

ISLAMIC RURAL LAND USE REFLECTED IN PAST AND PRESENT CATALAN TOPONYMY

PERE BALAÑA
CONSEJO SUPERIOR DE INVESTIGACIONES CIENTÍFICAS
SPAIN

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Abstract

Through the systematic study of three basic Arab concepts, together with their derivatives and compounds, it is possible to identify many names from all over the Catalan countries, interpret their meaning and approach an understanding of part of the system of land distribution carried out by the Muslims during their occupation, later reflected in the documents from the Christian resettlement.

KEY WORDS

Toponymy, Catalan Countries, Methodology, Arabisms, Land Distribution, the Qur'an.

CAPITALIA VERBA

Nomina locorum, Natio Catalaunensis, Ratio studiorum, Arabicae notae, Dispositio terrarum, Qur'an.



On of the questions related to the Islamic period in the Iberian Peninsula al-Andalus, 8th-15th centuries, that has earned more attention from Arabist and medievalist scholars is the distribution of land between the new Arab and Berber colonisers and the previous owners.¹ This task, which we can logically see as the drawing up of a property register basically for fiscal and religious purposes, derived from the Qur'an itself,² is easily understandable if we bear in mind that on recovering the lands and cities that had been owned by the Muslims, the Christian authorities copied the previous system or model in the so-called "Repartiments" or "Repartimientos".³ In modern terms, it is a question of knowing exactly who owned the lands and in what measure, in each historical circumstance, as these became the essential fiscal parameters for the subsistence of all kinds of constituted powers. This is what the Arab and Berber immigrants in Iberian lands did in their time (8th century).⁴

The subject is of great interest from a toponymic perspective because the place names derived from this system of territorial division have often become fossilised in phonetic forms gradually adapted to Catalan, but which however originally derive from Arabic etyma.⁵ Four specific suggestions led me to take on this research:

1. I will generally limit myself to guiding the readers to accessible and relatively recent bibliographic references, such as: Arié, Rachel. *España musulmana. Siglos VIII-XV*. Madrid: Labor, 1982: 18 and following; Vallvé, Joaquín. *La división territorial de la España musulmana*. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1986; Lagardère, Vincent. "Campagnes et paysans d'al-Andalus VIII^e-XV^e siècles". *Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée*, 79-80 (1996): 43-54; Lagardère, Vincent; Méouak, Mohamed. *Histoire et société en Occident Musulman au Moyen Age. Analyse du Mi'yar d'al-Wansarisi*. Madrid: Casa de Velázquez-Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1995; Miquel Barceló, coord. *Musulmans i Catalunya*. Barcelona: Empúries, 1999: I, 49-50; Martos, Juan. *Introducción al mundo jurídico de la España musulmana*. Madrid: Ediciones G. Martín, 1999 and, finally, Bramon. *Moros, jueus i cristians en terra catalana*. Lleida: Pagès Editors, 2013. All the unreferenced Catalan translations of the Arab words, while we await the consultation of the recent Arab-Catalan dictionary, have been done from: Castells, Margarida; Cinca, Dolors. *Diccionari Àrab-Català*. Barcelona: Fundació Enciclopèdia Catalana, 2007; Corriente, Federico. *Diccionario árabe-español*. Madrid: Instituto Hispano-Árabe de Cultura, 1977. The transliterations avoid the diacritic signs used by the scientific arabist in their publications, but I always remark the tonic accent on the vowels.

2. Surah 8, Ayah 41. See the extraordinary Catalan translation by: de Epalza, Mikel. *L'Alcorà*. Barcelona: Proa, 2001. Here I use the Castilian version by: Cortés, Julio. *El Corán*. Madrid: Editora Nacional, 1980. However, curiously, two of the three concepts that are analysed here do not appear in works where it would seem to logical to find them, such as the one by: Maíllo, Felipe. *Vocabulario de Historia Árabe e Islámica*. Madrid: Akal, 1999, or the one by: Viladrich, Mercè. *Història política de les societats islàmiques des de la fundació del califat fins a la caiguda dels abbàssides*. Barcelona: Universitat de Barcelona, 1996. None of the three is contained in: *Diccionari d'Història de Catalunya*, Jesús Mestre, Josep M. Salrach, Josep Termes, eds. Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1993.

3. The most famous from Majorca and Valencia have been published, are within reach of everyone. For the "minor" repartiments, written in the form of franchise documents or population charters, the basic work is still the one by: Font Rius, Josep Maria. *Cartas de población y franquicia de Cataluña*. Madrid-Barcelona: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1969-1983, complemented by the study by the same author: Font Rius, Josep Maria. "Carta de població de Lleida 1150", *Documents jurídics de la Història de Catalunya*. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya-Departament de Justícia, 1992: 51-62.

4. For the early period, see: Barceló, Miquel. "La primerenca organització fiscal d'al-Andalus segons la 'Crònica del 754' (95/713[4]-138/755)". *Faventia*, 1/2 (1979): 231-261.

5. The last and sintethical contribution about the changes done throughout the way from the Semitic language to the Romanic language, in the general vocabulary as well as in the onomastic, can be read in: Bramon, Dolors. *Moros, jueus i cristians...*: 90-114.



1. The proposal by the Arabist and toponymist Jaime Oliver Asín,⁶ that the roots of the Arab morphology should be carefully analysed for the “series” in which he coincided with the reasoned criteria of the master Enric Moreu-Rey had omitted the derivatives of the mentioned roots in the toponymy.
2. My personal acceptance of this methodology to try to explain a possible etymology of the crown of Catalonia.⁷
3. The amendments and improvements that this study can contribute to Joan Coromines’ two masterpieces the *Diccionari crític i etimològic de la llengua catalana* and the *Onomasticon Cataloniae*.⁸
4. And also, the observation of certain distancing, divergences or misunderstanding between the school of the “recompiling” toponymists who collect place names, driven by the firm will to preserve these as a part of our historical, cultural and linguistic heritage and the school of those we could call “etymologists”, when they follow certain “criteria of authority” which should be perhaps thoroughly revised.⁹

6. *Lo mejor será pues arrancar siempre de cada raíz árabe para reunir y observar inmediatamente no uno, sino todos aquellos derivados de la misma, que sepamos, averigüemos y sospechemos que han dejado huellas en el vocabulario y en la toponimia hispánicas; huellas de las que se irá dando cuenta así tras cada vocablo árabe progenitor, insertando no sólo los resultados romances, sino también los posibles calcos, es decir las expresiones nuevas que hayan podido surgir, no por adopción, sino por traducción evidente y afortunada.* (“The best would thus be to start always from each Arab root to gather and observe immediately not one, but rather all those derived from it, that we know, discover and suspect of having left their mark in the Hispanic vocabulary and toponymy; imprints of which we will become aware after every Arab parent word, inserting not only the romance results, but also the possible copies, in other words, the new expressions that can have arisen, not through adoption, but rather by evident and fortunate translation”). Oliver Asín, Jaime. “Las dos almuzaras”. *Al-Andalus*, 27/1 (1962): 157-158. We must add, to this proposition, the words still composed by hybridization, which were created for an element from each language, usually with the Romanesque in the first place. I proposed this in the case of ‘Vallcàrcara <Vallis + qarqara, the noisy valley (Balañà, Pere. *Bibliografia comentada de l’Islam a Catalunya. Del 713 al 1153*. Lleida: Pagès Editors, 1998). About the word *almuzaras*, it is forthcoming my study titled *Semàntica dels arabismes toponímics penedesencs*, whose I can add in full confidence, and for the moment, the modern property of *Monsarra*, even *Montsarra* (modern spellings that present old variants of the type *Musçarra*, *Muszarra* and *Almuzarra*, in 1143, 1156 and 1159), an old parish of the municipal area of Torrelles de Foix (Alt Penedès) with the meaning of “flat place for growing cereals by sharecropping” [*al-]* *muzàra’a*, from the Arab root *zàra’a* “to sow, plant”. Nowadays, this is an area of vines, the grapes from which are used to make cavas with the same name. Thus, we have a twin of the name of *la Mussara*, in the Camp de Tarragona, and the street and house of *Almozara*, near Lasquarri, in the Ribagorça: Coromines, Joan. *Onomasticon Cataloniae*. Barcelona: Curial-La Caixa, 1996: V, 431b-432a. This entry, that ignores the balanced posture of Oliver’s study, is one of the ones that should be rewritten calmly and with local documentation. We note that, in the toponymy of the modern Arab world, all derivatives of the root *zàra’a* and some phonetically close ones (*Màzra’a*, *Màzrī’a*, *Mízza’a*, *Múzra’a* > *Mussara*, *Múzdar’a* and *Zàrra’a*) have conserved the primitive sense of “place where the crops sprout from the seeds; field, farm or plantation”. Groom, Nigel. *A Dictionary of Arabic Topography and Placenames*. Beirut: Librairie du Liban-Longman, 1983: 194, 213, 315.

7. Balañà, Pere. “Catalunya, ‘la terra de la riquesa’”. *Medievalia*, 4/10 (1992): 41-53.

8. The new contributions from the “Lleida School” should also be taken into account, which gone from the medieval research group directed by Dr. Flocel Sabaté, that has produced, among others, works like the magnificent one by: Brufal, Jesús. *Les ràpites. Proposta de definició conceptual a partir del cas del nord-est peninsular*. Lleida: Edicions de la Universitat de Lleida, 2007: 15-41.

9. As a very clear example of the first group, it is important to underline the personalities of Albert Manent, president of the *Societat d’Onomàstica de Catalunya* during the period 1980-2010 and *Premi*



If one has taken the bother to look in depth into the innumerable contributions of the apparently modest, but extremely useful, *Butlletí Interior. Societat d'Onomàstica* (published in Barcelona) from its first edition, which has repeatedly held and debated these reflections, you will remember that it is not the first time that, while gathering the local minor toponymy, or micro-toponymy, names of pieces of land appear with an etymology which is none too clear, but that despite this, the scholars, on principal, attempt to explain through Sorothaptic, Iberian, Celtic, Germanic, Latin or Romanic etymologies with preference over other possibilities.¹⁰ It would be pointless to draw up a full list, although we will have to present some significant examples below.

The three minimum elements of the rich Arab language that we will take into consideration in these pages are the following.

1. *Khums*

The word *khums* (plural *ahkmas*); from here on *khums/ahkmas*¹¹ “fifth, fifth part”, from the root *khamasa* “take a fifth of...”, and whose intensive form gives *khammasa* “divide by five”. The Qur’an refers to booty obtained: *Sapigueu que, si obteniu algun botí, un cinquè correspon a Alà, al Profeta [Mahoma < Muhàmmad] i als seus parents, als orfes, als pobres i al viatger*¹². The remaining four fifths are reserved for the Muslim troops.

Apart from the practical application of this division of booty in other geographical areas, especially the Near East, in the struggle against the neighbouring Byzantine Empire, if I am not mistaken, the first time that an Arab chronicle refers to this referring to the Islamic occupation of Alandalus is in the late work *Kitab nafh al-tib*

d'Honor de les Lletres Catalanes (2011), and also Ramon Amigó i Anglès, so-called *el Xiquet de Reus*, an indefatigable researcher who has inspired a generation of disciples who collect local toponymies. Josep Moran and Montserrat Pagès have continued working along the same lines in the Baix Llobregat and other neighbouring districts.

10. Balañà, Pere. “Assaig breu de taxonomia de les etimologies toponímiques”, *Estudis de llengua i literatura catalanes. XXVII. Miscel·lània Jordi Carbonell*. Barcelona: Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 1993: VI, 263-270.

11. I use the system of transliteration, normally without diacritic signs and accents, that I prepared in 1968 for the *Gran Enciclopèdia Catalana*, in a table in the article “àrab”, but here I accentuate the Arabic tonic vowels in the Catalan form. The *Vocabulista in arabico* places this term in the singular in the Arab-Latin part, but does not translate it on page 96b; in the Latin-Arab it places *khàmsa* with the value of *quinque* and *khamśin* with that of *quingenta*. (Schiaparelli, Celestino. *Vocabulista in arabico*. Florència: Tip. dei successori Le Monnier, 1871: 96b; Dozy, Reinhart. *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes*. Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1991: I, 404b), adds that *khums* also designates a certain kind of army unit 500 soldiers in Morocco and defines the other meaning of the concept: *Les terres, dans les pays conquis, qui sont devenues la propriété de l'Etat*, (“The lands, in a conquered country, that became the property of the State”).

12. “you should now that, if you obtain booty, a fifth corresponds to Ala, the Prophet [Mohamed < Muhammad] and his relatives, the orphans, the poor and travellers”. (Cortés, Julio. *El Corán...*: 246).



min gusn al-Andalus al-ratib, by al-Maqqari (Tlemecen 1591-1631). Based on the writings of earlier chroniclers, he states textually and laconically:

After the caliph `Umar [II] ibn `Abd al-`Aziz [717-720] sent al-Samh ibn Malik al-Hawlani to al-Andalus [720-721], at the beginning of [the year] 100 [=719/720] and ordered him to calculate the fifth yukhammisa of the land of al-Andalus. He divided it by five khamasa-h, built the bridge in Cordoba and was martyred while fighting in the territory of Ifrang [the Franks] in the year 102 [720-721].¹³

It is worth remembering that, at this early date, all the old Roman province of Tarraconense had fallen under Muslim control, at least thanks to the control of the main lines of communication and that the Muslims occupied the city of Narbonne in the same year of 720.¹⁴

As mentioned in other places and situations, it is possible that at least some of the clearly Muslim anthroponyms later fossilised in the old toponymy of the growing Carolingian counties: *Abdirama* < `Abd al-Rahman; *Iaphar* and *Gaffari* < Ga'far; *Tennim* < Tamim; *Maruano* < Marwân; *Salama* < Salâma; etc.,¹⁵ can be explained by supposed northwards emigrations by Mozarabs¹⁶ or Muslims from Alandalus, the latter originally from north Africa Almoravids, Egyptians or the centre-south of the same continent (from the Sudan), and also other Muslims from the Middle East (Syrians, Iraqis, Persians, etc). Joan Coromines suggested this hypothesis, limited to the Mozarabs and Andalusian Muslims, as more reliable —taken up again later authoritatively as a firm criterion by various medievalists— with some arguments that, basically, obliged him to justify his theory:

*Doncs, si no hi ha fonament sòlid per veure-hi un NP germànic [referint-se a Vilamacolum], ni hi havia fonètica ni morfològica per lligar-lo amb llatí o romànic, ens veiem acorralats a cercar si pot venir d'una altra llengua. I aquí la fesomia ma-ú- crida fortament cap a l'àrab: un dels innombrables participis passius. Si no s'hi ha pensat, és perquè es tracta de l'Empordà. Però s'oblidava la sèrie de noms deixats pels mossàrabs refugiats: els "hispani" de les capitulars carolíngies, que s'hi afiançaren fundant-hi propietats (designades després amb llurs noms) [...] La via més fundada en el paral·lel d'altres topònims seria *màhrúb (sic) 'destruït, devastat' [...] Només caldria admetre que -uh- term° insòlita en català s'havia canviat en -um, per propagació de la nasalitat precedent, ajudant-hi la influència del NL veí Vilacolum < V. COLUMBI. Imaginem que VILLA COLUMBI aplicat primer a tots dos pobles*

13. Bramón, Dolors. *De quan érem o no musulmans. Textos del 713 al 1010*. Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 2000. We eagerly await the second part (1010-1153) of her excellent documentary collection.

14. Balaña, Pere. *L'Islam a Catalunya*. Barcelona: Rafael Dalmau, 1997: 13-16.

15. This list is even longer with the contributions for the Andalusian area of Lleida by Jesús Brufal in his PhD Dissertation: Brufal, Jesús. *L'espai rural del districte musulmà de Lleida (segles XI-XII). Espais de secà meridionals*. Lleida: Universitat de Lleida (PhD Dissertation), 2008.

16. Salrach, Josep M. "Els hispani: emigrats hispanogots a Europa (segles VIII-X)". *Butlletí de la Societat Catalana d'Estudis Històrics*, 20 (2009): 31-50.



*veïns, havent devastat els normands l'actual Vilamacolum, més a prop de la costa, havia estat repoblat pels refugiats mossàrabs aplicant-hi el nom aràbic ibin-al-mahrûb.*¹⁷

In fact, as the reader will have been able to observe, there is a great deal of “imagination” in both the historical and philological aspects —the toponymic morphology *ibin-al-mahrûb* is completely unlikely—, and even in the sociological, economic and cultural aspects, although creating his own invented theories was a technique that Coromines frequently used to overcome apparently insurmountable problems. What would the Catalan historiography think about some new natives who earned a living through farming and used the guano from the dovecots built near their homes as a fertiliser?¹⁸

However, regarding the same [*Villa*] *Maquerone* (910; later *Villa Mucroni*, in 974, according to Coromines) it should be taken into account that neither *Maqrûn* nor *Makrûm* are anthroponyms *ism`àlam/asmà``àlam* generally documented among the Andalusian ones (the normal one that corresponds to the second Arab root is *Karîm*). Despite this, we have news, and thus it is a hapax, of an illustrious Cordobese character named *Maqrûn* (*Abû Muhàmmad`Abd Allàh ibn Muhàmmad al-Quda`î*), who was a reciter of the *Qur`an* (*al-mûqri`*) and who lived between 290 and 378 of the Hegira (902-903/988-989 AD).¹⁹ If we accept this etymology, *Maquerone* < *Maqrûn*, the toponym in question has to be added to those that I have mentioned as being indisputably derived from Arab anthroponyms. However, as I see it, there is no way the cited Arab proper name can explain the *Mocoró* documented in 1252 and 1299 in Móra d'Ebre, owned first by the Trinitarians and later by the Templars, despite the phonetic-grammatical similarity. The *Onomasticon Cataloniae* does not deal with this place name, pronounced nowadays *Mucoró* and “Christianised” when it was combined in the denomination of the church of Santa Magdalena de Mocoró. As I have shown during my research, this practice of Christianising names was used to

17. “So, if there is no solid basis for seeing a Germanic NP [referring to Vilamacolum], there is no phonetic or morphologic pathway to link it with Latin or pre-Romanic, we are then forced to see if it could come from some other language. And here the appearance *ma-ú-* leads strongly towards Arab: one of the innumerable passive participles. If no one has thought about this, it is because this is the Empordà. However, this is forgetting the series of names left by the Mozarab refugees: the “Hispani” of the Carolingian chapters, who founded properties there later designated with their names [...] The most established path in parallel with other toponyms would be **màhrûb* (sic) ‘destroyed, devastated’ [...] One would need to accept that -uh- term° unusual in Catalan, had been changed to -um, by propagating the previous nasality, helped by the influence of the neighbouring NL *Vilacolum* < V. COLUMBI. We imagine that VILLA COLUMBI was applied first to both neighbouring villages and that, after the Normans had devastated the actual Vilamacolum, the one closer to the coast, this was repopulated by Mozarab refugees who gave it the Arabic name *ibin-al-mahrûb*”. (Coromines, Joan. *Onomasticon Cataloniae*...: VIII, 45b-47a).

18. Nevertheless, we have to await the contributions from the archaeology that the research cited in notes 8 and 15 will supply. According this research the andalusians inhabiting in the rural country of Lleida used to raise doves and pigeons.

19. Vizcaíno, Juan M. “Lectores del Corán en al-Andalus: andalusíes en dos diccionarios biográficos de Qurra”, *Estudios Onomástico-Biográficos de al-Andalus*. Madrid-Granada: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1988: VI, 469b (doc. n° 12).



“mask” old toponyms of Arab etymology which had disappeared from the records and/or whose meaning was not known. As the author of the text on which I have based this has mentioned, and noting that the loss of the *-n* from Latin happened earlier in vulgar Latin than in the Arabisms, the etymon of this *Mocoró* or *Mucoró* should be *mucro*, *-onis*, which has also given *mugró* (nipple), with the topographic meaning of “point or peak of a mountain; spike of rock”.²⁰ Personally, however, I see three alternative possibilities:

1. If we accept that *[Villa] Maquerone* < *[vila] Makrúma*, it is not exaggerated to deduce the meaning of “town [full] of vines”. *Makrúma* is a participle derived from the famous *karm* / *kurúm* “vinestock”, etymon of both the Catalan words *carme* and the Castilian *carmen* “quinta” (place of vines), and that still has the same semantic value in the modern Arab world, although according to the strict Qur’anic orthodoxy, the consumption of wine is absolutely prohibited. The initial substantive perhaps had another “regular” Andalusian plural, *karmât*, “the vines”, which has been used to justify the probable etymology of *Alcaramit* > *Caramit*, a property in Borriana documented in 1219-1233, with the application, in its adaptation to Latin or Catalan, of the vocalic epenthesis *-ram-* and palatalisation */à/* > */í/* (a very frequent phonetic phenomenon in Andalusian Arab that would have led to the Catalan word “imela” < *imàla*).²¹
2. We must remember and I have mentioned as much in various earlier studies that most of the documentary and bibliographic information used by the “philologist from Pineda” dates from before 1981. This is especially relevant in this case, because he was not aware of the place name *Benimacron* that appears in the *Repertiment de València*, within the city limits in 1238. The latter, a typical example of a clan toponym, allows the existence of a new example (in the Latin version) of the anthroponym *Maqrún*, to be shown. This thus ceases to be a hapax, despite the greater difficulties to justify the vocalic changes produced, like that of another possible etymon, related with a mote, *Miqràn*, “cornut, cuckold”: then we would have *Benimacron* < *Banú Miqràn*, “the children -or descendants- of the cuckold”.²²
3. The last imaginable etymology would refer precisely to a prestigious Arab word one of the so-called *lāqab/alqāb* “honorary titles” in the Islamic religious field, *(al-)múqri’*, “reader of the Qur’an in the mosques”; in Castilian, *almocrí*, and also *celui dont la principale profession est de chanter devant le corps des morts qu’on*

20. Plaza, Carme. “Santa Magdalena de Mocoró”. *La Riuada*, 14 (1999): 36-37. The scholarly version of the study was published in the *Actes del XXI Col·loqui General de la Societat d’Onomàstica*, held in Ulldecona in October 1999. I thank my friend Manuel Coll Taberner, a lover of the history and toponymy of his area, for this information. See also: *Diccionari crític i etimològic de la llengua catalana...*: V, 828b.

21. Corriente, Federico. *Diccionario de arabismos y voces afines en iberorromance*. Madrid: Gredos, 1999: 275b; Groom, Nigel. *A Dictionary of Arabic Topography...*: 137; Dozy, Reinhart. *Supplément aux dictionnaires...*: II, 467-468a; Cortés, Julio. *El Corán...*: 189 (Surah 5, ayat 90-91); Barceló, Carme. *Toponímia aràbiga del País Valencià. Alqueries i castells*. València: Ajuntament de Xàtiva-Ajuntament de València, 1983: 32, 35, 135; Bramon, Dolors. *Moros, jueus i cristians...*: 95.

22. Barceló, Carme. *Toponímia aràbiga del País Valencià...*: 255; Schiaparelli, Celestino. *Vocabulista in arabico... Latin-Arab...*: 321b; Arab-Latin...: 193a, “cornutus”.



porte en terre, magnified with the Arab hypocoristic *-ún*, that corresponded to the augmentative Romanic suffixation *-ón* (*`Abdun*, *`Aysun*, *Farhun*, *Fathun*, *Galbun*, *Gazlun*, *Hasnun*, *Hayrun*, *Hayyun*, *Masalgun*, *Sa`dun*, *Sahnun*, *Salmun*, *Samhun*, *`Ubaydun*, *Xabtun*, *Zaqqun*, *Zargun*, *Zarqun*, etc).²³

For the examples of the anthroponyms and, if they all were, I rather believe that they must be direct territorial appropriations done in the early times of the emirs who depended on Damascus —713-756— by local Muslim sheiks or headmen, surrounded by their family or clan group, who, during this period of precarious government by the eastern Umayyads, aimed to control the land and the main communication routes of the area they had occupied, either by reaching agreements with the native authorities or directly by force of arms. However, they could also come from the official share-outs in the form of *khums/akhmàs* by the emirs, or even through the better studied Islamic custom²⁴ of carrying out another kind of a cessions of land individually or collectively, which is mentioned in greater detail below. Irrespective of how the land was owned before the arrival of the Franks in this area, the new Muslim owners agreed with the Christian authorities to retain it. They surely maintained this until the 10th century, an epoch from which I have found their anthroponyms documented as toponyms.²⁵

However, the general regime for implanting the “fifth” (*khums*) of the booty around Alandalus has not been well-enough documented in the Arab sources nor do we know if it was applied legally in line with the prescriptions in the Qur’an, among both the Arabs and the Berbers (who are given the worst settlements during the 8th century), some of whose chieftains (*qabíla/qabà’il*) may still not even have been converted to Islam in the first half of the 8th century.²⁶ In any case, the scholars mention this especially, without too much detail, about the arrival in 741, of the Syrian troops of Balj ibn Bixr, called *jund/junúd*, who fought the Berber rebels in the Peninsula and who were finally hosted and quartered by the emir Abú-l-Hattàr

23. Dozy, Reinhart. *Supplément aux dictionnaires...*: II, 329a; García, Emilio. *Hipocorísticos árabes y patronímicos hispánicos*. Leiden: Brill, 1954: 129-135; Lucini, M^a Mercedes. *Los Banu Samayun: una familia de cadíes*. *Estudios Onomástico-Biográficos de al-Andalus...*: V, 171-198.

24. The first publication that presented this question was by Professor Pedro Chalmeta: Chalameta, Pedro. “Le problème de la féodalité hors de l’Europe chrétienne: le cas de l’Espagne musulmane”, *Actas del II Coloquio Hispano-Tunecino de Estudios Históricos*. Madrid-Barcelona: Instituto Hispano-Árabe de Cultura, 1973: 91-115, which was followed by other important reflections in which he further the theme developed.

25. That is shown, for example, by the onomastic cartography of the volumes in the collection *Atles dels comtats de la Catalunya carolíngia*: Bolòs, Jordi; Hurtado, Víctor. *Atles del Comtat de Besalú*. Barcelona: Rafael Dalmau, 1998; Bolòs, Jordi; Hurtado, Víctor. *Atles dels comtats d’Empúries i Peralada*. Barcelona: Rafael Dalmau, 1999; Bolòs, Jordi; Hurtado, Víctor. *Atles del Comtat de Girona*. Barcelona: Rafael Dalmau, 2000.

26. de Felipe, Helena. *Identidad y onomástica de los beréberes de al-Andalus*. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1997: 63 and following. The result of a doctoral thesis, it is based almost exclusively on the biographic repertoires of Andalusian characters and the information it contains should be extended to the Berber establishments situated further north-east than Mequinensa, with the collection of toponymy and cartography by: Dubler, César E. “Über Berbersiedlungen auf der iberischen Halbinsel Untersuchung auf Grund der Ortsnamen”. *Sache Ort und Wort. Festschrift Jakob Jud*, 20 (1943): 182-199.



al-Kalbī, still appointed by the Caliphate of Damascus, in various militarised districts about which we have been able to gather a good quantity of data.²⁷

The question we must ask is: could the system for land distribution by way of *khums/akhmàs* have left a mark on the later toponymy of the Catalan lands? If we focus on it from a strictly philological perspective, as there is no phonetic equivalence to the Arab /kh/ in the Catalan system (it is identical to the actual Castilian /j/), we must seek words that have adopted the phonemes /k/ or /f/ at the beginning of the word.²⁸ In alphabetical order, I cite the cases of *califa* (caliph) < *khalīfa*, *carraca* (carrack) < *kharrāq*, *carxofa* (artichoke) < *kharsūfa*, *cascall* (poppy) < *khaskhàs*, *cutexf* (a kind of knife used by tanners and coopers) < *khassàb*,²⁹ *falleba* (door catch) < *khal-làba*, *fanar* < *khatn*, *farjup* (fold) < *kharrjūba* and *fila* (measure of water flows) < *khàyt*. With /k/, we will have to find Catalan words with the structure *coms-* or *cums-*, with /f/, *foms-* or *fums-*. However, none of these four variants exists in Catalan. And it is not needed, because the division of anything into fifths also belongs to the old Latin tradition (*quinque*; *quintus*: *cinquè*, *quina*, *quint*, *quinta*, *quintà* (field), *quintada*, *quintalada*, *quintana*, *quintar*, *quintarada*, *requintar*, etc). This means that, despite being simple peasants, the people who settled the land previously occupied by the Moors had no problems in translating, if needed, *khums* for *quint*, easier to pronounce and closer to the terminology applied to the distribution and working of the land in their own culture. Thus, the farmers who lived from their crops and livestock in exchange for paying a fifth of their production to their lord were the *quintanus* or *quintarius*, that is the modern-day *Quintà*, *Quintana*, *Quinter* and *Quintero*.³⁰

A specific concept for the word *quint* even arose later as the *imposició fiscal que gravava una part, la cinquena, dels ingressos municipals d'algunes ciutats catalanes. D'ençà de les darreries del segle XVI la corona començà a exigir el pagament regular d'aquest tribut, que havia caigut en desús o que havia estat redimit per algunes municipalitats. [...] les*

27. Arié, Rachel. *España musulmana...*: 18.

28. Corriente, Federico. *Diccionario de arabismos y voces...*: 266-296, 312-324.

29. Added to the above-mentioned work: Balaña, Pere. "A Joan Solà, d'un aprenent d'arabista". *Avui*, 24 April 2000: 14.

30. The Dr. Federico Corriente (whom I wish to be, in the best of cases, a disciple from far away) emailed to me on 4th June, 2013, improving the possibilities about the explanation, given that he told me about Argamasilla (de Alba / de Calatrava) < *al-khamsīyyah* ("settlement of fifth parts"). I wait for a future moment when I will be able to develop a deep study about a possible evolution /kh/ > /g/ in Catalan language. A divergent interpretation of this kind of distribution, which I have spoken about with its author, is the research by Ramon Martí, such as: Martí, Ramon. "Territoris en transició al Pirineu Medieval", *La vida medieval als dos vessants del Pirineu. Actes del 3r curs d'arqueologia d'Andorra*, Xavier Llovera, Josep Maria Bosch, eds. Andorra la Vella: Ministeri d'Afers Socials i Cultura, 1995: 37-83; Martí, Ramon. "Palaus o almúnies fiscals a Catalunya i al-Àndalus", *Hommage à Pierre Bonnassie: les sociétés méridionales à l'âge féodal (Espagne, Italie et sud de la France Xe-XIIIe siècles)*, Hélène Débax, Pierre Bonnassie, eds. Toulouse: Université Toulouse-Le Mirail, 1999: 63-70. A similar methodology could be used to find out what the farmers who paid a quarter or a third of their production were called, and what modern surnames have originated from them: *quator* or *ter* (with derivatives and compounds).



resistències contra el quint es prolongaren fins al 1640.³¹ An official called a *quinter* was in charge of the timely payment of this tax.

As this definition evidently moves away from that type of land distribution, what I suggest is a critical revision of all the toponyms linked to the idea of “quinter” (dividing into fifths) the territory that we now know, as, if we observe them meticulously, we will see that they predominate in those areas of the Catalan Lands where the Islamic presence lasted longest.³²

To begin the research, we mention a probable direct Arab etymon, more with the meaning of “terrain worked (or divided) into fifths”, an *alquería* called *Alcamasa*, near the municipality of Calp in Alicante, documented in 1277. The *Onomasticon Cataloniae*³³, admitting on one hand that the appearance of the toponym “is undoubtedly Arabic” and, on the other, that the etymology proposed is risky, thought that this was perhaps a possible derivate of the root *qàmasa* “submerge, place in water” through the name of the profession *al-qammàs* “the diver”:

1. Because in the Arab-Latin *Vocabulista*³⁴ the word *qams* is translated as *submergere*, and, in contrast, in the Latin-Arab part the spelling that Coromines interpreted, with a question mark, as an error or variant, is *nàgmas* or *àngamas*, and
2. Because *Calp i el penyal d'Ifac són arran d'una costa d'aigües profundes*. And it is true that the two verbs *gàmasa* and *gàmmasa* also mean “submerge, sink”; but here neither Pedro de Alcalá nor Dozy are of help. Should we perhaps interpret *Alcamasa* as *l'enclotada*?³⁵

Among the probable copies or translations of a primitive Arab word, and following the *Onomasticon Cataloniae*³⁶ own data and from Carme Barceló, we obtain:

1. *Cinqueros*: (*alquería* of *Cinquayros*), between Rambla and Valencia, documented in the *Repertiment de València* from 1239.
2. *Quint*, canal of -: in Vilamarxant.
3. *Quintà*, *El*: property in La Roca d'Albera.
4. *Quintano*, *braçal de-*: (irrigation channel) de -: in Beniopa.
5. *Quintaro*: documented in Morella in 1441.
6. *Quintassos*, *Mas dels -*: in the Balearic Isles, without being able identify this in volume I of the work, dedicated to the ancient toponymy of the Balearic Isles.

31. “Taxation levied on a part, the fifth, of the municipal revenues of some Catalan towns. From the end of the 16th century, the crown began to demand the regular payment of this tax, which had fallen into disuse or had been redeemed by some municipalities. [...] the resistance to the *quint* continued until 1640”: Torras, Xavier. “Quint”, *Diccionari d'Història de Catalunya*...: 876a.

32. On this, I agree with Jesús Brufal: see notes 8 and 16. We both believe that the Islamic land division was done according to solar time, rather than considering the four cardinal points as shown throughout the medieval Latin and Romanesque documents.

33. Coromines, Joan. *Onomasticon Cataloniae*...: II, 95b.

34. Schiaparelli, Celestino. *Vocabulista in arabico*...: Arab-Latin: 164a.

35. “Calp and the rock of Ifac are on a cosat with deep waters, the hollow”. Barceló, Carme. *Toponímia àrabica del País Valencià*...: 235; Corriente, Federico. *El léxico árabe andalusí según Pedro de Alcalá*. Madrid: Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 1988; Corriente, Federico. “Notas adicionales a la edición del Léxico árabe andalusí de Pedro de Alcalá”. *Al-Qantara*, 10 (1989): 413-451.

36. Coromines, Joan. *Onomasticon Cataloniae*...: VI, 315b-316a.



7. *Quinto*, The gully of -: in Sanet i Negrals; property and farmhouse in Morella; Spring of -: documented in Tortosa in 1340.
8. *Quintos*, *La Peña's* -: a Castell de Castells.
9. *Quints*, *Los*: farmhouse in Catí.

And, finally, we rule out without any difficulty those derived from *quintà* and *quintana* with the sense of “field, or feixa, next to a farmhouse” and as a name for the recent neighbourhood of the city of Reus. Only if we discover and study of as yet unknown old documentation -the recent oral information is not valid- could confirm whether some of the new forms presented really correspond to a translation (Latin or Catalan) of the Arab *khums/akhmās*. Coromines attributed the conservation of -o to the Mozarab phonetics, but this latter denomination, a real “mixed bag”, has recently undergone a constant process of review and critique³⁷.

2. Qàsama

The root *qasama* “divide, split, separate”, which, in the intensive form *qàssama* means “share, distribute”. As old nominal derivatives I enumerate the words *qasm* “part —the Latin *sors*—, partition, division, portion”, *qísam/aqsàm-aqàsím* “part, division”, *qísma/qísam* “division, share, distribution” and *màqsam-míqsam/maqàsím* “portion, part, property”. The person does the action, (al-)Qasim) “the divider”, is one of the most widely used by Muslims as a name for springs or to designate all the descendants of the eponym of a segment or clan group —which is why it has left a notable imprint on Catalan toponymy³⁸ and the intensive (al-)Qassam is “the distributor”. The frequently —mentioned *Vocabulista in arabico* only includes the entries *qísma* “divisio” and *qàsam* “adjuracio, juramentum”, that must have been usual prior to, and during, the 13th century. Meanwhile, Dozy specifies that (al-)Qàssam is *celui qui répartit entre les heritiers les bien du défunt* (our “executor”) and extends the meaning of *màqsam-míqsam/maqàsím* to “booty”, in other words, that which must be shared out.

In my opinion, the Arab substantives derived from this root that may have been set in Catalan toponymy, in Medieval times together had the same semantic value as the modern concepts “land, property”, in other words: “Portion of land of some size and designated with the same name, part of the area belonging to a village rural

37. Bramon, Dolors. *Moros, jueus i cristians...*: 60-62, 105-106.

38. As well as the well-known municipality of Benicàssim in Castellon, the *Repartiment de València* mentions, with various documentary variants, some places generally *alquerías* such as: *Benalcacim*, *Benialcasin*, *Benicasim*, *Cassen*, *Caçin* (Barceló, Carme. *Toponímia aràbica del País Valencià...*: 246, 248, 251, 262). The spelling *Bolcasim* is suggested as a late name of the *alquería* earlier called *Benalcacim*. Most of the toponyms that lasted into the mid-19th century appeared in Miguel Asín Palacios' work: Asín, Miguel. *Contribución a la toponímia árabe de España*. Madrid-Granada: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1944. This Arab anthroponym also appears in the *Repartiment de Mallorca*, spelt *Cazem* (Riera, Magdalena. “La onomástica andalusí de Madina Mayurqa a través del ‘Llibre del Repartiment’”. *Estudios Onomástico-Biográficos de al-Andalus*, 2 (1989): 177-186).



area", "Small portion of terrain" or "Small piece of land".³⁹ In contrast, nowadays in Egypt and Sudan, the word *qism* designates a district or a larger administrative unit, similar to the province of Latin origin. *Màqsam* has also acquired the logical sense of "confluence" or "bifurcation" and, on the other hand, a substantivated adjective *qàsima/qasàyim* has been added with the specific meaning of "(isolated) sandy hill on a rocky plain".⁴⁰

If I analyse the data from the *Onomasticon Cataloniae* and Carme Barceló, I can list the following:

1. *Almachçem*:⁴¹ (not in the *Onomasticon Cataloniae*). A site not localised in the province of Valencia, documented in 1239-1244 in the *Repartiment de València* as *cases d'Almahçem i forn d'Almagzen* "houses of *Almahçem* and bakery of *Almagzen*". Regardless of the initial capital letter, updated as a toponym, the researcher attributes without the slightest doubt the Arab etymology to the concept *al-makhzàn*, which, in line with the practice which Dozy wrote about, explains:

*L'organització tribal romana reflectida, a més, en topònims que recullen la veu makhzan, que es troben, en casos com Almatzem, Amaezem i altres formes, en els termes de Cullera, Morvedre, Biar, Xàtiva o Moixent. La paraula makhzan es refereix al fet que una tribu poderosa ha obtingut una concessió de l'Estat per a cobrar els impostos a unes altres de més febles a canvi de tenir els seus cavallers a disposició permanent del govern. D'ací el seu sentit de magatzem i oficina de recaptació d'impostos. Aquest sistema descrit fou típicament nordafricà i s'introduí en al-Andalus amb l'expansió dels imperis almoràvit i almohade (segles XI-XIII)*⁴².

However, some houses and a bakery do not seem to fit in such a concept as broad as state policy, especially having become a tiny, untraceable place. I believe that, in this context, *màkhzan/makhàzin* is merely equivalent to its original value, that is, "barn, larder, cellar, store, warehouse, place for supplies" (in the *Vocabulista in arabico: cellarium*),⁴³ without further complications. Even nowadays this precise meaning is conserved throughout the Arab world⁴⁴. The only reflection regarding

39. *Diccionari de la llengua catalana*. Barcelona-Palma-València: Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 1995: "partida", "parcel·la" and "sort".

40. Groom, Nigel. *A Dictionary of Arabic Topography...*: 230, 176, 228, respectively. I have been unable to consult the more relevant repertoire of: Shafiq al-Khatib, Ahmed. *A Dictionary of Agricultural and Allied Terminology: Arabic-English*. Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1978, which surely contains the still valid use of the nominal derivatives of the root *qàsama* in current farming arabic terminology.

41. Barceló, Carme. *Toponímia àrabica del País Valencià...*: 240.

42. "The tribal organisation is also reflected in toponyms that include the word *makhzan*, as in cases like Almatzem, Amaezem and other forms, in Cullera, Morvedre, Biar, Xàtiva or Moixent. The word *makhzan* refers to the fact that a powerful tribe had obtained a concession from the State to collect taxes from other weaker ones in exchange for its knights being permanently available for the government, hence the meaning of a warehouse and tax office. This system was typically north-African and was introduced into Alandalus with the spread of the Almoravid and Almohad empires (11th-13th centuries)". Dozy, Reinhart. *Supplément aux dictionnaires...*: II, 57.

43. Schiaparelli, Celestino. *Vocabulista in arabico...*: Arab-Latin: 180b; Latin-Arab: 288a.

44. Castells, Margarida; Cinca, Dolors. *Diccionari Àrab-Català*. Barcelona: Enciclopèdia Catalana, 2007: 373b ("warehouse, booking, pantry, tent, attic").



the root *qàsama* is that the first spelling of the Latin transliteration would also admit a probable etymon of *al-màqsam* “the bifurcation, the crossing: the ‘houses’ and ‘bakery’ at the crossroads”.⁴⁵

2. *Almaczem*:⁴⁶ (not included in the *Onomasticon Cataloniae*). Mill in Xàtiva documented in the 1248 *Repartiment de València*, which applies to literally everything I have argued in the previous paragraph.
3. *Almatzen*:⁴⁷ relates it to an old inheritance near Biar, from 1275-1276, different from the houses and tavern in the limits of Moixent documented in 1273. Given that the pas /kh/ > /t/, both at the end of the word and as a closed syllable in Arab-Catalan phonetics, was often justified in Joan Coromines’ works before the *Onomasticon Cataloniae*, also it is only necessary for me to refer to what was said in the two previous paragraphs, now moreover backed by the master’s opinion.⁴⁸
4. *Amaezem*:⁴⁹ (it does not appear in the *Onomasticon Cataloniae*). Was a group of houses in Cullera documented in 1272. As I have demonstrated in other works, the loss of the /l/ from the Arab article makes me think of an anthroponym that has an initial labial type consonant (/b/ or /m/) or foreign to Catalan phonetics. I think it is clear enough that *Amaezem* is no less than Ibn `Àsim, a well documented anthroponym in leading families in Alandalus and that, as a clan designation, may also be from a Berber faction or a pure Arab one, that of the Banu `Asim, possible segment of the Gusam, a tribe that moved to the Maghreb from the Najd, the central area of the Arabian Peninsula.⁵⁰
5. *Gàssimes, les*:⁵¹ Heard and noted personally by Joan Coromines as a name of a property in Sopeira, in the Alta Ribagorça (and it was difficult to admit this so far north!), the outstanding philologist could not attribute it to anything other than the Arab etymon *qàsima* (pluralised in the local speech) “each of the parts a land is divided into”, while invoking the authority conceded by the saviours *Vocabulista in arabico* and Pedro de Alcalá.

45. It is significant that Dolors Bramon, who follows closely the research of Carme Barceló, doesn’t catch this toponym among those meaning the human intervention on the territory: Bramon, Dolors. *Moros, jueus i cristians...*: 98-106; Corriente, Federico. *Diccionario de arabismos y voces...*: 181b-182a; Dozy, Reinhart. *Supplément aux dictionnaires...*: I, 369b; II, 254b, where he refers to pilgrimage of Pedro de Alcalá: *dos caminos no se parten* (“two paths that divide”); *Diccionari crític i etimològic de la llengua catalana...*: II, 661b; Groom, Nigel. *A Dictionary of Arabic Topography...*: 169.

46. Barceló, Carme. *Toponímia àràbica del País Valencià...*: 240.

47. Barceló, Carme. *Toponímia àràbica del País Valencià...*: 240; Coromines, Joan. *Onomasticon Cataloniae...*: II, 156b.

48. Coromines, Joan. “Mots catalans d’origen àràbic”, *Entre dos llenguatges*. Barcelona: Curial, 1977: 68-177; Coromines, Joan. *Estudis de toponímia catalana*. Barcelona: Barcino, 1965-1970.

49. Barceló, Carme. *Toponímia àràbica del País Valencià...*: 241.

50. Marín, Manuela. “Nómina de sabios de al-Andalus 93-350/711-961”, *Estudios onomástico-biográficos de al-Andalus*, Manuela Marín, ed. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1988: I, 58 (doc. n° 653); Aguilar, Victoria. “Antroponimia tribal árabe en el Magreb en los siglos XII-XIII”, *Estudios onomástico-biográficos de al-Andalus...*: VI, 20, 22-24, 26, 47; Charouiti, Milouda. “Una familia de juristas en los siglos XIV y XV: los Banu `Asim de Granada”, *Estudios onomástico-biográficos de al-Andalus...*: VI, 173-185; Groom, Nigel. *A Dictionary of Arabic Topography...*: 10.

51. Coromines, Joan. *Onomasticon Cataloniae...*: IV, 331a.



6. *Magzem*⁵²: mills and house of *Raphal Magzem* < *Rahl* (*al*-)*Màkhzan*, in line with the politico-fiscal hypothesis of the Valencian Arabist, in the municipality of Morvedre, toponym documented in the *Repartiment de València* from 1249. It is not necessary to say that we have to understand it as “the land of the storehouse. Coromines, who defined the toponym as a mill in Punyara —also in Morvedre, translated it as [*el*] *rafal del dipòsit* (“[the] shed of the water tank”). With identical probabilities if we think about its location, as the toponym has not been localised, I can propose an alternative etymon *Rahl* (*al*-)*Màqsam*, “the property at the crossroads or bifurcation of paths”. The loss of the article can be explained through the end of the first Arab word, pronounced vulgarly *rafal*, that would have given a cacaphonic reiteration as *rafalal*-, suppressed in many cases, for example, in *Rafal Henna*⁵³, *Rafalsoltan*⁵⁴, *Rafalterràs* or *Rafelterràs*⁵⁵, *Rafaltrobat*⁵⁶, *Rafeçanna*⁵⁷, etc.
7. *Queçemalme*⁵⁸: (ignored by the *Onomasticon Cataloniae*) very probably corresponds to *Qasm al-ma'* or *Qàsima al-ma'* “the place where the water appears”. Nor can we reject such options as *qàssam al-ma'* “the [place of the] distributor of water —where water is distributed—” although Carme Barceló⁵⁹ does not mention this task that is so important on irrigated lands, in the section he dedicates to the names for jobs, or perhaps another combination of words more adequate for the phonetic evolution: *qísam al-ma'* > *queçemalme* “the place —where they did— the distribution of the water”. Having observed that the medieval Christian scribes systematically transliterated the Arab phoneme /q/, with no exact Latin or Catalan equivalent, as *ch*, and the /z/ final of the syllables became /r/ by rhotacism, in a specific situation, years ago I proposed the Arab etymology *Qàsma* “property, piece of land, plot, terrace” for *Chazmo/Cazma/Kazma/Catzma*, the earliest known spellings of the village of Carme, in the Anoia. But the topographic arguments in the *Onomasticon Cataloniae*,⁶⁰ were more subtle and convincing, and that is why I did not mind retracting that hypothesis and accept that by the admired master.⁶¹

52. Barceló, Carme. *Toponímia àràbica del País Valencià...*: 267; Coromines, Joan. *Onomasticon Cataloniae...*: VI, 323b.

53. Coromines, Joan. *Onomasticon Cataloniae...*: VI, 322b.

54. Coromines, Joan. *Onomasticon Cataloniae...*: VI, 323b.

55. Coromines, Joan. *Onomasticon Cataloniae...*: VI, 323b; Barceló, Carme. *Toponímia àràbica del País Valencià...*: 199.

56. Coromines, Joan. *Onomasticon Cataloniae...*: I, 284.

57. Barceló, Carme. *Toponímia àràbica del País Valencià...*: 272.

58. Barceló, Carme. *Toponímia àràbica del País Valencià...*: 271.

59. Barceló, Carme. *Toponímia àràbica del País Valencià...*: 33.

60. Coromines, Joan. *Onomasticon Cataloniae...*: III, 278b-279a.

61. Balañà, Pere. *Els noms de lloc de Catalunya*. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, 1989: 60. With the later data from the *Onomasticon Cataloniae* and the recent specific bibliography, and with the go-ahead of my friend Ricard Lobo i Gil, general director of the *Diari Oficial de la Generalitat de Catalunya* and the publications of the Generalitat, I was preparing a third edition but recent changes in government appointments have stopped.



3. Qàta'a

The substantives that come from the Arab root *qàta'a* “cut, amputate, separate, section” (*qàt'a*, *qít'a*, *qút'a*, *qàti*), and the derived verb forms, such as the IV, *àqta'a* “to have cut, give a fief, adjudicate” *iqtà*, also with the consideration (if needed) of the nominal diminutives originated regularly following the scheme $C_1C_2C_3$ [+ /a/ if it is a feminine word: *qutày'a*, of *qàt'a*, for example]. In this case, we must take into consideration, at least, that:

1. In the Catalan Lands there is evidence of the generalised use of these words, and others, thanks to the data in the *Vocabulista in arabico*⁶², which contains:
 1. 1. The adjective *àqta* “one-armed, one-handed”.
 1. 2. The verb *qat* “cut, separate, divide”.
 1. 3. The name *qít'a/qít'at* “part of a place”.
 1. 4. The place name *màqta/maqàti* “quarry”.
 1. 5. The name *qít'a/qít'àn 'ajíba* “[part, piece] dapper [marvellous]”.⁶³
2. In the geographic-natural (non human) Arab toponymy documented nowadays around the world, the number of place names derived from this root and its specific semantic values has been considerably reduced (some have changed) in favour of the substantives. These include:
 2. 1. *Qàt'a*, *Qít'a* and *Qút'a* “piece, cut portion, plot, extension of terrain”.
 2. 2. *Qít'a* “reef”.
 2. 3. *Màqta* “ford, pass in a desert; crossing point, cracks or cuts in a mountain, overflow in a dike”.
 2. 4. *Maqàta'a* “province—in Syria—”.
 2. 5. *Muqàta'a* “region, extension or agrarian area”—the reader may be reminded of the place called Santa Perpètua de Mogoda?—.
 2. 6. *Muqàta'a* “province, county”.
 2. 7. *Múqta* “ford, path across marshy terrain—in the north-east of Arabia”.⁶⁴
3. Numerous toponyms in the various Catalan-speaking areas have already been explained correctly from etyma corresponding to the cited Arab root *qàta'a*⁶⁵: Cotalba—which would be a hybrid Latin-Arab formation, Cotes, Cuta, Godella and Godelleta⁶⁶, Catadau, Catamarruc and Catarroja⁶⁷, of the same book and, together with Gata, between Xàbia and Llíber, near Montgó, a *rafal* called

62. Schiaparelli, Celestino. *Vocabulista in arabico...*: Arab-Latin: 404, 412, 450, 494, 507, 544, 571, 580, 604, 628.

63. The *Vocabulista in arabico* was completed extensively by: Dozy, Reinhart. *Supplément aux dictionnaires...*: II, 374a-383, especially regarding *qít'a/qít'at* “piece, plot, place, especially in a beautiful, lovely place”, which was in turn based on the data in the *Vocabulista*.

64. Groom, Nigel. *A Dictionary of Arabic Topography...*: 137, 175, 176, 206, 207, 229, 230, 232.

65. Strangely, the toponyms derived from the root *qàta'a* are not included in the chapter about “Les diverses maneres de distribuir-se les propietats”, written by Dolors Bramon, who proclaimed the basic guidance by Carme Barceló: Bramon, Dolors. *Moros, jueus i cristians...*: 101.

66. Barceló, Carme. *Toponímia àràbica del País Valencià...*: 141, 146-148, 263, 163.

67. Barceló, Carme. *Toponímia àràbica del País Valencià...*: 140-141.



Cata, documented in the terme of Tàrbena in 1273, Les Cateles, partida of El Campello, and El Cataplau, a property in the Ebo valley⁶⁸. In relation with the Islamic distribution of the rural territories: “Cuta, Cotes and Cotelles, if their etymology is not the Latin *cotta* “hill”, it could be the Arab /q’ut’a/ “piece of land”, “property”. According to Asín Palacios, the same root, /iqta’/ could have given some toponyms beginning with *Cata-*, like Catamarruc and Catarroja, with the meaning of “land given to be worked”⁶⁹. Coromines, with all the reason in the world, contradicted by the “absurd phonetics, incompatible syllabism” the etymon *iqta’* “concession similar to the Christian feudal type” attributed before to the forms *Cata-*, and proposed a simpler *qāt’a* “piece of land, cultivated area, property of an inheritance”, as we have seen as the first meaning of the word in the hem *Vocabulista in arabico*; Barceló was right to follow this suggestion⁷⁰, despite the text that he had written for the introduction to his research.

I also indicate the correct etymon for the place names Almatà (Balaguer, Lleida), with the variant Aumatà, El Mactà (Planes d’Alcoi) and Matà (Fortaleny) < *al-maqtà* “the quarry”⁷¹ and the fact that the Arab root *qāta’a* has left its mark on Arabisms all over the Iberian Peninsula (*alcateia*, *alicatar*, *almegue*, *macta* and *mactà* from the old Catalan “piece of clothing” < *al-maqtà*).⁷²

4. I understand that both J. Mascaró Passarius and Coromines made a mess in volumes I-II of the *Onomasticon Cataloniae*, the latter with the entry *Catalí*, *ina* from *La Cot* to *El Cotit*, an immense recompilation to which we should dedicate a much more structured, documented and argued critique than the present one.

In short, even nowadays we come over very up-to-date “fresh of the press” publications where the authors have avoided complications and have continued to spread false criteria of authority. There are many examples, but here I restrict myself to examining of one of those that arise most often in collections of toponymy about the names found in specific municipal limits, done following a very precise methodology that has set the standard for the “school” of toponymists in Catalonia, nowadays headed (since the death of the greatly-missed Enric Moreu-Rey), by Joan Tort i Donada, successor of the prolific Albert Manent i Segimon and Josep Maria Albaigès i Olivart (both with Ramon Amigó i Anglès (*el Xiquet*), such us vice-president of Onomastical Association of Catalonia.⁷³

68. Coromines, Joan. *Onomasticon Cataloniae*...: II, 331b-334.

69. Barceló, Carme. *Toponímia àrābica del País Valencià*...: 31.

70. Barceló, Carme. *Toponímia àrābica del País Valencià*...: 140-141.

71. Coromines, Joan. *Onomasticon Cataloniae*...: II, 148b-149b, 155b.

72. Coromines, Joan. *Onomasticon Cataloniae*...: V, 350b; Corriente, Federico. *Diccionario de arabismos y voces*...: 137a, 175b, 183a, 370a. Curiously, *almaegue* “ford”, Portuguese toponymic variant of the Catalan *almadec* “cliff”, had a defender of the Arab etymon *al-maqtā*, which cannot be accepted phonetically, as the author states correctly, but that, semantically, and in accordance with the data that I have noted from all over the modern Arab world, is used —not only in Morocco— with the meaning of “ford, passing place”.

73. See one of the “paradigmatic” articles with which the *Butlletí Interior. Societat d’Onomàstica* began its long and intensive history almost thirty years ago: Amigó, Ramon. “Vint-i-cinc anys d’experiència en



The brothers Moisès Selfa i Sastre and Vicent Selfa i Sastre, in “Toponímia municipal de Pego (Alacant) (II)”⁷⁴, in a province where the Arab imprint on place names possibly reaches one of the highest percentages in the Iberian area⁷⁵, enumerate, with n° 13, the *Poet de Cotes*, *lloc on abans estava situat un molí mogut per la força hidràulica d’aquest pou, el qual data del segle XIX. Està situat dins de la partida de Cotes, apel·latiu pres segurament per abreviació de les locucions llatines quota pars “quina part, quanta part”, quota nota “quina xifra”, que contenen l’adjectiu quotus “quant nombrós, en quín nombre”*.⁷⁶

Apart from the omission by the authors of the book of not referring to the more up to date and thematically close *Onomasticon Cataloniae* (where the proposed etymon diverges completely and becomes the stony formation of terrains, from the Latin *cos, cotis* “stone, rock, especially grinding stone”),⁷⁷ for the time being, I will only mention that the Arab etymon of *Cotes*, very well justified by both the phonology and the semantics and the oldest spellings, was already indicated (as mentioned above) by Dr. Barceló, for some place names in the limits of Càrcer (*alquería* of *Cota* in 1248), in Alcoi (*alquería* in *Cota* in 1249) and of Alzira (*alquería* in *Cotes* in 1243). In the *Onomasticon Cataloniae*, the latter is identified, by proximity, with an *alquería* in Algemesí).

As I see it, there is not the slightest doubt that the etymon is the Arab word *qút`al/ qut`at* “property, piece of farmland”, that Coromines also discovered in the form *Cota* as a Moorish neighbourhood of Finestrat (1574), in Rossell, Quatretonda, Petrer and Pinós de Monòver, with the spelling *Cotes*, in Confrides, Côtes, in Murla and Sella, and even in the diminutive *Coteta*, in Finestrat and Benimantell.⁷⁸ The transition from the singular to the plural, frequent in the normal evolution of Catalan, does

reculls de noms de lloc. Uns quants exemples modèlics”. *Butlletí Interior. Societat d’Onomàstica*, 1 (1980): 19-28.

74. Selfa, Moisès; Selfa, Vicent. “Toponímia municipal de Pego (Alacant) (II)”. *Butlletí Interior. Societat d’Onomàstica*, 78 (1999): 54.

75. You could see the statistical studies the maps and the text about this in: Dubler, César E. “Über Berbersiedlungen auf der iberischen Halbinsel...”.

76. “place where before there was a mill moved by the force of the water from this well, which dates from the 19th century. It is situated in the property of Cotes, a name likely taken for the abbreviation of the Latin locutions *quota pars* ‘which part, what part’, *quota nota* ‘what figure, that contain the adjective *quotus* ‘how numerous, in what number’” (Coromines, Joan. *Diccionari Etimològic i Complementari de la llengua Catalana*. Barcelona: Curial Edicions Catalanes-La Caixa, 1980-1991: II, *Cota*). With *Cotes* being a place name in the municipality of Pego, it is a shame that, as well as Coromines, the authors did not consult the presentations by numerous authors who know the area better, like the ones with the numbers 647, 653-655, 929, 930, 1,010 and 1,991 in the repertoire published by: de Epalza, Mikel; Paternina, María Jesús, Couto, Antonio. *Moros y moriscos en el Levante peninsular (Sharq al-Andalus)*. *Introducción Bibliográfica*. Alicante: Instituto de Estudios Alicantinos-Excelentísima Diputación Provincial de Alicante, 1983.

77. Coromines, Joan. *Onomasticon Cataloniae*...: II, 455b.

78. Coromines, Joan. *Onomasticon Cataloniae*...: III, 456-457. Perhaps it would be worth adding some of the forms that the *Onomasticon Cataloniae*...: I, 117, cites in the entry *Cotella* (Eivissa), such as *Cotelles* documented in Polop, Xixona and Sant Joan d’Alacant. Remember that the Romanic suffix *-ell(a)* was often suffixed to toponyms of Arab ascendance.



not present any type of difficulty in colloquial and farming language, especially when the name is given to various extensions of land.

An identical analogy can be applied to at least some modern place names: *Cot*, *Cota*, *Coteillas*, *Cotèles*, *Cotellas*, *Cotélles*, *Cotillas*, *Cotilles*, *Cots*, *Cotet*, many of which Coromines admitted that “tanta Cota junta, en paratges on sovint no es veu cap roca i sí molt de conreu...”.⁷⁹ However, the master adjudicated them an Arab etymology derived from the generic designation *[al-]qut* or *[al-]quta* “the Goth, the Visigoth”, without realising that an etymon *[al-]qút`a* “piece or area of farmland” is more plausible sometimes with Romance, and perhaps even Arab, suffixes, such as the so-called “Islamic superlative” *-illah-, *majorment en la regió on la gran majoria dels NLL són aràbics o vénen dels temps dels moros*.⁸⁰

In any case, each place name merits a specific study, always from the oldest documentation. Thus, the “sanctification” of *Sancti Michaeli de ipsa Cote*, from 1119, or of *Sancta Maria de Cute* (Santa Maria de la Cot, church of Llongarriu, in the Bac valley), from 1171 and, finally, that fact that the *Quadrella de Cotiellas* cited in the *Repartiment de Murcia* (13th century) *era una de les “quadrelles” més importants i riques de l’Horta de Murcia, prop de la capital*⁸¹ are notable enough indications to note how deeply the distribution of the land in the times of the Muslims affected Catalan toponymy, on one hand, and, on the other, because the knowledge of the rural environment of the Andalusian culture has very firm defenders who, in contrast, have not taken advantage until now of the contributions that I finish here and now.⁸²

79. “so many Cota together, in areas where often no rock is seen but much tillage is...” (Coromines, Joan. *Onomasticon Cataloniae...*: III, 456b).

80. “mainly in the region where the vast majority of the NLL are Arabic or date from the times of the Moors”. For some years I have had it in mind (and had mentioned it to Dr. Corriente) to publish a study titled *Joan Coromines versus l’arabisme*, with the idea of showing the almost unhealthy confrontation between the Catalan philologist and the tenacious work of any Arabist —or apprentice Arabist or ‘araboman’, according he called me: Coromines, Joan. *Onomasticon Cataloniae...*: II, 129b— who had not been one of his teachers such as Arnald Steiger, whom he was disciple in Zurich and who always was admired by Coromines.

81. “was one of the most important and richest ‘quadrelles’ in the *Huerta de Murcia*, near the capital” Coromines, Joan. *Onomasticon Cataloniae...*: III, 455a, 455b, 457b respectively.

82. Only as representative examples of this recent historiographic tendency I cite the works by Vincent Lagardère and Miquel Barceló (see note 1), both of whom suggest that we need to complete the merely peasant perception of Al-Andalus through reliable toponymic data that, although this will, in fact, later be reduced basically to references to said Arab or Berber tribal or clan toponymy (Pierre Guichard excels at this). In part Jesus Brufal, from the Medieval Research Group at the University of Lleida, belongs to this team. We await for the fruits from his research.

