

How tradition and innovation echo in Jorge de Henin's *Memorial*

Ana Paula Menino AVELAR

CHAM, FCSH, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal

E-mail: ana.avelar@fcsh.unl.pt

ORCID: 0000-0003-0482-3832

Abstract

This chapter aims to demonstrate how in the *Description of the Kingdoms of Morocco (1603-1613): Memorial of Jorge de Henin*, the author innovates using tradition history and memory concepts. While portraying the Europe of the late 16th century and early 17th century, we outline a brief biography of Jorge de Henin, of his sojourn in Ottoman and Moroccan lands, and his career under the Spanish crown. Through paradigmatic examples, we unfold tradition and innovation in the writing and drawing of the history of Morocco's kingdoms between 1603-1613, given its reformist ideal. In his memorial, the author advocated using force by the Spanish empire in Moroccan space, arguing that it would reinforce an ideal of an empire whose unity would be achieved by a new universalism, grounded in a single Christian and European civilization.

Keywords: War Writing; 16th and 17th centuries historiographies; Renaissance Studies; cultural studies; Memory

To answer the question of how tradition and innovation echo in Jorge de Henin's work, namely in the *Memorial*¹ where he describes the history of the Morocco Kingdoms between 1603-1613, we must bear in mind that in the late 16th century and early 17th-century war writing was conceived within the context of an imperial imaginary.

The validation tool for the innovation that the narrator intends to engraft in his discourse is achieved by describing his presence in other places, portraying different traditions, and comparing them with the ones the reader is acquainted with. As Carl Thompson points out:

Consciousness, after all, is not bound by space and time in the same way as the body, and the traveller's physical presence at a site will often be a spur for memories, reflections and imaginings that lead far away from their immediate surroundings. (Thompson, 2011:112).

This consciousness intervenes in history writing, thus composing the space and the record of memory even when those texts were written in the 16th and 17th centuries. History perceives itself in these discourses as a reservoir of the collective memory, thus contraposing to oblivion/silence the reference/memory.

The memory which selects and preserves the facts is a means of overcoming death, time, and forgetfulness. However, as noted by

Jacques Le Goff, in the Renaissance, the *Artes Memoriae* are recovered, renewing a style used in the ancient literature (Le Goff, 1992: 84), and assuming tradition as:

anything which is transmitted or handed down from the past to the present.[...] The decisive criterion is that, having been created through human actions, through thought and imagination, it is handed down from one generation to the next.

Being handed down does not logically entail any normative, mandatory proposition. The presence of something from the past does not entail any explicit expectation that it should be accepted, appreciated, reenacted, or otherwise assimilated. (Shils, 1981:12-13)

Jorge de Henin accepted and assumed narrative traditions to offer the reader the recent Morocco History between 1603 and 1613, and followed the coeval principle of an alliance between writing and drawing in the representation of space (Avelar, 2011). Inherited culture does not act as an inhibitor of innovation, although it can contribute as its driving force. Innovation can aim at social change or individual recognition and prestige. (Godin, 2008: 7). Within this context, we must understand Henin's Memorial and his description of the recent past conceived as a means to improve the present.

When Henin reports the history of Morocco's Kingdoms between 1603-16013, he resorts to drawings that somehow complement the textual description. Yet he does not explain how they work.

¹ *Description of the kingdoms of Morocco (1603-1613): Memorial of Jorge de Henin*, first published in the 20th

century by Torcuato Pérez de Cuzmán (1997).

Overall this manuscript includes four drawings (Henin,1614).

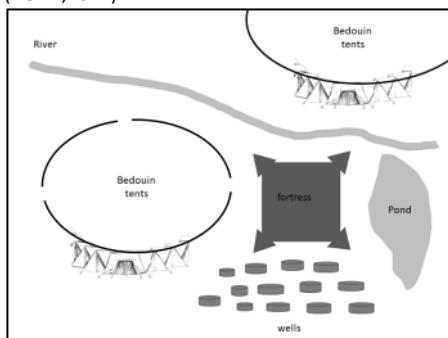


Fig.1. Sketch from the 1st drawing (Henin, 1614)²

The first one, inserted at the beginning, outlines the oval layout of the Bedouin tents outside the fort, charting the water reserves, e.g., the pond and the wells. The visual representation is confined to the structure of the space, without depicting any men or women, unlike the other drawings.

The last three depict the different movements of the battle between Muley Bufers and his nephew Abdalá and come up at the end of the narrative. Some pages before, the author had described the movement of troops in combat and the successes and failures thus achieved. There we may understand how the armies were made up, how the artillery was positioned according to the terrain's characteristics, with the help of subtitles where he explained the scenes and identified both the belligerents and their allies, as Muley Adbalá's English corsairs.

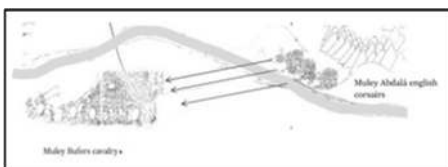


Fig. 2. A sketch of a combat detail scene using Henin's drawing, 1614

The layouts of the combats are depicted using different frames, unveiling the movement of the troops.

The analysis of this *Memorial* allows us to understand how it flows from a tradition of recording military deeds. Its innovation lies in the fact that the writing of History and a personal memory go hand in hand. In this text, we can understand the author's intentions, the networks of contacts, and the cultural atmospheres, that unveil the reading of an era – 16th and 17th centuries – and record a set of historical events

within a specific arch of time.

We observe a change in the discursive models that support the textual description of the encounters with other cultural horizons, namely the emergence of different kinds of textual records that linked the writing of History with imperial status. Historical accounts are one of the genres that the authors have used to get social recognition and, in the specific case of Henin's *Memorial*, to seek the protection of King Philip III of Spain. Thus, when he addresses his work to the monarch, he claims that it aims to provide useful information that may strengthen Spanish presence in Morocco. One must bear in mind that Spain was, in J.H. Elliott's formulation, "a composite monarchy" (Elliott, 1992: 48-71), and :

Being the centre of a composite monarchy spread out across Europe, the enormous power of the King of Spain and his needs generated a strong gravitational pull upon 'mechanics', inventors, and intellectuals from across the world. (Yun-Casalilla, 2019: 102)

The overseas expansion was Spain's reply to the Ottoman Geo-strategy for the Mediterranean, as well as to the indiscipline that ran through its empire. The Mediterranean was a space that allowed imperial expansion, either from the Ottoman Empire, when it advanced across the western Mediterranean or the Iberian dual monarchy, when it sought to ensure its control in Northern Africa.

As Jane Burbank and Frederic Cooper synthesized:

Constrained by the volatility of sovereignty in Europe, they [Charles V, Philip II, Philip III and Philip IV] tie European Spain and its American offshoots together through deference to a share monarch, religious affinity, the state's coercive and administrative capabilities, and protection against others empires. Spanish became the hegemonic language [...]; Catholicism was enforced as a shared religion. An uneasy interaction between one church and one dynasty, as well as between monarchy and landed magnates, signalled a new universalism, based on a single, Christian, European civilization extended to new continents [...]. For the Ottomans, the fundamental principle of universal empire was pragmatic inclusivity under sultanic rule, the protection of subject's already existing religious and customary practices, a subtle melding of Islamic and imperial law, and bureaucracy detached—ideally—from any permanent family power. (2010: 145)

Within the framework of these two macro empires - the Ottoman and the Habsburg - that Jorge de Henin's *Memorial* must be conceived. Through his biographical data, we may perceive these distinct practices of imperial governance and how his life exemplifies a whole pattern of historical time.

In 1597 Henin left Flanders and wandered all over Europe. For four years, he remained in Turkey,

² Made by Laura Calzada using Henin's drawing.

under imperial protection, and served as *alfaunque*³, i.e., he rescued Christian captives during the sultanate of Mehmed III (1595-1603). His sojourn in the Ottoman empire reveals “the pragmatic inclusivity under sultan rule” (Ibidem).

In 1605, under Abu Fâris’ reign, he reached Marrakech, where he rescued captive Christians by his own initiative. Still, as *alfaunque*, he served the new monarch, Muley Zaidân, during the following year (Cuzmán, 1997: 17). It should be noted that the moriscos who had taken refuge in Morocco after their expulsion from Grenada (1571) were putting pressure on the rulers to start warfare against Spain since Morocco had formed alliances with some enemies of the Spanish crown, such as the Republic of the Netherlands. Henin testified to Muley Zaydân’s efforts (1608-1609) to conquer Tetouan and control other strategic places in northern Morocco. (García-Arenal, M., Wiegers, G., 2014: 309-313).

After the defeat of Muley Zaydân by Abu Mahali, he was forced to leave Morocco and fled to Spain, where he arrived in November 1612 without any assets. Before leaving, Henin had spent all the money he had rescuing five Christian captives. Once in Malaga, Henin delivered these Christians to the local authorities before moving to the Spanish court, where he sought the patronage of Philip III.

His former network of contacts, his experience with the Ottoman sultans, and, above all, his knowledge of Moroccan politics were his privileged attributes. The knowledge of Italian, French, English, Flemish, Arab, and Castilian helped him in all the tasks he performed during his life, as he stated in the texts he wrote in Spain⁴.

At Philip III’s court, Henin caught the attention of one of the Emperor protégés, the Duke of Lerma, who invited him to write about his Moroccan experience. As Henry Kamen rightly notes, Philip III explicitly applied diplomatic strategies that have been used in the contemporary world for the so-called “peaceful coexistence,” in other words, coexistence without undermining ideological principles (Kamen, 2003: 310). Philip III’s foreign policy was designed to put an end to the ongoing conflicts. In 1609, the emperor sealed a cease-fire with England, and in 1611 he signed an alliance with France (Bogdan, 2005: 198).

Henin’s Moroccan expertise would help to reinforce the Spanish presence. His reports actually influenced the strategy developed by the king’s council in order to strengthen Mamora. However,

the king’s council was not inclined to pursue other military actions, and, in 1613-14, Jorge de Henin wrote his *Memorial*, seeking to overcome this resistance. In this direct appeal to the emperor, he argued that the Moroccan Kingdoms should be conquered. The Duke of Lerma also advised him to explain what actions should be taken after the victory to keep the Spanish control. This Philip III’s protégé hoped that an account of the recent wars in Morocco (1603-1613) would lead to actions that might solve the tensions in that region.

Despite several attempts to put forward his ideas, Henin failed to reach the emperor, his proposals remaining entangled in bureaucracy. Eventually, in 1616 he left these intentions behind. Nonetheless, he wrote to the great and powerful in Spain on European affairs, including those of the Mediterranean. Using his networks, Jorge de Henin provided privileged information to Philip III until he died in 1621.

In his different texts, we come across diversified information, such as what was happening on the Danube, the English activity in America, the Dutch presence in the Philippines, and Austrian, Danish, and Polish influences on other diplomatic settings (Fernández, 2019: 81). On internal affairs, Henin focus on the economic problems affecting the Spanish monarchy. In his *Discourse*,⁵ he outlines the requirements that should be met in order to solve the situation and supports the establishment of two trade companies, one for the Baltic, based in Seville, and the other for the Atlantic, based in Lisbon (Henin, 1620: fl. 127v-128). In this extensive manuscript, he unfolds reformist ideas, always with tradition in mind, although aiming for innovative solutions. This is the case when he scrutinizes the king’s council and declares that he does not want to change anything, but only to suggest the creation of a *junta*, which should function as the first stage of government (*Ibidem*: 57v).

His knowledge and skills will be advantageous with Philip IV (1621) on the Spanish imperial throne. The emperor’s new strong man, the Count-Duke of Olivares, will protect him, and between 1621 and 1622, he will be assigned to London in charge of diplomatic affairs. In the following years, he traveled to Poland and Germany, closing this circle in 1627 (Conde Pazos, 2016: 258).

However, it should be stressed that it had been in 1614 that Henin had outlined the Habsburg imperial idea in his *Memorial* to the Moroccan Wars (1603-1613). The author’s bilingualism allowed him

³ In arab: Alf-fakkâk

⁴ Namely in the manuscript, published by Torcuato Pérez de Cúzman entitled, Descripción de los reinos de Marruecos (1603-1613): Memorial de Jorge de Henin, which is the main focus of this study.

⁵ Discurso de D. Jorge Henin sobre requisitos que debe tener la economía española para que sea perfecta : año 1620

to choose Spanish as a metaphor for imperial unity and authority. In his vision, the war against the infidels was a symbol of a Catholic King who thus served God and Christianity. Despite the substantial expenses involved, it would ensure peace in Philip III's Christian empire. The memory of these Moroccan wars would be thus instrumental in shaping the rule of the Habsburgs in African lands.

A new universalism is inherent to Henin's text, the universalism of a Habsburg empire, anchored in a medieval idea aimed at a new and single Christian and European civilization. The Other is the Muslim that he portrays with a stereotype, the infidel, that must be subdued in order to achieve this idea of empire. The act of writing History serves the empire, and warfare is one of its main instruments.

In the *Memorial*, Henin uses the chronography in order to emphasize the relationship between one fact and another, and between a different set of events and circumstances:

The noted episodes are defined by their relations to other episodes: a succession of unique, good or bad, joyful or sorrowful events. This time is neither cyclic nor linear, but amorphous. It is what relates the presented chronicle to the narrator's position, before narrative detaches the told tale from its author. (Ricoeur, 2004, p. 156)

Although the manuscript was not formally organized in sections, the author explained the structure he had conceived in the *Discourse* mentioned above (Henin, 1620, p. 16). The information therein allows us to perceive that the *Memorial* was written in four parts.

In the first one, he briefly describes the geographical, economic, and social conditions of the kingdoms of Morocco, stressing the fact that, in his view, they do not fully benefit from their wealth (Cuzmán, 1997: 39-44).

The second section reports on the civil wars between 1603 and 1613, which are set out in a concise historiographical discourse (Ibidem: 45-152). The battle sketches explicitly indicate the fights' actions. Furthermore, if the narrative adopts the conventional storytelling battle style (following a descriptive tradition and describing the subsequent stages of the military action), the innovation lies in how the drawing clarifies and completes the writing. This is the case when, on

depicting the Muley Abdalá victory, Henin sketches English corsairs:

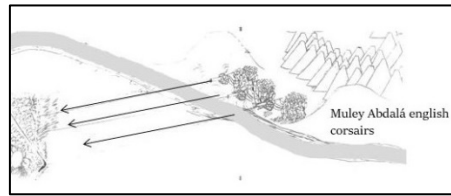


Fig. 3. Detail using Henin's drawing, 1614.

In the manuscript, he writes:

All the defeated people had already fled, and the Christians with the artillery were still shooting, but to no advantage, because the gunpowder did not have the strength to reach and the many pieces, as they were [made] mostly of iron and overloaded to reach, burst; and they were no use. (Ibidem: 77)⁶

The third section is devoted to the government and income of the Moroccan kingdoms: Marrakesh, Fez, and Sus (Ibidem: 153-160). The author argues that these kingdoms had been devastated by internal wars, which only led to death and destruction, and that injustice had prevailed:

May Your Majesty be served to consider whether there can be a more desolate Kingdom, with so many changes of Kings, so many battles, all the deadheads and all the people in the militia, and so many years of plague and hunger; and of the wrath of its Kings, who maliciously and in cold blood marred all the most pomegranate people of the Kingdom. They have no form of justice left. (Ibidem: 153)⁷

The fourth and last section is the corollary of a narrative (Ibidem:161-196), based on events that had been plainly described. There Henin stated the main reasons for the Morocco conquest, firmly supporting this view:

Many reasons move me to persevere and do all the reasonable diligence to persuade Your Majesty to try to conquer the Kingdoms of Morocco. The first and foremost is the obligation that Your Majesty has in the service of God, by being His minister to amplify our holy Catholic faith the hour that, by chance, Our Lord {263/264} incites Your Majesty to the said effect, being said Kingdoms of infidels, which, in past times, had the Kingdoms of Spain in hard servitude; which will not cease to cause, in great Spanish bosoms, some desire of just revenge. (Ibidem:161)⁸

⁶ Toda la gente vencida ya se había huido y los cristianos con la artillería todavía tiraban, pero sin provecho porque la pólvora no tenía fuerza de alcanzar y las muchas piezas, como estaban[hechas]la mayor parte de hierro y cargadas en demasía para que alcanzasen, reventaban; y no fueron de provecho.

⁷ Vuestra Magestad sea servido [en] considerar si puede haber Reino más assolado, con tantas mudanzas de Reyes, tantas batallas, todas las cabeceras muertas y toda la gente militia, y tan largos años de peste y hambre; y de ira de sus

Reyes, que maliciosamente y a sangre fría mararon [a] toda la gente más granada del Reyno. No les queda forma de justicia.

⁸ Muchas razones me mueven a perseverar y hacer todas las diligencias posibles para persuadir a Vuesta Magestad a que intentela conquista de los Reinos de Marruecos.

La primera y principal es la obligación que Vuestra Magestad tiene al servicio de Dios, por ser ministro suyo para amplificar nuestra santa fe católica la hora que, mediante la ocasión, Nuestro Señor {263/264} concita a Vuestra Magestad para el dicho efecto, siendo dichos Reinos de

In his view, Moroccan richness would bring more income to Spain than the Indies since the physical presence of the Spanish empire in these areas should be strengthened. Thus he actually outlines the geopolitical framework of Morocco in the context of European policy.

Henin's words echo the notion of Spain as an imperial land whose epicenter was the European continent, sustained by Moroccan space. Besides, he believed that Morocco's conquest would not be so costly since the gains would outweigh all prior expenses.

For this author, the key to Philip III's success lay on the ability to identify the factors that had led to the failure of previous attempts to conquer Morocco. The *Memorial* eventually provides such explanations:

Your Majesty has in Flanders, in Italy and many other parts of the world, a significant number of war people that cost Your Majesty many millions. With less than the decimal part of all these people, you can try to {264/265} such a just enterprise and be the lord of a great Kingdom that will give Your Majesty several million of income, as it will be told in due time, and will put the Muslims a no[n] plus ultra. (Ibidem:162)⁹

At Henin's *Memorial* flows the notion that one of the contributions of Humanism was the ability to portray war as a secular phenomenon made by human hand (Hale, 1998: 38-39). This text embodies the paradigm of an era that seeks the idea of an empire and a new universalism, based on a single Christian and European civilization. The *Memorial* of war, of space, the African/Moroccan one, suits an idea of empire. After all, tradition and innovation are intertwined in Jorge de Henin's imperial discourse.

Acknowledgment:

This study is part of FCT financed project, "Re Militari: From Military literature to the battlefield imagery in the Portuguese Space 1521-1621 (PTDC/ART-HIS/32459/2017)" and this chapter had the financial support of CHAM (NOVA FCSH / UAc) through the strategic project sponsored by FCT (UIDB/04666/2020)

References

infielos, los cuales, en tiempos pasados, tuvieron a los Reinos de España en dura servidumbre; lo cual no dejará de causar, en nobles pechos de españoles, algún deseo de justa venganza.

⁹ Vuesta Majestad tiene en Flandres, en Italia y en otras muchas partes del mundo gran cantidad de gente de Guerra que cuesta a Vuesta Majestad muchos millones.

- Avelar, Ana Paula (2011). A construção de uma imagem de Oriente na escrita e no desenho do Portugal de Quinhentos: Gaspar Correia e Jerónimo Corte-Real, In *Renascimentos na Europa do século XVI [Recurso electrónico]: formas, ritmos e convergência: actas do colóquio*. Lisboa: Fundação Gulbenkian (cd-rom).
- Burbank, J. Cooper, F. (2010). *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Conde Pazos, M. (2016). *La Monarquía Católica y Los confines orientales de la Cristiandad. Relaciones entre La Casa de Austria y Los Vasa de Polonia*. Madrid: Universidad Autónoma. Retrieved from file:///C:/Users/Utilizador/tudo%20disco%20fora%20e%20outro%20computador/Desktop/conde_pazos_miguel.pdf
- Cuzmán, T. P. (1997). *Descripción de los reinos de Marruecos (1603-1613): Memorial de Jorge de Henin*. Rabat, Reino de Marruecos: Universidad Mohamed V-Instituto de Estudios Africanos.
- Elliott, J. (1992). *A Europe of Composite Monarchies*. Past & Present, (137), 48-71. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/650851>
- García-Arenal, M., Wiegers, G.(ed) (2014). *The Expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain- A Mediterranean Diaspora*. Leiden-Boston: Brill.
- Godin, B. (2008) *Innovation: The History of a Category* Retrieved from <http://www.csiic.ca/PDF/IntellectualNo1.pdf>
- Hale, J. R. (1998). *War and Society in Renaissance Europe 1450-1620*. London-Buffalo: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Henin, J. (1614). *Del sitio, de la disposición y humor de los marruecos y de sus modos de pelear.*[mss.] Biblioteca Digital Hispanica. Retrieved from <http://bdh-rd.bne.es/viewer.vm?id=0000243022&page=1>.
- Henin, J. (1620). *Discurso que trata de los requisitos Y órdenes que debe haber en la economía conventual de la Monarquía española, para que sea perfecta*. [mss.] Biblioteca Digital Hispanica Retrieved from <http://bdh-rd.bne.es/viewer.vm?id=0000236955&page=1>
- Yun-Casalilla, B. (2019). *Iberian World Empires and the Globalization of Europe 1415–1668*. Palgrave.<https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-981-13-0833-8>
- Kamen, H. (2003). *Empire: how Spain became a world power, 1492-1763*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.
- Le Goff, J. (1992). *History and Memory*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Ricoeur, P. (2004). *Memory, history, forgetting*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ruiz Fernández, O.A. (2019). *England and Spain in the Early*

Con menos de la decimal parte de toda esa gente, puede intentar {264/265} tan justa empresa y ser señor de un gran Reino que dará a Vuestra Majestad muchos millones de rentas, como a su tiempo se dirá, Y pondrá a los mahometanos un no[n] plus ultra.

Modern Era: royal love, diplomacy, trade and naval relations, 1604-25. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Shils, E. (1981). *Tradition.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Thompson, Carl (2011). *Travel Writing.* London: Routledge.