

## Stereotypes Associated with Prototypes of the Prophet of Islam's Name till the 19th Century

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Received on: 1-12-2014

Accepted on: 22-2-2015

### Abstract

The name of the Prophet of Islam is supposed to be transliterated by Arabs and many Western specialists in Arabic as Muhammad, Mohammad, Mohamed or in other forms very similar to its Arabic spelling. However, these forms differ notably from other orthographic variants coined since the first contact with Islam, or the knowledge received about Islam, first in the East and later in some Western cultures. The literature written about the Prophet includes spelling variants of his name that were formulated and modified by Churchmen and orientalist between the seventh and the nineteenth centuries. The alterations of the name of the Prophet of Islam in Western Christian literature are based on an Eastern prototype. This prototype generated other kinds of Western prototypes which reflect, in a way, stereotypes that can be associated with these alterations. This study gives a repertoire of these prototypes in Greek and Latin literature and the orthographic forms which varied among or were shared by two Western cultures: Spain and France. It further attempts to show how these stereotypes are charged with the feelings attached to the name and Islam. The most common portrayals represent the Prophet as a false prophet, a Saracen prince or deity, a writer of the Quran, the Anti-Christ, the Biblical beast, a schismatic from Christianity and a satanic creature.

**Keywords:** Muhammad; prototype; variants; stereotype; Islam; West; orientalism; Christianity; Anti-Christ.

### Introduction

The popularity of the Prophet's name among Muslims dates back to a Hadith (a prophetic saying) of the Prophet "name after me [Muhammad], but do not use my nickname [Abu Qasem]" (Bukhari 1400h., 6188, 3539). Muslims throughout the world honor the prophet and express their love and devotion to him in different ways, one of which is giving his name to their male children.

According to the sixth edition of *The Columbia Encyclopedia* (2000), Muhammad is probably the most common given name, with variations including the West African *Mamadu* and the Turkic *Mehmet* (Bartleby.com). *Mohammed*, and five most popular different spellings of it, reclaimed its place as the most popular name for baby boys born in England and Wales in the past five years (CNN Belief Blog). *Mohammed* and *Mohamed* were the first most popular baby names in many cities and provinces in France's and Belgium's most Muslim populated cities since 2008 (La Provence.com). According to the Social Security Administration of the USA in 2013, the orthographic form, *Mohamed*, was the most common spelling variant used. *Mohamed* was ranked 445<sup>th</sup>, followed by *Mohammad*, which ranked 575<sup>th</sup>, and *Mohammed*, which ranked 555<sup>th</sup> (Social Security Online). Muhammad's most common current spelling variations are: *Mohammad*, *Mohamed*, *Mohammed*, *Mohamad*, *Muhammad*, *Muhamed*,

*Muhammed, Muhammet, or Muhamet*. To Arabs, all these modern variations echo the same Arabic name of the prophet- محمد (M, u/o, h, a, m, m, e/a, d).

Christendom knew Muhammad when Islam began to spread in the seventh century. Consequently, the source of the historical forms of the name dates back to the earliest documented Christian knowledge of Muhammad in Byzantine sources and records. In addition, historical translations by churchmen and orientalist of the Quran into Latin, French, Spanish and English had a special interest. Among these translations, we find titles accompanied by the name of Muhammad. Furthermore, from the ninth century onwards, highly negative biographies of Muhammad were written in Latin (*Encyclopædia Britannica Online*) and the romance languages.

Remarkably, no orthographic revision of the classic variants was conducted in some Western cultures (such as Spain, France, Portugal and Italy) despite the establishment of academic institutions and chairs of Arabism, which replaced orientalism. It is still spelled *Mahoma* in Spanish, *Mahomet* in French, *Maomé* in Portuguese, and *Maometto* in Italian<sup>1</sup>. However, it is not the case with Germanic Languages such as German<sup>2</sup> and English where the name currently used echoes the Arabic equivalent.

These Western forms of the Prophet of Islam's name were built on prototypes, either Eastern or Western. A prototype is a word from Greek roots, *protos* "first" and *typos* "model". It simply refers to the first example or model adopted or modified by certain users. In this study, it serves to highlight the starting form(s) of the evolution of some of other forms of the Prophet's name which are not similar to the supposed transliterations aforementioned. However, some forms are considered prototypes of the Prophet's name that ought not to be used. The prototypes shown in this study may indicate that certain stereotypes which we can read throughout the historical references in the Greek and Latin era up to the 19<sup>th</sup> century are the types that I want to address here.

According to Malgesini and Giménez (2000, 406), a stereotype is a simplified, exaggerated perception with few details about a person or group of people who share certain characteristics, qualities and skills and seek to justify or rationalize a certain conduct in relation to a particular social category. Similarly, Schapira (1999, 1-2) suggests that stereotypes:

(...) fixent dans une communauté donnée, des croyances, des convictions, des idées reçues, des préjugés, voire des superstitions: les Ecossais ont réputés avarés, les Polonais boivent beaucoup, il fait beau à la St Jean, après l'Ascension le temps se gâte, qui est heureux

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1. In the "Divine Comedy", XIII Century (Canto XXVIII, vs. 31-32), Dante puts *Maometto*, along with his cousin Ali, in Hell. This orthographic form of the name matches the Italian modern use. Dante presents *Maometto* and his cousin Ali at the ninth circle of Hell, the sowers of discord and the schismatic reserves, being lacerated by devils and guts coming out of his open belly. Later, this description was used by artists such as Salvador Dalí, with representation from the bowels of *Maometto* exposed or as illustrations of Gustave Doré's Divine Comedy.

2. A Latin translation of the Quran was done in German, entitled *Basileae. Alcoranus Mahometicus*, where the Prophet's name was *Mahometicus*, an ancient sound very similar to the modern one. On the other hand, Renaissance literature in Germany defines Islam as the religion of the Turks, and the Prophet Muhammad is also discussed in this context. Martin Luther (1483-1546), the founder of the Protestant Church, wrote many books and delivered many series of sermons about the Turks and their beliefs. In *Eine Heerespredigt wider den Türken*, Luther considers the Turks the "Satan worshipers" and a curse sent by God to punish the Catholic Pope. Moreover, in many other works written in that period, Prophet Muhammad is described as the prophet of the Turks and the author of the Quran (National Open University of Nigeria).

au jeu est malheureux en amour, il faut toucher du bois pour faire durer sa chance.

[plant in a given community, beliefs, convictions, ideas, prejudices or superstitions: the Scots are famous misers, Poles drink a lot, it's a nice weather in the feast of St John, after the Ascension weather turns bad, who is happy to play is unlucky in love, he should touch wood to prolong the luck]

The theory of "stereotype," conceived as fixed patterns and prebuilt conceptual schema, linguistic, sociological or ideological character, is currently being implemented within many fields, such as comparative literature, discourse analysis, socio-criticism, phraseology...etc.

Stereotypes belong to the repertoire of images and representations shared by speakers of a particular language or the same social or cultural community. Currently, the notion of "stereotype" is applied within social psychology studies to analyze the representation or image of the other that the members of a community concoct. Walter Lippmann (1956, 96), who coined the term in 1922 in *Public Opinion*, explains that stereotypes are highly charged with the feelings that are attached to them. They are the fortress of the tradition, and behind its defenses the stereotype can continue to feel safe in the position it occupies. A stereotype serves various purposes which reflect a variety of cognitive and motivational processes. As such, a stereotype emerges as a way to simplify the demands on the perceiver. Stereotypes make information processing easier by allowing the perceiver to rely on previously stored knowledge in place of incoming information. Stereotypes also emerge in response to environmental factors, such as different social roles, group conflicts and differences in power. Other times, stereotypes emerge as a way of justifying the *status quo* or in response to a need for social identity.

(Cited by Hilton and Hippel 1996, 237).

The present study aims to follow many historical sources<sup>3</sup> to point out the common stereotypes that could be the culmination of a long or a land written tradition in the languages under study. This aim will be realized through studying prototypes of the variants, in previous Greek and Latin records, considered the sources of the orthography of the Prophet's name investigated following in Spanish and French.

#### **Early Greek and Latin Stereotypes through first Prototypes<sup>4</sup>**

The revelation to the Prophet started when he was forty, dated 610 AC. A century earlier, the Roman Empire in the west had collapsed. The Roman Empire in the east, known as the Byzantine Empire, emerged till its decline in 1453. Under the rule of the Byzantines, there were many translations

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3. All the texts from other languages are translated into English by the author.

4. Translations of titles of Latin, Greek and Italian books in the chapter: *Peri haireseon* [Heresies Today]. *Doctrina Jacobi* [Teaching of Jacob]. *Lex Mahumet pseudoprophete Act* [The law of Mahumet false prophet]. *Machumetis Saracenorum Principis, eiusque successorum vitae, ac doctrine ipseque Alcoran...* [Machumetis Saracen prince, and his successors life and teaching of the Quran], *Doctrina Mahumet* [Mahumet's doctrine]. *Liber generationis Mahumet* [Genealogy of Mahumet]. *Vita Mahumeti* [Life of Muhammad]. *Otia de Machomete* [Ease of Islam]. *Notitia of Machometo* [Knowledge of Islam]. *De Sarracenorum status* [Saracen Status]. *Machumetus Machometo* [Islam of Machumetus].

which played a principal role in introducing Muhammad and his doctrine to the West. The first real Oriental impact on Muhammad's stereotypes in the West was through translation, when there was not yet an institutional mission but a mere interchange of knowledge among churches. Nonetheless, translation is not enough to promote an ideology; it is what ideology is built in through and how it is circulated. One of the most influential translations were from Greek into Latin of the polemical work *Peri haireseon*<sup>5</sup> written by John of Damascus (675?-749?). It was among the first sources stereotyping Muhammad using the phrase "false prophet," and "Antichrist." Some show that Muhammad was pointed out in this manuscript as *Mamed* (Cited by Powers 2009, 29). Nevertheless in an interview with the Priest Ibrahim Dabbur, from the Greek Orthodox Church in Jordan, on 14 September 2014, he confirmed that it is the form *ΜΩΑΜΕΘ* (Moameth) which is mentioned in this manuscript, which may make it the prototype of the many Latin and Germanic variants studied in this paper. Dabbur adds that John of Damascus spoke the verbal Aramaic known in the rustic area in eighth century Syria, but all his writings were in eastern Greek (ΡΩΜΕΙΚΑ) only. In the Byzantine Empire, the religion was principally Eastern Orthodox Christianity and language and literary culture were Greek. This language was used in Greece, Cyprus, Central Asia, Turkey, North Africa and Natural Syria. This may explain why the phoneme *h* and the gemination of *m*, which do not exist in Greek, were not used in *Moameth*. In addition, apparently an alteration has occurred to the posterior forms with the course of time between *ao* and *oa*.

The stereotypes were always circulated strongly by Media and/or *lingua francas* such as Greek and Latin; Greek before the Middle Ages and Latin, through them, in Europe. That made the linguistic and phonetic changes and the representations related to them dominate Western languages and cultures. Studying the current state of English as *lingua franca* and its domination over all the civilization aspects, Phillipson (1992) names it the "linguistic imperialism," defined as the imposition of one language on speakers of other languages; language has been always the mirror of cultures and ideologies. For the upcoming centuries, historical Greece will be of great impact on all Western culture's different aspects. The manuscript of John of Damascus is one of the first Orthodox Christian refutations of Islam which has manipulated the Western Catholic Church's attitude. The Muslim post-built stereotypes in the West will not really be a Western creation but Oriental in essence.

The stereotypes about the Prophet were used before using the name Muhammad itself to refer to the Prophet. It is highly expected that John of Damascus was influenced by the pre-stereotypes known in the region and distributed by churchmen. Hoyland (1997) in his *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam*, studies the images of Islam in old texts between the seventh and the ninth centuries. The majority of Greek, Syriac and Latin texts point out the Arab conquests in the region in general. Many of the stereotypes in this monograph prove that they were formulated during Christian debates and religious struggles anterior to John of Damascus either in Greek or in the other languages spoken by the Christians in that era. For example, in the apologetic work written in Africa, the *Doctrina Jacobi* (634?), the Prophet of Saracens is a "false

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5. Another influential source is the *Epistolae Saraceni* [Letters of a Saracen] written by an Oriental Christian and translated into Latin from Arabic (*Encyclopædia Britannica Online*).

prophet," an "impostor," a "troublemaker," a "shedder of blood" and the "Antichrist." John Moschus (c. 550–619), a Byzantine monk and ascetical writer, called the Muslim Arabs "godless" and "barbarians," and so did his disciple Sophronius (d. ca. 639), the patriarch of Jerusalem, who added that the prophet is a "devil" and the Saracens with him are "God-hating" and "God-fighters." We have to recognize that these churchmen traveled through the Roman and Byzantine empires, a fact that must be considered in studying the circulation of these stereotypes.

Some of the other translated sources that contributed to this mind-set are *Lex Mahumet pseudoprophete Act* (1143?), *Machumetis Saracenorum Principis, eiusque successorum vitae, ac doctrine ipseque Alcoran...* (1543), *Doctrina Mahumet* and *Liber generationis Mahumet*. Muhammad in these translations was represented as a "false prophet," a "Saracen prince"<sup>6</sup> and "the writer of a bogus holy book." A holy book is a God revelation, not an alphabet Saracen creation. John of Damascus, considered by the Catholic Churchmen a Doctor of the Church (*cf.* Rengers 2000), judged Islam as Christian-based heresy, so the posterior representation of Muhammad as a deity may be a false thought of that Muhammad is aiming to replace Jesus.

Other studies show constantly that the earliest variants are exclusively Christian dating to the Greek era. Since the old Greek language is the dominant language in this Church, it may explain why it is the case that in some writings he is stereotyped as the beast through digitalizing the letters of the Greek form *MAOMETIS* (Maometis) or *MOAMETIS* (Moametis), which in one interpretation to such use is connected to the number 666 that reflects "the Beast" according to the Apocalypse.<sup>7</sup> The Roman Catholic Bishop Charles Walmesley (1798, 356-357) argues that 666 is the number of the name of a man, which is Mohomet (Muhammad). He states that "This name expressed in the Greek language, because St. John wrote the Apocalypse in Greek, is *MAOMETIS*, or *MOAMETIS*." He tries to confirm his statement indicating that it is used in this way by the monk Euthymius Zigabenus (d. after 1118), by Cedrenus, a Byzantine chronicler of the 11<sup>th</sup> century and by Zonaras, a Byzantine historian, canonist and jurist of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Dabbur corrects the misconception of this word *MAOMETIS*. This is not the name of the Prophet; this word means Mohammedans (Muslims). Other studies participate later in rejecting Walmesley's studies showing that Cedrenus spelling of the Prophet's name is *MOYXOYMET* (Moichimet), Euthymius's spelling of the Prophet's name is *MΩAMEΘ* (Mohameth) or *MΩAMEA* (Mohamed), whereas Zonaras's spelling of the Prophet's name includes many variations, among of which are *Moametus*, *Machumetus*, *Maometus* and *Moamedus* (Otway and Singer 1831, 490-491). It is obvious that the Latin masculine termination *us* is added to the Greek-based prototypes. Moreover, Zonara's variants are the most similar to many posterior forms used in Latin West.

More biographies about the Prophet Muhammad were written in Latin. Some of these biographies, which were written in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, are the *Vita Mahumeti* by Embrico de Maguncia and the *Otia de*

6. In the manuscript *Doctrina Jacobi nuperbaptizati* [Teaching of Jacob] (634-640), a Greek Christian anti-Jewish polemical tract written in Palestine between 634 and 640 and considered the first Greek source of Islamic conquest, we can read a dialogue between Jacob, a recently converted to Christianity man, and many Jews, about the condition of the Byzantine Empire in light of the recent Arab conquests. Jacob said that the prophet appeared to deceive the Saracens with mentioning his name.

7. Equivalent digital letters of Maometis in Greek are  $40+1+70+40+5+300+10+200=666$

*Machomete* by Gautier de Compiègne. The first biography is based on a non-Islamic Byzantine earlier eye witness, and accounts for the early period of Islam. It highlights the person a land social life of the Prophet who is viewed as the embodiment of the Antichrist. The second biography is a long poem of 1090 verses narrating the life of 'Machomes,' the trickster, worker of bogus miracles and false prophet of the Saracens. It is plausible that the poet used Embrico's *Vita Mahumeti* (*BrillOnline reference works*). It is valuable to illustrate that in modern Greek, the *x* is transcript as *ch*, which explains the method of latinizing this variant and others studied here.

A positive representation of the prophet is reported in some other scripts. These records include the book *Notitia of Machometo; De Statu Sarracenorum* and *Machumetus Machometo*. The first record is about the Prophet's life, its basic doctrine and teaching of the Quran in comparison with Christianity, especially how the two religions view Jesus. There are sections that give consideration to civil and religious leaders of Islam. The objective of the second major work is to provide information to the Christians who are interested in learning about Islam, the dominant religion of the defeated Holy Land towards the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The genre is positive, not controversial, but emphasizes the similar beliefs and assumes the superiority of Christianity (*cf.* Tolan 2002, 204-205).

### **The Orthographic Forms of the Prophet's Name in Spanish<sup>8</sup>**

Although the Spaniards had access to accurate information about the Prophet and Islam, since they had lived under the rule of Muslims, the name of the Prophet in the texts they have written has been deformed. In fact, Spanish people have kept using the deformed form *Mahoma* to refer to the Prophet until this day despite the long contact with Muslims and development of Spanish Arabism, while the other forms *Muhammad* and *Muhammed*, for example, have been used in reference to the scholars, scientists and Islamic figures.

"Confucius" and "Buddha" had existed before Islam and even Christianity. Their names have been modified through Latinizing, but the final outcome has been unchanging forms in each language, whereas, "Muhammad" modifications were processed first under the hostility between Oriental Islam and Oriental Orthodox, i.e. within the same geography. It was, evidently, a conflict on the religious identity of the land, which was a micro Christian identity. Later, this conflict had to extend geographically, but within the macro religious identity, Christianity. It was to eliminate any opportunity of Islam extending more or to retake place, especially in Spain where Islam was powerful and the real source of the enlightenment of Europe. The West was not aiming to control and colonize the Orient, as in the institutional orientalism of Edward Said 2006 (first edition 1978); on the contrary, they were trying to eject it outside their territories. They were panicked that the beast may re-wake up, and therefore they had

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8. Translations of titles of Latin books in the chapter: *Istoria de Mahomet* [The history of Muhammad]. *Liber Apologeticus Martyrum* [The Book of Martyrs, Apology]. *Indiculus luminosus* [Luminous collation]. *Summa totius haeresis Sarracenorum* [Total heresy of Saracens]. *Doctrina pueril* [Teaching a child]. *Liber de gentili* [Book of the Gentiles]. *Summula quaedam brevis contra haereses et sectam Saracenorum, sive Ismaelitarum* [Short suit against heresies and Saracen or Ishmaelite sect]. *Liber generationis Mahumet* [Genealogy of Mahumet]. *Doctrina Mahumet* [Muhammad's doctrine]. *Summa totius haeresis Saracenorum* [Total heresy of Saracens]. *Epistola Saraceni* [Saracens' letter]. *Rescriptum Christiani* [Reply from Christian]. *Speculum Historiale* [Mirror of History].

to construct this beast in Western mentalities. Hence, the process was to re-Christianize Spain to unify the religious identity with its neighbors after the expulsion of the Muslims from Al-Andalus which resulted in increasing the publications against Islam and the Prophet Muhammad in Europe. One of these sources is *Istoria de Mahomet*, of Andalusian origin. The unknown writer is supposed to have written it no later than the ninth century. A text which may be the first known source where the form *Mahomet*, thought to be French originally, is shaped. It contains a brief and polemical history of Muhammad, his marriage to his first wife Khadija, a description of how Gabriel revealed psalms (Quran) to Muhammad, and accusation of the Prophet of sexual corruption. Another Latin source is *Liber Apologeticus Martyrum*, based on a Latin manuscript of Saint Eulogius of Córdoba, written in the ninth century. In this manuscript, Eulogius repeats his accusation to *Mahomat* as "precursor of the Antichrist" because he rejects the divinity of the Christ. This form may be strongly the Spanish prototype of *Mahoma*.

Many biographies stereotyping Muhammad were written in Latin since the ninth century, such as the biography written by Paulus Alvarus (800?-861), a Mozarab theologian of Al-Andalus. In *Indiculus luminosus* (854), Alvarus, whose main purpose is to refute the doctrine of Muhammad, used the similarity of names to argue that *Mahoma* is the precursor of Antichrist, and his doctrine is the Beast foretold by the prophets in Daniel's vision.

Medieval Spaniards used to exchange letters and texts with their French neighbors in Latin. The *Summa totius haeresis Sarracenorum*, written around 1143, was sent to Spain to serve in apologetics against Islam. Nicolás Albarracín (2001, 124-125) and Eulogius of Córdoba (800-859), had found the *Life of Muhammad* a book with many Christian theological debates (Viguera 1988, 87-88). Some studies showed that Muhammad was intentionally translated to "Maozim" by Paulus Alvarus (Gómez and Jimenez 2003, 16-17). Many Muslims think that *Mahoma* is deformed by Paulus Alvarus from the word Maozim in the Latin Vulgate version of the Bible, the Book of Daniel (XI, 38) "*Deum autem Maozim in loco suo venerabitur*". Maozim is associated with the worship of a false god, but subsequently has been associated with the Antichrist (De Lisle 1855, 189-191 and Scio de San Miguel 1857, 599). In the paragraph of Alvarus<sup>9</sup> it seems there are missing words which led to the misconception of the text even from a theological point of view: "why would the muezzins to safeguard such Maozim"? There is a need to find the text of Alvarus officially translated by Spanish medievalists to give a sound judgment. More to the point, it is mentioned in the Old Greek Septuagint (The Greek Word<sup>1</sup>), then in Arabic (Injeel.com) and Hebrew (Scripture 4 All) translations, as "the God of forces." So Maozim was not more than a theologian interpretation given by a churchman influenced by the ambiance of the epoch. In Catalan, it is also associated with the Beast in the vision of Ramon Llull (1232?-1315) on the Prophet and his religion. It is curious to ask ourselves why Llull used the name in four forms: *Mafumet* (*Doctrina pueril*, LXXI, 9),

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9. "Quod isti in sumosis turribus quotidie barritu inormi et monstuoso, ac ferarum rictu, dissolutis labiis et faucium latu aperto ut cardiac vociferant, ac vociferandi velut furiosi proeconant ut muniant Maozim cum deo alieno quem cognovit, id est, ut Maozim quem Cobam vocant, hoc est majorem, cum Deo alieno, id est, Demone illo qui ei sub persona Gabrielis apparuit uno venerationis nimine munit...". Translation: "These people with excessive and monstrous roaring from the highest towers every day, with the expression of wild beasts, with wanton lips and wide open throats and shouting like madmen, deliriously proclaiming that they will protect Maozim with a strange god, whom they call Coba, i.e. "the greatest," and who is a demon impersonating Gabriel and worthy of veneration and protection", translated by (Vázquez 2014).

*Maphumet* (cf. Llull 1923, 162), two sounds similar to *Baphomet*, *Machometus* (*Liber de gentili*, IV, 4, 1), and *Mahometus* (Llull 1665, 101) where he relates them to his apologetic plans. The term *Baphomet* (in Medieval Latin *Baphometh*, *Baffometi*, and Occitan *Bafometz*) is used to describe an idol or other deity that the Knights Templar were believed to worship and widely interpreted as a variant of Muhammad's name. The Knights Templar were a very wealthy and powerful Western Christian military orders, officially authorized by the Roman Catholic Church around 1129 and the first text which relates the Baphometh with the Templar dates to the eleventh century (Godfrey 1854, 475). The form *Bafometz* later appeared around 1195 in an Occitan poem as a deformation of Muhammad. It refers here to the poetic lines "*ab Luy venseretz totz lo cas/ Cuy Bafometz a escarnitz/ e-ls renegatz outrasalhitz*"<sup>10</sup>. *The Oxford Dictionary* and two English scholars (Peter Partner and Malcolm Barber) claim that the name of *Baphomet* was an Old French deformation of the name of *Mahomet*. Barber (1994, 321) cites the same verses and claims that some of the Templars, through their long military occupation, had begun incorporating Islamic ideas into their belief system, and this was seen and documented by the inquisitors. In *The Knights Templar and Their Myth*, Peter Partner says: "*In the trial of the Templars one of their main charges was their supposed worship of a heathen idol-head known as a 'Baphomet' [Mahomet]*" (Barber *Ibid*). Anyway, many studies on the relation of Muhammad to the Baphomet put under suspicion the studies which relate them to each other (cf. Churton 2005 and Channing 2013). *Baphomet* might be a misleading notion of the *Maphomet* or *Mafumet* of Llull deformed by the Western tongues by time through the liturgical relations between France and Spain.

Another important factor that led to more popular misconceptions about the Prophet Muhammad and Islam in the West is the Crusades by the Latin Roman Catholic Church during the High Middle Ages and Late Middle Ages. In this respect, studies of the Bishop of Cluny, Peter the Venerable, were intended to provide a foundation for many rebuttals written against Islam, now known as the "Collection Toledo-Cluny." In a letter he sent in 1141 to the French Cistercian monk Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) entitled *Summula quaedam brevis contra haereses et sectam Saracenorum, sive Ismaelitarum*, the Bishop of Cluny used the name *Machumet* (where the spelling of *ch* makes the sound *h* aspirated, and where *u* is read as in Spanish) and his wicked heresy: "*Mittovobis, clarissime, novam translationem Nostram against pessimam Nequam Machumet haeresim disputantem...*" (Villard 1944, 18-19). [Translation: I send you, very clearly, a new version of my own argument against the heresy of the very bad Machumet].

One early example is the aforementioned *Liber generationis Mahumet, Doctrina Mahumet* and *Summa totius haeresis Saracenorum*, an addition of a Latin translation of the Quran and of an apologetic pamphlet *Epistola Saraceni* or *Rescriptum Christiani* written in 3<sup>rd</sup> year of Hegira by Abulmasih ibn Ishaq al-Kindi to defend Christianity. Vincent of Beauvais (d. 1264), used this booklet in the composition of his collection *Speculum Historiale*, which brought together different stories about the Prophet Muhammad that were found in several monastic chronicles and passed down from generation to

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10. With his [i.e. Jesus'] help you will defeat all the dogs whom Mahomet has led astray and the impudent renegades. Translated in Routledge (1999: 112).



generation -a collection that had great influence on later generations in the West. This booklet was published later in English under the title *The Apology of al Kindi* by Sir William Muir (1882).

### **The Orthographic Forms of the Prophet's Name in French<sup>11</sup>**

Under the influence of Spanish sources like Saint Eulogius of Córdoba or chronicles and stories of pilgrims returning from the Holy Land as Thietmar (975-1018), Muhammad appears in French literature around the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. His life is enriched with many fabulous and slanderous stories.

In his study, Robert Mowa (1869, 233-256, 255) attributes the variety of the name to African origins imported to Western Europe during the long Moorish occupation and the Saracen raids, the expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492, the contemporary movement of the Algerian and Tunisian Jews and the incorporation of indigenous people in the military. He adds that in medieval Paris, there is no common spelling of the Prophet's name. Masson (*cf.* 2003) proposes that the chansons de geste popularized the name in various forms, e.g. *Mahon* or *Mahom* in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and they are originally Spanish. These forms were more multiplied in *Le livre de la taille de Paris* of 1297 simultaneous with the Reconquista and the exchange of religious knowledge among the churchmen in Spain and France. The spelling variations included *Mahomet*, *Mahoumet* and *Mahon*. However, the titles of some classical French translations used the variant *Mahomet*. Some of these popular translations are *L'Alcoran de Mahomet* [1647, 1649, 1672, 1683, 1719, 1734, 1770, 1775] and *Le Coran/ traduit de l'arabe, accompagné de notes et précédé d'un abrégé de la vie de Mahomet, tiré des écrivains orientaux les plus estimés* [1787, 1821, 1826]<sup>12</sup>. In contemporary French literature, *Mahomet* is the variant generally used to describe the founder of Islam and is also used to refer to some historical figures of Islam, as the former caliphs, but not for contemporary name holders.

According to the historian Jacqueline Chabbi, the French name *Mahomet* is the translation of the Latin form *Mahometus* (*Le Monde de Clio*) registered in a Latin book of Raymond Lull in the 13<sup>th</sup> century<sup>13</sup> whose first and lost version was written in Arabic (*cf.* Courcelles). More than a century earlier, the form *Machumet* appeared in the Latin translation of the Quran done upon the request of Peter the Venerable, abbot of Cluny, in 1142. This, enemy of the enemies of Christianity, represents Muhammad as a satanic creature half way between Arius and the Antichrist. This Latin translation, as mentioned above, was used for centuries as a template for all other European languages. It was published in 1543 and republished in 1550 by the Protestant philologist Theodor Bibliander (1509-1564). It constitutes the first

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11. Translations of titles of French books in the chapter: *Le livre de la taille de Paris* [The book of size of Paris]. *L'Alcoran de Mahomet* [The Quran of Muhammad]. *Le Coran/ traduit de l'arabe, accompagné de notes et précédé d'un abrégé de la vie de Mahomet, tiré des écrivains orientaux les plus estimés* [The Quran/ translated from Arabic with notes and preceded by an abstract of the life of Mahomet, taken from the most esteemed Eastern writers]. *Chanson de Roland* [The Song of Roland]. *Roman de Mahomet* [Novel about Muhammad]. *Notice biographique sur Mahomet* [Biographical notice about Muhammad]. *Le Fanatisme* [The Fanaticism]. *Histoire de la Turquie* [History of Turkey]. *La légende des siècles* [The legend of centuries].

12. There are more than 170 French translations of the Quran, but the prophet's name is not mentioned in all the titles.  
13. Chabbi refers to the book of Raymond Lulle, *Opera omnia*, Mayer, 1722, published under the title *Le livre des gentils et des trois sages*, éditions de l'Éclat, 1992, p. 74-82.

volume of his famous aforementioned translation *Machumetis Saracenorum principis, ejusque successorum vitae et doctrine ipseque Alcoran*, a work of controversial connotation that has found great success and serves as the first French version published in 1647 under the title *L'Alcoran de Mahomet*.

Three short forms are used in the *Chanson de Roland* (Mortier 1940) in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. In this text, the name lacks a fixed and stable orthographic form, such as in Lull's texts. Its variants vary among *Mahun* (Chapters XXXII, XLVII, LXVIII, LXXIV, CXCIV and CCLIII), *Mahum* (Chapters CXLII, CCXXXV and CCLXIV) and *Mahume* (Chapters I, LXIX, CXXIII, CLXXXVII, CXCIV, CCXXXII and CCLVII); the last one is the most similar to the current name in French *Mahomet*. In this ancient text, the Prophet is identified as one of the principal deities of the Saracens, worshiped within a pantheon alongside with Apollo and Termagant in a holy trinity. Bernard Lewis suggests that Muhammad started as: "a kind of demon or false god worshipped with Apollyon and Termagant in an unholy trinity, the medieval Mahound developed (...), after the reformation into a cunning and self-seeking impostor" (Lewis 2002, 45). *Mahound* is expected to be a blend of *Mahomet* in Old English associated with *hound* (*Dictionary.com*), an equivalent to dog in Old English, but also it is similar in pronunciation to the variants in *Chanson de Roland*. *Mahound* is frequent in the medieval *Mystery Plays* known between the tenth and the sixteenth centuries. These plays were a liturgical Christian drama in the context of theatre and developed from plays presented in Latin by churchmen on church premises and depicted such subjects as the Creation, Adam and Eve, the murder of Abel, and the Last Judgment (*Encyclopedia Britannica*). With the travelling companies of actors and theatrical productions organized by local communities they became popular, especially in the later Middle Ages, and vernacular subjects were included. Written in old Spanish language and found in the library of the Toledo Cathedral, the codex "The Magian Kings" was the oldest text of this dramatic genre dated to the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Anyway, in the available references, the variant *Mahound* did not appear among the variations of the Prophet's name in Spain or in this codex. The form related to Muhammad has been noticed more in Middle English (1350-1400). The orthographic forms *Mahound* or *Mahoun* were used as derogatory names of Muhammad giving the sense of an evil spirit or devil (*Websters Online Dictionary*). It was especially used to refer to Muhammad, usually called *Mahomet* (inspired in the Scottish Mahound for devil), to be a kind of a supreme god worshiped by Muslims (Schimmel 1992, 2) and a deity of the pagan people generic of the other "infidels." In the York *Mystery plays*, for instance, when the Pharaoh was about to die, he called his army to send its prayers to the deity *Mahowe* (cf. Stubbe 1911).

Lepage (1977) shows that Alexandre du Pont (1258) in the *Roman de Mahomet*, adapted the above-mentioned poem *Otia de Machomete* (1155), to represent the first French work of literature related to this topic. The content and treatment of Muhammad's life, Lepage adds, are essentially the same in both documents, where he was also portrayed as schismatic from Christianity, brutal and dangerous, often as an evil wizard. This could explain why Salman Rushdie, in *The Satanic Verses* (1988), chose the name *Mahound* to refer to Muhammad appearing in the dreams of a character, although he was not identified as Satan in this work, the title of which is not far from this word.

Another French influence in English is the most famous English translation of the Quran, where the Prophet's name appears, the *Alcoran of Mahomet* by Alexander Ross in 1649<sup>14</sup>. Edward Gibbon (1840, 444) thanked *Mahomet* or *Mohammed* for exciting the savage Arabs or Saracens, although Arabs themselves are stereotyped aggressively. English writers kept using *Mahomet*, alongside other spellings, but giving less aggressive images until the nineteenth century. Some writers hold positive attitudes towards the Prophet. The Scottish writer Thomas Carlyle in *Heroes and Hero Worship and the Heroic in History* (1840), *Mahomet* is defined as "A silent great soul; I was one of those who cannot but be in earnest" (Carlyle 1869, 65).

Albert Kazimirski, a French orientalist, who gave an Arabic-French dictionary, shows in the introduction of his translation of the *Quran*, also entitled *Notice biographique sur Mahomet*, a tendency to distinguish *Mahomet*, the Prophet, with *Mohammed*, name of alive Arabs:

Le nom Mahomet s'éloigne un peu de la véritable orthographe arabe. C'est Mohammed (le glorifié) qu'on devrait dire; les Turcs prononcent Méhémet, quand il est question d'un personnage vivant du nom de Mohammed, c'est au contraire l'usage en français de se servir de la forme Mohammed, lorsque on parle des Arabes vivants qui portent ce même nom.

(Kazimirski 1859, IV, note 1)

[Translation: The name Mahomet is a little removed from the true Arabic spelling. This is Muhammed (the glorified) we should say; the Turks use the spelling Mehemet, when talking about a living character named Mohammed, unlike French in which the orthographic form Mohammed is used when we speak of living Arabs who have the same name].

Kazimirski is not entirely right. Another modification occurred with Mehemet mentioned in the text. In an email on September 15th 2014 from Kirikkale University in Turkey, Abdussamed Yeşildağ, a professor of Arabic, and Muhittin Eliaçık, a professor of Ottoman, clarified that it should be Mehmet, since the Ottomans (1299-1922) used three forms: مُحَمَّد (Muhammed), مَحْمَد (Mehemmed) and مَحْمَد (Mehmed).<sup>15</sup> Anyway, we suppose that in French the original last sound (d) was converted into (t), in addition to the vowels, under the impact of the first Greek-Latin forms because French has no problem with this sound. It is worth saying that in modern Turkish they use Muhammed, Muhammet, Mehmed, Mehmet, Memed and Memet which make us think that some of them might be influenced by the Latin forms. In the Syriac texts (cf. Hoyland 1997), which cover the early Arab conquests, Fragment on the Arab Conquests (around 636), and A Chronicler of Khuzistan (wr. ca. 660s) the Prophet's name is M□md. In the Syriac Chronicles of Thomas the Presbyter (wr. ca. 640), and in AD ANNUM 705, a report about the kingdom and kings of Arabs, he is called M□m□. Sometimes the two forms are used in the same text. The two forms are written without vowels, and since Syriac, a spoken language in Syria, is

14. Other variants of other scholars are found, *De Arabische Alkoran: door de Zarazijnsche en de Turcksche prophete Mahometh...* (in flamenco 1641), *Mahomets Alkoran* (in flamenco through French 1658).

15. The (e) in Turkish represents two sounds (a) like in Muhammad or like é in French. Mehmet is used when the Ottomans were avoiding to add (peace be upon him صلى الله عليه وسلم) after the name.

a Semitic language like Arabic, the expected pronunciation of them are similar to Arabic after using the gemination and short vowels. This may give us the first prototype of the Turkish variants. Talking about John of Damascus, Hoyland mentions the form Mamed as the transcription of the name of the Prophet. We corrected the pronunciation of the Greek name in the beginning of this article. It seems that Hoyland transcribes the forms without vowels, and these forms have been used in later studies<sup>16</sup>. Hoyland did not notice that only short consonants and long vowels are represented by letters in the archaic forms of Semitic languages while short vowels, consonant length and gemination were used orally but not known in writing at that time.

After the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century, *Mahomet* was no longer viewed by Christians as a god or idol, but as an impostor, an ambitious and a cunning, selfish man (Lo Jacono 2003, note 3). Voltaire contributed with his tragedy *Mahomet* or *Le Fanatisme* where he defined him as "impostor," "false prophet," "fanatical" and "hypocrite." (Voltaire 1875, 135). The Marquis de Sade violently criticizes the famous religious leaders, including, of course, *Mahomet* saying: "*Ton Jésus ne vaut pas mieux que Mahomet, Mahomet pas mieux que Moïse, et tous trois pas mieux que Confucius (...)*". (Marquis de Sade, 1782?, verse 1752) [Translation: Your Jesus is no better than Mahomet, Mahomet is no better than Moses, and all three are no better than Confucius].

At the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, orientalism was progressively transferred from religious to royal patronage and some positive representations of the Prophet were found. Buhl and Welch (1993: 360–376) confirm in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* that Guillaume Postel (1510-1581), the first orientalist of this stage, was among the first to present a more positive stereotype of the Prophet of Islam, although Postel himself described Muhammad as "the second Antichrist" (Cited by Minois 2012, 61). Boulainvilliers, in his book *La vie de Mahomed* described *Mahomet* or *Mahomed* as a gifted political leader and legislator (*cf.* Boulainvilliers 1731).

French Orientalists have adopted the orthographic form *Mahomet* until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Alphonse de Lamartine, in *Histoire de la Turquie*, shows a variety of spellings for the name. Referring to Ottomans, he usually used *Mahommed*, *Mahomed* and *Mahomet*. When he refers to the Prophet, he suggests that the Prophet is: "*Philosophe, orateur, apôtre, législateur, guerrier, conquérant d'idées, restaurateur de dogmes, fondateur de vingt empires terrestres et d'un empire spirituel, voilà Mahomet*" (Lamartine 1862, 224) [Translation: Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of dogmas, the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire, that is Mahomet].

Similarly, Victor Hugo, in a poem of *La Légende des siècles* (1858), provides a romantic death of *Mahomet*. Ernest Renan provides Voltaire's account of the Prophet, who suggests that: "*Mahomet nous apparaît comme un home doux, sensible, fidèle, exempt de haine. Ses affections étaient sincères; son caractère, en général, porté à la bienveillance*" (Renan 1838, 248-249). [Translation: Mahomet appears as gentle, sensitive, loyal, free from hatred. His affections were sincere; his character, in general, brought to benevolence]. Among French translators, Hermann Zotenberg (1834-1909), orientalist and translator of

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16. The book of Hoyland was published in 1997 and Powers cited it in 2009.

Tabari, used Mohammed. As such, many Islamic erudites no longer use the form *Mahomet* in their French works, while others insist on the classical form.

Since the 17<sup>th</sup> century, *Mahomet* has been the best known French orthographic form in encyclopedias and dictionaries. The question of the correct Arabic form has not been submitted to the French Academy. However, the *Encyclopædia Universalis* uses the spelling Muhammad in its record of the Prophet of Islam. In the registration of the dictionary *Larousse*, the variant *Mahomet* or *Muhammad* (directed from *Mohammed*) is used.

### **Conclusion**

Since its appearance in the seventh century, many variants and forms of the Prophet of Islam's name have been formulated to stereotype the opinion and feelings of the West toward the leader of the new religion. Many references mentioned many forms and related them to the exaggerated and sometimes wrong researched stereotypes. The present article has attempted to filtrate many prototypes of known forms and draw a connection between these classical orthographic forms of the Prophet Muhammad's name and the real stereotypes associated with them in Spanish and French. In addition, the study shows that the first variants and stereotypes are born in the East but adopted by or developed in some Western cultures. At the same time, it has discussed the process of stereotyping which dates back to the earliest sources written in Latin or translated from Arabic or Greek into Latin under the rule of the Byzantines; which aim to refute Islam. These sources played a principal role in introducing Muhammad and his doctrine to the Latin West as the false prophet, Saracen prince or deity, the Biblical beast, a schismatic from Christianity and a satanic creature, the writer of the Quran, and the Antichrist. These prototypes were developed and modified in Spanish and French in religious atmospheres hostile to Islam while keeping sometimes the same stereotypes, other times improving them till the end of the non-academic orientalism in the nineteenth century.

## صور أدبية غربية ارتبطت حتى القرن التاسع عشر بأقدم ألفاظ اشتقت من اسم نبي الإسلام "محمد"

### أحلام صبيحات

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### المُلخَص

مُنذُ بعِثَةِ نَبِيِّ الإِسْلامِ مُحَمَّدٍ في القَرْنِ السَّابعِ المِيلادِيِّ نَقَلَ رِجالُ الكَنائِسِ الشَّرقيَّةِ لِلغَرَبِ عَبرَ مُدَوِّياتِهِمُ البِيونانِيَّةِ والأَرامِيَّةِ والسَّرِيانِيَّةِ واللّاتِينِيَّةِ صُوراً نَمَطِيَّةً رافِضَةً للإِسْلامِ ولِنَبِيِّهِ الَّذِي اعْتَقَدُوهُ المَسِيحَ الدَّجالَ، وأَعْتَقَدَهُ بَعْضُهُم تَجَسُّداً لِلشَّيطانِ أو لِلوَحْشِ الَّذِي ذَكَرَهُ دائِيالِ في نَبوءَةِ الأَيَّامِ الأَخيرةِ، ونَسَبُوا إلى النَبِيِّ ابْتِداعَ كِتابٍ مُقدَّسٍ أسَمَهُ الفُرَّانَ، ومُنْهُمُ مِنْ أَهْمَةِ باسْتِحْداثِ هَرطِقةٍ انْشَقَّتْ عَنِ المَسِيحِيَّةِ. ويُلاحَظُ غِيابَ اسْمِ النَبِيِّ عَن أَقْدَمِ النُّصوصِ المَسِيحِيَّةِ الَّتِي تُطَرِّقُ لِلدِّينِ الجَدِيدِ إلى أنْ أوردَهُ الفَدَيْسِ يُوَحِّنا الدِمَشقيَّ في أَعمالِهِ. ويُثبِتُ المُوَرِّخونَ أَنَّ كِتاباتِ يُوَحِّنا الدِمَشقيَّ لَعِبَتْ دَوْرًا أساسِيًّا في تُوْجِيهِ أَفكارِ الكَنِيسَةِ الكاثولِكيَّةِ الغَرِبيَّةِ ومَشاعِرِها تِجاهَ الإِسْلامِ في زَمَنِ كائِنَتْ تُهَيِّمُ فِيهِ هَذِهِ الكَنِيسَةُ عَلى السُّلطاتِ السِّياسِيَّةِ والحِياةِ الاجْتِماعِيَّةِ. ومُنْذُ ذَلِكَ الوَقْتِ تُناقَلتُ لُغاتُ أوروپِيَّةٍ عَدِيدَةٌ اسْمَ "مُحَمَّدٌ" بِالْأَفاظِ مُتبايِنَةٍ تَنقَّرابَ مِنْ الاسْمِ المُتَوَقَّعِ لِقَظِهِ في هَذِهِ اللُّغاتِ أو تَتباعدُ عَنَّهُ، إذا نُفِهُمُ هَذِهِ الدَّراسَةُ عَلى تَتبُعِ أَكْبَرِ عَدَدٍ مِنَ الأشْكالِ اللَّفْظِيَّةِ لِاسْمِ النَبِيِّ "مُحَمَّدٌ" مُنْذُ أوائلِ ظُهُورِهِ في اللُّغَتَيْنِ البِيونانِيَّةِ القَدِيمَةِ واللّاتِينِيَّةِ الرُّومانِيَّةِ ووصولاً إلى اللُّغَتَيْنِ الإِسْبانِيَّةِ والفَرَنْسيَّةِ، ولِدَعْمِ وُجْهاتِ النِّظَرِ المُدروِسةِ اسْتِنْدَ البَحْثِ إلى لُغاتٍ أُخْرى مِثْلَ الكائِلانِيَّةِ والإِنْجِلِيزِيَّةِ القَدِيمَةِ والإِنْجِلِيزِيَّةِ الحَدِيثَةِ واللُّغَةِ العُثمانيَّةِ، وَعَرَضَ إلى جَانِبِ كُلِّ شِكلٍ لَفْظِي الصُّورِ النَّمَطِيَّةِ الَّتِي ارْتَبَطَتْ بِهَ لِیَصِلَ إلى تَثْبِيتِ أو تَفْنيِدِ أو إِضاْفَةِ أشْكالٍ لَفْظِيَّةٍ وصُورِ نَمَطِيَّةٍ قُدِّمَتْ في أبحاثٍ ومَقالاتٍ عَدِيدَةٍ وتَتبَعَتِ الاسْمَ في تَارِيخِ الاسْتِشْراقِ الدِّينِيِّ حَتى انْتَهى مَعَ بَدایَةِ عَصْرِ الاسْتِشْراقِ الأكادِيميِّ في القَرْنِ التَّاسِعِ عَشرَ.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** محمد، نبي الإسلام، أشكال لفظية، صور نمطية، إسلام، مسيحية، استشرق، الغرب.

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### Interviews and Emails

- Ibrahim Dabbur, Priest in the Greek Orthodox Church in Jordan, interview with author, September 14, 2014.
- Abdussamed Yeşildağ and Muhittin Eliaçık from Kirikkale University, email message to author, September 15, 2014.
- Antonio Vázquez, professor of Physics, email message to author, October 7, 2014.