

“In hethenesse”: Chaucer’s Knight and Sultan Muḥammad V of Granada

In *The General Prologue to The Canterbury Tales* Chaucer says that the Knight, lifelong crusader in the Levant and eastern Baltic, has also fought in Granada at the siege of “Algezir” (I. 57). This siege is usually identified with the 1342-44 climax of a war between Christians and Moors in which King Alfonso XI took the port of Algeciras from Granada. And yet there was another siege of Algeciras, in the last days of July 1369, directed by Sultan Muḥammad V. In the following I shall argue that the Knight fights for him, a Muslim, against fellow Christians. How does it come to this?

The Siege of Algeciras in *The General Prologue*

In line with some pilgrim portraits after this one, his first, Chaucer’s Narrator presents the Knight as if he knows him. Three major theatres come in relatively quick succession, perhaps in order of importance. These are the Levant, the eastern Baltic, and the kingdoms around the straits of Gibraltar:

Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre And therto hadde he riden, no man ferre, As wel in cristendom as in hethenesse, And evere honoured for his worthnesse; At Alisaundre he was whan it was wonne.	Alexandria (1365)
Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne Aboven alle nacions in Pruce ; In Lettow hadde he reysed and in Ruce , No Cristen man so ofte of his degree.	Prussia Lithuania; Rossenia
In Gernade at the seege eek hadde he be At Algezir , and ryden in Belmarye . At Lyveys was he and at Satalye ,	Granada Algeciras; Morocco Ayas (1367); Antalya (1361)
Whan they were wonne, and in the Grete See At many a noble armee hadde he be. At mortal batailles hadde he been fifteen, And foughten for oure feith at Tramysse	Tlemcen
In lystes thryes, and ay slayn his foo. This ilke worthy knyght hadde been also Somtyme with the lord of Palatye	Balat
Agayn another hethen in Turkye; And everemoore he hadde a sovereyn prys.	

(*General Prologue*, I. 47-67; Benson, 1987: 24)

This list lacks any battles for King Edward III, apparently because the Knight, believing in “chivalrie, / Trouthe and honoure, fredom and curtei-sie” (I. 45-46), finds none of these virtues in the Hundred Years’ War (Sánchez Martí, 2000: 154-158). The list tells us rather that his prime directive, in “chivalry’s war against its own distorted image” (Keen, 1983: 60), is crusade.

The Knight’s first given crusade is with King Pierre I (otherwise known as Peter) de Lusignan of Cyprus and the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem (1359-69). Pierre will have been the

Knight's commander in the siege and capture of "Satalye", or Antalya, on Turkey's southern central coast in 1361 (I. 58), in "Alisaundre", or Alexandria, in 1365 (I. 51) and in "Lyeyes", or Ayas, on Turkey's south-eastern coast in 1367 (I. 58). Giving the capture of Alexandria as the summit of the Knight's career, Chaucer's Narrator juxtaposes "Lyeyes" and "Satalye" in one line seven lines later, with these battles six years apart and in reverse order. Although he thus gives a rather scrambled version of events, it appears that he expects us to know without being told that the Knight has fought for King Pierre through most of the 1360s.

After citing Alexandria, the Narrator refers to a crusade with the Teutonic Order against Baltic heathens in "Pruce" (East Prussia), "Lettow" (Lithuania) and "Ruce" (Rossenia: see Urban, 1984; Pratt, 1987: 14) with a vagueness of reference that may invoke these campaigns as recent history, in the 1380s. In contrast, the Knight's third given theatre, starting with "Algezir", has been regarded as the earliest episode in his career. Algeciras, west across the bay from Gibraltar, was taken in 1344 by King Alfonso XI of Castile (1321-50) from Sultan Yūsuf I of Granada (1333-54) after a siege of nearly 21 months. On the same line (I. 57) the Knight is said to have "ryden in Belmarye", or Banū Marīn, the emirate of Morocco. In 1344 Alfonso's Iberian-Genoese coalition also defeated an army which the Moroccan Sultan Abū'l-Ḥaṣān 'Alī (1331-1351) had sent to relieve Algeciras. So here we seem to have a third war against the infidel, one against the Moors of Spain and North Africa. Naming Antalya and Ayas just after this, the Narrator surrounds the Knight's crusades in the Baltic and western Mediterranean with his Cypriot adventures as if to represent his crusade with King Pierre as the most important part of his career.

Hereafter the Narrator dwells on the Knight "in hethenesse" (I. 49), citing "Palatye", or Balat in Turkey (I. 65), apparently as an afterthought to "Tramysse", or the Zayanid emirate of Tlemcen in north-western Algeria (I. 62). "Palatye" is a case where Chaucer's Knight appears to campaign with King Pierre's subject ally, the emir of Balat, against another Seljuk emir (Cook, 1916: 235; Manly, 1927: 99-100; Jones 1980: 87; *pace* Rigby, 2014: 57). Since Tlemcen was also a Muslim domain, the Narrator may end thus with a revelation that the Knight has taken service with at least two Muslim lords at different ends of the Mediterranean and possibly as many as twenty years apart.

How this type of service comes about, or more particularly when, bears on the fixity of the Knight's crusading objectives, which may change with time. Christian knights served Muslim kings, sometimes with papal sanction (Daniel, 1979: 221-225), so there is no religious objection to the Knight's fighting for Seljuks or Zayanids; nor to his serving Marinids in Morocco either, if he rides in "Belmarye" soon after "Algezir" (I. 57; Jones 1980: 104). In 1347, three years after his defeat in Algeciras, the Marinid Sultan Abū'l-Ḥaṣān expanded his North African domain eastwards as far as Tunis and other cities of the Hafsīd clan (Abun-Nasr, 1987: 110, 139). So at first it may appear that the Knight could ride with the Marinids then; or later, from 1348 to 1352, as Jones suggests (1980: 104).

However, there is a problem with the Knight's being in "Belmarye" soon after "Algezir". We have seen that Alfonso, when he took Algeciras, defeated a force sent by Abū'l-Ḥaṣān. By 1344 he had been at war with the Marinids for more than four years, having defeated them on 28 November 1340 by the river Salado near Tarifa, so ending their hopes of conquering Castile. It seems then unlikely that the Knight could have ridden with Abū'l-Ḥaṣān in 1347 or later so soon after a war in which he had helped to expel him from Spain. The other, perhaps more telling, problem with the Knight's doing service in Morocco (or in Tlemcen, according to Rigby, 2014: 50) in the late 1340s is that King Edward III had already recalled Earl Henry Grosmont of Derby (Blanche's father) and Earl William Montagu of Salisbury and their knights to fight against France, in August 1343 (Cook, 1916: 219; Jones, 1980: 63-64; Rigby, 2014: 49). So the mention of "Belmarye" so soon after "Algezir" on line 57 is an obstacle to placing the Knight at Alfonso's siege of Algeciras in 1342-44.

One way to explain “Belmarye” soon after “Algezir” has been to put the Knight in a raid which was carried out during the siege, on the Marinid naval base in Ceuta (Sabta) in 1343; the last raid from Castile until 1399 (Jones, 1980: 65). In support of the Knight’s being there in 1343, sailing with Alfonso’s Genoese admiral Egidio Boccanegra, it has been pointed out that Earls Derby and Salisbury went along for the ride; it is even suggested that Chaucer’s word “ryden” refers to the Knight aboard ship, as a metaphor for raiding (Rigby, 2014: 56). However, the line cites no ship and the dictionaries tell us that this usage works only in combination with a word or term for one (Stratmann, rev. Bradley, 1891: 506; Lewis, 1984: 669, 7.a).

Another problem with the years 1342-44 for “Algezir” is that it lengthens the Knight’s period of service, which, as Jill Mann says, “covers too long a time-span to be a realistic account of one person’s career” (2005: 799). If he takes part in this siege, like some knights of King Edward III (Henry, third earl of Lancaster (Blanche’s grandfather) as well as his son-in-law Derby and Salisbury), he will be in his mid to late 60s in April 1387, when we meet him at the Tabard. Although that is not impossible, it remains awkward that Knight’s career has a gap of seventeen years between 1344 and his first cited outing with King Pierre in Antalya in 1361. A final problem is that the Marinid defeat by the Salado in 1340, two years before the siege of Algeciras started, was Alfonso’s greatest victory: it is odd, as Jones points out, that this is not in the Knight’s record (1980: 61-61).

In all these ways, it seems that “Algezir” alludes not to 1342-44, but to a later campaign in line with the Knight’s others. The next siege of Algeciras was on 28-31 July 1369; the besieger was Sultan Muhammad V of Granada (1354-59 and 1362-91); the town’s defenders were Christians, subjects of King Enrique II of Castile (1369-79). If Chaucer’s Knight is placed at this siege, the timing becomes more interesting, not only because he will have moved there from Cyprus within six months of King Pierre’s assassination on 17 January, but also because Enrique took his crown from King Pedro I, his elder brother, after murdering him on 23 March in the same year; Pedro had been king since 1350; both men were sons of Alfonso by different mothers. As we shall now see, the Monk cites Pedro’s murder before Pierre’s in the so-called Modern Instances of his *Tale*, which is interrupted by the Knight.

Chaucer’s Knight and *The Monk’s Tale*’s Modern Instances

The Monk’s Tale is an encyclopedia of doom which takes its theme from Boccaccio’s *Decasibus virorum illustrium* (“On the fall of celebrated men”). It survives in two arrangements. In most manuscripts the Monk rehearses the downfalls of fifteen ancients from Lucifer to Croesus, in the midst of whom appears a group of moderns (VII. 2375-2462): King Pedro I of Castile, King Pierre I of Cyprus, Duke Bernabò Visconti of Milan and finally an older Italian, Count Ugolino della Gherardesca of Pisa. Pedro is killed by his half-brother (d. 23 March 1369); Pierre, by his men in the palace (d. 17 January 1369); Bernabò dies a prisoner of his nephew (d. 19 December 1385); and Ugolino, also thrown into a dungeon, starves to death there possibly after cannibalising his sons (d. 1289). Thus Ugolino’s story, which Chaucer based on a vignette in Dante’s *Inferno*, brings the greatest horror. In most manuscripts this group is placed in the middle, after Zenobia and before Nero. In as many as eight manuscripts, however, the Modern Instances follow Croesus, at the end of *The Monk’s Tale* (Ralph Hanna, in Benson, 1987: 1132; Mann, 2005: 1026-27). In all manuscripts this *Tale* is interrupted by the Knight, at the head of *The Prologue of the Nun’s Priest’s Tale*: “Hoo!” quod the Knyght, “good sire, namoore of this!” (VII. 2767).

Why does the Knight interrupt the Monk? The answer depends on where the Modern Instances are placed. In most manuscripts, as well as in the Riverside and all other eclectic

editions, where the Knight cuts in after Croesus, he does so to stop the Monk driving people mad with monotony. Only the Knight, a social equal, may stop the Monk on such patent grounds of “hevynesse” (VII. 2769), while in all but three manuscripts the Host, Harry Bailey, follows up with mockery (“He spak how Fortune covered with a clowde”, VII. 2782) by copying the Monk’s last line (“And [Fortune] covere hire brighte face with a clowde”, VII. 2766). Harry adds that only the clinking of Daun Piers’ bridle bells kept him from falling off his saddle; can he please talk about hunting instead?

On the other hand, those manuscripts with the Modern Instances at the end appear to give the Knight another motive. Terry Jones suggested that he interrupts here because he is annoyed or alarmed by the Monk’s including men of modern times, of whom at least one, King Pierre I, and possibly another, Duke Bernabò, have been his employers (1980: 73-74, 218-223). Only eight manuscripts have it so, but these include Hengwrt 154 and Ellesmere 26 C 9, which are closest to the oldest retrievable text. These manuscripts follow up on the ruined Croesus with laments on Pedro, Pierre, Bernabò and Ugolino. The first three go as follows:

De Petro Rege Ispannie

O noble, O worthy Petro, glorie of Spayne,
 Whom Fortune heeld so hye in magestee,
 Wel oghten men thy pitous deeth complayne!
 Out of thy land thy brother made thee flee
 And after, at a seege, by subtiltee
 Thou were bitraysed and lad unto his tente,
 Where as he with his owene hand slow thee,
 Succedyng in thy regne and in thy rente.

The feeld of snow, with th’egle of blak therinne,
 Caught with the lymrod coloured as the gleede,
 He brewe this cursednesse and al this synne.
 The **wikked neste** was werker of this nede.
 Noght Charles Olyver, that took ay heede
 Of trouthe and honour, but of Armorike
 Genylon-Olyver, corrupt for meede,
 Broghte this worthy kyng in swich a brike.

Fr *mal nid*: Oliver Mauny

De Petro Rege de Cipro

O worthy Petro kyng of Cypre also
 That Alisandre wan by heigh maistrie,
 Ful many an hethen wroghtestow ful wo
 Of which thyn owene liges hadde envie
 And for no thyng but for thy chivalrie
 That in thy bed han slayn thee by the morwe.
 Thus kan Fortune hir wheel governe and gye
 And out of joye brynge men to sorwe.

De Barnabo de Lumbardia

Off Melan grete Barnabo Viscounte,

sayde / In al his lyf' (I. 70-71), it seems that Chaucer's first intention was to show him reacting to some sort of pressure – as Terry Jones noticed (1980: 73, 218-223).

The murder of King Pierre I of Cyprus shows that this pressure may be read as an insinuation of blame. If the Knight is known to have fought under Pierre's command in Turkey, Egypt and Syria for the most of the 1360s, some pilgrims might ask where he was when Pierre was assassinated by his own men in Nicosia (on the morning of 17 January 1369). Indeed, the Monk's sequence with the first three moderns lets us infer an imputation that the Knight leaves every lord before a betrayal. We see this in retrospect from the first instance, which hints that the Knight was not present to save Pedro from his assailants (on 23 March of the same year). The third, most recent, instance would imply that he was not there to fight for Bernabò either when his enemies came. Furthest back from the present, the Monk's fourth tale of Count Ugolino, a Ghibelline who joined the Guelphs, seems to crown the collection with a vision of hell, by enlarging on what happens to a traitor at the hands of his former ally, in this case Archbishop Ruggieri of Pisa. In what appears to be the original arrangement of these four Modern Instances, the Monk insinuates that the Knight, by neglect, has failed in the "trouthe" for which he is known on arrival in the Tabard (I. 46).

Chaucer's Knight in Cyprus, Italy and Castile: a reconstruction

If we give the Knight a departure from Cyprus before 17 January and put him at the siege of Algeciras on 28 July 1369, he must be seen moving west. Chaucer's chief source for Pierre appears to have been *La Prise d'Alexandrie*, a commemoration of Pierre by Guillaume de Machaut of ca. 1370. The Knight's service with this king, as we have seen, is relatively well established in *The General Prologue*, by which the reference to Antalya, Chaucer's "Satalye", allows him to have joined Pierre in 1361. This was not long after the Treaty of Brétigny on 8 May 1360, when newly unemployed English soldiers rode south. To clear the "Free Companies", which they then formed, out of the Midi or at least away from his palace in Avignon, Pope Innocent VI (1352-62) called for a crusade against the Turks (Setton, 1976: 238-239). Perhaps, unlike the famous mercenary Sir John Hawkwood, who crossed into Piedmont (Caferro, 2006: 45-46), Chaucer's Knight responds to this call. With him and other western knights, King Pierre wins Antalya and imposes tribute on the emirates of southern Anatolia (Edbury, 1993: 13-18).

In 1362 Pierre toured the courts of Europe, including England, to recruit more knights for an assault on Alexandria, first step to Jerusalem. Now his crusade was blessed by Pope Urban V (1362-70), as keen as Innocent had been to remove the Free Companies from France (Setton, 1976: 248). Five weeks after signing a treaty in Rhodes with the emir of Balat, Pierre took Alexandria by surprise on 10 October 1365. The only English knights named with him there were Sir Stephen Scrope and Sir Nicholas Sabraham (Cook, 1916: 217), but there were other "estranges ... chevaliers", or "foreign knights" (De Mas Latrie, 1877: 100 (lines 3282-3283)). When these "transalpini" in Petrarch's words (Setton, 1976: 278), for "Transalpines" probably from England and Germany (Jones 1980: 47), sacked the city against Pierre's orders, he abandoned his plan to march on Jerusalem and returned to Cyprus, although in January 1366, to finance his further campaigns, he raided Tripoli in northern Lebanon. Then the politics of trade enforced an interval of peace, in which the Knight probably visits England: the Squire, said to be "twenty yeer of age" (I. 82) at the Tabard in 1387, seems to have been born a year later.

By 21 May 1367 the Knight must be back with Pierre, who was putting down a mutiny in his Antalya garrison before raiding cities up the coast of Lebanon and Syria (Jones, 1980: 70-72). In that Chaucer's Narrator does not name other expeditions of Pierre's in the Knight's

portrait, it may be possible to put the latter with the emir of Balat, subject ally of Pierre, for some of this time (“Somtyme” (I. 65); De Mas Latrie, 1877: 298-299). With the Knight on 4 October 1367, however, Pierre’s great army disembarked in Ayas, Chaucer’s “Lyeyns”, to take this port for the Armenian Christians, capturing only the lower town before withdrawing (Dawkins, 1932: 193-194, §211).

In the aftermath of this raid, King Pierre decided to revisit western Europe to recruit for a new attack on the Mamluk Sultan of Egypt. He landed in Naples in March 1368 and throughout that month and April was received in Rome by Pope Urban V, who had arrived there the previous summer from Avignon (Caferro, 2006: 131). First item of Vatican business was a feud between Pierre and two knights from Cyprus, Sir Florimont de Lesparre and Lord Rochefort, who had renounced his service and impugned his faith. Pope Urban included them all in an audience on Easter Sunday (8 April) 1368. That Chaucer’s “worthy” Knight may be placed there with Pierre is implicit in Machaut’s description of Urban’s assembly:

Le bon roy manda qu’à li veigne;
Et il y vint à grant campaingne,
Car toute sa chevalerie,
Toute sa gent et sa maisnie,
Et maint un bon chevalier estrange,
Dignes d’onneur et de loange.

(*La prise d’Alexandrie*, lines 7786-7781; De Mas Latrie, 1877: 240)

[The good king he ordered to come to him;
And he came there in great style,
For he had all his mounted knights,
All his people and his household,
Many a good foreign knight also,
All worthy of honour and praise.]

Machaut then jumps to late September, a little before Pierre departs Venice, without recording his next visit, which was to the Viscontis. Makhairas says that Pope Urban, having reconciled the king with his renegades, informed him that he could not press “οἱ ἀφέντες τῆς δύσις” (“the leaders of the west”) to join his crusade because of his quarrel with the duke of Milan (Makhairas, §217, in Dawkins, 1932: 199). Since April the Pope and his ally, Emperor Charles IV of Germany, had been at war with Bernabò Visconti and his brother Galeazzo in northern Italy (Caferro, 2006: 132-133). In the last week of May Pierre found the emperor in Mantua (Setton, 1976: 279; Caferro, 2006: 133); Makhairas says that he then visited Bernabò in Milan (§217, in Dawkins, 1932: 199). The Oxford manuscript of his *Chronicle*, although its text is from the sixteenth century, gives more detail to the record of Pierre’s shuttle diplomacy across Lombardy in May and June of 1368:

καὶ ὁ ῥήγας ἐπῆγεν εἰς τὴν Φλουρέντζαν, καὶ ἔμαθεν πῶς ὁ ἐμπαραδούρης τῆς Ἀλαμανίας ἦτον εἰς ἐκείνην τὴν μερίαν, καὶ ἦλθε νὰ διαφεντέγη τοὺς ποταμοὺς τοῦ Μιλᾶ· καὶ ὁ ῥήγας ἐπῆγεν εἰς τοὺς ἑμπαραδούρη καὶ προσδέκτην τὸν πολλὰ τιμημένα· καὶ ἐποῖκεν πολλὰς ἡμέρας καὶ ἐστράφη εἰς τὸ Ἀμιλᾶ. Καὶ πηγαίναντα, θωρῶντα τὸν ὁ δούκας τοῦ Ἀμιλᾶ, ἐπῆρε μεγαλώτατην χαρὰν πῶς ἐκαταδέκτην ὁ ἀφέντης τοῦ Ἱεροσολυμάτου καὶ ἐπῆγεν νὰ τὸν ἰδῆ καὶ ἔμεινεν κ’ ἐκεῖ πολλὰς ἡμέρας καὶ ἐποῖκεν τοὺς μεγάλα ἀπλαζίρια καὶ μεγάλες τιμές. Καὶ τοσον ἐποῖκεν ὁ ῥήγας μὲ τὸν δούκαν καὶ ἔποῖκεν τοὺς ἀγάπη μὲ τὸν πάπαν.

(Dawkins, 1932: 198, n. 4)

[And the king went to Florence and heard that the emperor of Germany was on that side [of the Alps], and had come to protect the rivers of Milan [i.e. against the Viscontis]. And the king went to the emperor, and he received him with many honours; and he spent many days with him, and returned to Milan. And the duke of Milan, perceiving that he had come there, was greatly delighted that the king of Jerusalem had consented to go to see him and stay with him many days, and he entertained him and gave him fine presents, and they did him many kindnesses and great honours. And the king so dealt with the duke that he made peace between him and the Pope.]

(Translation based on Dawkins, 1932: 199)

This tells us that Pierre missed Bernabò in Milan before finding Charles in Mantua, then found the duke in Milan on returning there. Pierre's mediation was incidental to why Bernabò put his war with Pope Urban and the emperor on hold. On 31 May 1368 Bernabò had left his fortresses west of Mantua for Pavia, to meet Prince Lionel, Duke of Clarence, whom he and probably his *condottiere* ("contractor") John Hawkwood, acting as bodyguard, escorted to Milan to be married to Galeazzo's daughter Violante on 5 June (Cafferro, 2006: 134-135). An alliance was thus created between the Viscontis and Lionel's father, King Edward III, to whom Galeazzo paid a dowry of fl. 200,000 (MacLean 2014: 59-64). When Lionel died of food-poisoning on 17 October, the English suspected treason and kept the money, but while the dalliance lasted this was the greatest royal wedding of them all. There were five months of celebration and guests included Jean Froissart, Petrarch and possibly briefly Chaucer, Lionel's erstwhile servant (Pearsall, 1992: 53-54). To judge by the timing of Pierre's second visit to Milan in this extended version of Makhairas, it seems that Pierre and his entourage were also guests at the wedding.

Notwithstanding any help from King Pierre, however, Pope Urban V continued to press him on behalf of Venice and Genoa to conclude a peace with the Sultan of Egypt. Although Pierre kept his nominal rights to Jerusalem, his acquiescence to their demands turned his mission into a failure (Setton, 1976: 279-281). Pierre had already declared support for this peace in a patent of 20 May; an embassy sailed from Italy to Cairo on 24 June; in July he left Lombardy for Venice from where he sailed for Rhodes on 28 September.

Chaucer's Knight is presumably to be seen with Pierre in most of these places, as was Pierre's chancellor, Philippe de Mézières, who stayed on in Venice (Setton, 1976: 283-284). We might assume that Chaucer's Knight remains in Italy likewise, having become disillusioned with Pierre, whose compromise with the mercantile needs of Genoa and Venice, at least from the crusader's perspective, postponed the recovery of Jerusalem yet again. At any rate, Milan between mid-June and early October 1368 is where the Knight might meet not only Hawkwood, a fellow English soldier, but also Bernabò and his brother Galeazzo, father of Giangaleazzo, Bernabò's son-in-law and future nemesis. Italy, like the Hundred Years' War, is missing in the Knight's portrait in *The General Prologue*, but there are still two literary reasons to place him there. One is Chaucer's re-use for his *Knight's Tale* of an Italian epic, the *Teseida* of Boccaccio, which he had adapted separately probably as early as 1381-82 (Pearsall, 1992: 153). Another might be the Italianate characterisation of Duke Theseus which is read by Jones in *The Knight's Tale* (1980: 213-223), albeit Chaucer may not see Theseus as a Bernabò in quite the same way. Although that is about as far as we can go with the notion that the Knight stops for long in Italy, it is worth noting that one final arrangement of Modern Instances, as we see them in New College Oxford, 314, gives only the third and fourth, Bernabò and Ugolino, as cause of the Knight's interruption (Ralph

Hanna, in Benson, 1987: 1132, n. 2375-2462). For these reasons it might be inferred that Bernabò is part of the Knight's history in *The Canterbury Tales* because Hawkwood recruits him for Bernabò before King Pierre returns to Cyprus.

How we then find the Knight in Granada just over a year later, in late July 1369, might be explained in a combination of ways. One is by imputing to his chivalry an aversion to the naked self-interest of mercenary contracts in Italy (Pratt, 1987: 19-20). Another is the sudden death of Prince Lionel on 17 October 1368, for which the English, though not Bernabò's captain Hawkwood, declared war on Galeazzo (Caferro, 2006: 134). A third part of this might be that, like Hawkwood, Chaucer's Knight is fundamentally loyal to King Edward III (Caferro, 2006: 26), whose new alliance with Bernabò, putatively now the Knight's employer, would set him against the French. The current project of King Charles V of France was to install Enrique de Trastámara as the king of Castile against the rightful Pedro I, an ally of Edward III since 1361.

By 1368 the kings of England and France had been fighting a two-year proxy war in Spain through Pedro and his illegitimate half-brother Enrique, rival sons of King Alfonso XI. At the beginning of 1366 the Breton knight Bertrand du Guesclin intervened on Enrique's behalf with a company of French, English and German mercenaries. Pedro applied to King Edward for help (Díaz Martín, 2007: 227-228); perhaps not coincidentally, Edward's esquire Chaucer was in Navarre from 24 February to 24 May, possibly to send word to Sir Hugh Calveley and other English mercenaries to leave Du Guesclin's service (Pearsall, 1992: 52-53). Du Guesclin, however, drove Pedro into exile and enthroned Enrique. Pope Urban V, or Guillaume de Grimoard of France, blessed his incursion as a crusade (Hillgarth, 1976: 374). Pedro escaped to Seville, thence to Portugal, Galicia and Aquitaine. Late that summer in Bordeaux he renewed the war by securing help from Edward the Black Prince in exchange for money and lands. On 3 April 1367 the Black Prince and John of Gaunt and some 8,000 English and Gascon soldiers helped Pedro defeat King Enrique and his French allies at Nájera in northern Spain (Russell, 1955: 104-105).

A few months later, however, Edward was back in Bordeaux, having established that Pedro lacked the means to pay him – also having contracted dysentery. Pedro lost his advantage and in the New Year of 1368 Enrique re-entered Spain (Russell, 1955: 138). Throughout 1368, however, while Pierre failed in Italy, Enrique's war with his brother fell into attrition. On 20 November he signed the Treaty of Toledo with King Charles, offering him the Castilian-Genoese fleet against England in exchange for a second intervention from Bertrand. This is when a loyal subject of Edward III might join King Pedro. With the help of Bertrand and King Pero IV of Aragon, Enrique entered Burgos, had himself proclaimed king and regained power over Castile by advancing south, laying siege to Toledo and surprising Pedro, who had arrived to relieve it, in his encampment in La Mancha north of the Sierra Morena near the hill-top castle of Montiel on 14 March 1369 (Hillgarth, 1976: 380-382).

At first it might be thought that since the Black Prince's departure in 1367, the only European foreigners to be witness to Pedro's defeat and subsequent murder were the Bretons Bertrand and Oliver de Mauny, as the Monk implies in his *Tale* (VII. 2375-2390). Nonetheless, Prince Edward, hoping to make good on Pedro's promises, continued to help him by negotiating an Anglo-Castilian alliance with Navarre and Aragon (Russell, 1955: 135-137). Enrique's chronicler López de Ayala (1332-1407) gives Bertrand words to the effect that, as late as 23 March 1369, “el rrey don Pedro tiene la parte de los ingleses e el es aliado con ellos, espeçialmente contra el rrey de Françia mi señor” (“King Pedro takes the part of the English and is an ally of theirs, especially against my lord the king of France” (Orduna, 1997: 287). This is borne out by Froissart, who portrays three Englishmen in the second of his two accounts of Pedro's death (Joliffe, 1967: 206-207; Vernier, 2003: 140-146). First Pedro escapes from the battle with twelve followers and takes refuge in the castle. Running

out of food nine days later, he makes a deal with Bertrand but is caught escaping by another Breton officer, Sir Pierre the Bègue (“the Stammerer”) of Villaines. Pedro parleys with the Bègue for safe conduct and is led to the tent of Sir Yon de Laconet, a third Breton. Suddenly, however, Enrique enters, asking “Ou est li fils de pute juis qui s’appelle rois de Castille?” (“Where is that whoreson Jew calling himself king of Castile?”; Kervyn de Lettenhove, 272). Pedro returns the insult with interest and the half-brothers roll across the floor. Pedro pins Enrique down, but the Viscount de Roquebertin turns him over, whereupon Enrique draws a knife and stabs his half-brother in the only unmailed place, his face:

et là furent mort ossi dalés li uns chevaliers d’Engleterre, qui s’appeloit messires Raouls Helme, qui jadis avoit estet nommés li Vers-Escuiers, et uns escuiers qui s’appeloit Jakes Rollans, pour tant qu’il s’estoient mis à deffense; mes à dan Ferrant de Castres et as aultres on ne fist point de mal, ains demorèrent prisonnier à monsieur le Bèghe de Vellaines et à monsieur Yon de Lakonet.

(*Chroniques*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove VII, 272)

[also killed there on his side were a knight from England called Sir Ralph Helm, who had formerly been known as the “Green Squire”, and a squire called James Rowlands, inasmuch as they had put up a fight for him; no harm, however, came to Don Fernando de Castro or the others, and they remained prisoner with Sir the Bègue of Villaines and Sir Yon de Laconet.]

Don Fernando, Pedro’s standard-bearer, entered the service of John of Gaunt on the prince’s marriage to Constanza, Pedro’s daughter, in Bordeaux in 1371; it has been suggested that *The Monk’s Tale’s* version, in which Bertrand helps Enrique kill Pedro, was influenced by his eye-witness account (Savage, 1949: 365-367). Helm and Rowlands are otherwise unknown, but the manner of their going, so reminiscent of *The Battle of Maldon*, speaks for King Pedro’s use of English bodyguards.

Does Chaucer’s Monk mean that the Knight was there and should likewise have died for his lord? In this regard, it may be worth noting Froissart’s third English mercenary, who is seen earlier in the story taking point for Pedro just below Montiel. Having anticipated their attempt to escape, Sir Pierre the Bègue intercepts the king’s party at night with a cordon and calls out to the first of them:

“Qui estes-vous là? Parlés ou vous estes mors.” Cil à qui messires li Bèghes s’adreça, estoit englès: se li refusa à parler et se lança outre en lui eschievant, et li dis Bèghes le laisse passer et s’adreça sus le roy dan Piètre, et li sambla, quoique il fesist moult brun, que ce fust il, et le ravisa pour le roy Henry son frère, car trop bien se ressambloient.

(*Chroniques*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove VII, 271)

[“Who goes there? Speak or you die.” The man to whom Sir Pierre the Bègue was talking was English: he refused to say anything and dodged his way past him, and the aforesaid Bègue let him pass and turned to face the next man, King Don Pedro, and to him it seemed, although it was very dark, that this was Pedro; for the man reminded him of Pedro’s brother, King Enrique; they looked too much alike.]

We need not identify this Englishman with Chaucer’s Knight to be able to put the latter in King Pedro’s camp before the battle of Montiel. The next question is how we relate this

reconstruction of the Knight's implied service for "Petro glorie of Spayne" to his role in the Siege of Algeciras in 1369.

Chaucer's Knight and Sultan Muḥammad V

Chaucer's Narrator's words "his lordes werre" allows for an assumption that the Knight, in order to fight for a lord in "Gernade", "Belmarye" and "Tramyssene" upon Pedro's death, on 23 March 1369, takes service with the region's most powerful king. That would have been Muḥammad V of Granada (1354-59 and 1362-91). Granada was a rich enclave between Tarifa and Vera along the coast and extended inland as far as Ronda (Abun-Nasr, 1987: 107). Muḥammad, of the Nasrid dynasty which was established in 1238 and lasted until the fall of Granada in 1492, was Pedro's subject ally and apparently friend (Ladero, 2002: 19). In 1360 he lent him some 600 Berber warriors to help him take Teruel from Pero IV of Aragon; in 1365, in Pedro's growing war with Enrique, Muḥammad supplied him with troops not only from Granada but also from his own vassals in North Africa, the Marinid emirate of Fez in Morocco and the Zayanid emirate of Tlemcen. The aim was self-preservation: when Pedro was driven out of Spain in May 1366, Muḥammad made a treaty with the new king Enrique, attending him at Burgos (Viguera, 2000: 138). Nonetheless, after Pedro's victory in Nájera eleven months later, he sent his vizier Lisān al-Dīn ibn al-Khaṭīb, a poet and philosopher, to restore peace with the newly restored Pedro and actively aided him in the last few months of his second war with Enrique in early 1369 (Ladero, 1969: 97). After Pedro's murder, Muḥammad turned the war to his advantage, taking one Andalusian city after another along his border away from the usurper: Cambil, Alhabar, Rute, Algeciras, Carmona. In these campaigns he summoned help from Banū Marīn. Only on 31 May 1370, ten months later, did Muḥammad sign a treaty with King Enrique II. By then he had strengthened his hand to the extent that he paid no more tribute to Castile and could focus on subjugating the Marinids (Hillgarth, 1976: 387; Ladero 2002: 19). When Enrique died in 1379, Muḥammad removed Algeciras from any future contention by tearing down her walls (Viguera, 2000: 138-140, esp. 139).

If the Knight, having arrived in late 1368 (perhaps via Genoa, an old ally of Alfonso XI), joins King Pedro to fight Enrique and the French, he is contractually bound to him and may later serve his subject ally in Granada, Sultan Muḥammad. The following picture of alliances shows that we may see Chaucer's Knight fighting for Muḥammad from late March 1369 onwards, through the siege of Algeciras in late July of that year and into the 1370s. The claim that a Christian fighting for a Muslim against Christians contravened the rules of chivalry (Rigby, 2014: 58) holds no water in Spain, in which Don Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar (1043-1099), fighting for the Banū Hūd clan of Zaragoza against the Christians of Aragon in 1082, was called "El Cid", or "the lord" (from "al-Sayyid" السَّيِّد) by Muslim allies possibly in his lifetime (Fletcher, 1989: 3-4, 134-140). Within the same peninsula nearly three centuries later, it has been pointed out that 1369 Algeciras belonged to a usurper who had murdered the rightful king (Ladero, 1969: 97). That is how the Knight may be seen to move beyond Castile towards Granada, to fight "In Gernade at the seege eek (...) / At Algezir" (I. 56-57) under Sultan Muḥammad V.

The depth of King Pedro's connection with Granada is clear not only in the *Crónica* of López de Ayala and in Froissart's *Chroniques*, but also in Cuvelier's epic in memory of Constable du Guesclin, the *Chanson de Bertrand* of the 1380s. Bertrand's eulogist creates a speech during Enrique's siege of Toledo in early 1369, when a Moor from Seville enters the city by a secret gate to put heart into the besieged inhabitants:

“Seigneurs, dist le paien, oués mon semblant,
 De Cebille bien droit, une cité vaillant,
 Les .iii. lois qui y sont vous vont par my mandant
 Qu’i ont ouÿ Nouvelles du roy Pietre le grant;
 Il est en Bel Marine, un royaume puissant,
 Et vous mande par nous, et vous va saluant,
 Que ne vous rendés mie a Henry le tirant,
 Ne aus François de France ne au vasal Bertrant,
 Car en Belle Marine s’en va li rois nagent
 Et amenra secours du Peuple Teurvagant.
 Et li rois de Granade en a envoié tant
 Qu’i ne soivent ou gierre ne femme ne enfant.”

(*La Chanson de Bertrand*, lines 16,174-16,184; Faucon, 1990: 319-320)

[“Lords,” said the heathen, “grant me an audience,
 For straight from Seville, a valorous town,
 Do the three faiths there come relaying through me to you
 News they have heard of King Pedro the Great:
 He is in Banū Marīn, a powerful kingdom,
 And instructs you through us, while offering you greetings,
 By no means to give yourselves up to Enrique the Tyrant,
 Nor to the French of France, nor to the vassal Bertrand,
 For in Banū Marīn the king is leaving by ship
 And will bring aid from the Mohammedan Nation.
 And the king of Granada has dispatched from there
 so many people that scarcely woman and child remain.”]

In these lines Seville has three “lois” (“faiths”) whose people, Christians, Jews and Muslims, are all his allies. Particularly the last two Andalusian communities were loyal to Pedro, along with the Berbers of Tlemcen (Manly 1907: 93-94). However, the Moor shows that Granada is Pedro’s greatest ally, for in these lines it is Sultan Muḥammad who brings the reinforcements from Morocco.

Pedro’s enemies accused him of “Maurophilia” (Ladero, 1969: 95); the other two chronicles throw more light on the war against Enrique as a joint Castilian-Granadino effort. López de Ayala, in ch. 3 of his annal for 1369, reports that Pedro, having based himself in Seville, “traya sus pleytesias con el rrey de Granada para que le ayudasse” (“sent his petitions to the king of Granada pleading to give him aid”); in ch. 4, the sultan responds by sending Pedro 7,000 horse, 8,000 foot and 12,000 bowmen, to add to Pedro’s modest 1,500 horse and 6,000 foot; with them is “Abenfaluz” (possibly for ‘Abdul-Rahmān ibn Yafusīn) a Marinid hostage whom Muḥammad later planted as a king in Morocco (Orduna, 1997: 253; 254-255, 256; Abun-Nasr, 1987: 114). Accordingly, in the rout that develops near Montiel, “los moros” (“the Moors”) also fight for Pedro in the battle (Orduna, 1997: 283). With more detail (cf. Joliffe, 1967: 204-205), Froissart says that the Bretons and Aragonese of Enrique’s force at Montiel are surprised to find

gens ossi contre yeus assés estranges, tels que Sarrasins et Portingalois, car li Juis qui là estoient, tournèrent tantost les dos, ne point ne se combatierent, mès se fisent cil de Grenade et de Bellemarine, qui portoient ars et archigaies, dont il savoient bien jouer, et dont il fisent

plusieurs grans apertises de traire et de lancier, et là estoit li rois dans Piètres hardis homs durement.

(*Chroniques*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove VII, 267)

[against them some real foreigners also on the other side, people such as Saracens and Portuguese, for while the Jews who were there soon turned tail, not fighting any longer, the men of Granada and Banū Marīn went to it, carrying javelins and assegais which they well knew how to play with and which they hefted and threw with great dexterity, and there stood King Don Pedro, a bold man fighting bravely.]

The Marinid warriors at Montiel were there because of Muḥammad V. Morocco had been senior to Granada in the 1340s, but in 1366, when Sultan Abū ‘Inān, son of Abū’l-Ḥaṣān ‘Alī, was strangled by his vizier, Muḥammad began to exert control (Abun-Nasr, 1987: 113-114). The next Marinid sultan, Abū Fāris ‘Abdul-Azīz (1366-1377), won back some power, but Muḥammad worked against him also by sending aid to his eastern neighbours, the Zayanids of Tlemcen (Viguera, 2000: 138).

Granada’s alliance with Tlemcen against Morocco gives the most plausible context for Chaucer’s Knight from late 1369 into the early 1370s. The trading metropolis of Tlemcen, or “Tramysene” in *The General Prologue* (line 62), was an old ally of Granada; their friendship picked up at this time (Viguera, 2000: 141). Traditionally in war the emirs of this central Berber dynasty hired Catalan mercenaries; for their culture, however, they looked to al-Andalus (Abun-Nasr, 1987: 137-138). Sultan Abū Hammū Mūsā II (1359-89) of Tlemcen had been educated in the Alhambra and was a patron of architecture and the arts. The city flourished in his reign (Bouzina-Oufriha, 2015: 109-112), even though this was marred by Marinid incursions and by conflicts with the Hafsids, his own eastern neighbours (Abun-Nasr, 1987: 141). Particularly the Marinids forced Abū Hammū to flee Tlemcen four times, in 1359, 1360, 1370 and 1383. If we ask how the Knight has “ryden in Belmarye” so soon after “the seege ... / At Algezir” (I. 56-57), it is Muḥammad’s response to the 1370 invasion from Morocco which begins to give an answer. This attack, led by Abū Fāris while the Zayanids were at war with the Hafsids, so ruined the city that Abū Hammū was forced to rebuild it. Since this was only a year after Muḥammad’s siege of Algeciras, in which the Knight is probably involved, it may be inferred that Muḥammad’s aid to Tlemcen includes Chaucer’s Knight and a squadron of cavalry who have “ryden in Belmarye” to expel Abū Fāris from the central Maghrib. Not only did Muḥammad restore Abū Hammū to his emirate, but in 1372 he took control of both sides of the straits by seizing Gibraltar and Ceuta from Sultan Abū Zayyān, who was Abū Fāris’ successor. When Abū Zayyān refused to extradite Ibn al-Khaṭīb, Muḥammad’s now exiled vizier, Muḥammad deposed him by sending two Marinid hostages, ‘Abdul-Rahmān ibn Yafusīn (who may have fought for Pedro by Montiel) and then Abū’l-Abbās Aḥmad ibn Abī Sālim, to overrun northern Morocco and lay siege to Fez (Ladero, 1969: 95; Abun-Nasr, 1987: 114). In this way 1372 is another year in which Chaucer’s Knight could have “ryden in Belmarye”.

Here it is worth adding, as part of the case for Chaucer tailoring his stories to their narrators (*pace* Pearsall, 1992: 152), that the Knight invokes Morocco in his *Tale* without foundation in his source, Boccaccio’s *Teseida* (VIII.26; Roncaglio, 1941: 226), when he says, of Palamon jousting with his former friend Arcite, “N’in Belmarye ther nis so fel leoun” (I. 2630-2633, esp. 2630). With just such ferocity may the Knight rediscover his crusading ideals while serving Muḥammad in the early 1370s, in the cultured but precarious city of the sultan’s vassal Abū Hammū. Namely he is said to have “foughten for oure feith at Tramysene / In lystes thryes, and ay slayn his foo” (I. 62-63). If his three jousts are

entertainment for others, for him they are duels with Muslims who have challenged the Christian faith. Clarity of purpose has come back to the crusader in the most unexpected place. In any case, killing Berber fellow servicemen in Tlemcen means that he cannot stay there.

Chaucer's Knight before the Baltic: a reconstruction

The Knight is based on a man Chaucer knows. Not in his late 60s but pushing 50, nearer to the poet's age, when we meet him in the Tabard, he has always chosen chivalry over the wars of Edward III. His career began nonetheless with the same campaign that brought Chaucer to northern France before the treaty of Brétigny. Thereafter, however, unlike Chaucer who may have met him then, the Knight rides south with the Free Companies into the Midi around Avignon, from where, in early 1361 and unlike John Hawkwood, he heeds the Pope's call to join King Pierre I de Lusignan in a crusade against the Turks, ultimately for Jerusalem – a series of raids, invasions and voyages around Cyprus which ends in failure. To recruit more followers, the Knight sails to Italy with Pierre in the spring of 1368, but loses faith in the living legend and leaves him for Hawkwood and Duke Bernabò in Milan, before moving on a few months later to Castile in a chivalrous attempt to save King Pedro I from his usurper Enrique. This is also a campaign against Bertrand du Guesclin of France, but it brings him no honour. The Knight survives King Pedro's defeat and murder in late March 1369 and takes service with his ally, Sultan Muḥammad V of Granada. He avenges Pedro by recovering towns for his new Nasrid lord including the port of Algeciras in late July. He helps take also Gibraltar and Ceuta for Granada and in the early 1370s joins Muḥammad's Zayanid allies in pushing the Marinids out of Tlemcen. Stationed there in the peace that follows, the Knight has time to duel with three Berber comrades who have offended the Christian faith. Killing them one after the other restores his longing for crusade and he leaves Muḥammad's service, heading home to England and thence to the Baltic to join the Teutonic Order.

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