

From Iraq to Andalusia:  
The Early History of the Hobbyhorse

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Western European scholars generally assume a late medieval, western European origin for the skirted hobbyhorse. Arnold van Gennep, for example, wrote emphatically in 1945 that the origins of the *cheval-jupon* “are not to be sought in the Orient, nor even in the Balkans and in Greece. The *cheval-jupon* is a distinctly western European invention, which was perhaps first devised in Provence or in Spain, or independently in these two regions, and among the Basques and the English, and this toward the end of the Middle Ages or at the beginning of the Renaissance, neither beforehand, nor elsewhere.”<sup>1</sup>

Although some have wanted to link the modern hobbyhorse to figures from ancient Greek and Indo-European myth<sup>2</sup> or to “those seasonal creatures [men disguised as animals] so well known and so sternly reprobated by the early Christian church,”<sup>3</sup> no scholar has offered documentary evidence of a hobby horse in Catholic Europe before the mid-thirteenth century.

Some time before 1261, according to Stephen of Bourbon, in the diocese of Elne in southwestern France, “certain young people of a particular village. . . customarily came and mounted on a wooden horse (*super equum ligneum*), and masked and armed, led dances on the eves of the feasts of the church, in the church and in the cemetery.” When the practice was banned by the village priest, one young man nevertheless entered the church “in the wooden horse [*in equo ligneo*].” The horse burst into flames and the young man was killed, a sign--some thought--of divine judgment, but perhaps no more than an accident of pyrotechnics.<sup>4</sup>

Jean-Claude Schmitt has argued persuasively that this was a skirted hobby horse: the dancer was “in” the horse and, since “the fire broke out around his feet [*ignis arripuit eum per pedes*],” his feet were presumably in contact with the ground, propelling the horse.<sup>5</sup> E. C. Cawte notes that this “is the earliest known record of a hobby-horse in Europe.”<sup>6</sup> If by “Europe,” he means Catholic

Europe, I know of no evidence to contradict him. According to van Gennep=s theory, therefore, the Elne hobbyhorse should be one of the first skirted hobbyhorses anywhere.

There is, however, evidence of skirted hobbyhorses in Muslim Andalus by the eleventh century. Moreover, the history of the hobbyhorse in the Arab world outside Europe goes back much further. While the origin of a folk theatrical tradition is notoriously hard to determine, establishing precedence is sometimes a simpler matter. The argument of this essay is that Arabic hobbyhorses preceded European hobbyhorses by several centuries.

I am not the first scholar to make such a suggestion. M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes concluded, in 1950, that the *cheval-jupon* entered Catholic Europe from Muslim Spain, which had in turn acquired the tradition from Abbasid Baghdad.<sup>7</sup> In 1962, Amnon Shiloah agreed.<sup>8</sup> In 1992, in the course of arguing at length (and against prevailing opinion) for the existence of “a profane and live theatre in the pre-modern Arab world,” Israeli scholar Shmuel Moreh published even more persuasive evidence of the early Arab history of the hobbyhorse.<sup>9</sup> Francesc Massip briefly noted Moreh=s argument,<sup>10</sup> but, otherwise, the case made by these scholars of Islamic culture has been little noticed by scholars of medieval drama. This essay seeks to rectify that fact.

Hobbyhorses may have been in use in Persia as early as the fifth century. According to a story found in the work of al-J\_hiz (d. 869), the besieged Persian king Bahram V (420-438) “put a reed between his legs and galloped about with a crown of sweet basil on his head, together with his 200 maids, singing, shouting and dancing.”<sup>11</sup> The performance may have been intended as a ritual enactment of the defeat of the besieging enemy. While this is neither a skirted hobbyhorse nor certain proof of the use of even the reed (or stick) hobbyhorse in the fifth century, it does at least prove that the reed hobbyhorse was known in the Arab world by the time of al-J\_hiz.

About the same time, al-Bukh\_r\_ (d. 870) mentioned the tradition that ‘Umar ibn al-Khatt\_b (d. 644), saw “a large number of emigrants” join the prophet Muhammad after a successful raid. Among the emigrants was a *la’ab* (player) who “kicked an Ans\_r\_ man on the hip.”<sup>12</sup> ‘Umar was to become the second Caliph, ruling from Medina. According to an account by al-Suhayl\_ (1114-1185), ‘Umar later “saw a player (*la’ib*) playing (*yal’ab*) with a hobbyhorse (*kurraj*), so he said, ‘If

I had not seen this (*kurraj*) played with in the time of the Prophet, I would have expelled him from al-Medina.”<sup>13</sup> If, as Moreh supposes, ‘Umar was remembering the earlier incident with Muhammad after the raid, then the emigrant *la’ab* would have been, as Moreh translates it, “a hobby-horse player.”<sup>14</sup>

Al-Suhayl\_ also mentioned “four effeminate men (*mukhannath\_n*) in the time of Muhammad,” who “did not practise homosexuality, but they spoke in a soft voice and dyed their hands and feet and toyed or danced like women. Some of these effeminate men used to play (*yal’ab*) with the *kurraj*.”<sup>15</sup> *Kurraj*--a Persian loan word meaning colt, donkey, or mule--became the standard Arabic word for a skirted hobbyhorse.<sup>16</sup>

While these passages prove the existence of the *kurraj* by the time of al-Suhayl\_, they also lay claim to its existence at the time of the Prophet (570B632). So, perhaps, does a tradition cited by al-Ghaz\_l\_ (1058-1111) concerning Muhammad=s nine-year-old child wife \_’ishah (613-678). Returning home one day, the Prophet found \_’ishah and her friends playing with a “winged horse.” Al-Ghaz\_l\_ compared this to the tradition of his own day, in which “young boys make an imitation horse from a carton and rags, . . . and say that the horse has two rag wings.” Citing the passage, Gaudefroy-Demombynes suggests that the description “strongly recalls the *kurraj*.”<sup>17</sup>

In each of these instances, of course, there is a significant gap between the time of the historian and that of the event itself. The gap narrows somewhat by the time we reach events believed to have taken place at the beginning of the eighth century. Two poets, Jar\_r (?653-732) and al-Farazdaq (d. 738) engaged in a series of poetic duels during the last forty years of their lives. Their poems were first collected by Ab\_ ‘Ubayda (d. 822). Several commentators added to his notes over the next hundred years.<sup>18</sup> “The bells of a *kurraj*” are mentioned three times in poems by Jar\_r.

Setting the scene for one of these occasions, al-Isfah\_n\_ (897-967) wrote that the governor of Iraq, Y\_suf ibn al-Hajj\_j (661-714), had summoned the two poets “to come to him at his palace in Basra dressed in the attire of their pre-Islamic ancestors.” Jar\_r arrived in armor, carrying a sword and spear and riding “a noble horse.” Al-Farazdaq came clothed in silk brocade. In one of his poems, Jar\_r seems to have mocked the apparent effeminacy of his opponent on this occasion, calling him B-

among other things-B“a laughing stock, dressed in the two ornamented belts and bells of a *kurraj*.”<sup>19</sup> In two other poems, Jar\_r returned to the theme, referring contemptuously to “al-Farazdaq with his bells of a *kurraj*”<sup>20</sup> and, again, to him wearing “bells of a *kurraj*, moustaches of a monkey.”<sup>21</sup>

Ab\_ ‘Ubayda and the three later transmitters of the poems gloss *kurraj* variously, in these instances, as “the wooden figure of a horse with which *mukhannath\_n* [effeminate men] play,” “a play played by *mukhannath\_n*” and, when the rhyme requires the synonymous *kurraq*, “the *kurraj* with which *mukhannath\_n* play in their impersonations.”<sup>22</sup> Moreh comments, citing a remark by al-Suhayl\_, that “the association between *kurraj* and *mukhannath* was so strong that during later periods effeminate men came to be known as *kurraj\_s*.”<sup>23</sup> The association strongly suggests that *kurraj* in these instances refers not to a reed or stick hobbyhorse, which has obvious phallic overtones, but to the skirted hobbyhorse, whose skirts were more likely to suggest effeminacy.

While there is no suggestion in Jar\_r’s poems that his rival was actually riding a skirted hobbyhorse, the verses do imply contemporary knowledge in Iraq of the skirted hobbyhorse and its association with effeminacy. Even if one were to argue that Jar\_r himself was referring to the ornamental bells on the harness of a live colt rather than to the bells of a hobbyhorse, those who collected and transmitted his poems almost certainly understood *kurraj* to mean a wooden, skirted hobbyhorse. If this is so, then such hobbyhorses were known in Iraq, at the very latest, by the death of the last transmitter, al-Yaz\_d\_, in 922,<sup>24</sup> a full three hundred years before the first record of European hobbyhorse in the diocese of Elne.

But even this is probably too conservative an estimate. Other evidence suggests that the skirted hobbyhorse was known in Baghdad by the early ninth century. Both al-Isfah\_n\_ and al-Tabari (839-923) cite, in almost identical words, a story ascribed to a singer in the court of the Caliph al-Amin (d. 813). Al-Tabar\_ identifies the singer as Mukh\_riq (d. 845) and dates the event to the last year of al-Am\_n=s reign.

Summoned after dark to the Caliph=s palace, Mukh\_riq was ushered into a courtyard lit by brilliant candlelight. There he saw the Caliph “enter into a *kurraj*.” To the accompaniment of drums and oboes (*s\_rn\_y*) and the singing of female slaves and eunuchs, al-Am\_n danced animatedly inside

the hobbyhorse (or, more accurately, made the hobbyhorse dance animatedly). Mukh\_riq was commanded to join the entertainment, which continued “until daybreak.” During all this time, the Caliph “danced around in his hobbyhorse without feeling any boredom.”<sup>25</sup> Al-Tabar\_’s American translator, Michael Fishbein, comments perceptively, “From the context, [al-Am\_n=s *kurraj*] must have been something like the representations of horses that Spanish dancers sometimes wear suspended from their shoulders in dances representing the movements of a battle.”<sup>26</sup> It was, in other words, something very close to the European skirted hobby horse.

The gap in time between the historian and the reported sighting of a skirted hobbyhorse is, in the case of al-Tabar\_, only a little more than a hundred years. Moreover, when he deals with recent events rather than with biblical peoples and prophets, al-Tabar\_ is generally regarded as a reliable historian. Here, as on many other occasions, he is careful to trace the chain of transmission to an original source, in this case the eye-witness singer Mukh\_riq. The general editor of the multi-volume English translation of al-Tabar\_’s monumental *History of Prophets and Kings*, in which the account of the *kurraj* is found, attests that al-Tabar\_’s work “is by common consent the most important universal history produced in the world of Islam.”<sup>27</sup>

Another highly-regarded Arabic historian, albeit from a later period, who testifies to the popularity of the skirted hobbyhorse at the beginning of the ninth century (and perhaps earlier) is Ibn Khald\_n (1332-1406). Writing of the cultural peak of the Abbasid dynasty, in the reigns of al-Rash\_d (786-809) and al-Am\_n (809-813), he remarks, “(People at that time) constantly had games and entertainments. Dancing equipment, consisting of robes and sticks, and poems to which melodies were hummed, were used. . . . Other dancing equipment, called *kurraj*, was also used. (The *kurraj*) is a wooden figure (resembling) a saddled horse and is attached to robes such as women wear. (The dancers) thus give the appearance of having mounted horses. They attack and withdraw and compete in skill (with weapons). . . . There was much of that sort in Baghdad and the cities of the ‘Iraq. It spread from there to other regions.”<sup>28</sup>

We will return to the dispersion of the skirted hobbyhorse from Iraq in a moment. First, though, it is worth mentioning two of its relatives. A variant on the skirted hobbyhorse was the

skirted camel. Writing of a conversation that took place at the palace of the Caliph al-Mu'tamid (870-892), the historian al-Mas'ūdī (d. 956) has one of the speakers mention “dances of a different character, such as those named *al-ibl* (camel) and *al-kurra* (the hobbyhorse).”<sup>29</sup> Moreh understands this to be a single dance, “the camel and the hobbyhorse,”<sup>30</sup> but it seems to me more likely that “the camel” and “the hobbyhorse” were singled out as “dances of a different character” because the former was a variant of the latter.

Skirted mock-camels certainly appear in the later Muslim and Catholic folk repertoires. Metin And has published an illustration of such an animal dancing, below a pair of tightrope walkers, in an early eighteenth-century festival in Istanbul.<sup>31</sup> The animal is saddled and lacks a hump. Its “rider” appears to be an effigy rather than a dancer, suggesting that the skirt and head may have concealed two men in the manner of a pantomime horse. Although its head is clearly that of a camel, And identifies the figure simply as a “hobbyhorse.”<sup>32</sup>

A festive mock camel was burned, in 1793, during the upheavals of the French Revolution, in the Languedoc town of Béziers.<sup>33</sup> Its successor, a large, wheeled monster with a single hump, does not dance, but is pulled by its handler. It still wears a skirt below the waist. Béziers' camel leads the annual procession through the town on the feast day of Saint Aphrodise (April 28).<sup>34</sup>

Reed hobbyhorses were also in use in Iraq. Ibn 'Abd Rabbih (860-940) tells of a Sufi mendicant, during the reign of the Caliph al-Mahdī (755-785), who gathered a crowd twice a week by riding a *qasaba* (reed) to the top of a hill. There he performed a simple play evaluating the early Caliphs and condemning those of the present Abbasid dynasty.<sup>35</sup> Another story, reportedly told by al-Sibī (d. 946) but surviving in written form in the work of Yūfī (d. 1366), is evidently fictional. In the story, al-Sibī claims to have met the Sufi Buhlī (d. ?799/806), who “had a reed with him, which he used as a hobbyhorse, and in one hand he held a whip.” Since Buhlī died before al-Sibī was born, the story should be read as a later testimony to the popularity of reed hobbyhorses rather than as an historical eye-witness account.<sup>36</sup>

More reliable is the report by al-Naysībūrī (d. 1015) that some Sufis “smeared their faces with black, hung garlands of bones around their necks in the manner of Central Asian shamans, and

galloped upon a *qasaba* while preaching both to rulers and the common people.” According to Moreh, al-Nays\_b\_r\_ defined a *qasaba F\_risiyya* (Persian reed) as “‘a reed with a hunk of cotton wrapped in a rag on its head’ in the shape of a horse head.”<sup>37</sup>

Although the hobbyhorse continued in use in Baghdad, and presumably spread eastward from there to India and China,<sup>38</sup> the rest of this essay will focus on the hobbyhorse’s westward journey to north Africa and Andalusia. The details of its dispersion are not clear, but the arrival of the skirted hobbyhorse in Muslim Andalusia well before it reached Catholic Elne is well documented.

The Egyptian historian al-Musabbih\_ (977-1029) described the procession, in 1024, of a banquet along “the great street” of Cairo. Among those leading the procession were a number of *afr\_s al-khay\_l*, which Moreh translates literally as “mares of acting” and interpretively as “wooden mares” or “hobbyhorses.”<sup>39</sup> As part of a public demonstration in the same year, according to a later citation of Al-Musabbih\_ by al-Maqr\_z\_ (1364-1442), “the people of the market continued to rove the streets with *khay\_l, sam\_j\_t* (masked actors), and [sugar] statues (*tam\_th\_l*).” In the performative context, *khay\_l* may again mean “hobbyhorses.”<sup>40</sup> Maimonides (1135-1204), who spent most of his adult life in Cairo, several times mentions “the horse headed stick (*faras al-‘\_d*) which the entertainers ride upon and play with when performing *khay\_l*.” He adds, “It is well known among entertainers.”<sup>41</sup>

Gaudefroy-Demombynes cites an account from Marrakesh, ca. 1168, which mentions a court in the palace of Ibn Jar\_r (vizier of the Almohad rulers) “where five hundred young slaves could manoeuver on wooden horses and fight with lances.” Gaudefroy-Demombynes observes, “These were, without doubt, *chevaux-jupons*.”<sup>42</sup> Moreh dismisses the exercise as a form of “military training” rather than theater,<sup>43</sup> but, even if he is correct, the slaves may still have been riding skirted hobbyhorses.

As for Andalusia, Henri Pérès ranks the *kurraj* alongside chess as one of the two games for which the Moors of al-Andalus showed a real “passion.” He identifies the *kurraj* with the *cheval-jupon*.<sup>44</sup> The earliest known record of an Andalusian *kurraj* is found in a collection of documents from the Abb\_did dynasty (1023-1091). Muhammad Ibn Martin served the last Abb\_did ruler, al-

Motamid, as commander of the garrison in Cordoba. In January 1075, while being entertained by a dancing *kurraj*, Ibn Martin was surprised by an attack on his palace and killed.<sup>45</sup> In the early thirteenth century, al-Shaqund\_ (d. 1231/2) includes the *kurraj* (which he spells *kurrayj*) in a list of “the means of entertainment” in Sevilla.<sup>46</sup>

The hobbyhorse eventually became popular in Catholic Andalusia. In February 1464, when Enrique IV visited Jaén, he was entertained outside the city by several mock “armies” that temporarily impeded his advance. One consisted of “four thousand boys” in Moorish costumes, riding “wicker hobby horses [*cavallejos de caña*].”<sup>47</sup> In the meantime, the skirted hobbyhorse had also reached--among other places--Barcelona, where eight “Christian” hobbyhorses were fighting twenty-four “Turkish” infantry during the annual Corpus Christi procession by at least 1424;<sup>48</sup> England, where “14 hobbyhorses *pro ludo Regis* [for the game (or play) of the king]” are mentioned in the 1334-5 Wardrobe Accounts at the court of Edward III;<sup>49</sup> the south of Italy ca. 1283--and, a few years later, Arras in northern France--if scholarly assumptions that a skirted hobbyhorse was used in Adam de la Halle’s *Jeu de Robin et Marion* are correct<sup>50</sup>; and, of course, Elne, by 1261.

Interestingly, the notion of the hobbyhorse=s Arabic origins was not entirely lost, although this may owe more to its association in England with the morris dance than with anything else, for the name of the morris suggested Moorish origins. The English scholar Christopher Wase, for example, wrote in 1654, “The leaping about with bells ty’d after an Hoboy, and a Horse, is not originally an European frolique, though brought amongst us by Spaine, but the name imports to dance Alla Moresca.”<sup>51</sup> It seems, after all, that Wase was right, at least about the hobbyhorse.

Precisely how the skirted hobbyhorse traveled from Andalusia to Elne and beyond is not within the scope of this essay. The hobbyhorse=s journey, however, would seem to have begun not in late medieval southern Europe, as van Gennep supposed, but much earlier and at a greater distance. By the ninth century, at the latest, it was known in the palaces of Iraq. Arabic tradition claims that it was already known in the time of Muhammad.



## Notes

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1. Arnold van Gennep, *Notes comparatives sur le cheval jupon* (Toulouse: Institut d'Études Occitanes, 1945), 42.
  2. Georges Dumézil, *Le Problème des Centaures* (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1929).
  3. Violet Alford, *The Hobby Horse and Other Animal Masks* (London: Merlin Press, 1978), 19.
  4. Stephanus de Borbone, *Tractatus de diversis materiis praedicabilibus*, liber. 3, titulus. 6, no. 194: see A. Lecoy de la Marche, ed., *Anecdotes historiques, légendes et apologues tirés du recueil inédit d'Étienne de Bourbon* (Paris: Renouard, 1877), 168-169. For an English translation of the passage, see Thomas Pettit and Leif Søndergaard, "Traditions of the People: Customs and Folk Drama," in *The Medieval European Stage, 500-1550*, ed. William Tydeman, 614-665 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 635. For a detailed discussion of the incident, including a reprint of the Latin original and a French translation, see Jean-Claude Schmitt, "'Jeunes' et danse des chevaux de bois: Le folklore méridional dans la littérature des 'exempla' (XIII<sup>e</sup> - XIV<sup>e</sup>)

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siècles)," *Cahiers de Fanjeaux* 11 (1976):127-158. For the suggestion that the fire was caused by wayward pyrotechnics, see Dorothy Pettit Noyes, "The Mule and the Giants: Struggling for the Body Social in a Catalan Corpus Christi Festival," Ph.D. dissertation (University of Pennsylvania, 1992), 267. Stephen of Bourbon died ca. 1261. Pettit and Søndergaard conservatively date the incident to ca. 1260.

5. Schmitt, "Jeunes," 136-137. Pettit and Søndergaard, "Traditions," 635, obscure the location of the dancer by translating "*in equo ligneo*" as "on his wooden horse."

6. E. C. Cawte, *Ritual Animal Disguise* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1978), 198.

7. M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, "Sur le cheval-jupon et al-kurraj," in *Mélanges offerts à William Marçais par l'Institut d'études islamiques de l'Université de Paris*, pp. 155-160 (Paris: G.-P. Maisonneuve, 1950), 160.

8. Amnon Shiloah, "Réflexions sur la danse artistique musulmane au moyen âge," *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 5 (1962):463-474, pp. 472-474.

9. Shmuel Moreh, *Live Theatre and Dramatic Literature in the*

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*Medieval Arab World* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992), vii, 27-37.

10. Francesc Massip, "Formas teatrales del al-Andalus: restos del memorecido," *Revista de Llenguas y Literatures Catalana, Gallega y Vasca* 8 (2003): 219-229.

11. Moreh, *Live Theatre*, 28.

12. Moreh, *Live Theatre*, 28. Muhammad Muhsin Kh\_n, *The translations of the Meanings of Sah\_h al-Bukh\_ri* (Lahore: Kazi, 1983), 4: 471, translates *la''ab* as "a person who used to play jokes (or play with spears)" and his action as "he (jokingly) stroked an Ans\_ri man on the hip."

13. Moreh, *Live Theatre*, 23.

14. *Ibid.*, 28.

15. *Ibid.*, 26.

16. *Ibid.*, 27.

17. Godefroy-Demomboynes, "Cheval-jupon," 160.

18. Arthur Wormhoudt, "Foreword," in Anthony Wormhoudt, trans., *The Naqaith of Jarir and al Farazdaq* (Oskaloosa, IA: William Penn

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College, 1974), i.

19. Moreh, *Live Theatre*, 29. The reference is to poem 64, verse 62, of the *Naqaith*. I am using Moreh's translation of the verse. Wormhoudt, 92, translates *kurraj* loosely as "whore": "Farazdaq was a puppet,/On him a whore=s belt and its bells."

20. Moreh, *Live Theatre*, 29-30; *Naqaith*, poem 97, verse 11; Wormhoudt, 140: "Al Farazdaq appeared with colt=s bells."

21. Moreh, *Live Theatre*, 30, 44; *Naqaith*, poem 42, verse 9; Wormhoudt, 32: "Bells of a horse and mustache of an ape."

22. Moreh, *Live Theatre*, 30.

23. Ibid., 28.

24. Ibid., 30.

25. For an English translation of al-Tabar\_, see *The History of al-Tabar\_*, vol. 31, *The War between Brothers*, trans. Michael Fishbein, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 247-248. For a French translation of al-Isfah\_n\_, see Shiloah, "Refléxions," 473. See also Gaudefroy-Demombynes, "Cheval-jupon," 157-158.

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26. Fishbein, trans., *History of al-Tabar\_*, 247n827.
27. Ehsan Yar-Shatar, "Preface," in Fishbein, trans., *History of al-Tabar\_*, v.
28. Ibn Khald\_n, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal, 3 vols. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), 2:404-405.
29. Maçoudi, *Les Prairies d=Or*, trans. C. Barbier de Meynard, 9 vols. (Paris: Société Asiatique, 1861-1877), 8:101.
30. Moreh, *Live Theatre*, 28.
31. Metin And, *A History of Theatre and Popular Entertainment in Turkey* (Ankara: Forum, 1963-64), fig. 7. And identifies the source of his illustration only as "the Topkapi Palace Museum" (p. 7). In a personal communication (June 10, 2003), Filiz Ça\_man, the Director of the Museum, confirmed that the original painting is a miniature from the *Surname* (Book of Festivities) of Ahmed III, ca. 1721-30. The *Surname* documents the month-long circumcision festivities held in Istanbul for the sons of Ahmed III and hundreds of poor children in 1720. For comparable miniatures from the period, see Filiz Ça\_man and Zeren Tanindi, *The Topkapi Saray Museum: The Albums and Illustrated Manuscripts*, translated,

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expanded, and edited by J. M. Rogers (Boston: Little, Brown, 1986), illus. 173-175.

32. And, *History*, 22. Metin And, *Drama at the Crossroads* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1991), 50, describes a village "Camel Play" from modern Turkey, in which "the camel is made by two persons who hide under a large cover and form the front and hind legs respectively. A horse skull, covered with rags, forms the head, and in lieu of eyes some small round mirrors are placed. The men carry a framework representing the hump of a camel on their shoulders. The man in front is also responsible for moving the jaws of the camel."

33. Jean Baumel, *Le Masque-Cheval* (Toulouse: Institut d'Études Occitanes, 1954), 105-106.

34. Aphrodise is reputed to have fled Roman persecution, taking refuge in Béziers with his camel in 250. The Romans captured and beheaded him, but spared his camel, which was adopted by the townspeople.

35. Moreh, *Live Theatre*, 31, 91-94.

36. Moreh, *Live Theatre*, 34, reports the story uncritically.

Ulrich Marzolph, *Der Weise narr Buhl\_1* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner,

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1983), 15, notes the impossibility of a meeting between Buhl\_l and al-Sibl\_, and, 48, provides a German translation of Y\_fi'\_\_'s Arabic original.

37. Moreh, *Live Theatre*, 34.

38. For a recent photograph by Michael Yamashita of a Chinese skirted hobby horse, see Peter Hessler, "Chasing the Wall," *National Geographic* (January 2003), 18-19.

39. Moreh, *Live Theatre*, 32.

40. Ibid., 53.

41. Ibid., 32.

42. Gaudefroy-Demomboynes, "Cheval-Jupon," 160.

43. Moreh, *Live Theatre*, 35.

44. Henri Pérès, *La poésie andalouse en arabe classique*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1953), 344.

45. Reinhart Dozy, ed., *Historia Abbadidarum*, 3 vols. (Leiden: Luchtmans, 1846-1863), 1:324. In Reinhart Dozy, *Spanish Islam*, trans. Francis Griffin Stokes (London: Chatto and Windus, 1913), 675, *kurraj* is unfortunately paraphrased as "a dance of Almahs."

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An almah is an Egyptian dancing girl. See also R. Dozy, *Histoire des Musulmans d'Espagne*, 3 vols., ed. E. Lévi-Provençal (Leyden: Brill, 1932), 3:99, where it is "almées." Moreh, *Live Theatre*, 35, cites the original Arabic "kurraj," but mistakenly dates the incident to 977. Gaudefroy-Demomboynes, "Cheval-Jupon," 160, dates the event to 1068. See also Pérès, *Poésie*, 344.

46. Moreh, *Live Theatre*, 35. The translation of this passage in Al-Saqund\_, *Elogio del Islam español (Risal\_ f\_ fadl al-andalus)*, trans. Emilio García Gómez (Madrid: Estanislao Maestre, 1934), 98, assumes that all the items in the list are "musical instruments" and, in a footnote, equates "karriy" with the Spanish "carrizo" or common reed grass.

47. Juan de Mata Carriazos, ed., *Hechos del condestable Don Miguel Lucas de Iranzo (Crónica del siglo XV)*, vol. 3 of *Colección de Crónicas Españolas* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1940), 195. See also Max Harris, *Aztecs, Moors, and Christians: Festivals of Reconquest in Mexico and Spain* (Austin, University of Texas Press, 2000), 56.

48. Harris, *Aztecs*, 43-47.

49. Bruce Moore, "The Hobby-Horse and the Court Masque," *Notes and Queries* n.s. 35 (1988):25-26. The elaborate nature of the other



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costumes associated with "the game of the king" strongly suggests that the fourteen hobbyhorses were of the skirted rather than the simpler stick variety.

50. Richard Axton and John Stevens, ed. and trans., *Medieval French Plays* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971), 259-262.

51. Christopher Wase, *Grati Falisci Cynegeticon* (London, 1654), 76, quoted in John Forrest, *The History of Morris Dancing 1485-1750* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 6.