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Re-examining Usama Ibn Munqidh's Knowledge of "Frankish": A Case Study of Medieval Bilingualism During the Crusades

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RE-EXAMINING USAMA IBN MUNQIDH'S KNOWLEDGE OF "FRANKISH": A CASE STUDY OF MEDIEVAL BILINGUALISM DURING THE CRUSADES

BOGDAN C. SMARANDACHE

USAMA IBN MUNQIDH (488–584/1095–1188)—described variously as a Syrian gentleman, warrior-poet, Muslim amir, and *fāris* (knight)—professes ignorance of the Frankish language in his *Kitab al-i'tibar* (The Book of Learning by Example), when recounting one of his childhood memories. Born to the Arab dynasty of the Banu Munqidh, who ruled the castle and hinterland of Shayzar on the Aṣi (or Orontes) River, Usama had grown up in close proximity to the Frankish Principality of Antioch. In the decade following the First Crusade (488–492/1095–1099), the Banu Munqidh and their Frankish neighbours engaged in periodic raids and skirmishes. By that time, Usama was a youth and might have begun his military training. Recalling that time decades later, he remembers that Tancred, the Christian ruler of Antioch (d. 506/1112), had granted a guarantee of safe-conduct to a skilled horseman from Shayzar, a man named Hasanun. (The unfortunate young cavalier was actually heading into a trap that cost him his right eye, but he had trusted in Tancred's good will.) After describing the initial negotiation of safe-conduct, Usama adds that "they speak only in Frankish (*Ifranji*) so we had no idea what they were saying."¹

To date, Usama's statement has deterred scholars from investigating the extent of his second language acquisition in greater depth. Compounded with the small number of Frankish loanwords preserved in his book, it appears to leave

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I Ibn Munqidh, *Kitab*, 66: "fa-innahum lā yutakallimūn ilā bi'l-Ifranji mā nadrī mā yaqūlūn." Translations are my own, except when citations of other translations are noted. This incident has also been discussed by Wild, "Open Questions," 17.

little room to elaborate on his grasp of *Ifranji*. Accordingly, Hartwig Derenbourg, the first editor of the *Kitab* and author of one of the most detailed biographies of Usama, concludes that “his knowledge of the language of the Franks did not extend beyond a few words.”² Here, Derenbourg refers to the Old French loanwords preserved in the book, of which he published an annotated list. However, an analysis of the context in which such words were acquired and used remains a desideratum. Indeed, Usama’s account invites a methodical investigation of his second language acquisition aimed, more broadly, at extending the limits of our knowledge about linguistic contact between Franks and Muslims prior to the institutionalization of interpreters.

In this paper, I construct a multi-stage argument in order to demonstrate that Usama had acquired at least a working knowledge of one Old French dialect or possibly a combination of several. My starting point is an analysis of the historical context of Usama’s exposure to the Franks and their language, beginning with his service to the ruler of Damascus, first as a retainer and then as an intermediary to the Franks. I suggest that Usama may have served many, if not all, the functions of a *tarjumān* (interpreter) even if he was not appointed to that function specifically. In other words, Usama’s services included, but were not limited to, diplomatic duties such as translation. The second stage of my argument is an assessment of the reliability of his book, which I show to be an accurate, if embellished, account of real events, based on an analysis of its genre and style, its intended audience, and the fact that many of the details contained therein can be corroborated by other sources. In the third stage, I analyse the Old French loanwords that appear in the text to show that Usama’s replications and translations of several Frankish words not attested in other sources indicate second language (L2) acquisition on his part. Finally, I apply Alan V. Murray’s concept of oral representation to assess the accuracy of the translation and transcription of second language speech (Frankish) into a first language (Arabic) text.

Methods and Terms

Western participants in the First Crusade brought an amalgam of ethnicities and languages to the Levant. Despite the diversity of the army, as noted by the chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres (d. ca. 1127), the crusaders found unity in their purpose and the language barrier appears to have been a negligible problem, at least dur-

2 Derenbourg, *Ousāma*, 50 and n. 2: “sa connaissance de la langue des Francs n’allait pas au delà de quelques mots.” See also Derenbourg “Quelques mots,” 453, 455, 462, and König, “The Unkempt Heritage,” 443. Another major work on this topic is Hasan ‘Abbas, *Usamah ibn Munqidh, ḥayātuḥu wa-atharuh*.

ing the initial stages of conquest.³ But the predominantly Romance-speaking westerners who settled in, or emigrated to, the Levant required more permanent linguistic solutions to carry out daily transactions. So the vernaculars and dialects of the European Franks, Catalans, Italians, Normans, and Provençals eventually fused to form a vehicular language, variously labelled by scholars as Français d'Orient, Outremer French, latinikè glôtta, or Ifranjiya. The formation of this localized *lingua franca* was a long process and not an immediate outcome of the crusading movement.⁴ This paper focuses on an earlier stage in this evolution, when a number of vernaculars and dialects were still spoken by the veteran crusaders, their immediate descendants, as well as newly-arrived immigrants from the western Mediterranean.

There is as yet no clear evidence that Arabic-speakers perceived the differences between Romance vernaculars, let alone the process of fusing described above, and past scholarship suggests that they did not distinguish between Romance and Germanic languages either.⁵ The use of the categories "Ifrañjī" or "al-Firañjīya" ("Frankish") in Arabic texts to describe the language of the occidentals thus reflected a generic understanding of the various European dialects and vernaculars subsumed under the familiar category of Ifrañj (Frank). In other words, Arabic-speakers called Frankish the language of the Franks in the same way that they called Arabic the language of the Arabs or Turkish the language of the Turks, despite the generalizing implications of such popular categories. In recent years, scholars have begun to use "Frank" instead of "crusader" to describe this broader group of westerners, again reflecting the assimilation of Germanic-speaking groups into a larger ethno-linguistic category.⁶

3 Murray, "National Identity," 107–30.

4 For studies of Old French in the Levant, see H. Kahane and R. Kahane, "Lingua Franca," 26, 29, 40; Mallette, "Lingua Franca," 331–32, 334, 339–40; Minervini, "What We Know;" Aslanov, *Le Français*, 43–51, 77–92. The earliest evidence cited by Henry and Renée Kahane for the "incipient stages" of the formation of Outremer French dates to the Fourth Crusade. Karla Mallette's conception of the medieval Mediterranean *lingua franca* actually refers to the Christian-Mediterranean *lingua franca*, Arabic, understood here as an umbrella term and functioning as a vehicular language, that also subsumed various dialects and served as a Mediterranean *lingua franca* that, along with shared cultural configurations, facilitated intellectual and economic exchange across an area extending beyond the Mediterranean basin; Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, and Voll, "Islam," 213–26.

5 Hillenbrand, *Perspectives*, 331; Mallette, "Lingua Franca," 339; see also König, "Unkempt Heritage."

6 MacEvitt, "Crusader States?" The term "Latins" used by scholars such as Hussein Attiya may provide a partial solution, see "Knowledge of Arabic."

For the purposes of this paper, I employ two linguistic categories: Old French, ancestor of the *langue d'oïl* and the modern French language, used by scholars as an umbrella term covering various dialects; and Frankish ("Ifranji" or "al-Firanjīya"), used by medieval Arabic authors—such as Usama and his younger contemporary Baha' al-Din ibn Shaddad (539–632/1145–ca. 1234), author of a regnal history of the Ayyubid sultan Salah al-Din—to describe what they heard as the language of their European counterparts. As a diplomat, Usama dealt with a ruling elite who mostly originated from regions where a dialect of Old French was spoken; while participants in the Third Crusade, some of whom Ibn Shaddad's contemporaries met in person, largely came from Norman England or Angevin France. The court of Fulk V (r. ca. 525–538/1131–1143) or the retinue of Richard of England (r. 1189–1199) might have spoken various dialects, but most fall under the umbrella of Old French. Even if Usama or Ibn Shaddad heard other Romance, Germanic, or Celtic vernaculars and called them Ifranji, the loanwords that Usama ultimately mentions all existed in dialects of Old French (though some might also be found in other Romance dialects).⁷ I prefer the term "Frankish" when discussing Usama's encounters in order to privilege the category with which he and his Arabic-speaking contemporaries were familiar, as opposed to "Old French," a category that not even the Franks would have recognized.

The Problem of Assessing Language Contact during the Crusades

The current state of research on linguistic contact and second language acquisition during the crusades reflects, in part, the range of sources available and their uneven distribution across the two centuries of intensive Christian-Muslim contact. Accordingly, an abundance of studies focus on the seventh century AH/thirteenth century CE, when Mamluk record keeping expanded exponentially. The sources for this period have provided enough material for Peter M. Holt to publish several articles and a book on specific diplomatic exchanges between Frankish and Mamluk rulers. Holt also discusses the role of diplomats and scribes in drawing up truces and terms of surrender.⁸ In addition, Cyril Aslanov has edited and

⁷ I thank Prof. Dorothea Kullmann (French Department, University of Toronto) for verifying the semblance of the Arabic loanwords to Old French terms.

⁸ Holt, "Qalawun's Treaty," 804–5; "Treaties," 68–71; "Baybars' Treaty," 242–45; "Mamluk-Frankish Diplomatic Relations," 278–89; and *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*, 5. See also Northrup, "History of the Reign," 548; 248, 251, 253, 260; Idem, *From Slave to Sultan*, 103–5, 130–31, 276; Irwin, "Mamluk Conquest," 246–49; Little, "Use of Documents," 9. The travelogue of the pilgrim Felix Fabbri (ca. 1441–1502), which contains interesting details of linguistic encounters and second language acquisition, is now available in a new translation.

analysed an Arabic-Old French phrasebook discovered in the back of a Coptic treatise and dated to the seventh/thirteenth century.⁹ Zrinka Stahuljak has presented her analysis of negotiations and travel arrangements between Muslim guides and European pilgrims to the Holy Land, again drawing on evidence from the Mamluk Period.¹⁰ And new research by Pierre Moukarzel sheds light on the diplomatic formalities observed by the Mamluk administration when addressing the Venetian doges. Moukarzel has also identified the use of loanwords, accompanied in some cases by glosses, in Latin and Italian diplomatic letters.¹¹

An important development suggested by this scholarship is that the *tarjumān* became an official office over the course of the seventh/thirteenth century, a period which saw the institutionalization of administrative offices more generally, as the Mamluks appointed highly-trained secretaries and scribes to draw up legal documents and compose official correspondence. This trend is reflected in the use of special labels for distinct offices and branches of the Mamluk bureaucracy.¹² Terms such as *al-tarjumān*, *kātib al-sirr* (literally, "scribe of secrecy") appear frequently in texts from the eighth/fourteenth century onwards.¹³ This period also marked the appearance of manuals on chancery practice, such as Ibn Fadl Allah al-'Umari's (ca. 700–749/1300–1349) *al-Ta'rif bi'l-mustalah al-sharif* (The Know-How of the Noble Procedures) and the famous fourteen-volume *Subh al-a'sha fi sina'at al-inshā* (Daybreak for the Night-Blind Regarding the Composition of Chancery Documents) of Shihab al-Din Abu'l-'Abbas Ahmad al-Qalqashandi (756–821/1355–1418).¹⁴ The upsurge of bureaucratic praxis in Mamluk texts does not, however, preclude the existence of administrative offices, perhaps in more rudimentary forms, during the Zangid or Ayyubid Periods. Ibn Shaddad, for example, describes the spontaneous appointment of interpreters for Salah al-Din (r. 570–589/1174–1193) and Richard of England when the immediate circumstances required it. In this case, the two rulers relied on a Frankish *poullain*

9 Aslanov, *Evidence of Francophony*.

10 Stahuljak, "Pilgrim Translation."

11 Moukarzel, "Customs Adopted."

12 Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 240–41; Tyan, *Le Notariat*, 18–19.

13 Al-Maqrizi (766–845/1364–1442) in *al-Suluk li-ma'rifat duwal al-muluk*; al-Şafadi (696–764/1297–1363) in *al-Wafi bi'l-wafayat* and *A'yan al-'aṣr wa-a'wan al-nasr*; and Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani (773–852/1372–1449) in *Inbā al-ghumr b'il-anba' al-'umr* and *al-Durar al-kamina fi a'yan al-mi'a al-thamina*. For the *katib al-sirr*, see Musawi, "Vindicating a Profession," 119; Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 239–42.

14 I am using Dr. Andrew Marsham's translation of the *Subh's* title.

interpreter, Humfrey IV of Toron.¹⁵ By contrast, Ibn Shaddad describes the official envoy of the Byzantines with admiration and points out that he knew “Arabic, Greek, and Frankish.”¹⁶

In sum, the relative paucity of primary sources for the sixth/twelfth century and the case-by-case administrative appointments of Zangid and Ayyubid rulers make the study of early Frankish-Muslim diplomacy challenging.¹⁷ Much of the extant scholarship has accordingly avoided the problem of assessing the extent of language contact in this earlier era. Recent studies on communication between Franks and Muslims accordingly focus predominantly on gestures, an emphasis that appears to sidestep the possibilities of second language acquisition and communication. Yvonne Friedman, for example, has written a fascinating study of the gestures employed by Frankish and Muslim rulers, and the occasional prisoner of war, when verbal communication was not a feasible option.¹⁸ There is also clear onomastic evidence for the employment of Eastern Christians as translators (Latin: *interpretes*), and as port officials (*custodes, scribae, scribani*) in Acre and Tyre from the late sixth/twelfth century onwards.¹⁹ Many Eastern Christian headmen (*ru'asā'*) also served as tax collectors and as intermediaries between the Franks and their subjects scattered throughout the towns and villages of the Latin East. Eastern Christians thus remained part of the administrative framework throughout the two centuries of the Frankish occupation of the Levant, and in some specific contexts actually removed the need for second language acquisition for Franks and Muslims.²⁰

These factors, compounded, suggest only limited prospects of success in investigating second language exchange prior to the Mamluk period. But all accounts from the Ayyubid period and earlier must be contextualised properly. As we see in the case of Hasanun, evidence for the language barrier and for bridging strategies often appears in the historical record only in the rare instances when some-

15 Ibn Shaddad, *Nawadir*, 153, 155, 163, 165, 182, 173, 193, 201, 204; see also Hillenbrand, *Perspectives*, 331–33. The term *poulain* (Latin: *pullani*) probably meant “foal,” referring to the descendant of one of the original settlers from the time of the First Crusade.

16 Ibn Shaddad, *Nawadir*, 133 (trans. Richards, 122): “‘arīfan bi'l-‘Arabiya wa'l-Rūmiya wa'l-Firanjīya”.

17 See Moukarzel, “La Qualité,” 248–53, for Zangid diplomatic forms that persisted in the Mamluk Period.

18 Friedman, “Gestures of Conciliation?,” 31–48; and “Peacemaking Perceptions,” 229–57.

19 Ibn Jubayr, *Rihla*, 306 (trans. Broadhurst, 317); Riley-Smith, “Lesser Officials,” 22–23; “Survival,” 13–14; cf. Attiya, “Knowledge of Arabic,” 207–8.

20 Riley-Smith, “Government,” 121–31; “Lesser Officials,” 1–26; MacEvitt, *Rough Tolerance*, 149–56; cf. Attiya, “Knowledge of Arabic,” 208.

thing went amiss. Authentic linguistic exchanges and second language acquisition should not be dismissed, despite the uneven survival of records. With *Kitab al-i'tibar*, we are fortunate to have a book containing abundant information in which to contextualize Usama's encounters with the Franks and thereby to discover ways in which language contact occurred.

Examining Usama's Education and Career as Context for Language Contact

In the account of Hasanun's betrayal, Usama uses the verb *nadrī* (to know; to have an idea) to describe ignorance of the Frankish language, and this verb appears in the first person plural. The wording of the account taken as a whole suggests that Usama himself knew Hasanun in his youth, but that he most likely heard the complete story from his father, Murshid, who would have been the one to negotiate with Tancred.²¹ Usama's intention might have been to suggest that the horseman and those compatriots involved in the incident did not understand the language of the Franks. Thus the *Ifranjī* statement could refer in general terms to the Muslims' collective unfamiliarity with the language of the Franks at that time. In addition, the conjugation of the verb in the first person plural could be a result of the scribal error of mispointing (*taṣhīf*) the first letter.²² If the verb was originally *yadrī*, it would refer to the third person singular, meaning that Ḥasanun was the one who did not understand.

However, this passage does not foreclose Usama's subsequent second language acquisition, even if he had included himself among those ignorant of Frankish in his youth. First, Usama was about fifteen years old when the incident occurred and his command of a Frankish dialect might not have developed that early. By contrast, Usama admits that he could not understand Turkish when relating an episode that took place in 529/1135, when he was forty.²³ Indeed, there are clearer indications of Usama's second language acquisition for the period of the 530s/1140s, when he entered into the service of the Burids of Damascus. In this capacity, he represented the interests of the Burid *atābak* (quasi-regent), Mu'in al-Din, before the Frankish court (based at Acre, Jerusalem, or Tiberias) and therefore

21 Ibn Munqidh, *Kitab*, 81, 103 (trans. Cobb, 94, 115–56); Cobb, *Book of Contemplation*, 299, n. 137 and 304, n. 182; Cobb, *Warrior-Poet*, 16, 98; Husain, "Wondrous Crusade Encounters," 193; Derenbourg, *Ousâma*, 134–35, 67–68.

22 On *taṣhīf*, see Gacek, "Taxonomy," 222; Gacek, "Technical Practices," 57. On the scribe(s) of the manuscript, see Miquel, "Notes," 430.

23 Ibn Munqidh, *Kitab*, 151 (trans. Cobb, 164); Wild, "Open Questions," 17–18.

visited the Kingdom of Jerusalem on many occasions.²⁴ Around 534/1140, Usama went to see King Fulk to complain about a Frankish lord who stole his master's sheep. He records, in the first person singular, how he presented his grievance and he also reports the king's terse command to his knights: "Arise and render a judgment for him."²⁵ In another instance, Usama relates a story that he heard from the Frankish lord of Tiberias, about a priestly physician. Like the king, the physician is also presented as a man of few words: he orders some wax to be brought, treats his patient, and then pronounces his patient dead.²⁶ Such accounts suggest that Usama and the Franks had communicated in a common language. Several possibilities present themselves to explain these texts: Usama invented these accounts, reconstructed what he thought might have been said, paraphrased what he had heard, or recorded what he had heard verbatim.²⁷ As a first step, examining his upbringing and diplomatic career can help to illuminate the reasons for his seemingly expanded linguistic abilities.

Usama was undoubtedly a scion of the Muslim courtier class, having been raised in a household that pursued both pragmatic and pious occupations.²⁸ Courtiers, sometimes referred to as the *khawāṣṣ*, comprised select members of the warrior class (*ahl al-sayf* or "men of the sword") as well as scribes and scholars (*ahl al-qalam* or "men of the pen") working under the patronage of a ruler's court.²⁹ They were set apart from the 'ulama' (sing. *'ālim*), or "turbaned classes," as they are called in some Arabic sources, who were essentially a clerical-scholarly

24 See Ibn Munqidh, *Kitab*, 81 (trans. Cobb, 93). Mu'in al-Din was the last representative of the Burid Dynasty in Damascus and reigned until his death in 544/1149. He was the *atābak* (regent and tutor) of the Burid ruler 'Abd al-Dawla Abu Sa'id Abak "Mudjir al-Din". R. Le Tourneau, "Burids", 1332. For Usama's career, see Cobb, *Warrior-Poet*, 21–22, 26–28, 31–43, 49–51, 57–58; Irwin, "Usama," 78, 81–82, 87; Husain, "Wondrous Crusade Encounters," 193. On the alliance between Fulk and Mu'in al-Din, see Praver, *Histoire*, 1: 327–28, 334, cited in Irwin, "Usama," 78; Frenkel, "Muslim Responses," 33–34.

25 Ibn Munqidh, *Kitab*, 65 (trans. Cobb, 76): "fa-qāla al-malik li-sitta sab'a min al-fursān: 'Qūmū i'malū lahu ḥukman'"

26 Ibn Munqidh, *Kitab*, 137–38 (trans. Cobb, 150).

27 On speech adaptation, imitations, and the use of speech for character development in the Greco-Roman historiographical tradition, see Marincola, *Authority and Tradition*, 17, 76, 130.

28 Cobb, *Warrior-Poet*, 4–7, 18; Derenbourg, *Ousāma*, 36–37 and chap. 2; Hitti, "Introduction," 7, 11–13.

29 Beg, "Al-Khassa wa'l 'Ammā." See also Ibn Shaddad, *Nawadir*, 246 (trans. Richards, 244), who recounts that only the "khawāṣṣ min al-umarā' wa'l-mu'ammamīn" (the elite of the emirs and the turbaned classes) were allowed to convey their condolences to Ṣalaḥ al-Din's son at his father's funeral.

elite. An individual *‘alim* sometimes entered court service, but others practiced ascetic lifestyles and a large group among them discouraged association with rulers.³⁰ These two categories were by no means impervious; many courtiers produced pious or religious texts and some *‘ulama’* engaged in warfare.³¹ Accordingly, no courtier was *ipso facto* secular and not every representative of the *‘ulama’* shunned court life.³²

Nevertheless, a noticeable difference between the *‘ulama’* and the courtiers was that courtiers tended to take a greater interest in *adab*, which can be defined, on the one hand, as a set of genteel manners and linguistic arts practiced by many representatives of the warrior elite, administrators, and wealthy land-owners; and, on the other, as a body of Arabic and Persian literature that comprises anecdotes, fables, advice letters, and poetry (see below). Courtiers practiced and developed eloquent speech and fostered an appreciation for fine literature while the more traditional-minded among the *‘ulama’* tended to refrain from such pastimes.³³ This divide between courtly ethos and religious orthodoxy was constantly reinforced but also challenged and compromised.

In most ways, Usama's interests, as indicated by his poetry and the *Kitab*, indicate a worldview closer in line with that of the courtiers. He conversed with many scholars in his lifetime and had, as a tutor in his youth, an erudite *shaykh* (teacher), but never became a religious scholar himself.³⁴ In his book, he relates hunting stories featuring his father in great detail and does not comment disapprovingly on his family's cooperation with the Franks.³⁵ Yet Usama was not wholly divorced from the pious concerns of his time. He describes his father as the pious

30 Ibn Shaddad, *Nawadir*, 246 (trans. Richards, 244). Ibn Shaddad also uses the term *ahl al-din wa'l-salāh* (men of religion and piety). Ibn Shaddad, *Nawadir*, 240 (trans. Richards, 237).

31 Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, 1: 451–53, 461; Khalidi, *Historical Thought*, 85–86; see also Hillenbrand, *Perspectives*, 109.

32 Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography*, 36, 38, 151, and 109–10, for the scholar Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (164–241/780–855), who took dissociation with worldly life and the court and to another level; Crone, *Political Thought*, 128–29, 254–55.

33 Gabrieli, "Adab," 1: 239, 296, 451–54, 461, 513; see also the discussions in Khalidi, *Historical Thought*, chap. 3; Hillenbrand, *Perspectives*, 260–61; Irwin, "Usama ibn Munqidh," 85; Cobb, *Warrior-Poet*, xx, 84–87.

34 On Usama's disagreement with a religious scholar, see Ibn Munqidh, *Kitab*, 85 (trans. Cobb, 97–98 and 300, n. 147); Cobb, *Warrior-Poet*, 6–7, 72; Derenbourg, *Ousâma*, 50–53. Usama did, however, disapprove of astrology, which was a courtly pursuit. See Derenbourg, *Ousâma*, 39–40.

35 For Majd al-Din on the hunt, see Ibn Munqidh, *Kitab*, 125–26, 192, 199–225; trans. Cobb, 138, 201–2, 207–34; Derenbourg, *Ousâma*, 33–34.

patriarch of the clan, who had copied an impressive sum of forty-three Qur'an codices.³⁶ He also claims that the *jihād al-Ifranġ* (the jihad against the Franks)—which I will revisit below—was one of his father's main preoccupations, despite peaceful relations with some Frankish leaders.³⁷ He recalls, with the same sense of pride, that his brother was “one of the Muslim scholars, cavaliers, and one of the faithful.” He adds that the same brother, “may God have mercy on him, was of the Muslim cavaliers who fought for religion, and not for the world,” thereby depicting him as a pious *mujāhid* (someone who undertakes jihad).³⁸

What may seem paradoxical to us, then, was just a part of the pragmatic outlook of many Muslims faced with the realities of a large-scale invasion and violent displacement. This paradoxical attitude also demonstrates that the courtly elite could exhibit more flexible behaviours and attitudes than the *‘ulamā’*: pursuing peaceful relations with Franks in one instance and then engaging in holy war in another. What is important here is that the normalcy of contact with Franks exposed Usama to their customs and their knightly code at an early age, and again when he was employed as a diplomat. His familiarity with the Franks is thus reflected in his book and needs to be analysed much more thoroughly.

***Kitab al-i‘tibār*: The Text and Its Audience**

Usama's greatest legacy among the Muslims of his age was his poetry.³⁹ In his extensive biographical dictionary, Ibn Khallikan (608–681/1211–1282) overlooks his remarkable and tumultuous political career and instead focuses on his poetic

36 Ibn Munqidh, *Kitab*, 53 (trans. Cobb, 63–64); Derenbourg, *Ousāma*, 31, 34–35. See also Ibn Munqidh, *Kitab*, 125, 192 (trans. Cobb, 138, 202), for other examples of his father's pious behaviour; Cobb, “Infidel Dogs,” 61–62; Husain, “Wondrous Crusade Encounters,” 191. For the copying of the Qur'an as a pious act, see, Gacek, *Arabic Manuscripts*, 235–36, and for his other displays of piety, see Cobb, *Warrior-Poet*, xx, 5, 74–76.

37 Ibn Munqidh, *Kitab*, 192 (trans. Cobb, 202); Cobb, “Infidel Dogs,” 61–62; Derenbourg, *Ousāma*, 34; Husain, “Wondrous Crusade Encounters,” 192; Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 15, 26–29, 38–39; Cobb, *Warrior-Poet*, 100; Dajani-Shakeel, “Diplomatic Relations,” 192, 198–207; Frenkel, “Muslim Responses,” 29, 32–33, 38–40; Köhler, *Allianzen*, 20–21, 110–11, 240, 284. I thank Mr. Andrew H. Sorber (University of Virginia) for having provided translations of sections of *Allianzen* prior to the publication of the English translation.

38 Ibn Munqidh, *Kitab*, 16, 18: “wa-kāna min ‘ulamā’ al-Muslimīn wa'l-fursānihim wa-ghubbādihim;” “wa-kāna raḥamahu Allāh, min fursān al-Muslimīn yuqātil li'l-dīn lā li'l-dunya”; see Cobb, “Infidel Dogs,” 61–62.

39 Husain, “Encounters,” 195; Cobb, *Warrior-Poet*, ix, xi, 18, 61–62, 93, 116–17; I. Schen, “Middle Arabic I,” 221; Hitti, “Introduction,” 13. See Ibn Khallikan, *Wafāyat al-a‘yan*, 1: 202–5.

achievement.⁴⁰ But among modern historians of the crusades, Usama is most celebrated for *Kitab al-i'tibar*, since it preserves a unique and intimate perspective on Frankish-Muslim relations during the sixth/twelfth century.⁴¹ The text survives in one damaged and incomplete manuscript, likely composed in Syria in the seventh/thirteenth century, and now housed in the Escorial in Spain (MS 1947). It may be a copy of the original, which would have been penned by a scribe working under Usama's supervision. Usama's working method appears to have been mainly dictation, in which case his scribe might have been familiar enough with an Old French dialect to relay loanwords accurately. But Paul Cobb suggests that Usama also had notes that could have been incorporated into the work by the same scribe.⁴² These notes may not have antedated the composition of the manuscript by much time, as Usama describes the difficulty of writing in old age.⁴³ The *ijāza* (certificate of transmission) appended to the end of the text confirms that Usama's great-grandson had read and transmitted the work under the supervision of his own grandfather. I. Schen and Robert Irwin therefore argue that the intended audience of the work was Usama's own progeny.⁴⁴ This may be the reason why the work survives in only one manuscript. Needless to say, the lack of variants precludes an analysis of the text's transmission, but the fact that any Old French loanwords should survive intact is a testament to the reliability of that transmission.

The *Kitab's* reliability must also be assessed in light of its similarities to works of *adab*. Authors of *adab* were more concerned with imparting advice or entertaining than with relating events accurately. This genre usually took the form of advice letters, anecdotes, parables, and poetry.⁴⁵ The *Kitab* fits neatly alongside

40 Note: this is partly a consequence of authorial selection. See Al-Qadi, "Biographical Dictionaries," 36–37, 58–67. See also Cobb, *Warrior-Poet*, 116ff.

41 See Hillenbrand, *Perspectives*, 260; Husain, "Wondrous Crusade Encounters," 189; Cobb, *Warrior-Poet*, 67, 93, 97–99, 117; Cobb, *Book of Contemplation*, xvi; Miquel, *Prince syrien*, 8; Hitti, "Introduction," 14.

42 Cobb, *Book of Contemplation*, xxxvii–xxxviii, xlvii; Miquel, "Notes," 426; Wild, "Open Questions," 10–13. Schen analyses the transmission of Middle Arabic in the *Kitab* in detail in "Middle Arabic I," 223–38, 231–33.

43 Ibn Munqidh, *Kitab*, 163 (trans. Cobb, 178).

44 Irwin, "Gentleman," 74; Schen, "Middle Arabic I," 230; Cobb, *Book of Contemplation*, xxxiv, who argues that the work was likely intended for Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn; Wild, "Questions," 16–17, argues for a wider audience. See also Miquel, *Prince syrien*, 8.

45 Cobb, *Warrior-Poet*, 67–69, 93; Hillenbrand, *Perspectives*, 260–61; Gabrieli, "Adab," I.1: 175–76; Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, 1: 239, 296, 451–54, 513; Hitti, "Introduction," 15–16. See Wild ("Open Questions," 16–17, 19–22) on conventionalized material in the *Kitab*; see also the discussions in Khalidi, *Historical Thought*, chap. 3.

such works, as it contains a number of stories that impart advice based on the actions and outlooks of the people Usama knew or heard about, hence the title *i'tibār* ("learning by example"). The *Kitab* also exhibits other features, such as anecdotes, which are often found in *adab*, as well as rhyming prose (*saj*), which appears ubiquitously in Arabic literature. This helps to explain Usama's tendency toward stereotyping, directing the reader's attention to the alterity of the Franks and highlighting their awkward and uncivilized behaviour, and their lack of moral propriety.⁴⁶ If the aim of the *adīb*, or practitioner of *adab*, was to display refined manners and eloquence, then the typical Frank serves as the anti-*adīb* in Usama's account. Many of the Franks in the *Kitab* thus represent a convenient literary foil whose example the audience should not emulate.⁴⁷

But Usama also challenges such simple dichotomies, and it is here that we recognize the merits of the work as a historical source. First, Usama takes issue with the vulgar behaviour of the Franks much more than with their religion or even with the reality of their presence in the Levant.⁴⁸ He does not vilify their religious beliefs nor does he engage in religious polemics. Second, he differentiates between the newly arrived Franks and the more acculturated and well-mannered Templars, whom he calls "my comrades" (*aṣḍiqāʾī*).⁴⁹ Indeed, his claim to familiarity with the Templars is undoubtedly intended as a boast and this point warrants additional analysis (see below). This sense of camaraderie also indicates that he did not refrain from intermingling with the Franks and therefore had a lot more to say about them than authors who stayed aloof.

This leads us to our third point, which is that the *Kitab* is also an autobiographical text, or more accurately a "self-text," as Dwight Reynolds calls it, since it does not adhere to a chronological sequence of life events.⁵⁰ In this self-text, Usama reveals, whether intentionally or not, some of his personal views and reflections

⁴⁶ See Hillenbrand, *Perspectives*, 260; Husain, "Encounters," 189–90, 195, 197; Cobb, *Warrior-Poet*, 96–97.

⁴⁷ See Hillenbrand, *Perspectives*, 260–61, 348; see also Cobb, "Infidel Dogs," 57, on Usama's story-telling and didactic concerns, and Miquel, "Notes," 426, 428.

⁴⁸ See Cobb, *Warrior-Poet*, 111–14.

⁴⁹ Hillenbrand, *Perspectives*, 333; Husain, "Wondrous Crusade Encounters," 197–98; Cobb, *Warrior-Poet*, 27, 29, 105–6; Miquel, "Notes," 428; Wild, "Open Questions," 23–25. For a parallel case of differentiation between *poulain* Franks and the newly-arrived ones, see Talmon-Heller, "Cited Tales," 127 and 149; Kedar, "Some New Sources," 136; and Ibn Shaddād, *Nawadir*, 204, 236 (trans. Richards, 196, 233).

⁵⁰ For the genre of *Kitab*, see Cobb, *Warrior-Poet*, 63; Husain, "Wondrous Crusade Encounters," 195–96; Reynolds, *Interpreting the Self*, 65. On *maqāma*: Brockelmann and Pellat, "Maḳama," 6: 107–15; and André Miquel's insightful observations in "Notes," 425–27. On rhyming prose (*saj*) and poetry in the *Kitab*, see Miquel, "Notes," 430.

on the Franks and on his work as a diplomat. As mentioned above, Usama did not omit the friendly relations between his father and Baldwin II when he composed the *Kitab*, and he recounts casual and even affable conversations with the Franks.⁵¹ Usama's account of the close relations between his own family and Baldwin II would have been controversial had the work been read publicly, because it was composed at a time of heightened Muslim enthusiasm for counter-crusade. By the time Usama sat down to dictate his reminiscences, Damascus had become the main centre for the diffusion of jihad propaganda and Sunni orthodoxy in Greater Syria.⁵² It is possible that its unique combination of autobiographical and *adab* genres afforded Usama a certain freedom from the critical eye of the Damascene establishment, either because it was not intended for circulation among the 'ulama' or because it posed no threat to their religious authority. The only indication of Usama's interest in the counter-crusade is the single use of the term *jihad al-Ifranj* mentioned above. Moreover, this term may represent a back-projection of late sixth/twelfth century ideologies imposed on early Frankish-Muslim feuds.⁵³ The Muslims who resisted the invasion of the first crusaders did not necessarily think of their actions in the framework of a counter-crusade; the development of a widespread and coherent ideology and terminology of counter-crusade lagged behind the events of the First Crusade by several decades.⁵⁴

Indeed, the strongest indication that jihad propaganda had any impact on Usama's work is actually his silence on his role as a diplomat for Mu'in al-Din and his refusal to comment openly on his ability to communicate with the Franks. Usama needed to mention his presence in many accounts in order to provide context for encounters with the Franks, but he refrained from openly implicating himself in any Burid-Frankish alliance. It is clear that Usama did not identify closely with the 'ulama' and did not share their moral concerns or their urge to promote the *jihad al-Ifranj*.⁵⁵ Even Usama's more casual writing style, which deviated from the refined

51 See Ibn Munqidh, *Kitab*, 41–42, 65–66, 69, 80–81, 134–38 (trans. Cobb, 52; 76–77, 81, 93–94, 147–50); see also *Kitab*, 141 (trans. Cobb 153–54) for conversations that Usama heard from others.

52 Mourad, "Jihad Propaganda," 6; Mourad and Lindsay, *Intensification*, 36–42, 56–57; and Gilbert, "Institutionalization," 106 on Damascus "as the source of political, social, cultural, and intellectual trends."

53 See also Wild ("Open Questions," 21, 28) for other possible later influences; Hitti, "Introduction," 14.

54 Sivan, *L'Islam*, 10–19; Ephrat, "Muslim Reactions," 47–58.

55 Cobb, *Book of Contemplation*, xxix–xxxii, xxxiv; Cobb, *Warrior-Poet*, 58; Husain, "Encounters," 194–95. See the discussion in Cobb, "Infidel Dogs," 58–68. See H.A.R. Gibb, *Damascus Chronicle*, 14–32, who argues that the shift in Muslim attitudes on *jihad* is

idiom of his scholarly contemporaries—as well as from *adab* works—further suggests indifference about whether or not an audience of ‘*ulama*’ would have liked to read and/or circulate his work.⁵⁶ Finally, in contrast to most ‘*ulama*’, who relied on the patronage of rulers and who in turn legitimised their rule, Usama revealed his experiences at the end of his career once his livelihood no longer depended on service to a ruler.⁵⁷ In sum, the work escaped the ideologies, the liabilities, and the attention of the Damascene ‘*ulama*’. The evidence surveyed thus far reinforces Schen’s and Irwin’s view that the text was left as a legacy for Usama’s family alone.

Paul Cobb credits Usama with a “marvellous eye for detail,” and his account certainly is more detailed than any extant contemporaneous Arabic text with regards to the customs of the Franks.⁵⁸ As a poet, Usama had a well-developed memory and we should not be surprised that he remembered so many details when he dictated the work.⁵⁹ More important is the fact that many of these details are corroborated by other sources. Adam M. Bishop has demonstrated convincingly that Usama accurately portrayed the role of Frankish viscounts in supervising legal procedures, the proceedings and outcomes of a judicial combat, trial by water as a means of proving murder, and the judicial role of knights in the king’s court, to which I return below.⁶⁰ More generally, other sources confirm that (a) Muslim merchants and diplomats stayed and travelled in the Kingdom of Jerusalem and the Frankish principalities during times of political entente or by official safe-conduct and that (b) prayer spaces and holy shrines under the control of the Franks were not always restricted to Frankish worshippers.⁶¹ In sum, the historicity of the *Kitab*

obscured in Usama’s writing. See also Ephrat and Kabha, “Fidelity,” 49.

56 See Derenbourg, *Ousâma*, vi; Miquel, “Notes,” 430–31 and Cobb, *Book of Contemplation*, xxxvii, who account for the “corrective” measures of scribes; and Wild, “Questions,” 11–13. For a detailed study of Usama ibn Munqidh’s use of Classical and Middle Arabic, see Schen, “Middle Arabic I,” 219, 221ff, and Schen, “Middle Arabic II,” 64–97.

57 For Usama’s later years in Damascus, see Cobb, *Book of Contemplation*, xxix–xxxii, xxxiv; Cobb, *Warrior-Poet*, 58.

58 Cobb, *Book of Contemplation*, xxiii, see also xvi.

59 Hodgson, *Venture*, 459; see also Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, and, on Usama’s memory, Miquel, “Notes,” 428; Schen, “Middle Arabic I,” 226.

60 Bishop, “Usama ibn Munqidh,” 53–65. The medieval Iberian *Code of Cuenca* states that a substitute may be hired in a duel; that the lances used in battle should be blunted; and that blacksmiths should not be hired as substitutes. Usama’s account suggests that the lord whose farmer was accused in the trial had cheated by hiring the local blacksmith to act as the farmer’s proxy. Ibn Munqidh, *Kitab*, 138–39 (trans. Cobb, 151–52); Powers, *Code of Cuenca*, 135–39.

61 Ibn Jubayr, *Travels*, 304–7, 310, 312–33 (trans. Broadhurst, *Rihla*, 316–19, 321, 323–24); Pellat, “Ibn D̲jubayr,” 755; Hillenbrand, *Perspectives*, 364, 379; Mayer, “Une lettre

is affected but not nullified by the author's primary occupation of teaching through the use of examples, as the title of the work suggests.⁶² With these considerations in mind, we can now analyse Usama's first encounters with Ifranji.

Loanwords in the *Kitab*⁶³

One way to probe the extent of Usama's knowledge of Ifranji is to analyse the loanwords in the *Kitab* whose usage can be dated reliably to his lifetime.⁶⁴ Usama introduces the following Old French words at different points in his account (listed in the order in which they appear):

Arabic	Old French
<i>turkubūlī</i>	<i>turcopoli</i> ⁶⁵
<i>sarjand</i>	<i>serjant/sergent</i>
<i>sīr, al-sīr</i>	<i>sire</i>
<i>burjāsī, burjāsīya</i>	<i>borjois/bourgeois</i>
<i>al-brūns</i>	<i>prince</i>
<i>al-dāmā</i>	<i>dame</i>
<i>al-biskund</i>	<i>visconte</i> ⁶⁶

de sauf-conduit," 27–35; Mayer, "Latins, Muslims," 184, 186. See also Dajani-Shakeel, "Diplomatic Relations," 201–9, 211. On the convergence of worshippers, see Limor, "Sharing Sacred Spaces," 219–32; Kedar, "Convergences," 59–69; Hamilton, "Our Lady of Saidnaya," 207–15; Riley-Smith, "Government," 122–28. On mercantile activity between Franks and Muslims, see Samarraï, "Medieval Commerce," 19–20; Frenkel, "Muslim Responses," 43; Riley-Smith, "Government," 125–26; Abulafia, "Role of Trade," 6.

62 Hillenbrand, *Perspectives*, 260, 262; Irwin, "Usama ibn Munqidh," 85; Wild, "Open Questions," 16. Robert Irwin and Adnan Husain note the use of antitheses without entertaining doubts on the historicity of *Kitab al-i'tibar*. Irwin, "Usama ibn Munqidh," 74–75; Husain, "Wondrous Crusade Encounters," 195–96. See also Young, "Arabic Biographical Writing," 186–87.

63 I thank my colleagues at the Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Toronto, for sharing their thoughts on Usama's loanwords, especially Cameron Wachowich, Eb Joseph Daniels, Benjamin Weaton, and Daniel Jamison.

64 There are other loanwords such as *Ifranji* that acquired currency before Usama composed his account. Derenbourg, "Notes sur quelques mots," 456–62. *Ifranji* or *Firanji* probably came from the Byzantine Greek *phrangoi*. See Bartlett, *Making of Europe*, 103–4; H. Kahane and R. Kahane, "Lingua Franca," 26–27, 30–31, 34, 39–40; Mallette, "Lingua Franca," 331; Aslanov, *Le Français*, 16–17.

65 *Turcopulus/turcopulus*, *-i* appears in the Latin sources for the period; see Smail, *Crusading Warfare*, 111–12. The Latin term probably entered OF vocabulary during the crusades, and might itself have derived from the Greek *tourkópoulos* ("sons of the Turks"); see Praver, "Social Classes," V: 120, n. 1.

66 Listed above in order of first appearance Ibn Munqidh, *Kitab*, 51, 67, 110, 115, 119, 120,

Turkubūlī is not attested in other contemporary Arabic sources. The closest match is *turkīl*, which appears in a manuscript of Ibn Shaddad's regnal history of Ṣalaḥ al-Dīn (*Al-Nawadir al-sultaniya wa'l-mahasin al-Yusufiya*, composed ca. 1198–1228) and appears to be a syncopated form of *turkubūlī*.⁶⁷ *Al-biskund*, *al-brūns*, and *al-dāmā*, are titles prefixed by the definite article *al-*, which normally precedes titles in Arabic. Apart from the article, *al-biskund*, *al-brūns*, and *al-dāmā*, like *turkubūlī* and *sarjand*, were imported into Arabic with minimal phonetic changes. *Burjāsī* and *burjāsīya*, however, are loanblends exhibiting the process of substitution, meaning that the words underwent additional changes to fit with the constraints of the recipient language.⁶⁸ In the case of *burjāsīya*, for example, the original OF term is altered to conform to the Arabic pattern of the roots *fā' - 'ayn - lām* combined with the suffix *īya* of mass nouns denoting ideas or concepts and it matches the structure of the Arabic words *furūsīya* (made up of *fā' - rā' - sīn + īya*) and *ṣūfiya* (*ṣād - wāw - fā' + īya*). But the similarity of *al-biskund*, *al-brūns*, *al-dāmā*, *sarjand*, and *turkubūlī* to their OF models may indicate that their appearance in the *Kitab* was a product of Usama's particular bilingualism, since bilinguals tend to import words into a receiving language with minimal substitution.⁶⁹ In other words, bilinguals are adept at importing loanwords by replicating their "phoneme categories," that is, the permutations of the phonemes, syllables, or prosodic units of the loan.⁷⁰

132, 139, 141 (trans. Cobb, 61, 79, 123, 127, 131, 132, 149, 151, 154); Cobb, *Warrior-Poet*, 94; Derenbourg, "Notes sur quelques mots," 462–64. I could not locate two of Derenbourg's OF loanwords in Hitti's edition. Variants of these OF terms can be found in Hindley et al., *Old French-English Dictionary*; Bourdon et al., *Dictionnaire normand-français*; Kelham, *Dictionary*.

67 Ibn Shaddad, *Nawadir*, 174 (trans. Richards, 164). On the composition date of the *Nawadir*, see pages 5–7 of the introduction by Richards. This could be either the result of a scribal error or of phonetic loanword adaptation.

68 For the processes of importation and substitution in loanword adaptation, see Haugen, "Analysis," 212–16, 230–31. The addition of *al* does not make them loanblends *per se* because the indefinite forms *biskund* and *dāmā* could in theory exist; Ibid., 218. *Burjāsīya* may be defined as a loanblend proper; Ibid., 215, 217–8. In this article I use "adapt" and its derivatives in a non-technical sense to mean "borrow."

69 Ibid., 213, 216. Weinreich, *Languages in Contact*, 26–28, 44–46, 51–54; and Van Coetsem, *Transfer Types*, 2–3, 7–23, 77–80.

70 See LaCharité and Paradis, "Category Preservation," 223–27, 230, 240, 249; "Apparent Phonetic Approximation," 87–90, 95–96, 121; Van Coetsem, *Transfer Types*, 10, 80, 112–14. Paradis and LaCharité stress the phonological approach to loanword adaptation ("category preservation") to explain the borrower's ability to reproduce source phonemes, "sound-units," based on their familiarity with the structures of the source language rather than on

It is important to note that Usama provides "explanatory asides" for the terms *al-biskund*, *burjāsī*, *al-dāmā*, *sarjand*, and *turkubūlī*, which confirm the obscurity of these OF terms among native Arabic-speakers.⁷¹ These five loanwords are absent from the contemporaneous Arabic texts that I have encountered thus far, with the exception of the corruption *turkīl*. In contrast, Persian and Turkish loanwords in the *Kitab* appear in other contemporary Arabic texts.⁷² The fact that Usama provides no explanation for the terms *burjāsīya* and *al-brūns* suggests that they were the only widely known loanwords out of the five.⁷³ For example, the

their misperception of its sounds. The opposing viewpoint allows for the greater accuracy of loanword adaptation by bilinguals even if they too are affected by phonetic misperception; See Peperkamp and Dupoux, "Reinterpreting Loanword," 369 and n. 2, and the summary of the two positions in Dohlus, *Role of Phonology*, 10–16; Calabrese and Wetzels, "Loan Phonology," 1–10.

71 Ibn Munqidh, *Kitab*, 67, 132, 139 (trans. Cobb 79, 149, 151); see Cobb, *Book of Contemplation*, xxxvii. Ibn Shaddad uses the Arabic term *ṣāhibā* (lady, in a regal sense) instead of *al-dam*.

72 For instance, the term *kazāghand* (a type of armour, from the Persian *kaz-agand*) also appears in Ibn Shaddad, *Nawadir*, 225 (trans. Richards, 221 n. 1). For the use of *kazāghand* in *Kitab*, see Cobb, *Book of Contemplation*, 289, n. 38. Other Persian loanwords from *Kitab* that appear in Arabic texts or inscriptions are *isbasalar* (general, from Persian *sīpah-salarī*) and *dasht* (desert, from Persian, Cobb, *Book of Contemplation*, n. 4). Bosworth, "Ispahsālār," 208; for the use of *isbasalar/isfah-salar* in inscriptions of the Crusade Period, see Frenkel, "Muslim Responses," 34, 40; Longworth, "Deṣht", II: 951. However, the above terms could have appeared in the Arabic language at any point after the Islamic Conquests of the first/seventh century. Turkish loanwords from *Kitab al-i'tibar* attested elsewhere are: *khatun* (lady, from Turkic, Cobb, *Book of Contemplation*, n. 261); *al-bala* (pointed blade, from Turkic *bala*, Cobb, *Book of Contemplation*, n. 57); and of course *atābak*. For the Egyptian loanword *janāwīya* (a Genoese shield), see Cahen, *Orient et Occident*, 133, 176; cited in Abulafia, "The Role of Trade," 10; Abulafia, "Trade and Crusade," 17. On naval loanwords to Arabic, see Pryor, *Geography, Technology*, 62–63 and 45–46.

73 The loanwords *al-qūmiṣ* (comes), *al-brins/al-bruns* (prince), *al-Istibār/al-Isbitārīya* (Hospitaller/Hospital Order), *al-Inkatār/al-Inkatīr* (the English [king]), *al-Ifransīs* (the French [king]), and *al-Markīs* (marquis) also appear in the *Nawadir* without explanatory remarks; see Ibn Shaddad, *Nawadir*, 77, 161, 164 (trans. Richards, 74, 150, 153, and nn. 1 and 5); see also Ibn 'Abd al-Ẓahir, *Al-Rawd*, 331. *Al-qūmiṣ* also appears in Ibn al-Qalanisi, *Ta'rikh Dimashq*, 138 (trans. Gibb, 51, n. 3) and a manuscript of al-Qadi al-Fadil's letters (Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Qq. 232); and *al-Markīs* also appears in Abu Shama's *Kitab al-rawḍatayn*. For the Old French loanword *pelegrin* (pilgrim, Ar. *al-bulghurīn*) in the *Rihla*, see Ibn Jubayr, *Rihla*, 314 (trans. Broadhurst, 325). The substitution apparent in *burjāsīya* also suggests that it was an early loan used by non-bilingual speakers; Haugen, "Analysis," 216. To my knowledge, no study devoted to Old French loanwords in medieval Arabic literature exists; but see Al-Qasim, *al-Lughah al-Faransiyah*; and Versteegh et al., *Encyclopedia of Arabic*, 3: 6–8.

twelfth century *Chronicon Livoniae* (*Chronicle of Livonia*) composed by Henry “the Interpreter” (ca. 1180–1260), a missionary in the Baltic, also contains a number of loanwords from Baltic and Finno-Ugric languages. Alan V. Murray accordingly argues that Henry’s use of uncommon loanwords indicates that he was also familiar with the source languages.⁷⁴

These loanwords are also interesting in themselves. In general, loanwords may be adapted out of necessity or for the sake of prestige. In the latter case, borrowing can be an act intended to showcase the borrower’s ability to use words of a foreign language. Necessary loanwords fill gaps in the recipient language for concepts or things that are not normally described, whereas such “luxury” loanwords are dispensable in regular everyday communication. Usama could have used equivalent Arabic terms for these Frankish loanwords; he even provides the plural form of the Arabic equivalent for *sarjand*: *rajjāla* (lit. “foot soldiers”). Yet he chose to use Frankish words and thereby exhibit his knowledge of some of the more technical terms encountered in their speech. All his loanwords pertain to social classes and five of them even designate ranks of the ruling aristocracy. He was thus using mostly luxury loanwords. This is important, too, because this type of loanword tends to retain the original morphology and phonology of the source language. And as we have seen, four of the five loanwords above are very similar to their Old French models.⁷⁵

In consideration of Usama’s interest in the marvellous and in the ethnography of the Franks, it is arguable that he inserted loanwords in his account as a means of boasting of his familiarity with Frankish society, and included the glosses as a way to expound his knowledge or make it accessible to an audience less familiar with Frankish customs.⁷⁶ The terms also evoke a sense of exoticism not incongruous with Usama’s description of devious Frankish habits and customs.⁷⁷ Finally, it is also possible that he incorporated the terms that he remembered best from his work as a diplomat.⁷⁸ In this scenario, the use of the loanwords is also a matter of accuracy and status, indicating Usama’s more intimate knowledge of (and interest in) Frank-

74 Murray, “Henry the Interpreter,” 118–21; see also Kivimäe, “*Henricus* the Ethnographer,” 81–82.

75 Danesi, *Language, Society*, 188, 190–91.

76 For the “non-structural factor” of prestige in loanword adaptation, see Weinreich, *Languages in Contact*, 3 and 46, 59–60; Van Coetsem, *Transfer Types*, 97, 99.

77 Derenbourg, “Notes,” 455, 460. For the bilingual’s acute appreciation of the novelty of loanwords, see Weinreich, *Languages in Contact*, 59.

78 For specialisation as a factor in loanword adaptation, see Weinreich, *Languages in Contact*, s.v. “c,” 3; for circumstances of learning loanwords as another factor: “d,” 3.

ish hierarchical structures.⁷⁹ Therefore, the pursuit of prestige and the novelty of the Frankish terms suggest two overlapping motivations for loanword importation in *Kitab*. Usama's ability to accurately replicate phonemes of Frankish words forty years after his involvement in diplomatic activity and his glosses for several loanwords (not attested in any other source) all point to second language acquisition on his part.

Representations of Orality

Another way to detect signs of Usama's bilingualism is to investigate how he reproduces direct speech uttered in Frankish. Murray identifies multiple accurate, plausible, or imagined "representations of orality" in his analysis of the linguistic ability of Henry the Interpreter, who had served as a translator in the Baltic region, during negotiations between Christian settlers and military orders, on the one hand, and the pagan communities of Livonia, on the other.⁸⁰ He first identifies 54 occurrences of Estonian, German, Lettish, Livish, and Russian direct speech in the *Chronicon Livoniae*.⁸¹ In most cases, Henry reproduced these speeches in Latin and in some cases he preserved original non-Latin words or phrases.⁸² Murray then differentiates between intra-linguistic communication (involving one language group) and inter-linguistic communication (involving two separate language groups) in order to determine when translation would have been necessary.⁸³ Of the cases where translation was necessary, Murray then determines whether these speeches accurately reproduce non-Latin verbal communication by determining if the content of the speech is:

1. Plausible, that is the sentiments expressed reflect the exigencies of the situation
2. Precise and recorded in a simple, non-ornate style
3. Pertinent to diplomatic exchanges—some of which Henry facilitated.⁸⁴

There are some important differences between Usama and Henry, of course. Henry most likely grew up around Magdeburg and may have spoken both a Slavic

79 According to Uriel Weinreich, the factor of prestige in loanword adaptation also makes for more accurate renderings of foreign concepts, see *Languages in Contact*, 27.

80 Murray, "Voices of Flanders," 105–6, 108–9.

81 Murray, "Henry the Interpreter," Table 4.1, 122–24, 126.

82 *Ibid.*, 125–26.

83 *Ibid.*, 126.

84 *Ibid.*, 128–32. On Henry's participation in the events he describes, see Henry of Livonia, *Heinrici Cronicon Lyvoniae*, 161–62 (4.23, 4.29: trans. Brundage, 179, 238); Brundage, *Henry of Livonia*, xxvi–xxvii; Mäesalu, "Mechanical Artillery," 294–96, 302.

language and Low German.⁸⁵ He wrote his account in Latin, which would not have been spoken on a day-to-day basis by the Livs or by the Germans engaged in negotiations or commerce. Usama, like most of his non-Turkoman contemporaries, based his writing on the language with which he was most familiar.

Despite these differences, Murray's method is useful for identifying representations of second language orality in the *Kitab*. Like Henry—who had learned Estonian, Livish, and some Lettish and Russian, either during his schooling or over the course of his career—Usama had learned some Frankish over the course of his employment and training as a diplomat. Like Henry, Usama renders plausible conversations in a simple style and records diplomatic exchanges in which he took part. Like the representations of orality in the *Chronicon Livoniae*, the speeches in Usama's account are also essentially representations of conversations Usama remembered having or hearing. There is no way to ascertain whether original quotations of second language speech are preserved in their entirety in the current manuscript witness, but it is certain that the speeches still preserve traces of what Usama said and heard because most of the second language direct speeches in the *Kitab* require some understanding of their specific contexts in order to make sense of them. For example, Usama need not have mentioned Mu'in al-Din's stolen sheep and his presence at Fulk's court in order to file a complaint had he simply wanted to comment on Frankish judicial process. These speeches therefore do not suggest a process of supplementing recollections with invented dialogue.

With these precautions in mind, we can begin to analyse some of the direct speech preserved in his account.

1. Usama describes a Frankish knight who came to the Holy Land on pilgrimage. This knight, Usama says, “grew to like my company and he became my constant companion, calling me ‘my brother’ (*akhī*). Between us there were ties of amity and sociability.”⁸⁶ Usama then recounts how the pilgrim offered to take his son to Europe. He said to Usama:

‘My brother, I am leaving for my country. I want you to send your son [...] with me to my country, where he can observe the knights and acquire reason and chivalry (*furūsiya*).’⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Murray, “Henry the Interpreter,” 116–18.

⁸⁶ Ibn Munqidh, *Kitab*, 132 (trans. Cobb, 144): “kāna fī ‘askar al-malik Fulk bn Fulk fāris muḥtashim Ifranjiya qad wašala min bilādihim yaḥujj wa-ya‘ūd, fa-anisa bī wa-šār mulāzīmī yad‘ūnī ‘akhī wa-baynanā al-mawadda wa'l-mu‘āshara.”

⁸⁷ Ibid.: “Yā akhī, anā sā'ir ilā bilādī, wa-urīduka tunaffidh ma'īya ibnaka ... ilā bilādī yabšur fursān wa-yata'allam al-'aql wa'l-furūsiya.”



Figure 3.1: The façade of al-Aqsa Mosque (facing towards the southwest).

Photo: Author, September 2013.

Like some of the diplomatic exchanges in the *Chronicon Livoniae*, this speech is devoid of rhetoric and Usama must have had no trouble understanding the pilgrim's earnest request.⁸⁸ Since Usama knew the words *sarjand* and *al-dāmā*, there is no reason to doubt that he could also understand the Frankish words for brother and country.

2. In the early 530s/late 1130s, Usama visited the al-Aqsa Mosque on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem (Figures 1 and 2). He was permitted to pray in a small adjacent church, but his prayer was abruptly interrupted by a newly arrived Frank. He recalls the Frank yelling, "Pray like *this!*" while forcibly turning him towards the Mount of Olives (the Christian direction of prayer).⁸⁹ The Templars had to come to his assistance twice to honour his diplomatic immunity and they contritely explained that the newly arrived Frank was unaccustomed to seeing someone pray towards Mecca. Usama must have understood the simple command given by the newly arrived Frank and rendered it literally into Arabic. Alternatively, it is possible that the irate Frank spoke at length but Usama recorded only

⁸⁸ Wild, "Open Questions," 18.

⁸⁹ Ibn Munqidh, *Kitab*, 135 (trans. Cobb, 147 with Cobb's emphasis): "Kadhā ṣallī!"



Figure 3.2: The eastern wall of al-Aqsa Mosque, showing the Templar Apse (facing towards the southwest). Photo: Author, September 2013.

the words that he caught. However, he must also have understood the apology of the Templars who tried to restore his inner peace. Usama would not otherwise have been able to explain the reason for the disruption to his prayers (that is, the ignorance of a newly-arrived Frank) on the basis of gestures or facial expressions alone, suggesting that Usama had acquired a working knowledge of some Old French dialect(s) by the time this episode occurred.⁹⁰

3. Usama saw a Frank approach his own overlord, Mu‘in al-Din, and ask him, “Do you want to see God [when He was] Small?”⁹¹ Mu‘in al-Din’s interest was piqued by what the Frank meant and the ruler followed him until he produced an icon, which displayed the Madonna and Child. It appears that the Frank meant to show them the Divine Infant. In this case, Usama may have recognized the Frank’s speech as a less formal register of an Old French dialect or a different Romance vernacular distinguishable from what was spoken in the court of King Fulk. Usama then rendered the words of the Franks into a correspondingly colloquial Arabic.⁹²

⁹⁰ It is highly unlikely that the Templars had learned enough Arabic in order to communicate with Usama; Burns, “Christian-Islamic Confrontation,” 1402–5, 1408.

⁹¹ Ibn Munqidh, *Kitab*, 135: “Turūd tabşur Allāh Şaghīr?”; See Schen, “Middle Arabic II,” 82 on the omission of the interrogative particle and 89–92 on *asyndeta*.

⁹² See Wild, “Open Questions,” 13–14; Schen, “Middle Arabic I,” 232. David Nancekivell

But this admittedly remains a highly speculative possibility in light of the paucity of evidence for Arabic-speakers differentiating between Romance vernaculars. It is more likely that the Frank actually used Arabic words but unwittingly pidginized the language.⁹³ He attempted to convey a message by simply gathering together the relevant words with little concern for word order or the crucial distinction between the definite and indefinite. The proper noun God requires a definite adjective whereas the Frank left the adjective in the indefinite.⁹⁴ To learn these words, the Frank could have consulted an Arabic-Old French phrasebook, like the one studied by Aslanov.⁹⁵ In this case, he would have located the word for God (Allāh) within a set liturgical or pious phrase⁹⁶ and then pinpointed the term *vert juene* (very young) and pronounced the corresponding Arabic *ṣaghīr* (small or little)⁹⁷ without adding the definite article *al-*.⁹⁸ In technical terms, the Frank would have transferred the grammatical relation of the model language (OF) to the replica language (Ar), which violated the relation pattern of the replica language.⁹⁹ Thus, the Frank's statement may be a calque, or a phrase translated literally from one language to another with little concern for correct grammar.¹⁰⁰ If this was the case, Usama then translated the Frank's words literally, in order to demonstrate his faulty use of grammar. Usama may only hint at his knowledge of Frankish but he was probably more reluctant to credit an unfamiliar Frank—as

(Faculty Lecturer of Arabic, Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University) suggests that the phrase could be a colloquial rendering of the circumstantial construction *Allāh Ṣaghīran* (opinion given in private conversation, September 2014); see Thackston, *An Introduction*, 60–61, and Schen, "Middle Arabic II," 83, for a similar example. This would fit neatly with Cobb's translation, 147.

93 Much of the following is inspired by an analysis of early pidginization of Arabic by Thomason and Elgibali, "Before the Lingua Franca," 317–49. I thank an anonymous external reader for this reference.

94 I thank Dr. Stephen Pelle (Dictionary of Old English, University of Toronto) and Cameron Wachowich (Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Toronto) for their insights on the Frank's peculiar construction.

95 Aslanov, *Evidence of Francophony*, 4–5. The phrasebook, as Aslanov explains, was consulted by a native Arabic speaker (probably a Copt) who used Bohairic transliterations of OF terms as an aid for pronunciation.

96 *Ibid.*, 27.

97 *Ibid.*, 5.

98 See Thomason and Elgibali, "Before the Lingua Franca," 329–30.

99 Weinreich, *Languages in Contact*, 29–31, 37–38.

100 Danesi, *Language, Society*, 192–93. The calque may also reflect "incipient bilingualism": Diebold, "Incipient Bilingualism," 99.

opposed to the Templars, whom he knew—with any knowledge of Arabic, even if it was ungrammatical Arabic.

4. As for the accounts of the Frankish physician and the judgment of King Fulk, described above, I argue that these are all representations of Old French dialect spoken in the presence of Usama, and that in both cases he understood at least the main ideas that were being conveyed. These accounts, considered together with Usama's knowledge of Frankish terms, suggest that he had some second language (L2) exposure during his frequent visits to the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. Importantly, he describes some of his journeys to pilgrimage sites in the kingdom as though he moved unaccompanied and independently.¹⁰¹ Finally, many of his encounters with the language(s) of the Franks occurred in diplomatic contexts, when he was either negotiating or travelling for the purpose of negotiating.

Other Cases of L2 Acquisition during the Sixth/Twelfth Century

Several other sources attest to foreign language learning on both sides of the religious divide, and Hussein M. Attiya has compiled an extensive list of cases in which Franks acquired knowledge of the Arabic language. To Attiya's list, we can add that:

1. a veteran of the First Crusade spoke to Usama's runner in Arabic;¹⁰²
2. a bath-keeper from Ma'arra who had served Usama's father may have understood some Romance words;¹⁰³
3. an Eastern Christian physician named Thabit, sent to the Frankish lord of al-Munaytira by Usama's uncle Sultan ibn 'Ali (r. 491–552?/1098–1157?), could understand some Romance speech;¹⁰⁴
4. a Muslim held captive by Richard of England overheard the planned route of the crusaders and reported it to Salah al-Din after he had escaped.¹⁰⁵

We can further add three more cases of L2 acquisition from the Third Crusade that also arose out of a diplomatic context. The regnal history of Ibn Shaddad contains

101 For current explanations of Usama's access to the al-Aqsa' mosque under Frankish rule, see Hillenbrand, *Perspectives*, 378; Mayer, "Latins, Muslims," 186 (who does not account for Usama's status as a diplomat); Riley-Smith, "Government," 123–24. For Usama's visit to the Dome of the Chain, see Elad, *Medieval Jerusalem*, 47–48, cited in Cobb, "Book of the Staff," 115–16. For Usama's visit to Sebaste (Sabastiya), see Ibn Munqidh, *Kitab*, 243 (trans. Cobb, 119).

102 Ibn Munqidh, *Kitab*, 141–42 (trans. Cobb, 153–54)

103 *Ibid.*, 136–37 (trans. Cobb, 149).

104 *Ibid.*, 132–33 (trans. Cobb, 145–46); cf. Attiya, "Knowledge of Arabic," 209.

105 Ibn Shaddad, 197 (trans. Richards, 189).

detailed accounts of the negotiations between Richard of England and the envoys of Salah al-Din, and the author was present in the sultan's court during some of his campaigns against the Christian armies. He witnessed the diplomatic process and, in his capacity as Qadi al-'Askar (Judge of the Army), certainly had easy access to oral reports and official documents.¹⁰⁶ There is no compelling evidence, however, that Ibn Shaddad himself understood anything spoken by the Franks or that he ever communicated with the crusaders; any representations of orality in his account must derive from his informants and sources, who were most likely the envoys and amirs in the sultan's court. They were in direct contact with Richard and could have explained Frankish terms to Ibn Shaddad upon their return to the sultan's camp. For example, Ibn Shaddad explains the meaning of the Old French *terme*, which he apparently learned from one of his informants and not from personal contact with the Franks:

[...] the princes answered the sultan [...] that what was to come to him of the remainder [of a payment] should be rendered in three 'terms' [*turūm*], or instalments [*nujūm*], each term lasting a month.¹⁰⁷

Ibn Shaddad provides an Arabic equivalent for *terme* and in effect translates the Frankish word. Again, the word has undergone substitution and conforms to another pattern of Arabic noun morphology. It is noteworthy that this loanblend also originated in a diplomatic context.

In another account, Ibn Shaddad recalls that, during the month of Rajab 588/ August 1192, Richard requested the company of several officers of Salah al-Din's court, with whom he was on close terms:

The king [Richard] then asked for the Chamberlain Abu Bakr al-Adili, who came to his presence along with Aybak al-Azizi, Sunqur al-Mashtub and others. He had made friends (*ṣādaqa*) with several of the elite mamluks and had knighted (*farasa*) some of them. He was on very good terms with

106 For Ibn Shaddad's sources, see *Nawadir*, 87, 116, 238 (trans. Richards, 81, 107, 235. See also Ibn Shaddad (*Nawadir* 13, 241; trans. Richards, 23, 237–38) for the author's *autopsia*; and Richards' introduction in *Nawadir*, 5–6.

107 Ibn Shaddad, 173: "al-mulūk qad ajābū al-sultān (raḥmat Allāh 'alayhi) ilā an yakūn mā waqa'a 'alayhi al-qarār yudfa'u fī turūm (ay nujūm) thalātha, kul tarm shahr." The loanword appears in a different form in J.G. Hava's dictionary and is completely absent from the lexicon of E. W. Lane/S. Lane-Poole as well as Hans Wehr's dictionary. Ibn Waṣil uses Ibn Shaddad's account almost verbatim but omits the Outremer French word in his history of the Ayyubids: *Mufarrij al-kurub fī akhbar Bani Ayyub* (The Disquiet Dispelled by the Dealings of the Ayyubid Dynasty).

them, as they met him on numerous occasions. He had also made friends with several of the emirs, such as Badr al-Din Dildirim.¹⁰⁸

This account attests to the popularity of the English king among the Muslim elite, as well as to the relative accessibility and cordiality of Richard's court. For our purposes, it is important to note that Richard "knighted" some of the Muslim guests.¹⁰⁹ It is possible that Ibn Shaddad heard Salah al-Din's officers discussing the western ceremony of conferring knighthood using a phrase that involved the Old French verb *adober* (to dub) and noun *chevalier* (knight) or *chevalerie* (knighthood).¹¹⁰ Ibn Shaddad's choice of words reflects a similar etymological link. He uses the verb *farasa* based on the pattern of *fā' - rā' - sīn* (or possibly even a "loan creation," *farrasa*, with the second root *rā'* doubled). The default verb of the *fā' rā' sīn* root means to break, seize; or kill (prey); or to become a horseman.¹¹¹ Thus, Ibn Shaddad or his source either used the verb in an unconventional way or modified the verb *farasa* to make it a causative *farrasa* in order to signify that Richard literally made these Muslims competent at horsemanship. But since the elites whom Richard met would have been highly-trained professional horsemen, this "semantic loan" more probably reflects Ibn Shaddad's literal translation of the European knighting ceremony.¹¹²

Importantly, the meeting described in this account also occurred during the critical negotiations of 588/1192, when both rulers were eager to conclude a truce. Once again, we see that prolonged diplomatic encounters could foster an environment of geniality despite the underlying tensions between two groups at war. This geniality, however, was not only a symptom of diplomatic circumstances

108 Ibn Shaddad, *Nawadir*, 227 (trans. Richards, 223): "thumma thalaba al-ḥājjib Abā Bakr al-ʿĀdilī fa-ḥaḍara ʿindihi, wa-Aybak al-ʿAzīzī, wa-Sunqur al-Mashṭūb wa-ghayr ḥāʿulāʿi, wa-kāna qad ṣādaqa jamāʿa min khawāṣṣ al-mamālik, wa-farasa minhum jamāʿa wa-dakhala maʿahum dakhūlan ʿazīman bi-ḥaythu kānū yajtamiʿūn bihi fi awqāt mutaʿaddida, wa-kāna qad ṣādaqa min al-umarāʾ jamāʿa ka-Badr al-Dīn wa-Ḍiḍdirim wa-ghayrihi."

109 The author of the *Gesta Ricardi* claims that Richard knighted Sayf al-Din's son: Nicholson, *Chronicle*, 295.

110 Boulton, "Classic Knighthood," 49–50; Hindley, Langley, and Levy, *Old French-English Dictionary*, 120.

111 Lane and Lane-Poole, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, 6: 2366, s. v. "farasa." The word *fāris* of the same root signifies a fighter on horseback and often appears in Arabic literature.

112 On "semantic loans" and "loan creations," Haugen, "Analysis," 214, 220–21. The clause in question ("wa-farasa minhum jamāʿa") is absent from manuscript M of the *Nawadir* and from the 1755 edition of Albertus Schultens, 252, and from the *RHC Occ* edition of the text (II: 333), which suggests confusion on the part of the manuscript copyists; see Ibn Shaddad, *Nawadir*, 227.

and political exigency. As far as we can tell from the sources, Richard did not ever meet with any of the 'ulama' of Salah al-Din's court; what allowed for the cordial encounter was that Richard's Muslim acquaintances were all amirs and mamluks who served the sultan's retinue as high-ranking officers and guards.¹¹³ Therefore, they had had an upbringing and training comparable to the European knights in Richard's retinue. In addition, the practice of hunting and the glorification of martial feats were alike integral to Frankish and Muslim court culture. I would therefore suggest that discussions between Richard and the Muslim warrior elites, mediated by translator(s), could have touched upon these topics.¹¹⁴ Indeed Ibn Shaddad relates that Richard praised the martial aptitude of the sultan before the same Muslim courtiers.¹¹⁵

Another example of contact between warrior elites is found in the *Kitab*, when Usama recounts how a Frankish knight suddenly appeared in Shayzar one day when Usama was still a young man.

My uncle [Sultan ibn Ali] said, "This horseman has come from Apamea wishing to set eyes on the cavalier [Usama] who speared the horseman Philip. For the Franks are amazed by that spear-thrust, which pierced two layers of the horseman's armour, and yet he survived."¹¹⁶

This account indicates that the Frankish knight was interested in simply meeting an adversary of martial distinction. Usama even suggests that Frankish knightly culture mirrored the culture of the Muslim warrior in a passage where he claims that he told Fulk: "My Lord, I am a knight of my race and people."¹¹⁷ Thus, Frankish and Muslim elites could find common ground in warrior ethos and culture, if only during periods of ceasefire.

113 See William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 2: 991; William of Tyre, *Historia*, 2: 431.

114 Cobb, *Warrior-Poet*, 4, 7–10, 15–6, 106; Hillenbrand, *Perspectives*, 355–57; Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, 44. See also Friedman, "Gestures of Conciliation?," 45, and Friedman, "Peacemaking Perceptions," 245, for an interest in hunting shared by Fulk and Mu'in al-Din.

115 Ibn Shaddad, *Nawadir*, 227–28 (trans. Richards, 223).

116 Ibn Munqidh, *Kitab*, 41–42 (trans. Cobb, 52): "‘ammī ... fa-qāla: 'hadhā al-fāris qad jā' min Afāmiya yurid yabṣur al-fāris alladhī ṭa'ana Filīb al-Fāris, fa-inna al-Ifranġ ta'ajjabū min tilka'l-ṭa'na wa-annuhā kharaqat al-zaradiya min ṭāqatin (?) wa-salima al-fāris"; see also Cobb, *Warrior-Poet*, 15. This passage suggests either that Usama's uncle understood Outremer French or that the knight spoke some Arabic—but most likely an interpreter, such as Sulṭan's Christian doctor Thabit, might have been present; see Ibn Munqidh, *Kitab*, 132–33; trans. Cobb, 145–46.

117 Ibn Munqidh, *Kitab*, 65 (trans. Cobb, 77): "Yā Mawlāya, anā fāris min jinsī wa-qawmī"; see also Wild, "Open Questions," 23.

Conclusions

Usama's colourful stories of the Frankish nobility suggest that there were ample opportunities for conversation across confessional divides even on the basis of a limited working vocabulary. Usama, in particular, spent long periods of time among the Franks as a diplomat and guest. He came to know individual Franks and developed a rapport with the Templars through such prolonged contact and by virtue of his diplomatic immunity. Most cases of inter-lingual contact in the medieval Levant occurred in diplomatic or mercantile contexts, at least as far as we can tell from the surviving evidence. Meanwhile, the Franks also had opportunities to learn Arabic and some of them became quite competent or even fluent, as the cases of Humfrey and Reginald of Sidon indicate. Yet here it is important to note that assertions of language competence may not always reflect historical reality and the actual degree of linguistic ability. Léger-Félicité Sonthonax, the French Civil Commissioner of Haiti, once claimed that the Haitian revolutionary leader Toussaint Louverture "ne parle que le creole." However, Louverture's autographed letters show that he could in fact communicate using a form of "creolized French" in line with seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French norms.¹¹⁸ The Spanish conquistador Bernal Díaz del Castillo (1492–1581) provides a treasure trove of loanwords in his *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España* (The True History of the Conquest of New Spain), but there is no indication in his account that he himself used any of the languages spoken in the Yucatán.¹¹⁹

Unfortunately, most of the evidence for L2 exposure among Franks and Muslims pertains only to the elite strata and is very scant. A much greater cache of evidence exists for L2 encounters in early modern Iberia where, for example, Mudejars (Muslims living under Christian rule) adapted linguistically by learning Romance dialects in order to conduct daily business transactions and to offer testimony in courts.¹²⁰ Still, my analysis of Usama's language acquisition at least allows for a fresh perspective on a frequently-quoted passage from Fulcher's chronicle:

For we who were Occidentals have now become Orientals. He who was a Roman or a Frank has in this land been made into a Galilean or a Palestinian. [...] Some have taken wives not only of their own people but Syrians or Armenians or even Saracens who have obtained the grace of baptism. [...] People use the eloquence and idioms of diverse languages in convers-

118 Louverture, *Memoir*, 4–5, 15–16, 25–29, and 39.

119 Díaz, *Conquest of New Spain*, has abundant examples of loanwords that Bernal learned but may never have used.

120 Meyerson, *Muslims of Valencia*, 228–30, 263; see also Nirenberg, "Muslims," 62, 67.

ing back and forth. Words of different languages have become common property known to each nationality, and mutual faith unites those who are ignorant of their descent. [...]¹²¹

Scholars have pointed out that language emerges as a clear marker of identity for Fulcher and that language contact was, for him, an important indicator of acculturation.¹²² This account, however, leaves the direction of language acquisition open to debate.¹²³ Undoubtedly, daily contact between a minority of Frankish settlers in power and a majority of local Arabic speakers made at least some second language acquisition inevitable for both groups, and this question merits further attention. Usama's *Kitab* cannot provide evidence for such wide-scale linguistic adaptation, but its survival as a historical document has allowed us a glimpse into a set of encounters in which a more mobile and affluent elite Muslim had exposure to second language learning.

121 Fulcher, *Historia*, 748–49 (trans. Ryan, 271): “nam qui fuimus Occidentales, nunc facti sumus Orientales, qui fuit Romanus aut Francus, hac in terra factus est Galilaeus aut Palaestinus. [...] ille vero iam duxit uxorem non tantum compatriotam, sed et Syram aut Armenam et interdum Saracenam, baptismi autem gratiam adeptam. [...] diversarum linguarum coutitur alternatim eloquio et obsequio alteruter: lingua diversa iam communis facta utrique nationi fit nota et iungit fides quibus est ignota progenies [...]. qui erat alienigena, nunc est quasi indigena, et qui inquilinus est, utique incola factus.”

122 MacEvitt, *Rough Tolerance*, 76–77; Jotischky, “Franks and Natives,” 2.

123 Cf. Hillenbrand, *Perspectives*, 331–33; Bartlett, *Making of Europe*, 146.

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Abstract Usama ibn Munqidh (488–584/1095–1188) was a distinguished poet, warrior, and nobleman born just months before Pope Urban II preached the First Crusade. He lived in what is now western Syria and witnessed the consolidation of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, the County of Tripoli, and the Principality of Antioch and their subsequent decline at the hands of the Zangids and Ayyubids. This article is a survey and analysis of Usama's exposure to the language of the Franks in his capacity as a diplomat. In the first part, I introduce Usama and his socio-cultural background and career in order to establish a context for his encounters with the Franks and the "Frankish" language. I then analyse his second language (L2) acquisition, focusing on his unique Frankish vocabulary as well as the representations of orality of Frankish speech preserved in his work. Finally, I compare his acquisition of Frankish to other cases of L2 learning from the sixth century AH/twelfth century CE. My primary aim is not to determine his exact level of fluency, but rather to understand the circumstances in which L2 learning and exchange could occur.

Keywords Crusades, Usama ibn Munqidh, Frankish-Muslim relations, Christian-Muslim relations, medieval diplomacy, medieval bilingualism, Old French, Romance languages, contact linguistics, loanwords.