



Citation: Niccolò Guasti (2021) Between Arabic Letters, History and Enlightenment: The Emergence of Spanish Literary Nation in Juan Andrés. *Diciottesimo Secolo* Vol. 6: 149-159. doi: 10.36253/ds-12140

Copyright: © 2021 Niccolò Guasti. This is an open access, peer-reviewed article published by Firenze University Press (<http://www.fupress.net/index.php/ds>) and distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

Data Availability Statement: All relevant data are within the paper and its Supporting Information files.

Competing Interests: The Author(s) declare(s) no conflict of interest.

Editor: Andrea Gatti.

Saggi

Between Arabic Letters, History and Enlightenment: The Emergence of Spanish Literary Nation in Juan Andrés¹

NICCOLÒ GUASTI

Università di Modena e Reggio Emilia

Abstract. The culture of the eighteenth century played a crucial role in proposing a positive image of Islam. The Valencian Jesuit Juan Andrés was particularly engaged in this re-evaluation of Arab culture in order to stress how much Iberian Arabs had contributed to the renaissance of Western culture and civilisation. In his treaty *Dell'origine, progressi e stato attuale d'ogni letteratura* (1782-1799) Andrés committed himself to outlining specific elements of the Medieval renaissance nurtured by Spanish Arabs between the ninth and thirteenth centuries. His interpretation on *Al-Andalus* concealed a «patriotic» intent, namely that of glorifying the historical role of Spain (rather than Italy or France) in the development of the European literary canon.

Keywords. Orientalism, Jesuits, Enlightenment, European culture, nation.

My paper aims to illustrate the salient aspects of the Arabism of one of the approximately five thousand Jesuits who were expelled in 1767 by the Spanish monarchy and arrived in Italy a year later, namely the Valencian Juan Andrés y Morell. This is a subject that has been familiar to Iberian historiography since the essays dedicated to it by the Jesuit historian Miguel Batllori in the 1940s², but it has also been of interest to Hispanism in Italy³. Most recently, Roberto M. Dainotto, professor of Romance Studies at

¹ A previous version of this paper was presented and discussed at the 15th International Congress on the Enlightenment, held in Edinburgh on 14-19 July 2019 (discussion panel *Between Universal History and National Histories: Building the Past in the Age of the Enlightenment*, organised by Patrizia Delpiano and Niccolò Guasti).

² M. Batllori, *La cultura hispano-italiana de los jesuitas expulsos españoles-hispanoamericanos-filipinos, 1767-1814*, Ed. Gredos, Madrid 1966, pp. 36-38, 301-403; P. Fernández, *Arabismo español del siglo XVIII: origen de una quimera*, Instituto de cooperación con el mundo árabe, Madrid 1991; C. Valcárcel, *Juan Andrés y la literatura española: la tesis árabe y la polémica sobre el Barroco*, in *Juan Andrés y la teoría comparatista*, ed. por P. Aullón de Haro, J. García Gabaldón y S. Navarro Pastor, Biblioteca Valenciana, Valencia 2002, pp. 245-265; I. Donoso, *El arabismo de Juan Andrés*, in *Juan Andrés y la escuela universalista española*, ed. por P. Aullón de Haro y J. García Gabaldón, Ediciones Complutenses, Madrid 2017, pp. 165-175.

³ E. Li Gotti, *La "tesi araba" sulle origini della lirica romanza*, Sansoni, Firenze 1955; F. Meregalli, *Alle origini della teoria araba*, in *Studi medievali e romanzi in memoria di A. Limentani*, Jouvence, Roma 1991, pp. 93-99; Id., *Andrés, Herder y el arabismo*, in *Spanien und Europa im Zeichen der Aufklärung*, hrsg. von S. Jütter, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main 1991, pp. 188-196.

Duke University, has published two interesting essays analysing the use that Andrés made of the so-called «Arabist Theory», essays that Dainotto then recast in his interesting 2007 book *Europe (in theory)*⁴. On the other hand, Andrés's name is not mentioned either in Edward W. Said's classic *Orientalism* or in Alexander Bevilacqua's *The Republic of Arab Letters: Islam and the European Enlightenment*⁵.

1. BETWEEN PHILOSOPHICAL HISTORY AND ERUDITE CARE

I will begin by saying a few words about Andrés. This is not the place for a detailed discussion of the work and thought of the Valencian Jesuit, which has emerged particularly in the wake of the bicentenary of his death (1817-2017). From my point of view, Andrés is the archetypal eighteenth-century *enlightened*, rather than *Enlightenment*, Jesuit, open to the moderate currents of the Enlightenment and engaged in an effort to reconcile two traditions: that of the Catholic culture (whether official or not), and the culture of the Enlightenment, or more precisely the «moderate mainstream» elements of the Enlightenment, to use Jonathan Israel's definition⁶. Along with hundreds of other Jesuits throughout Europe, Andrés pursued a strategy of consciously creating an accommodation between ideas, methods and theories (such as Locke's sensism and natural law)⁷ that

were at the foundation of the Enlightenment with Catholic dogma and culture⁸. This attempted appropriation, or, if one prefers, this hybridisation of Catholicism and Enlightenment, could already be seen in certain parts of the Society of Jesus in the first half of the century, but it accelerated considerably after the order's canonical suppression in 1773, when a substantial sector of the dissolved Order of St. Ignatius worked to block the work of the Jansenists and of reformist groups within the Catholic Church (so-called *Reform Catholicism* according to the label adopted by Dale K. Van Kley)⁹, whom it blamed for the demise of the Society. At the heart of this moderate acceptance of the cultural tendencies of the century was an express desire to ascertain with which of the Enlightenment's interlocutors it might have been possible to enter into dialogue¹⁰. Within the culture of the European Enlightenment the enemy, meanwhile, was unmistakably «the spirit of irreligion» that the works of Voltaire, Diderot, Raynal, Mercier and other *philosophes* had already disseminated in every sector of *ancien régime* society. Andrés's adhesion to the moderate Enlightenment can be clearly seen in his obvious criticism, clearly present in all his main works, of Aristotelian philosophy and in his adoption of the new French genre of the encyclopaedia: he was among the various former Jesuits (the Venetian confrere Alessandro Zorzi comes to mind) who, in the second half of the eighteenth century, reworked the taxonomy of knowledge introduced by the *Encyclopédie* in the light of Catholic orthodoxy (and, therefore, defended the scientific status of metaphysics and theology)¹¹.

⁴ R.M. Dainotto, *The Discreet Charm of the Arabist Theory: Juan Andrés, Historicism, and the de-centering of Montesquieu's Europe*, «European History Quarterly», XXXVI, 2006, 1, pp. 7-29; Id., *Of the Arab Origin of Modern Europe: Giannaria Barbieri, Juan Andrés and the Origin of Rhyme*, «Comparative Literature», 58, 2006, 4, pp. 271-292; Id., *Europe (in Theory)*, Duke University Press, Durham-London 2007.

⁵ E.W. Said, *Orientalism*, Pantheon Books, New York 1978; A. Bevilacqua, *The Republic of Arabic Letters. Islam and the European Enlightenment*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.-London 2018. On the tradition of orientalist studies that developed in Western Europe during the modern age, cfr. *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, ed. by D. Thomas and J. Chesworth, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2013, vol. 6. (*Western Europe, 1500-1600*); *The Teaching and Learning of Arabic in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by A. Hamilton, J. Loop and C. Burnett, Leiden-Boston, Brill 2017. An interesting case of documentary falsification attesting to the spread of 'Arabist' fashion throughout Europe in the late 1700s is reconstructed by D. Siragusa, *Lo storico e il falsario. Rosario Gregorio e l'arabica impostura (1782-1796)*, FrancoAngeli, Milano 2019.

⁶ J.I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment. Philosophy and the making of Modernity (1650-1750)*, Oxford University Press, New York 2001; Id., *Enlightenment Contested. Philosophy, Modernity, and the emancipation of man (1670-1752)*, Oxford University Press, New York 2006; Id., *Democratic Enlightenment. Philosophy, and Human Rights (1750-1790)*, Oxford University Press, New York 2012.

⁷ V. Navarro Brotóns, *Science and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century Spain: the contribution of the Jesuits before and after the expulsion*, in *The Jesuits. Cultures, Sciences, and Arts, 1540-1773*, ed. by J. O'Mal-

ley et al., Toronto University Press, Toronto-Buffalo-London 2007, vol. 2, pp. 390-404; J. D. Burson, *The Rise and Fall of Theological Enlightenment. Jean-Martin de Prades and the Ideological Polarization in Eighteenth-Century France*, Notre Dame University Press, Notre Dame 2010, pp. 38-54; Id., *Between Power and Enlightenment: The Cultural and Intellectual Context for the Jesuit Suppression in France*, in *The Jesuit Suppression in Global Context. Causes, Events and Consequences*, ed. by J. D. Burson and J. Wright, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2015, pp. 40-64; J. P. Rubiés, *The Jesuits and the Enlightenment*, in *The Oxford Handbook of the Jesuits*, ed. by I. G. Županov, Oxford University Press, New York 2019, pp. 855-890.

⁸ Regarding the specific cultural strategies developed by the expelled Spanish Jesuits during their Italian exile, cfr. N. Guasti, *Lesilio italiano dei gesuiti spagnoli. Identità, controllo sociale e pratiche culturali (1767-1798)*, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, Roma 2006, pp. 293-361.

⁹ D. K. Van Kley, *Reform Catholicism and the International Suppression of the Jesuits in Enlightenment Europe*, Yale University Press, New Haven-London 2018.

¹⁰ A. Trampus, *I gesuiti e l'Illuminismo. Politica e religione in Austria e nell'Europa centrale (1773-1798)*, L. S. Olschki, Firenze 2000; P. Del-piano, *Il governo della lettura. Chiesa e libri nell'Italia del Settecento*, Il Mulino, Bologna 2007; Ead., *Liberi di scrivere. La battaglia per la stampa nell'età dei Lumi*, Laterza, Roma-Bari 2015.

¹¹ N. Guasti, *Juan Andrés e la cultura del Settecento*, Mimesis, Milano-Udine 2017, pp. 204-215.

As the author of dozens of scholarly and popular pamphlets, Juan Andrés's literary fame was based in particular on his encyclopaedic *Dell'origine, progressi e stato attuale d'ogni letteratura* (On the Origin, Progress and Present State of All Literature), whose first edition was made available in seven volumes in Parma by the Bodoni press between 1782 and 1799¹². In the same years the book was translated into Spanish by his brother Carlos, although the two volumes relating to the religious sciences were excluded, and in 1805 a French version of the first volume was published¹³.

Andrés's treatise was a historical account of universal culture that aimed to fuse philosophical-conjectural history with erudite history¹⁴. He took the cosmopolitan and global approach of the first (including, therefore, its analysis of non-European cultures)¹⁵, along with its faith in the progress of human knowledge, its interest in comparing the salient traits of different civilisations and its tendency to provide general interpretations, in part through analogy¹⁶. From the second he adopted, apart from an interest in chronological succession (and thus

historical context), a philological rigour in the interpretation of documents and critique of sources.

The Jesuit's comparative approach is undoubtedly one of the more interesting aspects of his methodology¹⁷, but it should be made clear that his adoption of it did not imply any rejection of Eurocentricism, which in fact ended up greatly reinforced. Andrés considered Western culture, classical and modern, to be superior to that of any other civilisation, past or present¹⁸. His main preoccupation was therefore to understand how Europe had gained its primacy in the arts and sciences, first in the classical and then in the modern age. According to Andrés, human progress was best measured in terms of human chronology and advanced by means of the transfer of cultural hegemony from one civilisation to another. The course of civilisation, from the Flood onwards, had basically followed the path of the sun, that is, it had started from the East in Asia, before reaching the West in Egypt and Greece¹⁹. The genuine danger that the Jesuit feared was that this astronomical revolution would continue its journey towards the West and that cultural primacy would shift from Europe and settle in America. Thus when in his work he used the noun "West" and the adjective "Western", he was thinking above all of Europe while considering American culture to still be in an immature phase comparable to childhood²⁰.

Dell'origine, progressi e stato attuale d'ogni letteratura was not, however, merely a universal history of human culture, but was also a 'literary' history. As such, it belonged to a genre that from the end of the seventeenth century had enjoyed prolonged success in Italy, from Giovanni Mario Crescimbeni and Giacinto Gimma to Girolamo Tiraboschi²¹. In this context Andrés might have taken inspiration from Denina's *Discorso sopra le vicende della letteratura* (Discourse on the Events of Literature, 1760)²² and, above all, the *Storia della lettera-*

¹² J. Andrés, *Dell'origine, progressi e stato attuale d'ogni letteratura*, Stamperia reale [G. Bodoni], Parma 1782-1799, 7 vols.. The Bodoni press began work on a second printing in 1785, while in 1822 an eighth volume was released that gathered together the additions made by Andrés in the Roman edition published by C. Mordacchini between 1808 and 1817. Of great use is the critical apparatus contained in J. Andrés, *Origen, progresos y estado actual de toda literatura*, ed por P. Aullón de Haro, Biblioteca Valenciana-Editorial Verbum, Valencia 1997-2001, 6 vols.: vol. 1, pp. cxi-cliii; vol. 6, pp. 675-891.

¹³ J. Andrés, *Origen, progresos y estado actual de toda literatura*, A. de Sancha, Madrid 1784-1799, 10 vols.; *Histoire générale des sciences et de la littérature depuis les temps antérieurs à l'histoire grecque jusqu'à nos jours*, par l'Abbé Jean Andrés, jésuite, Imprimerie Impériale, Paris 1805.

¹⁴ Andrés, *Dell'origine*, cit., vol. 1, pp. i-ii.

¹⁵ However, it should be remembered that the Jesuits had always shown a profound interest, from a missionary perspective, for non-European cultures and civilisations, including those of the Islamic world: cfr. at least P. Broggio, *Evangelizzare il Mondo. Le missioni della Compagnia di Gesù tra Europa e America (secoli XVI-XVII)*, Carocci, Roma 2004; *Missions Religieuses Modernes «Notre lieu est le Monde»*, éd. par P.-A. Fabre et B. Vincent, École Française de Rome, Rome 2007; L. Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization in the Early Jesuit Mission*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2008; *Missions d'évangélisation et circulation des savoirs, XVI^e-XVIII^e siècle*, éd. par C. de Castelnau-L'Estoile et al., Casa de Velázquez, Madrid 2011; E. Colombo, *Convertire i musulmani. L'esperienza di un gesuita spagnolo nel Seicento*, Bruno Mondadori, Milano 2007; Id., *Jesuits and Islam in Seventeenth-Century Europe: War, Preaching and Conversions*, in *L'Islam visto da occidente. Cultura e religione del Seicento europeo di fronte all'Islam*, a cura di B. Heyberger et al., Marietti, Milano-Genova 2009, pp. 315-340; Id., *Jesuits and Islam in Early Modern Europe*, in *The Oxford Handbook*, cit., pp. 349-378.

¹⁶ From this point of view Andrés was clearly inspired by Condillac who, in the *Art de raisonner* of the *Cours d'études*, had praised the heuristic function of analogy in the context of the conjectural method: E. B. de Condillac, *Oeuvres complètes*, C. Houel, Paris 1798, vol. VIII, pp. 240-241. On analogy as an epistemological tool of Enlightenment thinkers cfr. V. Ferrone, *Il mondo dell'illuminismo. Storia di una rivoluzione culturale*, Einaudi, Torino 2019, pp. 25-26.

¹⁷ F. Sinopoli, *Storiografia e comparazione. Le origini della storia comparata della letteratura in Europa tra Settecento e Ottocento*, Bulzoni, Roma 1996; P. Aullón de Haro, *La Escuela universalista española del siglo XVIII*, Sequitur, Madrid 2016; J. García Gabaldón, *Juan Andrés (1740-1817). Ensayo de una biografía intelectual*, Verbum, Valencia 2017; D. Mombelli, *La scuola universalista spagnola del secolo XVIII: lo stato attuale della bibliografia*, «Diciottesimo secolo», III, 2018, pp. 229-239.

¹⁸ The exaltation of Greek, rather than Roman, civilisation is a constant of the Andresian treatise: see, for example, Andrés, *Dell'origine*, cit., vol. 1, pp. viii-ix, 44-58, 67-85; vol. 3, p. 397.

¹⁹ *Idem*, vol. 1, pp. 1-58.

²⁰ *Idem*, vol. 1, pp. 19-20 and 292 (in which the label «l'Europa occidentale» occurs).

²¹ I. Urzainqui, *El concepto de historia literaria en el siglo XVIII*, in *Homenaje a Álvaro Galmés de Fuentes*, Gredos, Madrid 1987, vol. 3, pp. 565-592; *La ciencia literaria en tiempos de Juan Andrés (1740-1817)*, ed. por M.^a J. Rodríguez Sánchez de León y M. Amores Fuster, Visor, Madrid 2019.

²² G. Ricuperati, *Ipotesi su Carlo Denina storico e comparatista*, in *Car-*

tura italiana (History of Italian Literature, 1772-1782) by his friend Girolamo Tiraboschi²³. It should be added, however, that the Valencian Jesuit's philosophy of history did not entirely chime with the theories put forward by his Modenese former confrere; in particular Andrés believed there was potential for further improvement in the belles lettres and liberal arts, just as there was in the sciences²⁴.

As for matters of taxonomy, Andrés appreciated the division of human knowledge theorized by Bacon and later reworked and refined by D'Alembert in the *Discours préliminaire*, with its outline of the faculties of Man (history/memory, poetry/imagination, philosophy/reason)²⁵. However, he believed it unsuited to those taking a historical approach. While D'Alembert's taxonomy was «completely correct if we consider the relationships between the sciences and the faculties of our mind [...], it is not very useful in following the progress made in the sciences»²⁶. Put another way, the tree of knowledge and disciplines adopted by the *Encyclopédie* did not provide «a general philosophical history of literature», in other words a historical account of the development

of human understanding²⁷. This absence of historical sequencing meant that Andrés's own taxonomy was instead inspired by a more traditional classification that divided knowledge into two major branches, that of the belles lettres and that of the sciences. Individual disciplines and genres all fitted within these two major categories²⁸.

As Dainotto has argued, the approach taken by Andrés in *Dell'origine* may certainly be considered typical of the 'historicism' favoured particularly by eighteenth-century intellectuals belonging to «subaltern Europe», and was a reaction against the cultural dominance of France and its idea of a single, unstoppable form of technical-scientific progress. In essence Andrés's notion of progress was very similar to that of Giambattista Vico, aspects of which were also shared by Tiraboschi in his *Storia della letteratura italiana*: for Vico the history of mankind was a series of events and recurrences that followed a physiological cycle (childhood, maturity, old age). Progress was therefore not linear, nor was it a unique and continuous process of improvement: not only were setbacks, slowdowns and decadence entirely possible (although never irreversible), but all civilisations or «nations» followed distinct paths marked by their own periods and staging posts. As a result, it was even possible to discern some progress in the «dark times», including in the high Middle Ages²⁹. Finally, the progress of civilisations was the result of a series of «extrinsic» and «intrinsic» natural, political, economic and moral causes that could be reconstructed *ex post* through historical research³⁰. Andrés therefore rejected the climactic determinism theorised by Montesquieu and accepted by numerous Italian thinkers, including Saverio Bettinelli, another fellow Jesuit³¹.

Andrés's knowledge of Arab culture emerges above all in the first volume of his work, although he also analyses its various branches in later volumes, in particular at the beginning of the second, dedicated to

lo Denina fra Berlino e Parigi: 1782-1813. Giornata di studio (Torino, Accademia delle Scienze, 30 Novembre 2000), a cura di M. Cerruti e B. Danna, Edizioni dell'Orso, Alessandria 2000, pp. 10-65; B. Danna, *Denina comparatista?*, in *Un piemontese in Europa. Carlo Denina (1731-1813)*, Il Mulino, Bologna 2015, pp. 245-260; L. Núñez García, *Carlo Denina precursor de los estudios comparados: el Discurso sopra le vicende della letteratura y su interpretación de la literatura española en el contexto europeo*, in *La ciencia literaria*, cit., pp. 209-231.

²³ G. Tiraboschi, *Storia della letteratura italiana antica e moderna* [...], Società Tipografica, Modena 1772-1782, 10 vols. (2nd ed. revised and enhanced: 1787-1794).

²⁴ *Idem*, vol. 1, pp. 203-205; vol. 2, pp. 1-28 (*Dissertazione preliminare sull'origine del decadimento delle scienze*); Andrés, *Dell'origine*, cit., vol. 1, pp. i-ii, 489-498. Andrés's ideas on the belles lettres and the arts was supported by the definition that he, following Johann Joachim Winkelmann, gave to the concepts of «ideal beauty» and «good taste» in relation to the absolute superiority of Greek culture: *idem*, vol. 1, pp. 42-43.

²⁵ Ferrone, *Il mondo dell'Illuminismo*, cit., pp. 18-28; *Id.*, *Conoscenza e immaginazione. L'Encyclopédie e la critica della rivoluzione scientifica del Seicento*, in *Illuminismo. Storia di un'idea plurale*, a cura di M. Mori e S. Veca, Carocci, Roma 2019, pp. 37-58: 45-51. In essence D'Alembert, with respect to Bacon's definition, had put reason before imagination. Andrés, on the other hand, in order to emphasise the union between the belles lettres and the sciences, firmly underlined the importance of imagination (the foundation of literature) in guiding reason: cfr. Andrés, *Dell'origine*, cit., vol. 1, pp. 40-42. Although Diderot also expressed similar ideas on this question, it is more plausible to hypothesise that Vico had been the main influence on Andrés's reasoning, given that the Neapolitan philosopher, especially in *De Antiquissima italarum sapientia* (1710), had already argued for the central role of fantasy in guiding human ingenuity («Phantasia ingenii oculus, ut iudicium est oculus intellectus»): cfr. G. Vico, *De Antiquissima italarum sapientia*, a cura di M. Sanna, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, Roma 2005, pp. 134-135 (chpt. VII, § 4).

²⁶ Andrés, *Dell'origine*, cit., vol. 1, p. iv.

²⁷ It is perhaps necessary to make clear at this point that Andrés and his contemporaries used the word 'literature' to denote all culture, i.e. the sum of knowledge acquired, and cultural artefacts produced by humanity.

²⁸ *Idem*, vol. 1, pp. iv-viii.

²⁹ S. Scandellari, *El concepto de progreso en el pensamiento de Juan Andrés*, «Cuadernos dieciochistas», 7, 2006, pp. 17-46; R. M.^a Aradra Sánchez, *Juan Andrés y la noción de progreso en los inicios de la historia literaria española*, in *La ciencia literaria*, cit., pp. 269-294.

³⁰ Andrés, *Dell'origine*, cit., vol. 1, pp. 20-44.

³¹ M. Verga, *Tra decadenza e Risorgimento. Discorsi settecenteschi sulla nazione degli italiani*, in *L'idea di nazione nel Settecento*, a cura di B. Alfonzetti e M. Formica, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, Roma 2013, pp. 89-109; A. Di Riccio, *Idee di nazione tra i letterati del Settecento: Gian Rinaldo Carli, Saverio Bettinelli, Francesco Algarotti*, in *idem*, pp. 133-145: 142.

poetry³². It was not a question of yielding to one of the most popular literary fashions of the eighteenth century, nor did the Jesuit adopt an affected Orientalism: Andrés's Arabism, far from being a literary artifice with which to criticise the customs and values of *ancien régime* European society (as in the well-known cases of Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes* or José Cadalso's *Cartas Marruecas*)³³, was instead an interpretative paradigm helpful in explaining the origins of «modern European culture» and, at the same time, in defining a new concept of the Spanish «nation»³⁴.

2. «ARAB LETTERS» AND THE BIRTH OF EUROPEAN CIVILISATION

In the first volume of *Dell'origine* Andrés provides an annotated synthesis of the entire work, and thus a general historical and philosophical overview of world culture and of every major civilisation, from the origins of humanity to the modern day, that is to the eighteenth century. A large portion of the volume – chapter VIII to chapter XI, or 215 pages out of 524 – is given over to an examination of the central role played by the Arabs in the development of Western European society. In these chapters Andrés, making use of the information and interpretations offered by the contemporary «Republic of Arabic Letters», issues a resolute call for a new interpretative canon relating to the birth of Western modernity. His essential idea is that «modern literature, not only in the sciences but also in the belles lettres, recognises

Arab culture as its mother»³⁵. I will attempt to provide a very brief outline of the Jesuit's arguments in support of this interpretation.

Firstly, Andrés distinguishes very clearly between Islamic religion and Arab culture. While defining Islam in well-worn terms as a «blind superstition» and Mohammed as an «impostor»³⁶, he professes his approval for one of the principal methodological developments in seventh- and eighth-century scholarly research (as put forward by Edward Pococke, Barthélemy d'Herbelot de Molainville, Simon Ockley, Thomas Hyde, Johann Heinrich Hottinger, Albert Schultens, Miguel Casiri and others): Islam was worthy of being considered one of the greatest civilisations to have ever existed, and its history and cultural production deserved to be studied on their own merits, independently of any judgment that might be made of the Muslim faith and the *Quran*³⁷. Thus Andrés separates the examination of Arab culture from that of the Muslim religion, an approach that allows him to avoid any analysis of the most problematic question relating to the history of the Arabs, namely that of the existence of a causal link between their military conquests (or attempts to civilise others) and their religion. This had hitherto been a subject that occupied the minds of many European thinkers, beginning with Machiavelli's *Il Principe* and *Discorsi*.

Secondly, Andrés argues that before the emergence of humanism in the fifteenth century and the Renaissance in the sixteenth, the period between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries had witnessed another cultural «rebirth», one that came about thanks to the Arabs and whose epicentre was in the Iberian Peninsula. The true achievement of the Arab sovereigns and intellectuals – beginning with those of the Abbasid Caliphate (750-1258), which had turned «Baghdad into a true emporium of science»³⁸ – had been the recovery of Greek philosophy and science and the ability to transmit this

³² Andrés, *Dell'origine*, cit., vol. 2, pp. 7-8, 34-40.

³³ R. Minuti, *Oriente barbarico e storiografia settecentesca. Rappresentazioni della storia dei Tartari nella cultura francese del XVIII secolo*, Marsilio Venezia 1994; Id., *Orientalismo e idee di tolleranza nella cultura francese del primo '700*, L. S. Olschki, Firenze 2006 pp. 232-247, 342-346; F. Sánchez-Blanco, *El absolutismo y las luces en el reinado de Carlos III*, Marcial Pons, Madrid 2002, pp. 135-137.

³⁴ Andrés had probably developed an interest in Arab culture even before the expulsion. In addition to being a native of the Kingdom of Valencia, one of the two places where the Arab past was still very visible in the local architecture and material culture, the Jesuit considered himself a disciple of the foremost Iberian scholar of the period, namely the Valencian Gregorio Mayans, who had also studied Arab antiquities and the link between Arab culture and Catalan-Provençal rhyming poetry (specifically in the *Orígenes de la lengua española*, 1737): cfr. A. Mestre Sanchis, *Mayans y la cultura valenciana en la España del siglo XVIII*, Artes Gráficas Soler, Valencia 2010, p. 136. In general, Andrés was able to draw suggestions and information from a deep-rooted Spanish tradition of erudite studies on Islam that dated back to the sixteenth century: cfr. M. García-Arenal y F. Rodríguez Mediano, *The Orient in Spain. Converted Muslims, the Forged Lead Books of Granada, and the Rise of Orientalism*, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2013. It is therefore not surprising to find that Mayans was one of the more frequently cited authors in the first volume of *Dell'origine*.

³⁵ Andrés, *Dell'origine*, cit., vol. 1, p. xi. On the Arabism cultivated by several expelled Jesuits, especially Catalans and Valencians, cfr. Batllori, *La cultura hispano-italiana*, cit., pp. 36-38, 301-403.

³⁶ Andrés, *Dell'origine*, cit., vol. 1, pp. 120 and 131. It should be remembered that in his *Essai sur les moeurs* (1756) Voltaire had defined Mohammed as a prophet, conqueror and legislator: war had been the means by which he spread the religion he had founded. On this, cfr. Bevilacqua, *The Republic*, cit., pp. 178-182.

³⁷ The removal of the religious element present in many aspects of Arab culture was a typical measure taken by the Catholic scholars who in the eighteenth century occupied the Arabic language professorships in numerous Roman colleges, starting with the Maronite one (directed until 1773 by the Jesuits): A. Girard, *L'enseignement de l'arabe à Rome au XVIII^e siècle*, in *Maghreb-Italie. Des passeurs médiévaux à l'orientalisme moderne*, sous la dir. de B. Grévin, École Française de Rome, Rome 2010, pp. 209-234: 232.

³⁸ Andrés, *Dell'origine*, cit., vol. 1, pp. 118-120.

legacy to all of Europe³⁹. Indeed, Andrés observes, the Arabs even added to Greek knowledge, supplementing it with that of the Persians, Indians and Chinese⁴⁰. This was demonstrated by a myriad of inventions, many of Chinese origin, to which Andrés dedicates the whole of chapter X, entitled *Delle invenzioni tramandateci dagli Arabi* (On the inventions handed down to us by the Arabs), including paper produced from linen, gunpowder, the magnetic compass, the pendulum, and, of course, Arabic numerals⁴¹.

In this way, at least in the fields of chemistry, algebra, geometry, botany, and natural history in general, in optics, geography, astronomy and medicine, the Arabs managed to improve «the disciplines they got from the Greeks»⁴². Their achievements, however, did not end there: apart from bringing about the «recovery» and providing «sacred asylum» to classical Greco-Roman culture, which had been «brutally chased out of Europe» by the barbarian invaders after the end of the Roman Empire, and thus saving it from obscurity and paving the way for new developments, the Arabs also established new educational structures, namely the academies (by which Andrés meant the *madrasas*), colleges and astronomical observatories that were then handed on to European society, especially via Spain⁴³.

The Iberian Peninsula had played a central role in this process of transmitting Arab culture to Western Europe. In fact, in the Spain of the Umayyads (755-1031), Almoravids (1086-1147) and Almohads (1150-1250) the preservation and acquisition of the knowledge of classical antiquity had morphed into a cultural mediation that was not brought to an end even by the *Reconquista*, during which the Christian kingdoms of the Iberian peninsula continued to absorb the learnings, texts, literary tastes and scientific inventions of the Islamic kingdoms that they confronted on the battlefield. Among the many examples of this phenomenon, Andrés pointed to the widely known case of the support given by the Castilian king Alfonso X to the Toledo School of Translators⁴⁴.

Andrés was aware, however, that the weak point of his interpretation concerned philosophy: in this context many eighteenth-century scholars, such as Jacob Brucker⁴⁵, had accused the Arabs of having corrupted the study of philosophy as they had been responsible for the rediscovery of the works of Aristotle (particularly his *Logic*)⁴⁶ and thus for providing Saint Thomas with the material needed to found Christian scholasticism⁴⁷. Andrés asserts that «the abuse of ingenuity and reason» that Aristotelianism had undoubtedly caused could not be imputed to the Arabs of *Al-Andalus* but was instead the fault of the Christian theologians of the fifth to eighth centuries. At the most, he admits, Arab commentaries on the works of Aristotle, such as those by Al-Farabi and Avicenna, had contributed to the development of scholasticism prior to the systematisation carried out by Saint Thomas, who then made «Christian the doctrine of Aristotle and the Arabs»⁴⁸. The greater truth, however, was that Christian scholasticism had been born in France during the time of the Frankish kings and that the first scholastic thinkers in Europe had been French. Andrés therefore set out to overturn the prevailing interpretative paradigm of the eighteenth century by adopting the unmistakably patriotic strategy and argumentative approach that is the key to understanding all his work, one based on removing Spanish culture from any blame for the cultural decadence of Western Europe, which was placed instead on France and in this case on Alcuin and the Frankish kingdom of Charlemagne. This overtly Francophobe approach was clearly intended as a criticism of the theories put forward by various important *philosophes* on this and other issues: on this particular occasion Andrés's target was Montesquieu and all those who had traced the origin of the rebirth of Western Europe back to Carolingian France.

The heart of Andrés's interpretation, however, concerned literature, in particular poetry, which he wrote about in chapter XI, entitled *Dell'influenza degli arabi nella moderna coltura delle Belle Lettere* (On the influence of the Arabs on the modern cultivation of the belles lettres)⁴⁹. After having shown, in the preceding chapters, that the rebirth of European science and philosophy was owed to Arab intellectuals (particularly those from Spain), Andrés attempted to apply the same interpretative structure to the *humanae litterae*, above all to poetry. In this chapter he proposes a total reversal of the

³⁹ *Idem*, vol. 1, pp. 158-161.

⁴⁰ *Idem*, vol. 1, pp. 182 and 260.

⁴¹ *Idem*, vol. 1, pp. 198-259.

⁴² *Idem*, vol. 1, pp. 160-161 and 197. It should be remembered that between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries there was no lack of Italian thinkers who praised the role of the Arabs in the rebirth of Western sciences and philosophy: one thinks of Nicola Cusano who, in *De docta ignorantia* (1440), remarked, from a patriotic perspective, on the importance of the Crotona school in the recovery of the ontological and gnosological reflection of Euclid and Pythagoras (the latter considered by the humanist to be a «glory of Italy and Greece»): cfr. P. Casini, *L'antica sapienza italiana*, Il Mulino, Bologna 1988, pp. 37-38, 81-86; Dainotto, *The Discreet Charm*, cit., p. 22.

⁴³ Andrés, *Dell'origine*, cit., vol. 1, pp. 116, 252-259.

⁴⁴ *Idem*, vol. 1, pp. 183-185, 288-290, 314-315.

⁴⁵ J. Brucker, *Historia critica philosophiae*, Impensis Haered. Weidemannii et Reichii, Lipsiae, 1740, vol. III, *passim*.

⁴⁶ Andrés, *Dell'origine*, cit., vol. 1, pp. 40, 101-114, 161-172.

⁴⁷ *Idem*, vol. 1, pp. 140-153.

⁴⁸ *Idem*, vol. 1, p. 167.

⁴⁹ *Idem*, vol. 1, pp. 259-331.

predominant interpretative canon, according to which the renewal of European culture had been stimulated by the emigration of Byzantine scholars following the conquest of Constantinople by the Turks⁵⁰, with the libraries that they brought with them making possible a rediscovery of a significant part of Greek culture. Andrés's task was certainly not an easy one, and in fact he warned his readers, beginning in the preface, that the argument that the rebirth of letters was owed to the Arabs might seem «to many a ridiculous paradox»⁵¹. In effect, the Valencian Jesuit was obliged to discuss and challenge theories that had emerged within a series of important debates held in Italy during the eighteenth century, such as those relating to the birth of the vernacular, the cultural decadence of the Italian peninsula and the crisis of «good taste»⁵². These had been the issues against which the peninsula's leading intellectuals had measured themselves, from Giovanni Giuseppe Orsi to Tiraboschi by way of Scipione Maffei, Giacinto Gimma, Ludovico Antonio Muratori, Saverio Bettinelli, Carlo Denina and Francescantonio Zaccaria⁵³. However, unlike his confreres Francisco Javier Llampillas and Juan Francisco Masdeu, Andrés sought to avoid any open conflict with those of his literary contemporaries, in particular the former Jesuits Bettinelli, Tiraboschi and Andrea Rubbi whose works had argued for the primacy of the Italian humanist and Renaissance culture.

Once again Andrés put forward a thesis running counter to the prevailing current without being provocative, making use of his undoubted rhetorical skill. First of all he did not call into question the fact that the «revival» («risorgimento») and «rebirth» («rinascimento») of the *humanae litterae* could be ascribed to the recovery of the classical tradition⁵⁴, although he did argue that the *translatio studii* had not been from Greece

to Italy (and thus within Europe) after 1453, but instead from Spain to Italy from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries⁵⁵. The roots of modern European civilisation could be traced back to Arab culture and to Spain (in other words to *Al-Andalus*). This interpretative paradigm involved a clear alteration to the timeline of modernity, whose beginning was obviously moved back significantly. For Andrés the early modern age, which he defined as a break with the darkness of the Carolingian Middle Ages and as a recovery of the Greco-Roman cultural legacy, did not begin (in Italy) in the middle of the fifteenth century but (in Spain) between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries⁵⁶. True modernity, understood as the overcoming of the classical legacy, had instead blossomed fully throughout Europe during the seventeenth century, when «there was no part of the sciences and the belles lettres that did not take on new appearances, and when on the foundations of the ancient a new literature arose». In fact, up to the end of the sixteenth century, «the taste and profit in science and the belles lettres was almost entirely reduced to understanding and imitating the ancients»⁵⁷.

At the same time, although he did not cast any doubt on the fact that the Provençal troubadours had been responsible for encouraging a taste for vernacular poetry in Europe from the twelfth century onwards⁵⁸, Andrés argued that the birth of modern rhyme poetry was due to the transposition of this style of Arabic poetry to the European vernaculars⁵⁹, thanks to the cultural

⁵⁰ M. Formica, *Lo specchio turco. Immagini dell'Altro e rappresentazioni del Sé nella cultura italiana dell'età moderna*, Donzelli, Roma 2012.

⁵¹ Andrés, *Dell'origine*, cit., vol. 1, pp. xi, 169, 262, 280.

⁵² On the main literary theories advanced by Andrés in his treatise cfr. C.D. Fuentes Fos, *Juan Andrés: entre España y Europa*, Valencia, Institució Alfons el Magnànim 2008; Id., *Ilustración, neoclasicismo y apología de España en la obra de Juan Andrés (1740-1817)*, Instituto Alicantino de Cultura Juan Gil-Albert, Alicante 2017; F. Quinziano, *Lesilio italiano dei gesuiti spagnoli. Enciclopedismo, dialogo e modelli di promozione culturale in Juan Andrés*, in *Spaesamenti. Processi di estraniamento culturale tra età moderna e contemporanea*, a cura di F. Martelli, Aracne, Canterano 2017 pp. 79-122; Id., *Juan Andrés e la cultura ispano-italiana del Settecento: Umanesimo, sincretismo e dialogo culturale*, in *Un recorrido por las letras italianas en busca del humanismo*, ed. por V. González Martín et al., Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, Salamanca 2019, pp. 407-420.

⁵³ Núñez García, *Carlo Denina*, cit., pp. 209-214; F. Bruni, *Italia. Vita e avventure di un'idea*, Il Mulino, Bologna 2010, pp. 420-482.

⁵⁴ Andrés, *Dell'origine*, cit., vol. 1, pp. ix-x, 169, 172, 175, 179-180, 182, 197, 259-261, 273, 285, 330, 339, 344-345, 348, 356, 364.

⁵⁵ Andrés did not deny that the arrival of the Byzantine scholars in Italy after the Turkish conquest of Constantinople had played a positive role, but argued that the conditions for the acceptance of the legacy of the classical age in the peninsula were established by the Arabs and by the Council of Florence to the early fifteenth century. Furthermore, like Tiraboschi, Andrés recognised the spread of movable type printing as an essential contribution to the development of humanist culture: *idem*, vol. 1, pp. xi, 348, 356-377.

⁵⁶ *Idem*, vol. 1, pp. 262, 271, 308. For Andrés the Middle Ages broadly coincided with the Early Medieval period and could be placed between the seventh and tenth centuries: *idem*, vol. 1, p. 173.

⁵⁷ *Idem*, vol. 1, pp. 488-489. Andrés concluded his argument by stating that the eighteenth century had limited itself to perfecting the arts and discoveries that emerged in the previous century, introducing «a severity of criticism and a flavor of philosophy to all subjects».

⁵⁸ *Idem*, vol. 1, pp. 259-331. The Valencian Jesuit, following Vico and in opposition to D'Alembert's *Discours préliminaire*, attached great importance to poetry, which he considered (together with history) the first manifestation of the «human spirit» and therefore of the imagination: Andrés, *Dell'origine*, cit., vol. 1, pp. 1-2, 16, 41-42; vol. 2, pp. 1-7. As is known, Vico, in the *Scienza nuova* (1744 edition), had argued that from the «age of heroes», the «poetic logic» had been the foundation of literature and of common languages themselves: cfr. G. Vico, *Scienza Nuova*, a cura di P. Soccio, Garzanti, Milano 1983, pp. 228-230, 343-362 (*Idea dell'opera*; book II, section II, chpts. 1-5).

⁵⁹ Andrés, *Dell'origine*, cit., vol. 1, pp. 306-315. This idea had long been debated by the Orientalists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, who had observed that the rhymed and rhythmic prose in which

and political ties in place in the twelfth century between Catalonia and Provence⁶⁰. Naturally, the Valencian Jesuit also rejected the theory that modern poetry/literature, linked to the development of vernacular languages, had originated among the Nordic peoples of barbarian origin, beginning with Ossian⁶¹.

3. THE ARABIST PARADIGM AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE SPANISH 'NATION'

Coming now towards my conclusions and drawing together the lines of reasoning I have developed so far, I would like to restate what, from my point of view, are the salient features of Andrés's Arabism. The main objective of the interpretation offered in the first volume of *Dell'origine* was to challenge the idea that the primary role in the formation of European civilisation had been played by the French and by the Nordic culture in general: hence the dismantling of the myth of the Carolingian age and the specular exaltation of southern Europe. In the context of a perspective that continued to be Eurocentric, Andrés set himself the goal not so much of

the Quran was composed (known as *saj'*) would have predisposed the Arabs to develop a rhymed lyric rather than one based on a syllabic meter: cfr. Bevilacqua, *The Republic*, cit., pp. 71-72, 165, 184, 193. Even Voltaire, in the *Essai sur les moeurs*, subscribed to this theory.

⁶⁰ Andrés, *Dell'origine*, cit., 1, pp. 293-297. Pointing out the political ties that linked Provence to Catalonia (at the beginning of the 1100s the counts of Barcelona had become regents of Toulouse and Occitania), Andrés implicitly supports the thesis – strongly advanced by Francisco Javier Llampillas in his *Saggio storico apologetico della letteratura spagnola* (Genoa, F. Repetto, 1778-1781, 6 vols.) – that the Occitan language in fact originated from Catalonia. On the other hand Tiraboschi (echoing the theories of Giovanni Maria Barbieri and Ludovico Antonio Muratori) maintains that it had been the Arab Sicilians, through the mediation carried out in the court of Frederick II of Swabia, that transmitted rhyming poetry to Petrarch and Dante: cfr. Dainotto, *Europe (in Theory)*, cit., pp. 128-131; Andrés, *Dell'origine* cit., 1, pp. 167, 169, 315-318; Id., *Epistolario*, a cura di L. Brunori, Biblioteca Valenciana, Valencia 2006, pp. 367-368 e 496.

⁶¹ At the end of the 1780s, the theories relating to the contribution made by the Arabs to the birth of European rhyming poetry set out by Andrés in these parts of volumes 1 and 2 triggered a furious argument between the author and his former confreres Esteban Arteaga, a debate into which Tiraboschi was also eventually drawn. Cfr. Andrés, *Dell'origine*, cit., vol. 1, pp. 172, 274-275, 312; vol. 2, p. 48, n.*; Id., *Lettera sopra la musica degli Arabi a Gio. Battista Toderini*, in G. Toderini, *Letteratura turchesca dell'abate Giambattista Toderini*, G. Storti, Venezia 1787, vol. 1, pp. 249-252; E. Arteaga, *Rivoluzioni del Teatro Musicale italiano*, Carlo Trenti, Bologna 1783, vol. 1, pp. 145-148, Id., *Rivoluzioni del Teatro Musicale italiano*, Carlo Palese, Venezia 1785², vol. 1, pp. 161-183, n. (a); Id., *Della Influenza degli Arabi sull'origine della poesia moderna in Europa*. *Dissertazione*, Stamperia Pagliarini, Roma 1791; G. Tiraboschi, *Prefazione*, in G. Barbieri, *Dell'origine della poesia rimata* [...], Società Tipografica, Modena 1790, pp. 3-26; M. Batllori, *Estudio preliminar*, in E. de Arteaga, *Lettere musico-filologiche. II. Del ritmo sonoro e del ritmo muto nella musica degli antichi*, CSIC, Madrid 1944, pp. xiii-cxlix: ciii-cxi.

reducing Europe's position within the universal history of culture, but rather that of «decentring» France's position at the origins of Western civilisation and modernity. He therefore used the Arabist Theory to support an argument which placed the Mediterranean at the centre of the Western world, and which had the added value of enabling a pro-Spanish patriotic interpretation of the birth of modern European culture, since it exalted the role of Spain in the recovery of the legacy of the classical world⁶². Put differently, Andrés used Arabist Theory to challenge certain arguments belonging to another powerful paradigm connected to Iberian history, namely that of the anti-Spanish Black Legend⁶³. Emphasising the civilising role of Spain in the Middle Ages meant challenging the idea, shared by many *philosophes*, that from the medieval period to the Counter-Reformation Spain had always been a place of ignorance and superstition.

According to Andrés, civilisation was born in the Orient, in China, and then took up residence in the Mediterranean, first with the Egyptians, then with the Greeks, then the Arabs and finally, in the early modern age, with the Spaniards and Italians. While arguing patriotically in favour of the primacy that Spain could boast over the rest of the Mediterranean world precisely because of its Arab past, throughout his literary history Andrés nevertheless hesitated to employ the bitter tones towards Italian scholars and men of letters that instead characterised the publications of his confreres Francisco Javier Llampillas, Tomás Serrano and Juan Francisco Masdeu. The implicit message that he sent to Italian intellectuals – some of whom, like Tiraboschi and Bettinelli, were also former Jesuits – was that they should unite forces against their real enemy, that is the France of the *philosophes*: it was necessary to demonstrate that European identity was rooted neither in a concept of progress calibrated around French history, nor in the notion of reason theorised by the *Philosophie*⁶⁴. Instead of exhausting each other in an internal struggle, the scholars belonging to the Mediterranean cultures of Italy and Spain, which had always been united by the classical tradition and a shared religion, would do better to join forces against the real enemies of Western civilisation:

⁶² Dainotto, *The discreet Charm*, cit., pp. 17-26.

⁶³ On the main arguments and the history of the *leyenda negra* see at least R. García Cárcel, *La leyenda negra. Historia y opinión*, Alianza, Madrid 1992; A. Mestre Sanchis, *Apología y crítica de España en el siglo XVIII*, Marcial Pons, Madrid 2003; R. D. Carbia, *Historia de la leyenda negra hispano-americana*, Marcial Pons, Madrid 2004; N. Soriano Muñoz, *Bartolomé de Las Casas, un español contra España*, Institución Alfons el Magnánim, Valencia 2015; *La sombra de la Leyenda negra*, ed. por M. J. Villaverde Rico y Francisco Castilla Urbano, Tecnos, Madrid 2016.

⁶⁴ Dainotto, *Europe (in Theory)*, cit., p. 119.

the Protestantism professed by the Nordic peoples and the «spirit of irreligion» of the *philosophes*.

This idea was supported by a skilful use of sources, so that the philosophical-conjectural and discursive element of Andrés's approach was constructed on irreproachable erudition and philology⁶⁵. In contrast with some confreres, like Joaquín Pla, by his own admission Andrés could read and speak neither Arabic nor Persian⁶⁶. He therefore founded his strongest-held interpretative theories on information and sources collected and translated into Latin by the most able Arabists of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, making particular use of Edward Pococke's *Specimen Historiae Arabum* (1650), Johan Heinrich Hottinger's *Historia Orientalis* (1651), Barthélemy d'Herbelot de Molainville's *Bibliothèque Orientale* (1697), Thomas Hyde's *Historia religionis veterum Persarum* (1700) and Albert Schultens's *Vita et Res Gestae Sultani* (1732). Furthermore, in order to understand the Arabic texts, Andrés had consulted the grammars, dictionaries and anthologies available at the time, such as the Thomas Erpenius's *Grammatica arabica* (1613), Jacobus Golius's *Lexicon Arabico-latinum* (1653) and William Jones's *Poeseos Asiaticae Commentariorum* (1774).

Yet the decisive influence on the development of Andrés's interpretative system was in fact a Spanish source, namely the *Bibliotheca Arabico-Hispana Escorialensis*, which was published in two volumes between 1760 and 1770⁶⁷. This was the edition of the Arab codes (kept in the Escorial Library) edited by the Syrian-Maronite scholar Miguel Casiri (1710-1791), and was a publication that brought to a conclusion a project which, having started during the reign of Ferdinand VI, received the support of Ferdinand's successor Charles III of Bourbon and the reformist ruling group then in government (the *manteístas* or *golillas*)⁶⁸. In other words, Casiri's

catalogue was the product of the official culture of the kingdom and the Spanish Bourbons, who, especially during the reign of Charles III (1759-1788), had mobilised all Spanish intellectuals (including the former Jesuits expelled to Italy)⁶⁹ in a propaganda campaign aimed at defending the image of Spain and its history in European public opinion⁷⁰. The ultimate objective had been to praise the all the «glories» of Spanish history (in particular that of Castile) and their influence on the history of Europe⁷¹. While, for example, the royal historian Juan Bautista Muñoz and the Academy of History had been charged with providing an apologetic perspective on the conquest of America⁷², Casiri and his pupils were given the difficult task of establishing the documentary basis that would also allow the country's Islamic history to be included among the glories of the «Spanish nation»⁷³.

Despite having been exiled to Italy by Charles III, Andrés nevertheless managed to involve himself in this aspect of official Bourbon culture by reworking the main theories expounded by the Maronite scholar in his introduction to the catalogue⁷⁴. Included in these, apart from the central role played by the Spanish Arabs in the rebirth of European science and literature, was also the theory according to which all the Arab authors that Casiri recorded and studied should be considered «his-

127-130, *passim*; Id., *Religiosidad, cultura y política. Mayans y la Compañía. De la amistad a la ruptura*, Facultad de Teología San Vicente Ferrer, Valencia 2019, pp. 96-99; Bevilacqua, *The Republic*, cit., pp. 32-33.

⁶⁹ Guasti, *Lesilio italiano*, cit., pp. 363-553.

⁷⁰ F. Lopez, *Juan Pablo Forner et la crise de la conscience espagnole au XVIII^e siècle*, Presses de Biscaye Frères, Bordeaux 1976.

⁷¹ On the role that «national glory» and «national amour-propre» played in orienting the strategies of the European scholars and cultural institutions in charge of the study of oriental antiquities cfr. Bevilacqua, *The Republic*, cit., p. 38.

⁷² N. Bas Martín, *Juan Bautista Muñoz (1745-1799) y la fundación del Archivo General de Indias*, Biblioteca Valenciana, Valencia 2000; Id., *Juan Bautista Muñoz (1745-1799). Un ilustrado valenciano autor de la 'Historia del Nuevo Mundo' y fundador del Archivo General de Indias*, Universidad de Valencia, Valencia 2000; Id., *El cosmógrafo e historiador Juan Bautista Muñoz (1745-1799)*, Universidad de Valencia, Valencia 2002; J. Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to write the History of the New World. Histories, Epistemologies, and Identities in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World*, Stanford U.P., Stanford 2001, pp. 190-203; E. Velasco Moreno, *La Real Academia de la Historia en el siglo XVIII. Una Institución de sociabilidad*, Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, Madrid 2000, pp. 97-103; Mestre Sanchis, *Apología*, cit., pp. 185-207.

⁷³ The *Bibliotheca Arabico-Hispana Escorialensis* was not simply a bibliographical catalogue, and Casiri frequently provided Latin extracts of the 1851 Arab codes held in the Escorial.

⁷⁴ From Italy Andrés, through his brother Carlos, was in constant correspondence with Casiri, who often provided him with information and copies of manuscripts kept in the library of the Escorial: Andrés, *Epistolario*, cit., pp. 197, 259, 351, 554-555, 704; G. Mayans y Siscar, *Epistolario. Cartas Literarias. Correspondencia de los hermanos Mayans con los hermanos Andrés, F. Cerdá y Rico, Juan Bautista Muñoz y José Vega Sentmenat*, ed. por A. Alemany Peiró, Ayuntamiento de Oliva, Valencia 2000, vol. XVII, pp. 83-85, 109-110, 115-117, *passim*.

⁶⁵ Andrés, *Dell'origine*, cit., vol. 1, pp. 219, 278, 291, 327.

⁶⁶ The collaboration with the Catalan jesuit Joaquín Pla proved to be important for the processing of the data contained in the Arabic (and Provençal) texts used by Andrés: cfr. Andrés, *Epistolario*, cit., pp. 244, 247, 535-536, 540, 544, 546, 554-556, 581-582; Batllori, *La cultura hispano-italiana*, cit., pp. 391-411.

⁶⁷ M. Casiri, *Bibliotheca Arabico-Hispana Escorialensis sive Librorum omnium MSS. quos Arabice ab auctoribus magnam partem Arabo-Hispanis compositos Bibliotheca Coenobii Escorialensis complectitur, Recensio et Explanatio* [...], Antonio Pérez de Soto, Matriti 1760-1770, 2 vols.; in 1771, immediately after the completion of the *Bibliotheca*, Casiri published the *Catálogo de voces castellanas que tienen su origen en el arabe*.

⁶⁸ N. Gemayel, *Les échanges culturels entre los maronite et l'Europe. Du Collège de Rome (1584) au Collège de 'Ayn-Warqa (1789)*, Impr. Y. et Ph. Gamayel, Beyrouth 1984, vol. 1; J. F. Alcaraz Gómez, *Jesuitas y reformismo. El padre Francisco de Rávago (1747-1755)*, Facultad de Teología S. Vicente Ferrer de Valencia, Valencia 1995, pp. 594-599; Mestre Sanchis, *Mayans y la cultura*, cit., pp. 108-109; Id., *Humanistas, políticos e ilustrados*, Alicante, Publicaciones de la Universidad de Alicante, 2002, pp.

pani vel origine, vel patria, vel domicilio, vel schola», irrespective of the fact that they had been Muslim⁷⁵. Through this approach, Spain's Arab past, like the periods of Roman and Gothic dominance, could be justifiably used to construct an idea of a Spanish literary «nation» in which the geographic aspect, overlapping with the etymological meaning of the Latin term *natio* (which derives from *nascēre*, «to be born»), continued to be more important than other aspects of identity, such as the religious one. Being natives and inhabitants of the Iberian peninsula and of the states of which it was composed in the Middle Ages, even the Iberian Arabs, despite their Islamic faith, could be considered «Spanish» and thus take credit for their role in the construction of the «glorias» (in other words the historical achievements) of the «nación española». Andrés, in other words, took part in the process of founding an idea of the Spanish nation in which the Iberian *ilustrados* were engaged during that period: this was still a geo-literary commitment, but one which, perceiving itself as an exaltation of a cultural superiority and of certain salient elements that Spanish culture had given to Western European civilisation, already possessed certain clearly political and ideological connotations⁷⁶.

4. CONCLUSION: ANDRÉS'S ANTI-PHILOSOPHIQUE ARABISM.

In conclusion, therefore, it is possible to argue that the interpretation set out by Andrés on the role played by Arabs in the cultural rebirth of Europe was not in itself original, given that his statements can be traced back to the seventeenth-century sources that he used. For example, his theory on the crucial role played by the Spanish Arabs in the spread of Greek knowledge throughout Europe had already been put forward by Pococke in his *Specimen Historiae Arabum*⁷⁷. However, the argumentative and methodological structure that Andrés used to transform this hypothesis into a coherent interpretative paradigm was original: he in fact systematised and explained, through an approach that verged on the controversial, the main arguments of European and Spanish oriental studies, placing them in a philosophical-conjectural historical context that took inspiration both from *Philosophie* and from the historical-literary tradition of Italy. In the first case Andrés's

heuristic point of reference was above all Etienne Bonnot de Condillac, whose *Art de raisonner* in his *Cours d'études* had fixed with precision the rules of the scientific conjectural method, while Montesquieu and Voltaire were his main targets: the Valencian Jesuit rejected the former's climatic determinism and the myth of the Carolingian cultural renaissance, while Voltaire seemed to him an unfaithful, biased, superficial and irreverent historian⁷⁸, despite the fact that the Valencian Jesuit agreed with him on the need to go beyond a historical method based merely on outlining sequences of events and concurred with certain specific questions or interpretations expounded in the *Essai sur les moeurs* (starting with the re-evaluation of the essential role played by the Arabs in recovering the scientific knowledge of the Greeks). As for the Italian historical-literary school, Andrés was certainly influenced at least by the works of Vico, Muratori, Denina and Tiraboschi: apart from discussing their theories, he took from the seventeenth-century historians of 'literature' a comparative approach to the various 'national' cultural traditions of Europe (which contained very specific value judgments and judgments on aesthetics), and he refined this method yet further⁷⁹. In particular, the geo-literary idea of the nation defined by Andrés recalls the criteria established by his friend Tiraboschi at the start of his *Storia della letteratura italiana*⁸⁰.

Andrés was convinced that the best weapon with which to weaken the cultural revolution introduced by the *philosophes* was that of history. Such an effort had to begin with the renewal of the historical method, which he believed Catholic intellectuals had to complete in order to take account the fact that historical works were no longer the preserve of a handful of scholars but were available to an ever expanding public accustomed, thanks to Voltaire, Raynal, Hume, Robertson, Gibbon, etc., to a narrative register and to general interpretations that were not limited merely to political and military issues⁸¹. Put differently, Andrés, like many other Jesuits, believed it was necessary to accept the challenge thrown down by the *philosophes* against traditional knowledge by fighting them on their own ground and with their own methods. History was one of those battlegrounds and the historical method was one of the main instruments in this ideological war. The Valencian Jesuit was in fact aware that the *philosophes'* most dangerous ideas could only be challenged effectively by adopting a 'his-

⁷⁵ Casiri, *Praefatio*, in *Bibliotheca Arabico-Hispana*, cit., pp. i-xxiv: xxiii.

⁷⁶ For the nineteenth-century developments of this reflection cfr. J. Álvarez-Junco, *Spanish identity in the age of nations*, Manchester University Press, Manchester-New York 2011.

⁷⁷ Bevilacqua, *The Republic*, cit., pp. 78-79.

⁷⁸ Andrés, *Dell'origine*, cit., vol. 1, pp. 474-475; vol. 3, pp. 367-368, 394, 398.

⁷⁹ *Idem*, vol. 1, pp. 484-486; vol. 3, pp. 381-387.

⁸⁰ Tiraboschi, *Storia della letteratura*, cit., vol. 1, pp. ix-xviii (*Prefazione*).

⁸¹ Andrés, *Dell'origine*, cit., vol. 3, pp. 391-399.

toricist' approach, the only one still capable of explaining the past, interpreting the present and predicting the future without giving in to the «spirit of irreligion»⁸². Naturally, in his attempt to achieve this polemical objective, Andrés fell into certain contradictions, made well-calculated omissions and resorted to numerous rhetorical ploys: for example, while he excluded the religious element when evaluating the legacy that the Arab culture left to the West, he reintroduced it with force in the final chapters of the first volume and in the last two volumes of *Dell'origine*. We should remember, however, that for a Jesuit modern European civilisation could not be anything but Catholic, so that any deviations from dogmatic truth – whether originating from Lutheranism or from the unbelief of the *philosophes* – risked undermining the cultural primacy of Western Europe⁸³.

It is probable that in their own time Andrés and those among his former confreres who were involved in the project to renew Catholic historiography did not achieve the goals they set themselves. Yet whether and to what extent their works influenced the way of doing history in the early nineteenth century, particularly in Italy and Spain, is something that has still to be fully assessed: it seems fair to say, for instance, that certain key aspects of positivist historiography – like the myths of the historian's impartiality and the objectivity of sources – seem to have sprung from this first generation of late eighteenth-century historicist intellectuals⁸⁴. At the same time, there does not seem to be any doubt that the positive interpretation of the culture of the Spanish Arabs and of *Al-Andalus* developed by Andrés to challenge certain anti-Spanish prejudices paradoxically ended up forging new and perhaps even more powerful ones. The orientalism which the European Romanticism of the nineteenth century used to stereotype the social customs and collective psychology of the Spaniards was in part a result of works like that of Andrés: a fact which once again raises the question of what kind of legacy the Enlightenment and its adversaries left behind for the culture of the following century.

⁸² *Idem*, vol. 1, pp. 453-455, 461-462. After claiming that the 1600s had surpassed the 1700s in terms of the number of «superior geniuses» and the importance of the progress made, Andrés dedicated the final chapter of the first volume of *Dell'origine* to the examination of the possible developments (and desirable corrective measures) of late eighteenth-century European culture: *idem*, vol. 1, pp. 489-522. The problem of his century, he thought, was an excessive «itch to philosophize» which had pervaded not only the educated elites, but also new social groups and subjects (women above all): *idem*, vol. 2, pp. 490, 495-497. On this, cfr. Delpiano, *Il governo della lettura*, cit., pp. 265-266; Ead, *Liberi di scrivere*, cit., p. 172.

⁸³ Andrés, *Dell'origine*, cit., vol. 1, pp. 460-461.

⁸⁴ Cfr., for example, *idem*, vol. 3, pp. 396-397.