamentation for the Cities, the Poetry of Wailing developed into an independent sub-genre, noted for its attention to the historical record and its attempt to document the spirit of the age. The Poetry of Wailing flourished during the protracted Muslims defeat in Andalusia; as the Christian forces continually progressed, the dimensions of the torture to which local Muslim and Jewish populations were subjected increased in proportion.[[4]](#footnote-4) The persecution of the Jewish community reached its peak in the Muwaḥḥidūn period (1238-1145) and is poignantly expressed in the lamentations describing the fates of these communities.

The destruction of the cities, and the deliberate murder of their inhabitants, were events that directly influenced the poetic formation of the lamentations and are reflected in their tones and images. The connotation of total destruction and utter annihilation that accompany the term Nakba – which was coined at this time – was an attempt to cry out to the Arab princes to awaken from their slumber, and enlist in the effort to salvage Arab homeland in the West. In Andalusian lamentations written in Hebrew, a similar form of wailing can be identified, expressing the suffering of the exiled Jews, who appealed to God for salvation, both physical and spiritual. Yet both Jews and Muslims were given little choice, and had to decide between death and conversion. To achieve their goal, the Christians established a new Inquisition that was designed to ensure and enforce conversion to Christianity.

The lamentations written during this period describe acts of horror and crimes committed by the Christians against the Muslims. They were collected in anthologies, of which ʻAbd Allāh Muḥammad Zayyāt’s *Raṯāʾ Al-Mudun* (*The Lamentations of the Cities*), is considered the most comprehensive.[[5]](#footnote-5) The desperate cries of women, children, and men – mercilessly slaughtered in plain sight of one another – spring from these poems of lamentation, which are considered historical depictions describing and documenting the tragic events that were literally inscribed into the flesh of the non-Christian inhabitants of Andalusia. The lamentations reached the height of their development in Andalusian Arabic between the 10th and 12th centuries. Ḥasnà al-Ṭarāblusī’s 2001 book, *Ḥayāt al-Šiʻr fī Nihāyat al-Andalus* (*The Life of Poetry at the End of the Andalusian Period*), deals with the Nakba of the Andalusian cities. In her estimation, the highpoint of lamentations was reached after the fall of Toledo in 1085.[[6]](#footnote-6) Youssef Eid’s 2002 study, *Al-Ši‛r Andalusī wa Ṣadà al-Nakabāt* (*The Poetry of Andalusia and the Echoes of the Catastrophe*s),[[7]](#footnote-7) is concerned with the poetry of the Nakba and the defeat, which grew in intensity during the Muwaḥḥidūn period.

This study attempts to bring to the reader’s attention the reasons behind these acts of forced conversion and persecution, and to elucidate the background to the clashes that erupted between Muslims, Jews, and crusaders. In what follows, we will shed light on the distressing vignettes characteristic of the lamentations for the fall of the Andalusian cities. The persecution began in the Middle Ages, from a sense of religious fanaticism. In Rabbi Judah Halevi’s *The Kuzari* it is already clear to be seen that the claim of Jewish exclusiveness – the Jews as God’s “Chosen People,” and their position as the oldest of the three monotheistic religions – made Judaism into an object of envy, often inciting persecutions against the Jews.

## Holocaust, Nakba, Crisis

As the Jewish medieval Spanish philosopher and poet, Rabbi Judah Halevi, recounts in his fictional retelling, the king of the Khazars initiated a debated concerning the priority, trustworthiness, and originality of the rival monotheistic religions. In this discussion, the Jewish disputant represents the perspective of the author. The king, unconvinced by the Christian’s arguments, states that “Christianity leaves no room for reason.” He then meets with a Muslim sage, but is similarly dissatisfied. The king realizes that he has “no recourse but to ask the Jews.” He calls for one of the Jewish wisemen to teach him the fundamental percepts of Judaism.[[8]](#footnote-8) the rabbi explains the superiority of the Jewish source at length, claiming that “All who came after these philosophers could not detach themselves from their principles [...] and look upon the Israelites and all that befell them as a proof of this.”[[9]](#footnote-9) Convinced by the results of his inquiry, and swayed by the words of the Jewish wiseman, the king comes to the conclusion that Judaism is the one true religion.

*The Kuzari*, therefore, strengthens the literary motif of the Chosen People, which is omnipresent in the work. This motif plays a crucial part in structuring the book’s narrative framework, in which the king of the Khazars attempts to study the three religions in order to choose the single real one, which inevitably ends up being the religion of the Chosen People.

Karen Armstrong, who has published widely on comparative religions, argues that the crusades shaped subsequent history for hundreds of years, and still influence contemporary disputes and struggles. According to Armstrong, the crusades are often used as a source of polemics both fueling and reflecting modern-day political crises. Ironically, the crusaders, who were searching for a new source of inspiration for medieval European identity, began their journey with the murder of local European Jews and ended it with the massacre of Muslims in Jerusalem. In order to justify these barbarous acts of terror, they further fanned the flames of Western xenophobia and hatred of Jews and Muslims. This resulted in catastrophes such as the persecution and forced conversion of entire communities in 15th-century Spain, and the Holocaust in 20th-century Europe.[[10]](#footnote-10)

During the crusades, Pope Alexander II promised that every Christian who would take part in the fighting against the Muslims would receive atonement for his sins.[[11]](#footnote-11) The period of the Muwaḥḥidūn can be seen as the furious Muslim response to these Christian initiatives, and Songs of Lamentation, grieving for the destroyed cities, were also a resounding call to declare a Jihād (Holy War), and to unite the Islamic nation against the Christian invasion. Jewish Andalusian communities also suffered, and many had to leave their homes and seek refuge elsewhere.

My conclusion from reading the many lamentations written about the destruction of the Andalusian cities, is that these poems were composed in order to voice a civilizational and existential crisis. Both Muslim and Jewish poets described the agony of religious persecution, and the acts of forced conversion to which entire communities and cities in Andalusia were subjected. This religious persecution was warmly sanctioned by the church, which sought to use the crusades to impose Christianity across the entire known world. The results of the crusades for the fate of Muslims and Jews in Andalusia were wide-reaching, and the incessant attacks against Muslims continued unabated until their final expulsion from Granada, in 1492.

The Andalusian Nakba is primarily characterized by waves of emigration, as well as the forced migration and flight of the area’s Muslim residents. These phenomena took place as part of a religious war launched by the Christians, which led to a mass desertion of cities. The Andalusian Nakba’s secondary characteristic is acts of revenge against the local Muslim population, that is, those who had ruled Andalusia for hundreds of years. The price exacted from Muslims was expressed primarily in the uprooting of the local population, their expropriation and expulsion. As part of this process, houses were burned to the ground, the men and the boys were tortured and slaughtered, and the women and the girls were imprisoned and raped. The inquisition transformed mosques into churches, and defaced Islamic symbols. In light of these acts, the events should be considered as the Muslim Nakba of the Middle Ages.

The Muslim cities of Andalusia were heavily damaged in the battles; the Christians were unable to bear the thought of a Muslim state in the heart of Europe. From the rubble, heart-rending lamentations sprang, as poets described the horrific acts committed in the streets, the slaughter and wanton murders perpetrated by Christians in Andalusian cities, especially during the period of the Reconquista. The descriptions of the Nakba are also to be found in the chapter devoted to cries for help (*istiṣrāh*(. Modern scholarship on the Andalusian Jewish communities has treated these events as an act of forced conversion, whereas Muslim scholarship has given them the term “Nakba.” However, what ultimately matters is that the persecution and atrocities led to the creation of intense poems of lamentation, in both Hebrew and Arabic. The intensity of these poems reflects the tearful sorrow and pain of the area’s residents, and their unanswered cries for redemption.

The cultural condition of the Jews in Spain greatly improved thanks to their connections with the local Muslim society. Spanish Jews were famous for their erudition and cultural refinement.[[12]](#footnote-12) During the 12th century, with the rise of the Muwaḥḥidūn and later the crusades, they experienced extremely difficult tribulations, including the antisemitic pogrom of 1391, which ranks among the most devastating events in Jewish history before the modern age.

## The Poetry of Redemption and the Nakba

The lamentations for the cities included certain patterns of expression concerning exile, longing, and cries for redemption that later developed into the sub-genre of the *istiṣrāh* (*istiṣrāh* – *istiġāṯah*),[[13]](#footnote-13) whose roots are in the poetry of the *Jāhiliyyah*, and later in Umayyad and Abbasid poetry, which mourned the destruction of the city of Basrah.[[14]](#footnote-14) The lamentations for the cities were listed under four different chapter headings, according their dominant motifs: The chapter on longing, which expresses the glamorous past while detailing the grim present; The reasons for the fall of the city; Emotional vignettes; And the portrayal of the religious conflict, which is constructed in a similar pattern as the poetry of war.[[15]](#footnote-15)

This genre of Andalusian poetry should be divided into two periods. The first concerns lamentations for the fall of the capital, Cordoba, that was taken in 1033 by the Murābiṭūn (1056-1147), and whose fall was closely followed by that of Al-Bireh and Al-Meria. The Muslim poets used their lamentations to express their suffering and sorrow for being uprooted from their homes, voicing their grief for the destruction of their cities and culture at the hands of barbarians who arrived from North Africa. The second period is that of the Muwaḥḥidūn, from the 12th to 15th centuries, in which the fall of the Andalusian cities to the Christian invaders is related. The lamentations treated below belong to this second period, whose height was reached in 1492, when the central cities were captured, and their residents experienced both the violence of defeat, and the waves of destruction and killings which followed in their wake. This period became known was the Nakba – the great disaster that is well known from books of history and poetry. At the center of these poems of mourning we can identify three subjects:

1. The grief for the destruction of the cities. This topic, whether expressed explicitly or implicitly, constitutes the immediate backdrop of the poems, in which the sorrow for the lost cities intertwines with the bitterness of the daily lives of the refugees, forced to abandon their homes in order to escape the inferno of destruction.
2. The suffering of exile and displacement. Exile and wandering result from the destruction of the homeland, and, conversely, the loss of the homeland is the source of suffering in wandering.
3. The call for redemption. Relating the tale of woe, which constitutes exile and wandering, makes up the mainstay of the lamentations, leads to the outcry and the call for redemption.[[16]](#footnote-16)

Shimon Bernfeld’s 1926 *The* *Book of Tears* and Simon Berstein’s *On Spain’s Rivers* describe the condition of the Jewish communities in Andalusia. These lamentations bemoan the destruction of the authors’ communities, whose voices of sorrow and suffering spring from the pages. They are considered among the national Jewish poems of lamentation; they resemble the Muslim poems of lamentation both in their thematic design, and the circumstances under which they were written.

## Echoes of the Nakba in the Lamentation for the Cities

We must distinguish between two periods in the history of the calamitous events that took place in Andalusia, particularly between those that occurred in the first period, under the Murābiṭūn (1147-1056) and those that took place later, under the crusaders. The Murābiṭūn were not fighting a holy war, and thus were not motivated by religious considerations. They used all manner of methods and means to do away with the al-Ṭūwaif dynasty and take control of the national treasures. There is no denying that in order to accomplish this goal, the Murābiṭūn severely damaged many cities, killing numerous of their inhabitants. They stormed towns, destroyed their gardens, exiled their rulers, and caused their inhabitants to flee. In these battles, in which Muslims persecuted Muslims, the Jewish communities were certainly not spared.

In the second period, the Reconquista, the persecution by the crusaders was even more savage and cruel. These oppressions served two goals. First, the conquest of Andalusia, and the reinstatement of Spanish rule. And second, the declaration of a religious war, as part of the crusades, that aimed at spreading Christianity throughout the world. The extent of these atrocities, and the viciousness with which they were carried out by the crusaders, merit the label of Nakba.

During the Murābiṭūn period, lamentations were written describing the condition of the House of ‛Abad after their capitulation and imprisonment. In the following lamentation, written by Ibn al-Lubaneh (d. 1113), the poet expresses the pain and suffering of his exile. He tries to console himself, and grieves for the Golden Age during which he lived under the House of ‛Abad*.* Ibn al-Lubaneh presents us with a vignette of the sea passage and the exile from the homeland, which are clearly expressed in the following stanza:

سارت سفائنهم والنوح يتبعها كأنها إبل يحدو بها الحادي

كم سال في الماء من دمع وكم حملت تلك القطائع من قطعات أكباد[[17]](#footnote-17)

تبكي السماء بمزن رائح غادي على البهاليل من أبناء عباد[[18]](#footnote-18)

Translation:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Their ships sailed, with wails in their wake | Like a caravan of camels, driven by the songs of the camel driver |
| What rivers of tears the waters carried | O how their flocks were carved out [of the land] like pieces of living flesh from a liver! |
| The skies cry with rain clouds that come and go | raining down on the nobles of House ‘Abad. |

Ibn al-Lubaneh uses verbs in the past tense to describe what led to his present condition. In his verses, tears and sorrow are expressed profusely, in a touching manner, describing the journey of Prince Mu‘tamad ibn ‘Abad (1045-1095), and his humiliation and imprisonment in A‘mat in Tunisia by the Murābiṭūn. In the first verse he describes the ships in which the nobles of House of ‘Abad were deported, likening the ships to a caravan of camels, driven across the sea by the sound of wailing.

In the second verse, the poet wonders at the copious tears that flowed from the eyes of the House of ‘Abad as they parted with their homeland, and their pain at this parting, which he likens to carving pieces of living flesh from the liver. In the third verse, he metaphorically describes the sky as weeping, showering the fall of House ‘Abad with tears.

Further on, Ibn al-Labbānah describes the grim reality of the members of the royal house after the invasion of the Murābiṭūn. In my opinion, this poem can be classified as belonging to the genre of lamentations for kings and queens. The poet focuses specifically on a personal event, and on the pain and sorrow of the royal family, and in this lamentation hardly treats the suffering of the entire nation. The only vignette which might reflect the public lamentation can be found in the final two verses noted above, when read in isolation.

The Poetry of Wailing presents us with difficult images and unpleasant sounds. During the time these poems were written, cries of sorrow and wailing reverberated across all of Andalusia. The enemy behaved cruelly towards the Muslims, even to the point of sadism. The lamentations present us with terrifying vignettes, in which babies are torn from their mothers’ embrace and families are uprooted and slaughtered, while flames devour their houses. The following poem depicts difficult scenes from a battlefield: the defilement of women and girls, an act that played a central role in the lamentations for the cities. This delicate subject was used to provoke feelings of revenge against the Christian invaders. The subgenre of the *istiṣrāh* echoes desperate cries for help which, on the one hand, express the pain and suffering of the exiled poet, and on the other call for redemption and delivery by military means. In this cry, the sadness and pain caused by the horrific events of the present, is mixed with the longing for a beautiful, vanished, past. For all these reasons, this form of poetry was favored by resistance movements that sought to rebel against Christian control.

Ibn al-Alabbār (1199-1260) is considered one of the poets who was greatly saddened by Valencia’s fall to the Crusaders. He wrote two heart-rending lamentations on the subject. In the first, ‘*Nādatka Andalus*’ (‘Andalusia is Calling You’), is a ringing call to the Muslims to rise up immediately and fight the Christians – referred to here as “the people of the cross” – and to give them no quarter. The poet’s exhortation amounts to a cry of pain expressing his great agony. In his helplessness, the poet turns to the Muslim princes of North Africa, hoping they will rally and break the siege of Valencia, which began in 1237. The poet eulogizes the people of the city, recounting their grievous condition, and enumerating the calamities that befell the West and East of the land. The following verse serves as a kind of introduction to the lamentation that calls upon the Muslims to take action:

نادتك أندلس فلب نداءها واجعل طواغيت الصليب فداءها[[19]](#footnote-19)

Translation:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| For Andalusia is calling you, fulfill its cry | Make the tyrants of the cross its victims |

Ibn al-Alabbār’s poem became the focus of a literary dispute. Ḥaryush, a scholar of Andalusian poetry, argues that the poem belonged to the category of lamentations for destroyed cities and kingdoms.[[20]](#footnote-20) Al- Dāyah, on the other hand, considers it a part of the sub-genre of the *istiṣrāh*.[[21]](#footnote-21) I argue, however, that both scholars are correct, as the poem cannot exist as a lamentation without the painful background that provoked the poet to express the suffering of the Andalusians – that is, the attack on Andalusia that left it barren and stricken.

In the second lamentation, Ibn al-Alabbār describes the disaster that befell the symbols of Islam.[[22]](#footnote-22) Ibn al-Alabbār sent this lamentation to the sultan of Tunisia to encourage him to act bravely and redeem Andalusia. In his accompanying letter, al-Alabbār exhorts the sultan to mount his steed and embark on a journey of liberation to the city of Valencia. This lamentation makes use of vignettes describing the grievous condition of the local Muslims, which is poignantly compared to the city’s former glory. The poet’s depiction of synagogues and mosques transformed into churches is a clever use of Islamic (and Jewish) law, according to which such acts of desecration can only be undone by the removal of the impure elements:

أَدْرِكْ بِخَيْلِكَ خَيْلِ اللَّهِ أندلُسَاً إنَّ السَّبِيلَ إلَى مَنْجاتِها دَرَسَا

يَا للجَزيرَةِ أَضْحَى أَهلُها جَزَراً لِلحَادِثَاتِ وأَمْسَى جَدُّهَا تَعَسا

في كُلِّ شارِقَةٍ إِلْمَامُ بَائِقَةٍ يَعُود مَأتَمُها عِندَ العِدَى عُرُسا

فَــمِـنْ دَسَـاكِـرَ كـانَـتْ دُونَـهَـا حَـرَسـاً ومن كنائس كانت قبلها كنُسُا

يَا للْمَساجِدِ عَادَتْ للعِدَى بِيَعاً ولِلنِّداءِ غَدَا أَثْناءَها جَرَسا

وَابْتَز بِزَّتَهَا مِمَّا تَحيَّفَها تحَيفَ الأَسَدِ الضَّارِى لِما افتَرَسا

مَحَا مَحَاسِنَها طاغٍ أُتِيحَ لَها مَا نامَ عَن هَضْمِهَا حِيناً وَلا نَعَسا

وأكْثَرَ الزَّعْمَ بالتَّثْلِيثِ مُنْفَرِداً وَلَوْ رَأَى رأيَةَ التَّوحِيدِ مَا نَبَسا

### هَذِي وَسائِلُها تَدْعوكَ مِنْ كَثَبٍ وَأَنْتَ أفْضَلُ مَرجُوٍّ لِمَنْ يَئِسا

طَهِّرْ بِلادَك مِنْهُم إِنَّهُم نَجَسٌ وَلا طَهَارَةَ ما لَم تَغْسِل النَّجَسا  [[23]](#footnote-23)

Translation:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Mount your horses, the steeds of God, and ride of Andalusia | The road to its redemption is desolate |
| Woe for Al-Gazīrah (Andalusia), and its slaughtered residents | The catastrophes made her grandfather sad. |
| Its East has been struck by woe | And its death and bereavement have become weddings for the enemy |
| The palaces surrounded by entertainment centers were left without guard | And the synagogues became churches |
| Woe for the mosques, which the enemy converted into churches | And for the call to prayer, replaced by the sound of the bell |
| Pitilessly, he exploited her clothes | Like a ravenous lion, hunting |
| Her beauty was erased by a heretic who ruled her | Who stayed awake until he had consumed her |
| He often swore by the trinity | And when he saw the flag of monotheism, he fell utterly silent |
| For she calls you to her | And you are the one most hoped for in the hour of despair |
| Cleanse your land of them, for they have defiled it | There can be no purity without having washed away what is impure. |

Ibn Sahl al-Isrā’ili (1208-1251) also cried out in impassioned tones, urging the North African Muslims to awaken from their slumber and attack the enemy.[[24]](#footnote-24) In the first verse of the following poem of exhortation he urgently calls upon them to make haste, invoking the duty of Jihād, the Holy War, and reminding them of the honor and pride for which the ancient Arabs had been known:

نادي الجهاد بكم بنصر مضمر يبدو لكم بين القنا والضمر

حلوا الديار لدار عز واركبوا عبر العجاج إلى النعيم الأخضر

يا معشر العرب الذين توارثوا شيم الحمية كابرا عن أكبر

إن الإله قد اشترى أرواحكم بيعوا ويهنئكم وفاء المشتري[[25]](#footnote-25)

Translation:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Call for a Jihād that will have a secret victory | It will appear to you to be between the lance and the horses |
| Enter the grand estates and ride | Through the dust of battle, to Heaven |
| O ye Arabs who have inherited | The qualities of fury and pride |
| For the Almighty has already bought your souls | Sell [them] to him and enjoy the good faith of the Buyer. |

This poem is a call to wage a Holy War against the enemies. It begins with a general call to the reader to embark on a Holy War, without specifically mentioning who this reader is supposed to be. But in the third verse the poet makes a sudden, direct appeal to the Arab Nation as a whole. This is new attempt in the history of the Poetry of Wailing. I argue that this aesthetic and poetic innovation points to the extent of the suffering and helplessness experienced by the Andalusians. One of the principles of Jihād is that those who die while fighting for the homeland and Islam are considered as living in God’s company, and pass from this world into heaven. As is written in the Qurʾān: “Never think that those who were slain in the cause of God are dead. They are alive, and well provided for by their Lord.”[[26]](#footnote-26) This principle is expressed in the fourth verse, where the poet distracts the warriors from death. He placates their qualms, reminding them that God will provide deliverance and secure their passage to heaven.

The Reconquista, in which Andalusian cities fell to the Christians, greatly stimulated the development of the poetry of Jihād and unification, in which vistas of the lost cities were recorded, along with difficult scenes to which their streets bore witness, in particular the unanswered cries for help of the victims. These poems were meant as a literary translation of these cries, intended to reach Muslims both in Andalusia and abroad, calling upon them to rally and repel the enemy, who had the upper hand. The lamentations for the cities were authentic expressions of grief that voiced sincere feelings. The Andalusians classified the poetry of Jihād and the cries for redemption into a number of categories:

1. The *Istiṣrāh*: a cry which acts as a call to set out on a Holy War (Jihād).
2. The description of battles and war.
3. Laudations for leaders and military heroes.
4. Lamentations for cities that fell to the enemy.

Aiḥsan ‛Abas, a literary scholar who studied the Andalusian lamentations,[[27]](#footnote-27) argues that due to the multiplicity of calamities, many of the poems written in this genre failed to rouse the emotions of their readers.[[28]](#footnote-28) The cry for redemption was also expressed in the act of beseeching God, and recounting before Him the litany of calamities which had befallen the cities. The lamentations acted as appeals to God, calling upon Him to intervene and put a stop to the tragedies unfolding in the city streets.

At the center of the Andalusian lamentations are the cries for vengeance, poems calling for retribution for the disaster that befell Muslim and Jewish communities in Spain. As opposed to these, other lamentations depict the suffering of the Muslims who did not succeed in escaping when their cities were conquered and sacked by the Murābiṭūn. These residents were forced to witness the pillage of their cities.[[29]](#footnote-29)

Umar al-Daqqaq considers this poetry as the direct result of having witnessed deeply distressing scenes, which evoked profound feelings of grief and sorrow. For al-Daqqaq, the emotional tenor of the poems is an expression of the extent of suffering that the cities’ inhabitants underwent, and the bitter lessons that they learned. The tears and pain are hardly noticeable in the first lamentations, where instead we find the open gaze of the poet, observing the cosmos and the world, and considering the events that have taken place. This gaze is styled as deeply philosophical and contemplative, and is one of the characteristics of this genre in Andalusia.[[30]](#footnote-30)

Abu al-Baqā’ al-Rundī (1204-1285), considered one of the more zealously Muslim poets, responded in verse to the fall of Seville in 1248, at the hands of Ferdinand III of Castile. This event, alongside the mostly symbolic conquest of Cordoba two years earlier, created a new political map, redefining the religious and cultural topography of Spain, a process that had begun already in 1085. In his lamentation “*Li Kul Shān Iḏa Ma Tamma Nuqṣān*,” he describes the dismal state of affairs of the Muslims, and the acts of destruction committed by the Christians. Al-Rundī was greatly saddened by the scope of the annihilation, and particularly the desecration of the mosques and the defacement of Islamic architecture and cultural heritage. Al-Rundī’s lamentation is 43 stanzas long, written with a single, continuous rhyme that flows through the entire poem.[[31]](#footnote-31)

The poem does not contain even the faintest echo of a personal voice, and the poet speaks as a mouthpiece for the common values of the Andalusian nation, the Muslim community of Spain. The poem’s mournful tone and grim subject matter require direct expression. It is completely unadorned, a style that sets it at variance with the highly stylized, flowery Spanish-Arab court poetry of the 13th century. The poem is divided into four parts: the introduction runs from verses 1 to 13; Verse 14 serves as a transition; Verses 15-24 describe the catastrophe; and Verses 42-45 present the solution, supplicating for external military intervention. The lamentation opens with a traditional, universal philosophical tone, emphasizing the brevity of life, and its arbitrary nature.[[32]](#footnote-32)

لِكُلِّ شَيءٍ إِذا ما تَمّ نُقصانُ فَلا يُغَرَّ بِطيبِ العَيشِ إِنسانُ

Translation:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Everything that has not ended has its lack | So be not tempted by the sweetness of life. |

The first part of the poem mourns the accomplishments of long-vanished kings, whose fate it was to fall. Verse 14 marks the transition to the poet’s subjective grievances. At this point the poem shifts from the general to the specific, examining the contrast between the historical calamities just enumerated, and the much nearer, inconsolable disaster that occurred in Andalusia, which was of much greater extent (verses 14-16):

وَلِلحَوادِثِ سلوانٌ يُهوّنُها وَما لِما حَلَّ بِالإِسلامِ سلوانُ

دهى الجَزيرَة أَمرٌ لا عَزاءَ لَهُ هَوَى لَهُ أُحُدٌ وَاِنهَدَّ ثَهلانُ

أصابَها العينُ في الإِسلامِ فاِرتزَأت حَتّى خَلَت مِنهُ أَقطارٌ وَبُلدانُ

Translation:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Oblivion eases time’s calamities | But there is no consolation for what has harmed Islam |
| A calamity struck the peninsula [Andalusia] for which there is no solace | It toppled mount Auḥud and scattered the tribe of Ṯahalān |
| The evil eye struck Islam and it was divided | And whole districts and provinces were emptied [of the faithful] |

Much like Ibn Ezra, one of the most distinguished medieval Jewish commentators and philosophers, al-Rundī creates a list of large Andalusian cities that fell, and, in the second part of his poem (lines 15-24), he ask “where have they all gone.” He presents the social disintegration both in terms of the decline of education, and in terms of lost pleasures. In the latter there is an allusion to the afterlife, where, as the Qurʾān tells us, “rivers of the clearest waters will flow.”

وَأَينَ حمص وَما تَحويِهِ مِن نُزَهٍ وَنَهرُها العَذبُ فَيّاضٌ وَمَلآنُ

Translation:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| And where is Ḥums (Seville), and the pleasures it contained | Its sweet river, swelled and overflowing? |

Both Muslims and Jews in Andalusia experienced their disaster as a unique trauma. Much as in Abraham ibn Ezra’s poem, “A Lament for Andalusian Jewry,” here too the image of destroyed buildings and religious symbols, and the widespread looting, intensify the sense of disgrace and helplessness at the loss of Muslim power, (lines 21-24):

تَبكِي الحَنيفِيَّةُ البَيضَاءُ مِن أَسَفٍ كَما بَكى لِفِراقِ الإِلفِ هَيمَانُ

عَلى دِيارٍ منَ الإِسلامِ خالِيَةٍ قَد أَقفَرَت وَلَها بالكُفرِ عُمرانُ

حَيثُ المَساجِدُ قَد صارَت كَنائِس ما فيهِنَّ إِلّا نَواقِيسٌ وصلبانُ

حَتّى المَحاريبُ تَبكي وَهيَ جامِدَةٌ حَتّى المَنابِرُ تَبكي وَهيَ عيدَانُ

Translation:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| The faucet for ritual purification cries tears of sorrow | Like a lover crying over separation from his beloved |
| [It cries] for houses emptied of Islam | Laid waste, and settled by heretics |
| Where the mosques were turned into churches | Filled only with bells and crosses |
| Even the prayer niches cry although they are frozen stone | And the pulpits cry, although they are aught but twigs. |

Al-Rundī’s poem does not end with a note of supplication, as Ibn Ezra’s does, but rather with a heartfelt cry for military help from North Africa, in order to halt the Christian onslaught.

يا أَيُّها المَلكُ البَيضاءُ رايَتُهُ أَدرِك بِسَيفِكَ أَهلَ الكُفرِ لا كانوا

وَراتِعينَ وَراءَ البَحرِ في دعةٍ لَهُم بِأَوطانِهِم عِزٌّ وَسلطانُ

Translation:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| O king of the white banner | Take revenge on the heathen with your sword |
| And those who feast beyond the sea with equanimity | Enjoying might and power in their own lands. |

The poet ironically mocks the Berbers and their excessive material splendor. During the 11th and 12th centuries, the ostentatiousness of the Berber court and their neglect of Islamic religious duties were a source for friction with the strictly religious Murābiṭūn and the Muwaḥḥidūn, who sought to strengthen the pillars of faith.[[33]](#footnote-33) Al-Rundī composed his famous lamentation in 1266, after most of the cities had been conquered by the crusaders. In the following verses he expresses his emotions when faced with the cruel violation of women and girls:

وطفلة مثل حسن الشمس إذا طلعت كأنما هي ياقوت ومرجان

يقودها العلج للمكروه مكرهة والعين باكية والقلب حيران

لمثل هذا يذوب القلب من كمد إن كان في القلب إسلام وإيمان[[34]](#footnote-34)

Translation:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| And a girl as beautiful as the sun | Who shone like coral and precious stones |
| They lead her, the hateful savages, to an [act] of violation | And the eye cries, and the heart is confused |
| Such sights make the heart dissolve from loss | If that heart has Islam and true faith |

The Muslims considered their defeat much as the Jews understood the prolongation of their exile: these were divine punishments, and therefore proof of religious negligence. The Reconquista worsened the living conditions of the Muslims and necessitated an even more extreme response. Despite the fact that Muslims tended to see historical events as reflecting the will of God, the patterns of exile in al-Rundī’s poem have a political message that is no less important than the purely religious one. In the Hebrew language lamentation of Abraham ibn Ezra, to which I refer below, the expectation for redemption is very prominent. Ibn Ezra’s tried and tested solution for the problem of exile is spiritual resistance, whereas when al-Rundī speaks of resistance, he invariably means physical resistance.[[35]](#footnote-35)

The examples cited above show that the lamentations for the destroyed cities depict the destruction from numerous angles. They are replete with descriptions of the devastation of buildings, and atrocities committed against the local, non-combatant, civilian population. Moreover, they document the violation of women and girls, the murder of babies before their mothers’ eyes, the massacre of men and children, and the desecration of the mosques, that were transformed into churches.

The national lamentations collected in Bernstein’s anthology, *On Spain’s Rivers*, and Bernfeld’s *Book of Tears* depict similar scenes, experienced by the Jews who lived in Andalusia before they were exiled. Moses Ibn Ezra’s lamentation *Me‛onoṯ Ma‛anoti Ne’elamot*, on the subject of exile and loss, is considered one of his most personal poems. However, it bears a remarkable resemblance to Al-Rundī’s poem, cited above:

מְעוֹנוֹת מֵעֲנוֹתִי נֶאֱלָמוֹת / וְאָזְנֵיהֶם שְמֹעַ לִי עֲרֵלוֹת

וְאָנוּ שַעֲרֵיהֶם מִבְּלִי-אִיש / וְדַרְכֵיהֶם בְּלִי עֹבֵר אֲבֵלוֹת

עֲנַן עֵינַי לְאַט יַזִּיל דְּמָעוֹת / וְאַךְ הֵמָּה בְּדַם לִבִּי מְהוּלוֹת

וּמָה-הוֹעִיל בְּצָעְקִי אֶל-גְּדֵרוֹת / פְּרוּצוֹת מִמְּטַר בִּכְיִי וּבָלוֹת

יְצָאוּנִי שְכוּנֵיהֶם וְעָלוּ / בְרַגְלֵיהֶם לְבָבוֹת הָאֲמֻלוֹת

וְהָלְכוּ הֵם לְמַסְעֵיהֶם וְזִכְרָם / יְחַזֵּק הַנְּפָשוֹת הַנְּחָלוֹת

וּבִמְקֻצְעוֹת מְגוּרֵיהֶם קְצִיעוֹת / וְרֵיחַ אָהֳלֵיהֶם כַּאֲהָלוֹת[[36]](#footnote-36)

Translation:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Their campsites are mute; they do not answer me.  Their ears, not hearing me, are covered over.  Their entryways lament, devoid of any man,  and their roads, without a passerby, are in mourning.  The clouds of my eyes gently trickle down tears,  but with the blood of my heart, they are mixed. […] | But what is the use of my crying at walls  collapsed from the rain of my tears, worn out?  Their inhabitants left me and  saddened hearts went up in their path.  They went on their journey but their memory  restores strength to sick souls.  And in the corners of their dwelling there is cassia,  and the smell of their tents is like aloe. |
|  |  |
|  |  |

This poem begins with a bitter complaint about loneliness, in which the poet relates certain autobiographic details.[[37]](#footnote-37) The rhyme between the first and the second verse presents the reader with a kind of austere desert splendor, in which *ne’elamot* (mute)is likened to *‘arelot* (covered over), two words that differ in a letter and a vowel.

A feeling of deep sorrow, grief, and sadness overtakes the poet. The loss, the destruction, and the ramifications of the act of abandoning one’s home, are all expressed in the first and second stanzas. The houses are empty, and their residents do not heed the cries of the poet, who wanders the cities’ empty streets, gazing at their locked gates and empty streets. He sees the streets as though they are mourning for their missing passersby. The first two verses paint once bustling places in colors of emptiness and sorrow, reminiscent of such verses from the Book of Lamentations as “The ways of Zion do mourn,” or “and I will make the cities of Judah desolate, without an inhabitant.”[[38]](#footnote-38) In the third verse, the poet observes the desolate scene, and sheds tears stained “with the blood of [his] heart,” a term he borrows from Abraham ibn Ezra, along with the phrase “the clouds of my eyes.” In the fourth verse, the narrator admits his helplessness in the face of broken fences and desolation. In the fifth and sixth verses he depicts the miserable condition of the Andalusians – “How weak is thine heart!”[[39]](#footnote-39) – who were forced to leave their homes and take up a life of wandering. Their memory of these places is the only thing that makes them stronger. In the seventh verse, the poet likens the refugees’ domiciles to the leaves of scented plants, referring to their aromas of perfume wafting from their tents.[[40]](#footnote-40) The poet Abu al-‘Abās al-Daqūn used a similar description in one of the lamentations he composed for the fall of Andalusia:[[41]](#footnote-41)

وهم لديه كطير, وهو ينتفه, والطير يرجو البقاء مع كيد قتال[[42]](#footnote-42)

Translation:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| For they (the Muslims) are like a plucked bird | Begging for its life although almost dead |

This language of this image, suggestive of an almost brutal scene, is indicative of the viciousness of the Crusaders and the helplessness of the persecuted Muslims. Moreover, it is a characteristic example of the simple, direct language of the lamentations and their poetic technique, that stand out when compared to the more elaborate style of the earlier genres of Andalusian poetry.

This description repeats itself often in the lamentations, in which images of the destroyed cities alternate with those of the abandoned populace, left homeless and forlorn, desperately desiring to return to their homes but unable to do so. The expression “*uv‛ir yarad hadarah va-hamonah,*”[[43]](#footnote-43) contains a linguistic allusion to the condition of Jerusalem after destruction of the temple (according to the Book of Lamentations), but this term is used by Ibn Ezra to refer to his home in Granada.[[44]](#footnote-44) Ibn Ezra was among those who were forced to become refugees, and fled their former homes, impoverished and destitute. He remained in Granada for a number of years, for reasons that are still unclear, an exile in the place where he was born.[[45]](#footnote-45) During this time he lived a life of poverty and loneliness, a fate which was common to many other poets, particularly Muslim ones, who were forcibly displaced and exiled from their homeland. Ibn Ezra’s descriptions of his ravished native country influenced the Muslim poet Abu al-Baqā’ al-Rundī, in his lamentation for the fall of Runda and Málaga:

أحقا خبا من جو رندة نورها وقد كسفت بعد الشموس بدورها

فمالقة الحسناء ثكلى أسيفه قد استفرغت ذبحا وقتلا حجورها[[46]](#footnote-46)

Translation:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Has the light of Runda really vanished | Its moons eclipsed after its suns |
| And Malaga the fair, bereaved and sad | Its courts emptied by massacres and murders. |

Al-Rundī compares the state of the city to a pitch-dark day, in which both the sun and the moon have been eclipsed. The light of the radiant city of Runda, whose past was as brilliant as its buildings were beautiful, was extinguished by the heinous acts committed by the enemy in its streets. Malaga, likened here to a beautiful woman, is transformed into a bereaved mother, a figure completely forlorn. These cities’ fate was similar to Granada’s.

Abraham ben Meir ibn Ezra (1090-1167) was born in Tudela, and lived in Spain for close to fifty years. In 1140, the same year that Judah Halevi embarked on his final journey to the Holy Land, Ibn Ezra fled Andalusia, most likely due to a sense of the impending disaster. Having conquered North Africa, the Muwaḥḥidūn had set out to take Spain from the Murābiṭūn. Their conquest quickly turned into a bloody series of pogroms conducted against the local Jewish communities. The Spanish Jews were allowed to choose between forced conversion to Islam and death. Many refused to convert and were killed.

Tidings of these calamitous events reached Ibn Ezra in his place of exile in Rome, where he wrote his “Lamentation for Andalusian Jewry.” There he describes the massacre of the local Jews, and weeps for their bitter fate. This lamentation was to have great historic significance, as Ibn Ezra carefully lists the cities in Spain and North Africa that were heavily damaged, both in this wave of conquest and in the one committed by the crusaders. Ibn Ezra places the responsibility for the events on the heavens, a severe act of repudiation which he undertakes in light of the harsh fate of the local Jews. His tears and cries of sorrow for the Jewish cities are unending. In Ibn Ezra’s Hebrew lamentations, the expectation for redemption is writ large. His time-tried solution to the problem of exile is spiritual resistance, whereas al-Rundī favors physical resistance.[[47]](#footnote-47)

Abraham ibn Ezra’s lamentation is a source that teaches us about hatred towards Jews during the 11th and 12th centuries, which was the Jewish Golden Age in Spain, and the height of its Hebrew poetry. The looters were fueled by hatred, which incited them to commit pogroms, as mentioned above. At the same time, other sources mention the fact that the Muslim rule in Spain was a particularly lawful and orderly period, marked by a rule of law and religious tolerance for non-Muslims.[[48]](#footnote-48)

This lamentation by Abraham ibn Ezra deals with objective events, and not with the metaphysics of exile. It is, most likely, one of the earliest Hebrew lamentations to deal with collective persecution from a historical perspective.[[49]](#footnote-49) In the next poem, “A Lamentation of Andalusian Jewry,” Ibn Ezra begins from the reasons that grief and sorrow have engulfed the Jews – the evil which the heavens have dealt them, in spite of their innocence. He emphasizes the grievous nature of the position of the Jews, wandering and exiled, the desecration of the Torah and the holy scriptures, and the destruction of institutions for religious learning and their libraries. His poetry shows us images of the enemies’ happiness, who are joyous while Jews are killed, their honor besmeared, their women and daughters defiled by foreigners, and their prisoners crying out to Heaven in pain. The narrator speaks almost like a cantor, and the lamentation bears semblance to liturgical poems, echoing the voice of exilic Jewish communities.[[50]](#footnote-50) Yet this lamentation was not included in the Jewish prayerbook.[[51]](#footnote-51)

אֲהָהּ יָרַד / עֲלֵי סְפָרַד / רַע מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם,  
וּסָפֹד רַב / עֲלֵי מַעֲרָב / לַזֹּאת רָפוּ יָדָיִם.

עֵינִי עֵינִי / יָרְדָה מַיִם.  
בְּכוֹת עֵינִי / בְּמַעְיָנִי / עַל עִיר אֶלְיוֹסַנָּה,  
בְּאֵין אָשֵָׁם / לְבָדָד שָׁם / הַגּוֹלָה שָׁכָנָה;  
בְּאֵין סֶלֶף / עֲדֵי אֶלֶף / שָׁנִים, וְשִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה,  
וּבָא יוֹמָהּ / וְנָד עַמָּה / וְגַם הָיְתָה כְּאַלְמָנָה;  
בְּאֵין תּוֹרָה / וְאֵין מִקְרָא / וְהַמִּשְׁנָה נִטְמָנָה,  
וְהַתַּלְמוּד / כְּמוֹ גַּלְמוּד / כִּי כָל הוֹדוֹ פָּנָה,  
וְיֵשׁ הֹרְגִים / וְיֵשׁ עֹרְגִים / מָקוֹם, אָנֶה וְאָנָה,  
מְקוֹם תְּפִלָּה / וְגַם תְּהִלָּה / לְבֵית תִּפְלָה נִתָּנָה,  
וְקָרַע זָר / וְגוֹי אַכְזָר / דָּת אֵל הַנֶּאֱמָנָה,  
לְזֹאת אֶבְכֶּה / וְכַף אַכֶּה / וּבְפִי תָּמִיד קִינָה,  
וְאֵין לִי דֳּמִי / וְאֹמַר מִי / יִתֵּן רָאשִׁי מַיִם.  
וְרֹאשׁ אֶקְרַח / וּמַר אֶצְרַח / עַל גּוֹלַת אַשְׁבִּילְיָה,  
עֲלֵי נְשִׂיאִים / וְהַקְרֻאִים / בְּשֵׁמוֹת וַחֲכָמֶיהָ.  
וְעַל אֲצִילִים / וְהֵם חֲלָלִים / וּבְנֵיהֶם בַּשִׁבְיָה,  
וְעַל בָּנוֹת / וּמַעֲדַנוֹת / נִמְסְרוּ לְדָת נָכְרִיָּה,  
וְאֵיךְ עֲזוּבָה / מְאֹד קוֹרְטְבָה / וּתְהִי כַיָם שֶׁאִיָּה,  
וְשָׁם חֲכָמִים / וְגַם עֲצוּמִים / מֵתוּ בְּרָעָב וְצִיָּה;  
וְאֵין יְהוּדִי / וְגַם יְחִידִי / בְּגַיָאן גַּם אַלְמַרִיָה,  
וּמָיוֹרְקָה / וְעִיר מְלַקָּה / לֹא נִשְׁאֲרָה שָׁם מִחְיָה.  
וְהַיְּהוּדִים / וְהַשְּׁדוּדִים / הֻכּוּ מַכָּה טְרִיָּה.  
לְזֹאת אֶסְפְּדָה / וּמַר אֶלְמְדָה / וְאֶנְהֶה עוֹד נֶהִי נְהִיָּה,  
לְשַׁאֲגוֹתַי / בְּתוּגוֹתַי / וְיִמָּאֲסוּ כְּמוֹ מַיִם.  
וְהוֹי אֶקְרָא / כִּמְצֵרָה / עַל קְהִלַּת סַגְלְמַאסָה,  
וְעִיר גְּאוֹנִים / וּנְבוֹנִים / מְאוֹרָם חֹשֶׁךְ כִּסָּה;  
וְשָׁח עַמּוּד / וְהַתַּלְמוּד / וְהַבִּנְיָּה נֶהֱרָסָה,  
וְהַמִּשְׁנָה / לִשְׁנִינָה / בְּרַגְלַיִם נִרְמָסָה;  
וְעִיר מְלוּכָה / וְהַנְּבוֹכָה / מַרְאכָס הַמְיֻחַסָה,  
עֲלֵי יְקָרִים / מְדֻקָרִים / עֵין אוֹיֵב לֹא חַסָה;  
אֲהָה אָפַס / קְהַל פַאס / יוֹם נָתְנוּ לִמְשִׁסָה,  
וְאֵי חֹסֶן / קְהַל תַּלְמְסֶן / וְהַדְרָתָה נָמַסָה;  
וְקוֹל אָרִים / בְּתַמְרוּרִים / עֲלֵי סַבְתָּה וּמַכְנְאסָה,  
וְסּוּת אֶקְרְעָה / עֲלֵי דַרְעָה / אֲשֶׁר לְפָנִים נִתְפָּשָׂה,  
וּבְיּוֹם שַׁבָּת / וּבֵן עִם בַּת / שָׁפְכוּ דָּמָם כְּמַּיִם.  
וּמָה אַעַן / הֲכִי לְמַעַן / חָטָאתִי זֹאת הָיְתָה,  
וּמֵאֵלִי / וְצוּר חֵילִי / רָעָה אֵלַי כָּלְתָה,  
לְמִי אֶשָֹבֵּר / וְגַם אֲדַבֵּר / וְהַכֹּל יָדוֹ עָשְׂתָה,  
וְחַם לִבִּי / בְּתוֹךְ קִרְבִּי / עַל נַפְשִׁי אֲשֶׁר עִוְּתָה;  
וּמֵאַרְצָה / מְחוֹז חֶפְצָה / לְאֶרֶץ טְמֵאָה גָּלְתָה,  
וְנִכְלָמָה / וְנֶאֱלָמָה / לְסַפֵּר תְּלָאוֹת רָאֲתָה;  
וְעִם כְּאֵבָהּ / וּבִלְבָבָהּ / לְחֶסֶד צוּרָה קִוְתָה,  
לְצַוֹת פְּדוּת / וּמֵעַבְדוּת / כִּי בְּצֵל כְּנָפָיו חָסְתָה;  
בְּבֵית כְּלָאִים / בְּכָל עֵת אִם / זָכְרָה שְׁמוֹ אָז חָיְתָה,  
וְרַק בִּכְיָהּ / עֲלֵי לֶחֱיָהּ / בְּיָד אָמָה אֲשֶׁר קַשְׁתָּהּ  
מְאֹד תִּירָא / עֲדֵי יֵרָא / אֱלֹהִים מִשָּׁמָיִם.[[52]](#footnote-52)

Calamity came upon Spain from the skies,

and my eyes pour forth their streams of tears.

I moan like an owl for the town of Lucena,

where Exile dwelled, guiltless and strong,

for a thousand and seventy years unchanged

until the day that she was expelled,

leaving her like a widow, forlorn,

deprived of the Scriptures and books of the Law.

As the house of prayer took folly in,

some men murdered and others sought shelter.

For this I weep and, mourning, wail:

If only my head were a fountain of water.

I shave my head and bitterly keen

for Seville’s martyrs and sons who were taken,

as daughters were forced into strangeness of faith.

Córdoba’s ruined, like the desolate sea:

its nobles and sages have perished in hunger.

There are no Jews left in Jaén,

Majorca, Malaga, and Almería;

all traces of life are gone—

and those who survived were beaten down.

For this I wail in my grief and mourn—

for they have melted away like water.

For Sijilmása I groan in distress—

city of sages whose light barred darkness—

its pillar of Talmud was toppled and broken;

its Mishnah was trampled, cursed, and crushed.

The upright were slaughtered and no one was spared.

Fez was razed and its brethren butchered.

Telmesen’s splendor shines no more.

For Meknes and Cueta my cry is bitter.

For Der’a I put on sackcloth and mourn:

their blood, on the Sabbath, was spilled like water.

What could I hope for or possibly say—

when this is the work of my own hand?

From God this calamity has come upon me,

and now within me my heart’s aﬂame

for my soul which has strayed from longed-for lands

and silently grieves in her trouble and shame.

She hopes for mercy from her Rock and strength,

for refuge beneath His wing’s shadow.

Whenever she thinks of His name she revives,

though she’ll face the hail of her handmaiden’s arrows—

till the Lord with compassion looks down from the skies.[[53]](#footnote-53)

In his “*Oi Ason Mi-Shamaim Nafal ‘Al Andalusia*,” (“Woe, misfortune from heaven has befallen Andalusia”) Abraham ibn Ezra opens with words of pain and anguish, reminiscent of his “Lamentation for Andalusian Jewry” cited above. In this poem, in which he describes the horrors of destruction and the pain of persecution, the poet grieves for the destruction of the Jewish communities in Andalusia and the Maghreb. It echoes the cry of pain experienced by Jews under Muslim rule – a cry that resounded through the Jewish world. Abraham ibn Ezra lists the afflicted communities, swept away by persecution and destruction. He describes his feelings of impotence when the houses of prayer were desecrated by strangers, grieving for the fall of Cordoba and its rabbis, and the other Jewish communities in the Maghreb and Andalusia.

אוי, אסון משמים נפל על אנדלוסיה,

ואבל גדול פקד את המגרב.

לכן אני חסר אונים;

עיניי מוצפות בבכי...

בתי תפילה ושבח

הפכו לבתים של כפירה.

כי עם זר ועז-מצח

קרע לגזרים את האמונה הנאמנה באלוהים...

כיצד העיר קורדובה הוזנחה כליל,

הפכה לאוקיינוס של חורבות!

חכמיה ומפרנסיה נספחו ברעב ובצמא,

אף לא יהודי אחד, שורד בחאן ולא באלמריה...

כיצד נהרס המגרב בחוסר אונים?

אוי אסון משמים נפל על אנדלוסיה;

עיניי מוצפות בבכי...

אוי אני בוכה כמו אישה במצוקה,

עבור הקהילה של סיג'ילמסה;

עיר של למדנים וחכמים,

אשר ברקם נבלע בחשיכה.[[54]](#footnote-54)

Translation:

Woe misfortune from heaven has befallen Andalusia,

And a great mourning overtaken the Maghreb.

Therefore am I helpless;

My eyes are swollen with weeping. […]

The houses of prayer and praise transformed into mosques.

For a fierce and foreign people has torn asunder

the faithful creed of God. […]

Alas the city of Cordoba is utterly forsaken,

Reduced to an ocean of ruins!

Her sages and magnates perished from hunger and thirst;

Not a single Jew survives in Jaen or Almeria. […]

How was the Maghreb helplessly devastated?

Woe misfortune from heaven has befallen Andalusia;

My eyes overflow with weeping. […]

I cry in woe as a woman in labor,

For the congregation of Sijilmāsa;

City of scholars and sages,

Whose brilliance was engulfed by darkness.[[55]](#footnote-55)

“In the Jewish year of5151 , in Hispania [Andalusia], a terrible destruction [Nakba] took place, which afflicted not only the Jews of these lands, but the entire nation. These events are a major occurrence in the development of human culture. Their manifold repercussions have not yet been studied. In year 5151 the true tragedy began. The events of that year portended the deportation that was to follow, and from the time of the crisis, the Jewish community in Hispania began to die. Finally, its end arrived, and it expired.”[[56]](#footnote-56)

[The following poem was written by] an anonymous Jewish poet. It is a heart-wrenching lamentation that describes what happened to the Andalusian cities and their Jewish communities:

On the first of the suddenly bitter month of Tamuz, the Lord drew His bow against the Jewish community of Seville and the region, who numbered six or seven thousand home-owners. Its gates were burned, and many were killed, but most converted, selling their children and women into Muslim bondage. Many died a martyr’s death [*al kedushat hashem*], while many others profaned the holy covenant. From thence spread the fire that consumed all the cedars of Lebanon, the holy city, the community of Cordoba, in which many also converted, and which became a ruin. The fate of Toledo was no different, [its residents] converted, and could not defend themselves. A similar fate was shared by Jews in other cities, whose number reached 70.[[57]](#footnote-57)

Below is a letter of lamentation, written by Rabbi Don Hasdai Crescas, included by Bernfeld in the *Book of Tears*. It relates the intense pain and grief at the fall of the communities of Seville, Castille, and Andalusia, and recounts the humiliating behavior to which the local Jews were subjected in Catalonia and Aragon.[[58]](#footnote-58)

**קינה על גזירות שנת קנ״א**

**שִׁמְעוּ כָּל עַמִּים תּוּגָתִי**

**כִּי גָדְלָה וְגַם אַנְחָתִי;**

**לְזֹאת עֵינִי בְדִמְעָתִי**

**אֲרְוֶּה וְתִדַּר שְׁנָתִי.**

**שִׁמְעוּ נְהָרוֹת וְיַמִּים;**

**וּגְבָעוֹת וְהָרִים רָמִּים,**

**אֶבְכֶּה בֵּין אֵפֶר וּפֶחָמִים**

**אַתְאַבֵּל לֵילוֹת וְיָמִים.**

**שִׁמְעוּ אֶרֶץ וְשָׁמַיִם,**

**וְאֶבְכֶּה בְּכִִי אֶגְְלַיִם**

**עַל שִִׁמֲמוֹת רִבּוַתִים-**

**מִּיוֹם צֵאֲתִִי מִירוּשָׁלָיִם.**

**בִּפְרָט יְלָלָה רַבָּה נִהְיָה**

**בִּשְׁנַת הַקַנָּ״א בַשְׁאִיָּה;**

**כִּי נֶחֱרַב קְהַל אִישְׁבִילְיָה**

**וּקְהִלוֹת רַבּוֹת בְּקַשְׁטִילְיָה.**

**וּקְהִלוֹת כָּל אַנְדַּלוּס,**

**וּּבִפְּרוֹבִינְצִיָה רַע נָחוּץ,**

**וּבְקַטַּלוֹנְיָה הָיָה לָבוּז,**

**וְאַרַגוֹן עִמָּם אָחוּּז.**

**יְהוּדָה וְעַם יִשְֹרָאֵל,**

**סוּרוּ מִן יֵצֶר מִתְגָּאֵל-**

**וְאוּלַי יֶחֱנַן הָאֵל**

**וְיִשְׁלַח לָכֶם הַגּוֹאֵל.**

**בֶּן דָּוִדִ יָבוֹא לִקְהָלָם,**

**יִבְנֶה מִקְדַּשׁ אֵל וְְאוֹלָם;**

**שָׁם יְשַׁבְּחוּהוּ כֻּלָָם:**

**בָּרוּךְ שֶׁאָמַר וְהָיָה הָעוֹלָם.**[[59]](#footnote-59)

Translation:

All nations, hear my grief

For it is great, as is my sighing;

For this, my eyes with my tears

Are inundated, and my sleep is disturbed.

Listen, rivers and seas,

And hills and high mountains,

I weep among the ashes and cinders,

Mourning night and day.

Earth and sky – listen!

As I weep, dripping tears

Over the desolation of myriads

Since the day I left Jerusalem.

The greatest came to be

In the year of destruction 5151;

For the community of Seville was destroyed

Along with many communities in Castille.

In the communities throughout Andalusia

And in Provence, was evil manifest,

While in Catalonia they ravaged

And Aragon was seized with them.

O Judah and the nation of Israel,

Turn away from your tainted urges,

And perhaps God will show mercy

And send you the redeemer.

To their community the son of David will come,

And build God’s Temple and hall;

There, all will praise Him

Blessed is He who spoke, and the world became.

Another lamentation collected by Bernfeld concerns the pogroms of 1391, and describes the fall of Seville, Cordoba, and Toledo, which were plundered by the enemy. It includes descriptions of the massacres committed in Barcelona.[[60]](#footnote-60) In this lamentation, the poet places the responsibility for the destruction on God: “It was in your name, o God of Israel, that foreigners shook the city.” He appeals to God to redeem the people from their plight:

"בִּמְקוֹם אֲהָהּ אָרִים בִּתְרוּעָה, בְּבוֹא יִנּוֹן וְאֵלִיָּה גוֹאֲלִי"

כָּל נְשִֹיאֵי שֵֹבִילְיָה,

הַנִּשְׁבָּעִים בְּשֵׁם יָהּ-

בֵּאִלֹהֵי יִשְֹרָאֵל.

פְּאֵר גּוֹלָה גַּם טוּבָה,

אַנְשֵֹי קְהַל קוֹרְטוֹבָה

כִּי לע...וּבָה

בְּשִֹמְךָ יִשְֹרָאֵל.

טִלְטֵל זָר טַלְטֵֵלָה

לִקְהִלַּת טוּלִיטוּלָה;

לָקְחוּּ אֵת כָּל שְׁלָלָהּ-

מִכָּל אִִישׁ יִשְֹרָאֵל.

עֲדַת קֹדֶשֹ בַּרְֵצלוֹנָה,

הֲרוּגֵי חֶרֶב שְֹמֵנָה,

שְׁאֵרִית כָּל –שִִֹטְנָה-

מִבְּנֵי יִשְֹרָאֵל.

יוֹם מְאוֹרִי חָשַׁךְ בְּגֵרוּשׁ קַסְטִילְיָא  
אוֹי לִי עַל שִׁבְרִי  
שֶׁבֶר יְרוּשָׁלַיִם אַל תִּזְכְּרִי עוֹד  
אֲהָה עָלַי וְאוֹיָה לִי  
כִּי לְשֶׁבֶר קַאסְטִילְיָא לֹא נִמְצָא צֳרִי  
  
מִפּוֹרְטוּגַל נִשְׁמַע קוֹל נְהִי בְּמָרָה  
אֲהָה עָלַי וְאַלְלַי  
כִּי אֵין שֶׁבֶר כְּשִׁבְרִי וּמָזוֹר כִּמְזוֹרִי  
  
עַז פָּנִים מֶלֶךְ קָשֶׁה מְנֻוָּל שְׁמוֹ  
אֲהָה עָלַי וְאוֹיָה לִי  
שָׁכַח שֵׁם אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁעִי וְאוֹרִי  
  
יְלָדִים הָאוֹמְרִים בְּכָל יוֹם שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל  
אֲהָה עָלַי וְאַלְלַי  
אוֹמְרִים לָעֵץ הָקִיצָה וְלָאֶבֶן עוּרִי  
  
הַמְיַחֲדִים בְּכָל יוֹם ה' אֶחָד  
אֲהָה עָלַי וְאוֹיָה לִי  
אָמְרוּ אָב בֵּן וְרוּחַ אֲשֶׁר הוּא יוֹצְרִי  
  
קִיְּמוּ וְקִבְּלוּ אֲבוֹתָם כָּהֵם  
אֲהָה עָלַי וְאַלְלַי  
אָמְרוּ שְׁלוֹשָׁה אֵלֶּה הֵם כִּתְרִי וּנְזִירִי  
  
סִפְדוּ וּנְהוּ נְהִיָּה עַל בֵּית הַתְּפִלָּה  
אֲהָה עָלַי וְאוֹיָה לִי  
אֵיךְ סִפְרֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ נִטְמְנוּ בַּעֲפָרִי  
  
וַחֲכָמִים חֲסִידִים וְאַנְשֵׁי מַעֲשֶׂה  
אֲהָה עָלַי וְאַלְלַי  
אָמְרוּ בְאִישׁ מֵת שַׂמְתִּי אֲנִי שִׂבְרִי  
  
נַחֲמֵנוּ הָאֵל בְּקָרוֹב בִּתְשׁוּעָה  
בִּמְקוֹם אֲהָהּ אָרִים בִּתְרוּעָה  
בְּבוֹא יִנּוֹן וְאֵלִיָּה גוֹאֲלִי

Translation:

“Instead of ‘woe’, I will raise a cry at the coming of Yinon and Elijah my redeemers”

All the princes of Seville

Who swear by the name of the Lord

By the God of Israel.

The splendor of the exile, and its nobility,

The people of the congregation Cordoba

For ...

By Your name, Israel.

An outsider overturned

The assembly of Toledo;

They plundered all it had –

From every man of Israel.

The holy assembly of Barcelona,

The slain of a baleful blade,

The remnant of every calumny,

From the children of Israel.

My shining day went dark with the exile of Castile,

Alas for my devastation.

The devastation of Jerusalem - remember no more,

Woe is me and alas,

For there is no remedy for the devastation of Castile.

From Portugal, bitter wailing is heard

Woe is me and alas

For there is no injury like mine or healing for me.

Shameless cruel king, villain is his name

Woe is me and alas

He forgot the name of my saving and radiant God

Children who say “Shema Yisrael” daily,

Woe is me and alas,

Tell wood to awaken and stone to stir;

Who unify the one God daily,

Woe is me and alas

Said father, son, and spirit about my Maker;

Like their forefathers, they practiced and accepted

Woe is me and alas

As they said: these three are my crown and coronet

They bewailed and bemoaned for the house of prayer

Woe is me and alas

That the holy books were buried in dust

Along with scholars, saints, and righteous men

Woe is me and alas

They said: in a dead man I set my stock

Console us, O God, with redemption soon

Instead of ‘woe’, I will raise a cry

At the coming of Yinon and Elijah my redeemers

## The Structure of the Poetry of Lamentation

The Nakba of Muslims and Jews in Andalusia was characterized by persecutions, and scenes of horror and destruction. The Andalusian lamentations are considered a genre of universal and national poems of lamentation. At the center of these lamentations are images of the destroyed cities, and eulogies for concrete places, in particular holy places, that no longer exist. These poems constitute acts mourning, cries to redeem Islam and free the mosques, and at the same time they are poetic exhortations meant to fan the flame of Jihād and revenge. In addition to the structure characteristic of the lamentations, we can also point to a certain style of writing typical of them. They are replete with thick descriptions, images, contrasting parallels, and surprising couplings. The poets who wrote in this style primarily made use of the following rhetorical means:

1. The mirroring the personal and collective self. At the center of the Poetry of Lamentation are two expressions. The first articulates the personal voice of the poet, who cries out, driven by his own grief. The second is directed outwards, and petitions the nation, rousing their universal Muslim feeling, and instilling in them the spirit of Jihād, and the will to fight the enemy. Both forms of expression make use of horror imagery, depicting the atrocities committed by the enemy alongside the suffering experienced by the local residents.
2. The depiction of suffering and torture. The poets movingly describe the condition of the destroyed city, the suffering of its residents, the torture inflicted by the enemy, and the transition from devout belief to heresy.
3. The description of the local. The poem describes the city and its tragic state. Emphasis is placed on the acts of destruction and defacement which have effaced the city’s beauty, the cries and pain of its residents, the sense of loss connected to the homeland, longings for a glamourous past, and lamentations for the city, that liken the poet’s parting from the city to a parting of lovers.
4. The dramatic style. The poem presents the fall of the city by means of a dramatic narrative, breaking down the catastrophe into a number of gradual stages, until finally it falls to the enemy. The Poetry of Lamentation appears to be a kind of historical document that events and historic events, as in the poetry of Ibn al-Abbār: أضحى أهلها – its residents became; ارتحل الايمان – the passing away of faith; صيرتها العوادي – wrecked by disasters; يا للمساجد عادت – oh to return to the mosques; وللندا غدا اثناءها جرسا – and the call to prayer became the ringing of a bell.
5. The transition from the individual to the collective. The poetry of Abu al-Baqā’ describes the great disaster that afflicted Andalusia. Following this, al-Rundī concretely describe each city that fell to the Christians, noting their memorable characteristics. The poet, standing face to face with destruction, wonders what happened to these cities, particularly Cordoba, the famed center of science and wisdom.

دهى الجزيرة أمرٌ لا عزاءَ له هوى له أُحدٌ وانهدْ ثهلانُ

أصابها العينُ في الإسلام فامتحنتْ حتى خَلت منه أقطارٌ وبُلدان

فاسأل (بلنسيةً) ما شأنُ (مُرسيةً) وأينَ (شاطبةٌ) أمْ أينَ (جَيَّانُ)

وأين (قُرطبة)ٌ دارُ العلوم فكم من عالمٍ قد سما فيها له شانُ

وأين (حْمص)ُ وما تحويه من نزهٍ ونهرهُا العَذبُ فياضٌ وملآنُ.[[61]](#footnote-61)

Translation:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A calamity struck the peninsula [Andalusia] for which there is no solace | It toppled mount Auḥud and scattered the tribe of Ṯahalān |
| The evil eye struck Islam and it was impaired | And whole districts and provinces were emptied [of the faithful] |
| Ask Valencia how fares Murcia | And where is Xàtiva, where is Jaén |
| And where is Cordoba, home of science | Where fortune shined on oh so many scientists |
| And where is Ḥums (Seville), and the pleasures it contained | Its sweet river, swelled and overflowing? |

1. The rhetorical means. Many rhetorical means are used in the Poetry of Lamentation, particularly the coupling of parallel and opposite examples. These pairs often draw comparisons between the past and the present, between heresy and devout religious faith, and between the sorrow of the Muslims and the joy of the enemy. Typical pairs include:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| المأتم \ العرس | happiness \ mourning |
| الأمان\ الحذار | caution \ security |
| الاشراك\ الايمان | faith \ hearsay |
| الجرس \ الأذان | the call to prayer \ the church bell |
| اليأس \ الرجاء | hope \ despair |

In addition, many similes and metaphors are used, such as: مدائن حلها الشراك مبتسما – cities that the enemies invaded while smiling. Or: ارتحل الايمان مبتئساَ – faith departed grievingly.

1. The use of derogatory language to humiliate enemies. When the city of Castille fell, King Ferdinand ordered its prince to hand over to the Christians all the bastions and royal buildings, and especially the Alhambra palace, in return for the freedom of Prince Abdullah ibn Muhammad. But the prince refused. At that time, all the Andalusian cities were already in the hands of the Christians. The prince composed a poem of protest describing the state of the nation:[[62]](#footnote-62)

وفرسانهم تزداد في كل ساعة وفرساننا في حال نقص وقلة

فلما ضعفنا خيموا في بلادنا ومالوا علينا بلدة بعد بلدة

وقد أمرونا أن نسب نبينا ولا نذكرنه في رخاء وشدة

فآها على تبديل دين محمد بدين كلاب الروم شر البرية[[63]](#footnote-63)

Translation:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| By the hour, their horsemen grow | Ours only dwindle | |
| When we weakened, they encamped themselves in our land | And took our cities one by one |
| Theט ordered us to curse our prophet | And not to call his name in times of prosperity or strain |
| Woe for the substitution of Muhammad’s faith | with the faith of the vicious Roman dogs. |

## Conclusion

This article examined whether the crimes committed in Andalusia, and the way the characteristics of the Nakba were expressed in the lamentations for cities and communities, and the importance of the Cry of Wailing as a central subject in the lamentations. This genre refers to poetry written in the wake of the events that took place in Andalusia, from the rise of the Muwaḥḥidūn to the Reconquista. Scholarship treats the Poetry of Wailing as a distinct poetic category in the lamentations for the cities. Later, the Poetry of Wailing became an independent sub-genre with characteristic features noted for documenting historic events and their *Zeitgeist*.

The Poetry of Wailing developed in pace with the intensification of suffering and torture of the local society, as the Christians gradually overran the Iberian Peninsula. The transition to the later period brought about a great proliferation in the Poetry of Wailing, with more and more poets expressing themselves in this genre, as the Muslims were vanquished again and again, and city after city fell to the Christian invaders. Jewish communities suffered a fate similar to that of their Muslim neighbors. The Christian enemy did not distinguish between Jews and Muslims. The destruction of the cities, and the intentional targeting of civilian residents had direct consequences for the poetic and aesthetic considerations out of which the lamentation and the Poetry of Wailing took shape. These poems are based on scenes of ruin and destruction associated with the term “Nakba.” The poetic elaborations of these scenes were employed in an attempt to enlist the help of Arab rulers, to rouse them to rally on the side of Islam, and save Andalusia. Lamentations written in Hebrew express a similar cry, one that conveys the suffering of the exiled Jews, who turned to God to redeem them both physically and spiritually. The enemy left them no choice but to convert or to die. In order to achieve their goal of forcing Christianity on the local population they established the Inquisition.

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1. Zurayk, “The Meaning of the Nakba,” pp. 97-103, 210-184. The term “Nakba” was first coined by Zurayk, in his 1948 book The Meaning of the Nakba. A Syrian professor of oriental studies, Zurayk taught at the American University in Beirut. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. According to historian Ilan Pappé, the term Nakba was first employed to offset the moral weight of the Holocaust, and scholars indeed often employ motifs comparing the Nakba to the Holocaust. See: Pappe, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine,* p. xvii. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. For more on the subject of the Nakba, see: Gelber, *National Independence and Nakba*,p. 284. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. In this process, the fate of the Jewish communities was no different from that of the Muslim communities, as the Christians did not differentiate between them. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Zayyāt*, Riṯāʾ al-Mudun fī al-Shiʻr al-Andalusī*, p. 274. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Al-Ṭarāblusī, *Ḥayāt al-Šiʻr fī Nihāyat al-Andalus*, p. 160. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Eid, Youssef, Al-Ši‛r Andalusī wa Ṣadà al-Nakabāt. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Schweid, *Our Great Philosophers*, pp. 130-131. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Halevi, *The Kuzari,* 2:54, p. 116. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Armstrong, *Holy War,* pp. 75 and 373. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Lévi-Provençal, *Al-Islām*, p. 301. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Bernfeld, Shimon, *The Book of Tears: Anti-Jewish Pogroms and Persecutions*, pp. 183-185. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. *Istiṣrāh, istiġāṯah*: to cry, or call out for help. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Šauqī, Ḍaif, *ʿAṣr al-Duwal wa al-Imarat fi al-Andalus,* pp. 378-391; Al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-Ṭīb,* p. 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Šauqī, Ḍaif, *ʿAṣr al-Duwal wa al-Imarat fi al-Andalus*, pp. 378-391. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Lavi, *The Lamentation as a Literary Genre,* pp. 20-23. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-Ṭīb,* vol. 2, p. 402. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Ibn Ḥaqqan, *Qalaʾid al-ʿAqyan,* p. 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-Ṭīb*, vol. 4, pp. 479-481. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Ḥaryush, “Dirāsat al-Ǧānib al-Fanni,” pp. 160-164. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Dāyah, *Fi al-Adab al-Andalusi*, pp. 166-167. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Al-Maqqari, *Nafḥ al-Ṭīb*, vol. 4, pp. 479-481. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Al-Maqqari, *Nafḥ al-Ṭīb*, vol. 6, p. 200. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Al-Isrā’ili was born in Seville and drowned when he was about forty years old. He converted to Islam and became the court poet of the Moroccan Caliphate. He wrote Hebrew poetry for his Jewish brethren, and after his conversion joined the Arab poets. See: Ratzaby, “Jews and Arabic Poetry,” pp. 329-350. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Al-Fāsī, *Al-daḫīra fi Tʾarīḫ al-Dawla al-Marīniyya*, p. 74. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. The Qurʾān 3:169. This translation by: Dawood, *The Koran*, p. 57. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. The poetry of the Nakabāt was created after the fall of the Andalusian cities to the Christians; it has many elements in common with the poetic genre of the Istiṣrāh. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Abbas, *Tārīḫ al-Adab al-Andalusi*, p. 178. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs*, p. 334. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Al-Daqqaq, *Malāmiḥ al-Siʿr al-Andalusi*, p. 321. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Al-Maqqari, *Nafḥ al-Ṭīb,* vol. 4, pp. 447-488. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Brann, Ross, “Patterns of Exile in Hebrew and Arabic Lamentations from Spain,” pp. 54-56. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Al-Šantarinī, Ibn Bassam, *Al-Daḫira fi Maḥāsin Ahl Al-Gazira*, p. 430. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Al-Maqqari, *Nafḥ al-Ṭīb*, vol. 4, p. 488. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Brann, Ross, “Patterns of Exile in Hebrew and Arabic Lamentations from Spain,” p. 60. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Brody, *Moshe ibn Ezra's Secular Poems*, p. 109. Translation from Elinson, *Looking Back at al-Andalus*, pp. 94-95. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Pagis, *Secular Poetry*, p. 285. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Lamentations 1:4, and Jeremiah 9:11. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Ezekiel 16:30. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Ezekiel 9:30. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. His dates of birth and death are unknown. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Muṣṭafà, *Azhār al-Riyāḍ*, p. 106. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Brody, *Moshe ibn Ezra's Secular Poems*, p. 292. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Brody, *Moshe ibn Ezra's Secular Poems*, p. 292. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Brody, *Moshe ibn Ezra's Secular Poems*, p. 292. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Muṣṭfà, *Al-Adab al-Andalusi,* pp. 554-555. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Brann, Ross, “Patterns of Exile in Hebrew and Arabic Lamentations from Spain,” p. 60. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. יששכר, תשנ"ב, עמ' 244-242. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Brann, “Patterns of Exile in Hebrew and Arabic Lamentations from Spain,” pp. 52-49. See also Pagis 1968, p. 357 and Joseph ibn Abitur’s “Lamentation for the Pogroms against Jews in the Land of Israel,” in which he bemoans the tribulations of Jews in Palestine. See: Shirman, 1997, vol. 1, pp. 64-65. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Goitein cites Rabbi Judah Halevi’s lamentation “Lo Aleikhem Shomei Shimi,” that deals with the destruction of the Jewish community in Toledo by the Christians, in 1109. This lamentation was published by אלוני, 1991, ד, עמ' 421-419. I am uncertain of the transcription of this poem’s name; if it has an English translation, that name should be used.. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Both Levin and Masha Itzhaki, who is preparing a critical edition of Abraham ibn Ezra’s secular poetry, have regarded this lamentation as secular. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Bernstein, *On Spain’s Rivers,* pp. 114-118. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Cole, *The Dream of the Poem,* p. 181-182. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Translation from Fenton, et. al., *Exile in the Maghreb*, pp. 48-50. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Abraham ibn Ezra, translation by Prof. Paul Fenton, in: Hirschberg, *History of the Jews in North Africa*, vol. 1, pp. 90-91. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Bernfeld, *The Book of Tears: Anti-Jewish Pogroms and Persecutions*, pp. 216-217. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Bernfeld, *The Book of Tears*, pp. 216-217. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Ben Verga, *Liber Schevet Jehuda*, page. This lamentation appears in: Bernfeld, *The Book of Tears*, pp. 218-219. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Bernfeld, *The Book of Tears*, pp. 224-225. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Ibn al-Abbar, Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Qudā'ī al-Balansī, *Kitāb al-Takmila li Kitāb al-Ṣila*, Beirut, Alhrās, 1985, p. 135. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. ʿAnān, *Nihāyat al-Andalus,* pp. 228-230. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Al-Maqqari, *Nafḥ al-Ṭīb*, vol. 1, pp, 111-112. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)